



Research Initiatives Fund (RIF) Collaborative Equipment Grant 2022 Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do I apply?

Applications for the 2022 RIF CEG round will be administered through SmartyGrants. The link to this can be found on [Research Initiatives Fund \(RIF\) Collaborative Equipment Grant \(CEG\) Webpage](#). Clear instructions on starting, saving and submitting applications can be found on the landing page of SmartyGrants and in the guide that can be downloaded.

2. How do I provide evidence of co-investment?

Download the "Co-Investment Approval Form", found on the [RIF CEG webpage](#). Complete the form and get the required signatures for approval and upload the form when prompted to do so within the SmartyGrants application form. Please forward the signed copy to your [Academic Division research contacts](#).

3. Can I put in an application for a software purchase?

Yes, but only if it is a one-off purchase with a minimum threshold of \$50,000. Clear rationale for the purchase of the software and evidence of a one-off cost associated with this purchase, needs to be provided. Any subsequent costs associated with the one-off software purchase (i.e upgrades, support and other trailing costs) will need to be provisioned for as an in-kind contribution with the funding source articulated in the application. Subscription-based access to software will not be supported.

4. The guidelines state that the primary applicant must hold a 0.5FTE salaried appointment within the University; is the appointment required to be continuing?

No. The primary applicant may be employed on a fixed-term contract, as long as they have a 0.5FTE salaried appointment at the time of award.

5. Can a researcher of any level apply? Should I ask a senior academic to lead my proposal? What if I am from a HASS disciplines?

There is no restriction on the level of appointment of the lead or associate applicants in this scheme. Early/mid-career researchers, Platform Managers, staff from HASS disciplines, professional staff members and female applicants are particularly encouraged to apply. Assessment is not made based on the track record of listed applicants.

6. Should I seek to obtain letters of support from potential users or other departments?

Letters of support that describe the value and importance of the equipment and make an argument for funding are useful. Applicants may attach a maximum of three letters of support to their applications.

7. The LIEF grant I applied for last year was unsuccessful. Can I apply for the same or similar equipment through the RIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme?

Yes, you may apply for support through the RIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme for purchase of the same or similar equipment as that proposed in an unsuccessful LIEF award; however, the request will be considered in the context of potential reapplication through the ARC LIEF scheme. There is opportunity within the RIF application form to articulate why the equipment is unlikely to be successful through LIEF reapplication.

8. The equipment I am requesting is not going into an established University platform. Is it still considered eligible?

Aligning with principles of the [Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Program \(MCRIP\)](#) the RIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme aims to support equipment purchases of a collaborative nature; that is, have impact beyond, and support more than one research group. While platforms represent an established mechanism for collaborative equipment access within the University, applications for equipment to be located

outside of a platform may still be considered eligible provided the collaborative nature is demonstrable. The 'collaborative test' within the Funding Rules (Appendix A) should be used to ascertain whether the proposed equipment meets the collaborative requirements of the scheme.

For equipment that is to be located within a platform, the Platform Manager must be contacted no later than two weeks before the application deadline to allow time for consideration by the Platform Steering Committee. Platform Managers and Steering Committees reserve the right to decline offers to manage equipment procured through this scheme.

Applicants are encouraged to contact [RIC Research Infrastructure](#) during application development to discuss eligibility.

9. I need to upgrade a piece of existing equipment. Can I apply for the cost of this upgrade through the RIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme?

Yes, upgrades to existing equipment will be considered for funding provided other eligibility criteria for the scheme are met (i.e. the value of the upgrade exceeds the \$100,000 threshold and the integrated equipment passes the 'collaborative test').

10. Can I pool equipment items to meet the \$100,000 minimum threshold?

The total request may comprise of multiple components provided that they are fully integrated. An acceptable example may include a request for imaging equipment with multiple interchangeable lenses and filters, and collection/dispensing modules. Requests that, for the purpose of meeting the minimum value threshold, comprise collections of standalone equipment are not eligible for funding through the RIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme.

11. Can I include extended warranty in the purchase price in order to meet the \$100,000 minimum threshold?

Applicants are recommended to engage with Commercial Services in seeking assistance with the negotiation of competitive pricing and inclusion of extended warranty (three-year) as part of quotation package. Other operational costs may not be included in the equipment request.

12. If the proposed equipment is to be used by two different research groups within one department, is it deemed to have passed the 'collaborative test'?

Equipment requests intended to support multiple user groups and that carry investment from multiple Academic Divisions will be viewed more favourably compared to single department requests. However, if a case can be made for a strong user base over multiple research groups within the one department, the request may be considered eligible for support.

13. My Academic Division/School/Department has made a cash contribution to the platform in which the equipment will be located via MCRIP. Can this be counted as a cash co-investment?

No. Co-contributions for MCRIP fund the salaries of platform support staff, not equipment. Co-investments of funds must be independent of MCRIP investments.

14. Will cash investment from non-University of Melbourne research groups and MRI-based research groups be considered as contributing to the (minimum) 25% co-investment threshold?

Yes. Investment from precinct partners is encouraged.

15. Are non-University of Melbourne research groups and MRI-based research groups counted in the 'collaborative test'?

While precinct engagement is encouraged, the 'collaborative test' is only deemed to be passed if multiple University of Melbourne research groups have identified the need for and intend to use the proposed equipment.

16. Are all groups listed on the application expected to contribute to the cash co-investment?

While not prescriptive, cash co-investment from all user groups is encouraged and is a strong signal of need for the equipment. A minimum cash co-investment of 25% of the total cost of equipment, from multiple groups, is expected.

17. I have not been able to obtain current quotes from the supplier. Can I submit an application without these?

No. The submitted application must include current quotes for the proposed equipment purchase from the preferred supplier.

18. Will my application be considered less competitive if a platform manager or early career researcher led the bid?

No. Applications are evaluated on how the equipment will contribute to research-teaching capability at the University and collaborative merits. ECRs and platform managers are encouraged to lead applications if they bring relevant expertise to the application.