The University of Melbourne and the University of Bonn have supported research collaboration through several initiatives. Through these activities we have recruited over 50 joint PhD candidates and funded six collaborative research projects to date. These initiatives include the Bonn & Melbourne Research and Graduate School in Immunology (est. 2016), the Bonn & Melbourne Research and Graduate School in Decision Neuroscience (est. 2020), and the Bonn-Melbourne Research Excellence Fund (est. 2020).

In 2022, the Universities of Melbourne and Bonn are seeking to expand on these opportunities through a University-wide call for joint PhD projects. Applications are invited, and encouraged, from all faculties and research areas.

Up to six joint PhD projects will be funded across three separate pairs of Principal Investigators (PIs), comprising of one PI from Melbourne and one from Bonn. Each of these PI pairs will receive funding to support two joint PhD candidates, plus additional seed funding to support collaborative activities. Candidates and supervisors will join the established community of the Bonn – Melbourne joint PhD programs, offering opportunities to deepen and enrich their research networks. Additional integration of PhD candidates into the respective research environments at each institution is also expected.

Joint PhD candidates are enrolled at both institutions, perform their research under joint supervision, and are graded according to the academic standards of both institutions. Upon successful completion of the program, each candidate will be eligible to receive a joint PhD, recognised by two testamurs acknowledging the joint nature of the award.

Eligibility criteria

The supervisory team must consist of at least two Principal Investigators (PIs), one from Melbourne and one from Bonn. The PIs must have capacity to serve as primary supervisors for two jointly enrolled PhD candidates.

Previous Bonn Melbourne Research Excellence Fund recipients and applicants are eligible to apply.

Current supervisors of joint PhD candidates in the Bonn and Melbourne Research and Graduate School in Immunology; and/or the pilot cohort of the Bonn and Melbourne Research and Graduate School in Decision Neuroscience are not eligible to apply.

Melbourne academics

Melbourne academics must be registered to supervise as per the Supervisor Eligibility and Registration Policy. The primary supervisors should be employed at Melbourne beyond the envisaged submission date of their PhD candidates (2027). If their employment contract does not extend beyond the submission date, then alternative arrangements must be in place, by either having:

a) A named co-supervisor at Melbourne beyond the envisaged submission date of their PhD candidates (2027); or
b) A letter of support from the respective Head of Department/Head of School detailing the arrangements in place to ensure continuity of supervision.

For more information, including the forms for supervisor registration, please consult the information for supervisors section on the Graduate Research Hub.

Honorary employees whose primary academic affiliation is with the University of Melbourne are eligible to lead an application as a PI if they are a registered Principal Supervisor at Melbourne, and either:

a) Their primary employer has entered into a written agreement for this call to fund the Melbourne cash component of the collaborative activity; or

b) They participate at their own expense if they are otherwise unaffiliated (for example, they hold an emeritus position).

**Bonn academics**

Bonn academics must be authorized to act as primary supervisor for PhD candidates according to the relevant regulations of the respective faculties. The primary supervisors should be employed at Bonn beyond the envisaged submission date of their PhD candidates (2027). If their employment contract does not extend beyond the submission date, then alternative arrangements must be in place, by either having:

a) A named co-supervisor at Bonn beyond the envisaged submission date of their PhD candidates (2027); or

b) A letter of support from the respective Head of Institute, speaker of excellence cluster, or Bonn International Graduate School detailing the arrangements in place to ensure continuity of supervision.

**Additional notes for all applicants**

Additional colleagues (including other partners in Australia, Germany, or internationally) are not eligible to apply as PIs, although they can participate in the co-supervision of joint PhD candidates.

Adherence to respective equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies are a core feature of this program to ensure that all participants can do their best work, thrive and succeed. Applicant teams should consider how they can take meaningful steps in their future collaborations to foster an environment that values, supports and respects a diverse range of views, knowledge and experiences. Applicants should consider EDI including as it applies to gender, indigenous peoples, nationality, disabilities and career stages.

Applicants that do not satisfy these criteria will **not be eligible**.

**Program structure**

Up to **three** proposals will be funded, with each application supporting **two** joint PhD projects. Together the recruited candidates to these projects will form a 2023 cohort of **six** jointly enrolled candidates. The successful PIs will also receive seed funding to support the growth in collaborative activity.
In each proposal pair, one candidate will have Melbourne as their Home institution, and the other will have Bonn as their Home institution. The Home institution is where the candidate will conduct the majority of their research, where they receive their scholarship from, and where they are likely to commence and conclude their degree.

All candidates recruited to the program must meet the minimum eligibility requirements to successfully enroll in the relevant PhD course at both Melbourne and Bonn. Candidates should aim to submit their thesis within three years of commencement – with the possibility of two six-month extensions, upon application, to a maximum of four years. The candidates must also spend at least 12 months at each institution. Time spent at Bonn and Melbourne can be determined depending on the needs of the project, so long as the candidate spends at least 12 months at each institution and the project is designed to be completed within three years.

Funding
An overall summary of the funding provided per proposal is included below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University of Melbourne</th>
<th>University of Bonn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax-free scholarship (stipend) for each Melbourne-based candidate. Refer to the Graduate Research Scholarship page for the full details.</td>
<td>Tax-free scholarship (stipend) of € 1,500 per month for each Bonn-based candidate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition fee remission scholarship or waiver for both Melbourne- and Bonn-based candidates.</td>
<td>There are no tuition fees at Bonn. Melbourne-based candidates receive an additional one-time lump sum of EUR 500 to cover student service fees at Bonn over the course of their PhD candidacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) single membership for any Melbourne-based international candidate who requires a student visa to study in Australia, when in Australia, and travel insurance whilst on Study Away.</td>
<td>OSHC for the duration of research in Australia for any Bonn-based candidates will be covered from the lump sum detailed below.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relocation allowance for all Melbourne-based candidates to commence at Melbourne, up to a maximum of $3,000.</td>
<td>Relocation allowance for all Bonn-based candidates to commence at Bonn, up to a maximum of €1,500 will come from the lump sum detailed below.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| A $20,000 lump sum* to support Melbourne-based candidates and UoM PIs for relevant activities, including**:  
  • Candidate travel  
  • PI travel  
  • Workshop costs or virtual collaboration expenses  
  • Graduate recruitment | A €15,000 lump sum to support Bonn-based candidates and Bonn PIs for relevant activities, including**:  
  • Candidate travel and OSHC  
  • PI travel  
  • Workshop costs or virtual collaboration expenses  
  • Graduate recruitment |
The lump sum provided by Melbourne is pooled and allocated to the Academic Lead of the joint PhD program. The Academic Lead is responsible for distributing the funds to the PIs and Melbourne-based candidates for the uses described.

**Please note that ineligible costs include:** directly incurred staff (e.g. Research Assistants), replacement research/teaching costs, directly allocated costs including applicants’ time, indirect costs/estates costs, publication costs, equipment, consumable costs, scholarships, conference attendance, tuition fees, and honoraria.

**Reporting and other conditions**

**Melbourne academics**

Melbourne recipients will be required to provide regular updates on project progress during the candidate of their joint PhD candidates. These updates will be requested biannually by the Academic Lead of the program. Recipients who fail to participate in regular reporting mechanisms may be found ineligible for participation in future Researcher Development Schemes.

**Bonn academics**

Bonn recipients will be required to provide regular updates on project progress during the candidate of their joint PhD candidates. These updates will be requested annually by the International Office. Recipients who fail to participate in regular reporting mechanisms for this program may be found ineligible for participation in future International Office grant programs.

**Application and submission**

Before preparing a proposal, please note the following about the structure of the program:

- Each pair of PIs should submit one proposal that outlines two joint PhDs projects intended for two joint PhD candidates. These projects can be on a similar research topic or theme, but the candidates cannot rely on each other’s results or completed thesis material to progress in their candidate.
- One project should be for a Melbourne-home candidate and the other for a Bonn-home candidate. Candidates must spend at least 12 months of their candidate at each institution.
- The supervision concept put forward by the PIs should outline the planned integration of PhD candidates into their respective research environments. Bonn-home candidates are expected to be integrated into a Bonn International Graduate School or other structured PhD program at the University of Bonn.
- The joint PhD projects should be designed to be completed within three years, with a maximum duration of four years (one additional year available upon extension request).
- For proposals involving a PI from Melbourne’s Faculty of Arts only: You must also provide a statement addressing how the Melbourne and Bonn home candidates will meet the Melbourne Faculty of Arts PhD coursework requirements in your application. Please refer to the Faculty’s guidelines for additional information. Elements of Bonn’s Faculty of Arts’ structured PhD program or other graduate course offerings at Bonn may offer useful options. It is recommended that the Bonn and Melbourne PIs consult with each other, and contact Melbourne’s Associate Dean (Graduate Research) if any further guidance is required.
The proposal must be submitted via SmartyGrants, including the following parts:

1. Information about the Bonn and Melbourne PIs, including a short CV
2. Nomination of co-supervisors (if applicable)
3. A summary of the Bonn-home and Melbourne-home projects, including:
   a. A 250-word abstract, to be used for candidate recruitment if the proposal is successful. This abstract will be published online to advertise the project to prospective joint PhD candidates, so it should be written in lay terms.
   b. A project timeline, outlining the proposed periods of research at Bonn and Melbourne.
4. Responses to the selection criteria below:
   a. Project design and rationale
   b. Potential impact
   c. Collaborator complementarity
   d. Supervision concept
   e. Capacity for expanded collaboration
5. Endorsement for the Melbourne applicant from their Head of School/Department and Faculty Associate Dean (Graduate Research).

It is recommended that the proposal is written in lay terms for reviewers to better understand the project’s potential impact and anticipated outcomes.


Evaluation

The proposals will be ranked in order of meeting the selection criteria. Melbourne and Bonn will select up to three proposals (equivalent to six joint PhD projects) for funding.

The following selection criteria apply:

- **Project design and rationale** – How clearly presented and justified is the basis for, and design of, the joint PhD projects? What are the anticipated benefits of involving joint PhD researchers in the collaboration? What is the benefit of the candidate spending a minimum of 12 months at each institution?
- **Potential impact** – What is the level of originality and innovation in the research proposal? To what extent does the research proposal plan to address significant challenges and what is the anticipated benefit to local or international communities?
- **Collaborator complementarity** – What is the evidence of an existing research relationship, or added value of a new collaboration? How does the collaboration combine mutual areas of interest and strength?
- **Quality of supervision** – How will the PIs work together effectively when jointly supervising their PhD candidates? How will PhD candidates be integrated into the research environment at each university? What are the beneficial learning outcomes and experiences for the joint PhD candidates? Have the PIs accounted for any challenges that may arise when supervising a joint PhD candidate?
• **Capacity for expanded collaboration** – What is the extent of the planned collaboration between the PIs beyond joint supervision? How well does the proposal plan to leverage external funding? To what extent are future collaborations made possible as a result of the proposed activities? How could this project seed the development of a larger network of researchers?

Successful recipients will be formally notified of the award and informed of funding conditions.

**Key dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call for joint PhD project proposals opens</td>
<td>12 May 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Call for proposals closes</td>
<td>19 September 2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outcome notifications and start of recruitment</td>
<td>Mid-November 2022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruited joint PhD candidates commence</td>
<td>By July 2023 (Bonn-home candidates) and November 2023 (Melbourne-home candidates)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PIs must successfully recruit two joint candidates by 30 June 2023 (even if the candidates will not commence until later in 2023). If the PIs do not meet this deadline, the scholarships and seed funding will be recalled.

Applications will close at **7AM CET/ 3PM AEST on 19 September 2022**. PIs must submit one, jointly prepared proposal in English via SmartyGrants: https://ricunimelb.smartygrants.com.au/BonnPhD2022.

**Contacts**

_Melbourne academics_

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