

RESEARCH GRANTS POLICY



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Related Documents

Conflict of Interest Policy

Regulation 8: Members of the University

Strategic Plan 2030: Research Strategy

1. Aims

To support the University's Research Strategy, the Council allocates funds in the University's annual budget for research grants. These research grants aim to enable members of the University in the production and dissemination of research that is at or above world standard, and in the preparation of applications for external competitive grants.

2. Research Grants

| <i>Type of Grant</i> | <i>Description</i> | <i>Assessment Criteria</i> |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Small Research Grant | Up to \$5,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">applicant research track record (50%)project quality, including project outcomes, methodology (50%) |
| Large Research Grant | \$5,001 - \$10,000 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">applicant research track record (50%)project quality, including project outcomes, methodology, potential to support external competitive grant application (40%)alignment with the University's Research Strategy (10%) |
| Collaborative Large Research Grant | Above \$10,000 (amount specified in the University's annual budget, usually one available annually) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">applicant research track record (40%)project quality, including project outcomes, methodology, potential to support external competitive grant application (40%)alignment with the University's Research Strategy (10%)capacity to build research collaboration across the University and with external researchers (10%) |

3. Research Grants Panel

3.1 Membership:

- a) The Dean of Research Strategy
- b) Five academic staff of the University appointed by the University Executive for a term of up to three years
- c) An academic external to the University appointed by the University Executive for a term of up to three years.

In making appointments the University Executive should ensure the Panel has:

- d) expertise in assessment of grant applications
- e) expertise across a range of disciplines
- f) members from a range of Colleges and Schools.

3.2 The Chair of the Research Grants Panel (“Panel Chair”) is elected by the Panel from its membership for a term of up to three years.

3.3 A quorum is four Panel members.

3.4 The Research Grants Panel may appoint external assessors to assist them in the assessment of a round or of individual applications. In instances where external assessors are used, the identity of the assessors must remain confidential to the members of the Panel.

3.5 The following officers of the University are not Panel members and are ineligible for appointment as Panel members or as external assessors:

- a) The Chancellor
- b) The Vice-Chancellor
- c) The Chair of Academic Board
- d) The Dean of the School of Graduate Research.

4. Conflicts of Interest

4.1 Conflicts of interest must be handled in accordance with the University’s Conflict of Interest Policy.

4.2 A Panel member who has an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest in relation to a grant application must declare the conflict to the Panel either through the standing register of conflicts of interest or by declaring the matter to the Panel Chair.

4.3 Rules for handling common conflicts of interest:

| | <i>Circumstance</i> | <i>Rule</i> |
|----|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. | Panel member applies for grant. | Panel member excluded from the Panel for the entirety of that round. |

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|----|--|---|
| 2. | Panel Chair applies for grant. | Panel Chair excluded for the entirety of that round. The Dean of Research Strategy (or a Panel member appointed by the Vice-Chancellor) acts as Panel Chair for that round. |
| 3. | Application from another member of a Panel member's home College or (if not a member of a College) home School. | Panel member may participate in discussion but must not vote on that application. |
| 4. | Application from a higher degree by research student whose thesis was supervised by a Panel member. This provision applies until two years after the date of the student's graduation. | Panel member excluded from participation in discussion of or voting on that application. |

4.4 In the event that the exclusion of Panel members due to conflicts of interest means that in the opinion of the Panel Chair there is a risk of the Panel being unable to achieve a quorum, the Dean of Research Strategy or Vice-Chancellor has delegated authority to appoint an additional temporary Panel member for that application round only.

5. Applications

5.1 The number of application rounds and the closing dates for applications are decided by the Panel by 31 October of the prior year and published in the University Calendar.

5.2 Eligibility to apply for a research grant requires the applicant, or in the case of a group at least one of the applicants, to be currently:

- a) an academic staff member of the University as defined by Regulation 8: Members of the University
- b) a candidate enrolled in a higher degree by research at the University
- c) a staff member of a library of the University as defined by Regulation 7: Libraries.

5.3 Eligible expenditure for inclusion in a research grant is any expenditure that demonstrably supports the production or dissemination of high-quality research or the preparation of applications for external competitive grants.

Examples of eligible expenditure include but are not limited to:

- a) travel, registration and accommodation associated with presenting a paper at a research conference
- b) library or archival research or fieldwork
- c) research assistance
- d) sponsorship or seed-funding for a conference supported by the University
- e) bringing a visiting academic to the University
- f) expenses relating to a peer-reviewed publication, such as copyright permissions, images, or a publisher's fee

- g) research items such as books, manuscripts, or digital collections
- h) teaching relief that leads to the production or dissemination of research

5.4 Applications must be submitted via the University’s online application portal on or prior to the closing date and time published in the University Calendar for each round.

5.5 The Dean of Research Strategy is responsible for ensuring guidelines, application forms and training materials are available to prospective applicants.

5.6 Applicants are responsible for:

- a) adhering to this Policy and to any guidelines issued by the Dean of Research Strategy
- b) ensuring applications are complete and the applicants and proposed expenditure fall within the eligibility criteria of this Policy
- c) making a case as to the quality and feasibility of the proposed research and providing evidence to support that case
- d) where applicable, providing evidence that Human Research Ethics Committee approval for the proposed research has been applied for or obtained.

5.7 An application may be deemed ineligible if any of the following apply:

- a) the application is submitted after the advertised closing date and time
- b) the applicant is not eligible to apply under this Policy
- c) the proposed expenditure is for activities undertaken prior to the closing date and time for the round.

6. Assessment

6.1 The Panel is provided with all applications that were received prior to the cut-off date and time for an application round.

6.2 Panel members must notify the Chair of conflicts of interest with any application to be considered in the round prior to the start of the Panel meeting. Conflicts of interest and actions taken to address them must be recorded in the minutes of the Panel meeting.

6.3 The Panel must make one of the following decisions with respect of each application:

| | <i>Decision</i> | <i>Outcome</i> |
|----|--|--|
| 1. | Incomplete | Application not considered. May apply to a future round. |
| 2. | Ineligible | Application not considered. May apply to a future round. |
| 3. | Ranked below the level at which funding is available | Application unsuccessful. May apply to a future round. |
| 4. | Partially funded (Panel to advise total sum funded) | Application successful, partially funded. |

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| 5. | Fully funded | Application successful. |
| 6. | Partially or fully funded, subject to provision of evidence of HREC approval. | Application successful, subject to provision of evidence of HREC approval to the Panel Chair within 60 days of notification. If evidence not provided, application unsuccessful. May apply to a future round. |
| 7. | Partially or fully funded, subject to clarification requested by the Panel. | Application successful, if satisfactory clarification is provided to the Panel Chair within 30 days of notification. If satisfactory clarification not provided, application unsuccessful. May apply to a future round. |

6.4 The Panel has delegated authority:

- a) to decide its own working procedures to facilitate the fair and timely assessment of applications;
- b) to award no grants in a round;
- c) to award grants to a total amount less than the available funding for that round;
- d) to give priority to applications from early career researchers (as defined by the Australian Research Council);
- e) to give priority to applicants who have not previously been awarded a research grant.

6.5 The Panel may not award research grants beyond the funds available in the University's annual budget. Unspent funds are not carried forward from one year to the next.

7. Reporting and Acquittal

7.1 The Panel must inform each applicant in writing of the outcome of the application within thirty days of the meeting at which the application was considered.

7.2 Successful applicants must submit a report to the Dean of Research Strategy detailing how the funds have been expended and how the outcomes of the project have been achieved. Failure to provide this report constitutes grounds for the Panel to decide that a future research grant application is incomplete.

| <i>Type of Grant</i> | <i>Report Requirements</i> |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Small Research Grant | Final Report – 12 months from date of award |
| Large Research Grant | Final Report – 12 months from date of award |
| Collaborative Large Research Grant | Progress Report – every 12 months Final Report – within 3 months of project completion, to be prepared in accordance with the University's |

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| | Research Strategy and presented to the Research Strategy Committee |
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- 7.3 Funds awarded for a research grant may only be disbursed by the University on presentation to the Financial Controller of an invoice or purchase order for payment, or a receipt for reimbursement.
- 7.4 For Small Grants and Large Grants, funds must be claimed within twelve months of the date on which the grant was awarded. After twelve months unclaimed funds are forfeited by the applicant.
- 7.5 In exceptional circumstances where unforeseen events hinder the capacity of a successful applicant to carry out part or all of the activities for which the funding has been awarded, and where this would result in the surrender of all or part of the funding awarded, the applicant or applicants may apply to the Panel for a variation in funding. The variation request must be submitted to the Dean of Research Strategy at the earliest opportunity and must:
- a) explain the circumstances that have necessitated the change in research plans
 - b) include the submission of a revised budget and timeline
 - c) explain the alternative use to which the funding will be applied
 - d) describe how that activity advances the goals of the research project.
- 7.6 A list of successful grants must be published on the University website after each application round, including the type, amount, researchers and project title.
- 7.7 The Panel must provide an annual report to the University Executive and Research Strategy Committee providing:
- a) information on how the funds set aside for Research Grants were expended in that year, including how any special allocations were expended
 - b) how many applications were received and how many grants were awarded (the success rate)
 - c) how much funding was requested and how much funding was awarded (the funding rate)
 - d) any recommendations for improvements or changes to this Policy.

8. Review and Appeal

- 8.1 An applicant may apply for a review of the Panel's decision by lodging a completed Review Request Form with the Chair of Academic Board and University Secretary within one week of receipt of notice of the outcome of the application. Disagreement with the Panel's assessment of the merits of an application is not sufficient grounds for an appeal; the onus lies on the applicant to explain how the Panel's decision did not follow due process as set out in this Policy or any guidelines issued by the Dean of Research Strategy.

- 8.2 The University Secretary must acknowledge receipt of the review request in writing to the applicant within five working days.
- 8.3 The Chair of Academic Board may consult with Panel members or the Financial Controller before making a decision, and usually consults the Panel Chair.
- 8.4 If the review request is upheld, the Chair of Academic Board must make recommendations to the Dean of Research Strategy, Panel Chair or other appropriate officers of the University.
- 8.5 The Chair of Academic Board must provide a report and decision on the review request in writing to the applicant, the Panel Chair, the Dean of Research Strategy, and the University Secretary within ten working days of receipt of the review request.
- 8.6 An applicant has recourse to the Appeals Policy to dispute the outcome of the review request.
- 9. Date of next review**
- 9.1 This policy must be reviewed no later than 31 December 2029.