Research Infrastructure Investment Fund (RIIF) Collaborative Equipment Grant (CEG) 2023 Funding Rules

1. Definitions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>DVC (Research)</th>
<th>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>‘Equipment’ refers to research equipment of a collaborative nature. This does not include capital costs, standard laboratory fixtures (i.e., fume hoods or biological safety cabinets) or costs associated with subscription-based access to research infrastructure or software. One-off software purchasing costs may be considered eligible for funding.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCRIP</td>
<td>Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Program</td>
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<td>RIIF</td>
<td>Research Infrastructure Investment Fund</td>
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<td>University</td>
<td>University of Melbourne</td>
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2. Introduction
Research infrastructure is a ubiquitous enabling resource that contributes to the competitive positioning of the University. The University currently hosts 25 individual Research Platforms spanning the full spectrum of the University’s research efforts. However, a significant amount of 'workhorse' research infrastructure across the University is not of critical mass to warrant a platform model of operation but is an important element of the University’s research endeavour. A replacement mechanism for this equipment is required to maintain business continuity and ensure competitive advantage. There are considerable restrictions placed on national pools of funds that allow for capital expenditure on research infrastructure. ARC Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) grant applications, for example, are primarily intended to support technologies considered cutting-edge in their field, are high-end (between $150,000 and $2,000,000 in value) and are the focal point of significant (external) collaborative activity. This scheme supports the purchase or refresh of technology outside of national competitive infrastructure grant funding.

3. Scheme Objective
The Research Infrastructure Investment Fund (RIIF) Collaborative Equipment Grant (CEG) Scheme provides funding for research equipment that cannot feasibly be acquired through national funding that supports the purchase of cutting-edge and the replacement, repairment, or upgrading of ageing research infrastructure of critical mass. Aligning with principles of the Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Program (MCRIP), the RIIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme aims to support infrastructure purchases that address the needs of more than a single research group and impact multiple areas of the University.

4. Enquiries
Researchers requiring assistance should direct their enquiries to members of the Research Infrastructure Team (Research, Innovation & Commercialisation) via ric-researchinfrastructure@unimelb.edu.au.

5. Eligibility requirements
5.1. A minimum cash co-investment from a Department, School or Faculty of the University of 25% of the total purchase price of the requested equipment. This co-investment must not be sourced from MCRIP funds awarded to Research Platforms.
5.2. The purchase price of the requested equipment is expected to be greater than $100,000; however, there will be due consideration for either of the following:
   5.2.1. The differing needs of research disciplines should smaller requests be forthcoming. Such requests must provide a clear discipline-specific rationale for not meeting the minimum threshold.
   5.2.2. One-off software purchase with a minimum of $50,000. A clear rationale for purchasing the software and evidence of a one-off cost associated with this purchase need to be provided. Any subsequent costs associated with the one-off software purchase (i.e., upgrades and other trailing fees) will need to be
provisioned as an in-kind contribution with the funding source articulated in the application. Subscription-based access to the software will not be supported.

5.3. The application must be deemed to pass the Collaborative Test (Appendix A).

5.4. Cash co-investments may be sourced from the sale of obsolete or superseded instrumentation, provided that additional co-investments totalling a minimum of 15% of the total purchase price of the requested instrument are sourced from a Department, School or Faculty of the University.

5.5. The applicant may be an individual researcher, a group of researchers, a Platform Manager, or members of a Steering Committee of an existing Research Platform. The lead applicant must hold a 0.5 FTE salaried appointment (or greater) at the University of Melbourne at the time of the award. The track record of the applicant is not used as a selection criterion, and early/mid-career researchers, Platform Managers, professional staff members and female applicants are particularly encouraged to apply.

5.6. The RIIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme will not normally support equipment purchases that are eligible and competitive for funding through the Australian Research Council’s Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) annual grant round. Equipment associated with previously unsuccessful LIEF applications may be considered for funding.

5.7. Applications comprising requests for multiple components may be considered if there is a satisfactory demonstration that the components are integrated into a single capability.

5.8. Medical Research Institute (MRI)-based researchers are ineligible to lead a RIIF Collaborative Equipment Grant application (but may be coinvestigators), and equipment cannot be located within an MRI-based department.

5.9. Consideration for funding under Ageing Critical Research Infrastructure will be determined by the applicant’s requested equipment type (i.e., “new piece of equipment” or “replacing, repairing, or upgrading” equipment (question 6.1 on the application form)).

6. **Funding**

The total pool of funds for the 2023 RIIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme is $1,000,000. Funds awarded may be used to purchase equipment but not for technical support, service, maintenance or other operating costs.

In addition to this annual investment, and as signalled in the [2022-2025 Research Infrastructure Ecosystem Roadmap](#), there will be an additional $1,000,000 investment in Ageing Critical Research Infrastructure towards replacing, repairing or upgrading critically ageing infrastructure.

7. **Researcher Responsibilities**

Applicants are required to:
- Liaise with Departments, Schools and Faculties to secure cash co-investments, letters of support and a suitable location for the requested equipment.
- Consult with Platform Managers and/or Steering Committees and obtain endorsement for locating requested equipment within a Research Platform at least two weeks prior to the application closing date.
- Complete due diligence to ensure the specific equipment or equipment with a similar function is not currently available within the existing Research Platforms (MCRIP funded or otherwise) at the University.
- Work with RIC Research Infrastructure to ensure that the funding is spent within the required time frame on the equipment requested in the applications (should funding be awarded).
- Researchers should engage with University Procurement Services to seek assistance with negotiations for reasonable pricing and purchasing terms and conditions. It is strongly advised that quotations should be in AUD.
- Comply with the University [Procurement Policy (MPF1087)](#) policy whereby equipment valued over $400,000 must proceed through Procurement Services and the University Procurement Review Board.
8. Submitting an application
It is recommended that applications are developed with guidance from staff in Research Infrastructure (Chancellery Research & Enterprise). Completed applications should be submitted to SmartyGrants by 9 am on Monday, July 3rd, 2023, for consideration. No hard copies are required.

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<tr>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Applications open</td>
<td>Thursday, May 18th 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Applications close</td>
<td>Monday, July 3rd 2023, by 9 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notification of outcome</td>
<td>Friday, August 18th 2023</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquittal of Funds</td>
<td>Monday, December 18th 2023 (pending confirmation of year-end calendar)</td>
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9. Assessment process
Evaluation of applications based on eligibility and merit will be undertaken by a panel appointed by the DVC (Research) or a delegate. The Evaluation Panel will comprise senior members of the University who have oversight of research infrastructure matters with relevant expertise and experience in evaluating grant schemes. Merit will be assessed based on the need and use of the infrastructure, age of infrastructure (if applying to replace, repair or upgrade research infrastructure), evidence of collaboration, level of cash co-investment and impact on the University’s research capability, quality and output. The recommendations of the Evaluation Panel will be presented to the DVC (Research) for approval. The Research Infrastructure Team will communicate the outcomes to applicants following DVC (Research) approval.

10. Resources
The following resources are available in the Supporting Documents Section of the RIIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme website:

- Funding Rules (this document)
- Online application form available via SmartyGrants from May 18th, 2023
- Instructions to Applicants (this document should be read in conjunction with the Funding Rules prior to completing the application in SmartyGrants)
- Frequently Asked Questions (if you have a question, please check the FAQs before contacting the RIC Research Infrastructure team)
- Co-Investment Approval Form
11. Appendix A: RIIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme Collaborative Test

Is the equipment going into an existing Research Platform?

Yes

Are the cash co-investment independent of MCRIP investment in Research Platform support staff?

Yes - The application passes the collaborative test.

No - Cash co-investment must be sourced as per the Funding Rules.

No

Does the application carry cash co-investment by more than one UoM Faculty or Department?

No

Can a case be made for multiple UoM research groups needing the proposed equipment?

No - The request does not pass the collaborative test

Yes - The application passes the collaborative test