

THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

Research Impetus Grants: Instructions to applicants and Frequently Asked Questions

Information for applications in 2026 for grants commencing in 2027

Key Dates and Selection Process overview – Pg. 1

Application Instructions – Pgs. 1-4

Frequently Asked Questions – Pgs. 5-9

KEY DATES AND SELECTION PROCESS OVERVIEW

<i>Monday, 4 May 2026</i>	Scheme opens
<i>Thursday, 25 June 2026</i>	Applications due Applicants must first submit through SmartyGrants.
<i>28 June to 19 July 2026</i>	Eligibility Review After the submission deadline, all applications will be reviewed for eligibility and compliance by the Researcher Development Schemes team in RIC. Applications that are not fully compliant with stated requirements will be removed from eligibility (refer to the guidelines, scheme forms, and webpage requirements).
<i>Monday, 20 July to Thursday, 6 August 2026</i>	Faculty Endorsement Applications are first assessed by a committee in your faculty, who produce a recommended ranking for applications in your faculty.
<i>Mid-September 2026</i>	Central Selection Committee The Central Committee is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Capability) or other as nominated by the DVCR. The Central Selection Committee will allocate grants across the applicant pool, informed by the selection criteria, faculty-ranked lists, and overall strategic and equity considerations.
<i>Early-Mid October 2026</i>	Outcomes announced

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

- Most instructions are provided within the application form; however, this document includes some additional explanation and assistance, corresponding with key sections of the application form.
- Applications must comply with the page, and document format requirements described in the application form.
- All questions must be answered.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

- Some faculties require that you contact the listed research office to indicate your intention to apply for a grant under this scheme. Please review the scheme webpage to find out your faculty's preferred process.
- Seek support from your faculty by having a discussion with your nominated RIG delegate about your experience of disruption/s, the significance of the disruption/s and the impact on your research trajectory and jointly complete the Faculty Confirmation Form. You may also need to have a discussion with your Head of Department/School.
- Commence your SmartyGrants application and upload your signed Faculty Confirmation Form.

Part A: Administrative Summary

A3. Faculty Confirmation

- Use the career disruption calculator to calculate and map out any claimed disruption/s (available for download from the RIG webpage).
- To be eligible for the scheme you must have experienced a disruption of a minimum of 90 consecutive days, some portion of which must occur within five years of the application closing date (25 June 2021 to 25 June 2026). Please note, the disruption may have started before the eligibility window but must continue past 25 June 2021. Only days occurring within the eligibility window should be counted.
 - *For example: Alex was hospitalised on 20 February 2020 and after a period of illness, returned to research activities full time on 10 May 2023. In demonstrating her eligibility for this scheme, Alex may claim days between 25 June 2021 and 9 May 2023.*
- Copy the information obtained from the calculator onto the Faculty Confirmation Form (available for download from the [RIG webpage](#)). Use this information as the basis for initiating discussions with your Faculty Delegate. Your Faculty Delegate may ask you to provide evidence or relevant information. This information is not required to be attached to your application.
- If you have multiple interruptions at the same time, you cannot claim for the period of interruption twice.
 - *For example, if you were working part-time (0.5 FTE) in one non-research role while concurrently working part-time (0.5) in another non-research role, then for the overlapping time you have 1FTE in a non-research capacity, but you should not count the days/duration of disruption twice.*
 - *For example: If Dr Jo had 90 days of parental leave and during this time was in a car accident that required 30 days of hospitalization, Dr Jo cannot claim 90 + 30 days of disruption. In the Faculty Confirmation Form Dr Jo is encouraged to outline the 30 days of hospitalisation to fully and accurately convey information about the disruptions that were experienced, but the 30 days of hospitalisation should not count towards the total disrupted research time as it was within the period of parental leave.*
- By signing the Faculty Confirmation Form, Delegates and the Head of Department/School understand that they are committing specific financial support for your grant as this is a jointly funded scheme between Chancellery and Faculties.
- Upload the signed confirmation form in a PDF format into the SmartyGrants application and submit it via SmartyGrants. Once the final application is submitted it cannot be altered.

Part B: Education and Appointment Details

B3. Workload allocation split.

Use the table to show the % split of your FTE fraction noted in part B2 of the application form.

For example: in Part B2 Dr Smith noted:

Start of Current appointment	End of current appointment (if not continuing)	Current appointment type	Current employment Type	Appointment Level	Current FTE (must be 0.4 FTE minimum)
1/01/2023		Hold a continuing role	Education and Research	B	0.5

Dr Smith's workload allocation split is 40% teaching 40% research 20% service within the 0.5 FTE. So, his workload allocation split should be:

Current percentage of Teaching time/allocation	Current percentage of research allocation	Current percentage of Service allocation
40	40	20

Part C: Researcher Profile and Case for Support

C1. Summary of disruption/s

Applicants must provide a high-level overview of their claimed disruption/s periods as noted and endorsed in the Faculty Confirmation Form. The application form does not need to include details or discussion of the disruption. You must utilise the career disruption calculator to help you to complete the Faculty Confirmation Form and your RIG application form.

C3. Applicant Curriculum Vitae

Your CV **must not** exceed 4 pages and must be uploaded to the Smarty Grants application form in PDF. The application form provides guidance on details to include in your CV.

Part E: Proposed Budget Components

E1. Budget components

Applicants may request a maximum of \$50,000 AUD (including any applicable fringe benefits taxes as relevant) across the budget component categories outlined in the guidelines. Please note that each budget category has specified budgetary limits. You may request the maximum amount noted in each category. However, you must have a clear need for and an explicit plan to expend the funding you are applying for, including how it will help you regain your research trajectory.

The Total Amount Requested is automatically calculated from the 'Total amount Requested for Category' totals column. Chancellery will match your faculty's co-contribution if your grant application is successful. Please budget for 100% of the

expected funding. That is, if your faculty commits to a total of \$20,000 across all budget categories, you can set out your budget with the expectation that Chancellery will fund an additional \$20,000 (i.e., total budget of \$40,000 for the application).

Fringe Benefits Tax:

Applicants should note some budget categories will attract **Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT)** (see specifications in Section 6.3 of the scheme's guidelines).

Various non-salary benefits are subject to FBT. This includes paying for carers or dependents to travel for work reasons. Note that in cases of business travel for research/work purposes, the staff member's business travel expenses are not subject to FBT; it is only accompanying family members' expenses that are subject to FBT.

FBT is a liability of the employer/University (not employees). The FBT year runs from 1 April to 31 March. For the year ending 31 March 2027, the applicable FBT will be charged to budget units in Q3 of 2027 (i.e., the faculty or budget unit bears the cost). Where DVCR funds are allocated to co-support an FBT component in a RIG grant, the funds will be transferred with the other scheme funds for faculties to administer and manage.

Further information about FBT is available here: https://unimelb.service-now.com/finance?id=kb_article&article=KB0020642

FBT and your RIG application

Where the FBT applies to your grant application, applicants must include an estimation of the FBT sum as this will be considered as part of the grant budget. Please use the **basic FBT calculator** available to download from the following knowledge base article to support your estimation: https://unimelb.service-now.com/finance?id=kb_article&article=KB0020709

FBT should be reflected in the application form by adding the calculated FBT sum to the budget amount requested. For example, if requesting \$4,000 for "career or childcare expenses for research-related travel costs", and the FBT estimator recommends a tax amount of \$3910.78, please enter the sum (\$4000) on the relevant budget component drop-down box in the application form and \$3,910.78 to the Fringe Benefits Tax Request drop-down options (also in the application form). Please note that requesting budget lines, that include FBT, reduces the total funding available since the maximum application request remains \$50,000.

To calculate the FBT payable, a type 1 benefit rate (currently 2.0802) is used where the benefit includes GST and the University is entitled to a GST credit. A type 2 benefit rate (currently 1.8868) is used where the benefit is not subject to GST, or the benefit is subject to GST. However, UOM is not entitled to a GST credit.

Example of a type 1 benefit calculation

Total expense (incl GST):	\$4000
Multiply by gross-up factor:	$\$4000 \times 2.0802 = \$8320.80$
Multiply by the FBT rate:	$\$8320.80 \times 47\%$
FBT payable by the employer/University:	\$3910.78

For FBT related queries, please reach out to the University's Taxation Team by emailing: finance-tax@unimelb.edu.au

Submitting expenses

When staff submit Expense Reports for credit card expenses or cash reimbursements, you should ensure that the description/justification section is clear and detailed, e.g., "Research Impetus Grants scheme - flights for Dr. Smith's children".

Childcare at University premises

Where an applicant is seeking funding for childcare under Category D, an exemption is available for childcare at University childcare facilities as follows:

- Where the University provides childcare to an employee's child on the University's premises, this will be an exempt benefit, and therefore not subject to FBT.
- To utilise this exemption, the fees must be paid for directly via accounts payable or the University's credit card. This arrangement must be organised in advance with the childcare administration team to enable this process. ***It is important to note that the FBT exemption does not apply to UOM childcare fees that are reimbursed to the employees (i.e. incurred personally and paid by the employee).***
- This applies to Swanston Street Children's Centre, Queensberry Children's Centre and The Early Learning Centre in Abbotsford.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

If applicants are concerned that they may have an eligibility issue, they should in the first instance contact their faculty internal grants administrator for advice (contacts are listed on the scheme webpage). If, after reviewing these instructions and FAQs eligibility cannot be confirmed, they should contact RIC via res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au.

Please note that the RIC RDS Team cannot assess you RIG Career Disruption calculations prior to grant submission.

What if my appointment doesn't start until 2027?	You would not be eligible for this scheme if your academic appointment is yet to begin. As per the guidelines, you must be a current academic staff member who has held, for a minimum of six months, a salaried fixed-term or continuing academic appointment. There are also other eligibility requirements in the guidelines. You may wish to apply in a later round of this scheme once you are in your role and meet all other eligibility requirements.
Re eligibility - How do I show prior 6-month UoM employment?	Applicants must be current, salaried staff of at least 0.4FTE employment with the UoM directly (as opposed to a different research institute) <i>at the time of</i>

Does it need to be 6 consecutive months, or can it be cumulative? Is it time limited?	<i>the application</i>. They must also have been employed by UoM for 6 months prior to that. For the purposes of this scheme, 6 months' prior employment is the minimum duration for showing requisite background and connection with the University as an academic staff member. The 6 months of prior appointment can be reached as a <i>cumulative total</i>, including patchy employment extending back in time. That is, the 6-month prior employment does not need to be a single 6-month consecutive period, or 0.4FTE the whole way through, or run directly into the appointment the applicant is now on or be connected in time to the application closing date. Prior employment can be constituted with accumulated casual, fixed term or ongoing employment. In showing they have been UoM staff for an equivalent of six months prior to the closing date, the applicant can calculate this flexibly, on the basis that this scheme is intended to assist promising researchers who have had disrupted research opportunities. In the main RIG application, the onus will be on the applicant to show how they still show strong research potential, relative to opportunity.
Do I need to attach prior contracts or proof of employment conditions?	The RIG application form requires you to enter the dates of your prior employment. You do not need to attach documentation as evidence. Additionally, the Faculty Confirmation Form is an opportunity for you to discuss your previous disruption/s and employment record with the RIG delegate. If the RIG delegate is satisfied that you meet the relevant thresholds (significant disruption/s and 6-month prior employment), this will be accepted by scheme administrators without the need for further evidence to be uploaded. The applicant's RIG delegate or faculty grants officers may ask you for more information if they have any queries about your record.
I am on a fixed term, continuing research contingent or casual appointment, but my contract does not extend into next year (yet). Does this make me ineligible to apply for RIG?	No, it does not necessarily make you ineligible. On the Faculty Confirmation Form, we ask that faculties confirm that the applicant will be employed for a sufficient period of time to complete the grant project. If your fixed-term or continuing research contingent appointment does not cover the duration of your proposed grant application/research activities relevant to the grant application, you can speak to your Head of Department/School to seek their agreement that if your application is successful, your appointment will be maintained over the proposed grant period. If your faculty agrees to extend your contract and if you are awarded the grant to do the research, then you can apply. However, this scheme is not open to applicants on casual employment with the University.

I am employed by an affiliated research institute and have an honorary appointment at UoM. Can I apply?	Honorary staff of the University of Melbourne are not eligible for this scheme. As per the scheme guidelines, this scheme is open to salaried academic staff of the University of Melbourne who meet the eligibility criteria and are based in any of the University of Melbourne's academic divisions (faculties) or in the Melbourne Business School.
If I am successful for a 2026 ECR Grant or ECR Fellowship, can I still apply for RIG?	The Research Impetus Grant may not be <i>concurrently</i> held with a Chancellery-funded ECR Grant or ECR Fellowship (McKenzie, Puzey, or Mary Lugton). Staff who have previously held these grants or fellowships may apply for and hold a RIG but, for equitable allocation of internal research funding, will not be eligible to do so until they have completed or utilised their existing grant/fellowship.
If I currently hold a RIG, can I apply for another one?	You will not be eligible to do so until you have finalised your current RIG by submitting your final report showing expenditure of all funding received. Any repeat applications would need to demonstrate what the initial grant funding support helped you achieve. Additionally, the selection criteria include an assessment of how much support you have already had to recover your career trajectory, so the prior RIG funding would be taken into account.
What if after interruption I adjusted my trajectory to a different direction? (i.e., I'm not trying to recover my old research trajectory?)	Yes, this is a legitimate form of disruption and would not deem you ineligible.
Am I eligible if my employment arrangements allow for less than 40% of research?	You are not eligible if your role while on the Research Impetus Grant will not allow 40% of your workload allocation to research. Note, if your HoD signs your endorsement form, this is an indication they are agreeing that you will have at least 40% workload allocation to research during the RIG grant period, in which case you would be eligible to apply (assuming you meet all other eligibility criteria).
What does demonstration of impact on research trajectory look like? What is the panel looking for specifically?	This can take many forms. Demonstration could be quantitative, for instance you could argue that prior to caring responsibilities you produced three papers per year, and then after assuming caring responsibilities you were not able to produce any papers. Your argument could be qualitative, for instance, you could discuss how you are no longer able to travel due to your disruption and have therefore missed out on key collaboration opportunities. The disruption may also be evident in your publications history but this is not the only factor.
Am I eligible to apply if I have received a grant since my disruption/s?	While you are eligible to apply, your application may be considered less competitive because grant success is an indicator that you have recovered your career trajectory since the interruption.
Can I have salary funding as per the	In 2024 the RIG scheme replaced the Melbourne Research Fellowship (Career

former Melbourne Research Fellowship (Career Interruption) scheme?	Interruptions) which had a CI salary component. However, in the current scheme, salary is not one of the allowable budget items for the RIG scheme. Applicants can apply for limited teaching relief, but not salary. Researchers should direct questions about converting fixed-term contracts to continuing contracts to their School/Faculty or local HR representative.
Why is the Faculty Delegate expected to discuss and confirm the history of disruptions claimed by the applicant?	The Faculty Delegate is asked to verify if the interruption is 'significant' as defined in the scheme guidelines. If there are overlapping or severe aspects of the disruptions that the applicant particularly wishes to raise, this can be briefly mentioned in the 'After the Disruptions' research career trajectory text box in the application form. However, further detail or description is not required.
What if the disruption was very recent?	The applicant's case for why they need support based on the disruptions will be considered by faculty and central ranking committees, who will be seeking to understand the impact of the disruption/s.
Often after an interruption, it might take some time for an interruption to show effects on CVs (because, for example, publications were in the pipeline before the interruption), so the period after the interruption/s may include different phases of impact. How should we describe this if impacts ahead aren't fully known?	We suggest you use the 'details of disruption' boxes in the application form to briefly describe the interruptions and their impact in distinct phases, so it is clear to assessors that a disruption period that occurred earlier actually began impacting at a later period. If you cannot yet identify or quantify the full detrimental extent of the impact of the disruption/s, you can apply and make the case for support, acknowledging that your application may not be as competitive as someone who already can clearly demonstrate the negative impacts of disruption/s.
Why are the eligible disruption days claimed (Column J) in the career disruptions calculator not equal to the number of disruption days claimed for eligibility purposes (Column I)?	For the purposes of assessing eligibility under the Research Impetus Grant (RIG) scheme, disruption days are calculated on an inclusive basis. This means that both the commencement date and the conclusion date of a disruption are counted as disruption days, provided they fall within the scheme's eligibility timeframe. A disruption that occurs on a single calendar day is therefore counted as one (1) day, not zero. This approach ensures that periods of disruption are calculated consistently and accurately, and that applicants are not disadvantaged by short-duration or boundary-date disruptions when total eligible disruption time is assessed. Example An applicant records a disruption with: • Commencement date: 15 March 2023 • Conclusion date: 15 March 2023 As the disruption applies on that calendar day, it is counted as:

	1 eligible disruption day Where a disruption spans multiple days, all days from the commencement date to the conclusion date (inclusive) are counted when calculating total eligible disruption time.
Could this grant be used to support a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning project?	All research fields are relevant, including teaching and learning research. However, the funds cannot be used to improve teaching practices (without any research outcomes).
The application asks: <i>If you are already employed on a research project, please summarise the project and explain the source of funding, your role in the project, and any funding you can access through this role (such as travel funds).</i>	This question is particularly relevant to postdoctoral researchers and research fellows hired on grants. If you are an ongoing academic staff who is not employed on a research project, you can briefly indicate this in your answer. The purpose of this question is to ensure you are applying for this grant for yourself, and not on behalf of a research team or otherwise. This question should be used to demonstrate the context in which the proposed research is taking place. If you are part of a team, we want to understand this context and make sure the funding supports you personally.
Will the costs of FBT be borne by applicants or university?	For budget items in categories a and d (see the scheme guidelines, page 5), Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) applies. Applicants must include this in their application budget (via a drop down in the application form). If awarded, the FBT item will also be shared 50:50 between DVCR and faculty budgets. Further information can be found above in this document.
What sort of research track record do you need to have, prior to career interruption? Is parental leave considered an eligible career interruption?	Prior track record should show you were building a promising research trajectory (relative to opportunities). Parental leave is considered an eligible interruption - see scheme guidelines at 4.5. Note there are other thresholds on the significance/duration of the disruption also stated in the guidelines.
Is working as a casual staff member in the past considered an interruption?	Working in a casual role is not automatically considered an interruption. If the casual role was a 100% research role, then you would not be able to claim interruption. However, if the role was primarily teaching, was part-time, or offered limited or no provision for research, or in other ways meets one of the disruption criteria in the guidelines, then it could be eligible as a disruption.
Can you please explain COVID-19-related interruptions? For example, for most of 2020-2021, user studies with human participants were stopped.	COVID19 lockdowns were experienced by all but we understand that those stoppages had different impacts on different people. The guidelines at 4.7 mention that COVID19 impacts can be referred to as an exacerbating factor, linked to an eligible disruption and your specific circumstances. So, for human participant user studies, you could refer to "Limited or no access to facilities and resources—such as through workplace interruptions or lack of access to facilities" or potentially "employment that offered no provision for research". You need to explain your specific context/impacts.

Are COVID-19 disruptions alone not eligible, and are they only viewed as an exacerbating factor for other eligible disruptions?	COVID19 disruptions can be raised as exacerbating factors in connection with an eligible disruption but are not taken as eligible on their own.
Regarding significant disruptions (Other extraordinary/unanticipated life events), do we need confirmation via RIC if circumstances meet this criterion, or are you comfortable for faculties to make that decision via the endorsement form?	The RIG delegate can determine 'extraordinary/unanticipated life events' at the faculty end, based on their judgement that the event is extraordinary/unanticipated and was a significant disruption, consistent with the scheme purpose. The Faculty Confirmation Form should note (at high level) the nature of the interruption so Chancellery can get a sense of consistency/utility of the stated disruptions for scheme evaluation, and for committee members to broadly understand the applicant's circumstances.
Will this grant also be available next year?	This is an annual researcher development scheme at the University of Melbourne.
Could relocation from another country to Australia and change of research subject be considered as significant disruption?	This needs to be discussed with your faculty RIG delegate. It may be more likely that another listed disruption (such as unemployment for 90+ days) is more relevant. Taken alone, relocation may not be deemed an extraordinary or unanticipated in the context of typical research careers. If you have personal circumstances that further explain why it was disruptive to your research opportunity, you should discuss this with your RIG delegate.
What if I have some other interruption not on the list of eligible reasons?	Applicants should discuss their circumstances with their faculty who may seek guidance from Chancellery about exceptional circumstances.
My current fixed-term or continuing research contingent contract ends in December 2026. While I expect it to be extended, does it make me ineligible?	No, it does not necessarily make you ineligible. On the Faculty Confirmation Form, we ask that faculties confirm that the applicant will be employed for sufficient time to complete the grant project. So, if your faculty agrees to extend your contract and if you are awarded the grant to do the research, then you can apply.