



# Research Initiatives Fund (RIF) Collaborative Equipment Grant

## 2022 Funding Rules

### 1. Definitions

Table 1 RIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Definition of Terms

DVC (Research)	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
Equipment	'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.
MCRIP	Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Program
RIF	Research Initiatives Fund
University	University of Melbourne

### 2. Introduction

Research infrastructure is a ubiquitous enabling resource that contributes to the competitive positioning of the University. The University currently hosts 23 individual platforms spanning the full spectrum of the University's research efforts. However, there is a significant amount of 'workhorse' research infrastructure across the University that is not of critical mass to warrant a platform model of operation but is an important element of the University's research endeavour. In order to maintain business continuity and ensure competitive advantage, a replacement mechanism for this equipment is required. 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 provides support for the purchase or refresh of technology outside of national competitive infrastructure grant funding.

### 3. Scheme Objective

The Research Initiatives Fund (RIF) Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme provides funding for research equipment that cannot feasibly be acquired through national funding that supports cutting-edge infrastructure of critical mass. Aligning with principles of the Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Program (MCRIP), the RIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme aims to support equipment purchases that addresses the needs of more than a single research group and has impact across multiple areas of the University.

### 4. Enquiries

Researchers requiring assistance should direct their enquiries to members of Research Infrastructure team (Research, Innovation and Commercialisation) via [ric-researchinfrastructure@unimelb.edu.au](mailto: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 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. Clear rationale for the purchase of 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 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.

- 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 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 RIF 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 of requests for multiple components may be considered if there is satisfactory demonstration that the components are integrated to a single capability.
- 5.8. Medical Research Institute (MRI)-based researchers are ineligible to lead a RIF Collaborative Equipment Grant application (but may be coinvestigators) and equipment cannot be located within a MRI-based department.

## 6. Funding

The total pool of funds for the 2022 RIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme is \$800,000.

Funds awarded may be used for the purchase of equipment but not for technical support, service, maintenance or other operating costs.

## 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 Commercial Services to seek assistance with negotiations for good 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 in excess of \$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 (Research, Innovation and Commercialisation). Completed applications should be submitted to SmartyGrants **by 9am on Monday July 18<sup>th</sup> 2022** for consideration. No hard copies are required.

*Table 2 RIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Critical Dates*

Milestone	
Applications open	Wednesday June 1 <sup>st</sup> 2022
Applications close	Monday July 18 <sup>th</sup> 2022 by 9am
Notification of outcome	Friday September 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2022
Acquittal of Funds	Monday December 19 <sup>th</sup> 2022 (pending confirmation of year end calendar)

## 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 of 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 on the basis of need and use of the 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 Lead will communicate the outcomes to applicants following DVC (Research) approval.

## 10. Resources

The following resources are available in the Supporting Documents Section of the [RIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme website](#):

- Funding Rules (this document)
- Online application form available via SmartyGrants from June 1<sup>st</sup> 2022
- 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: RIF Collaborative Equipment Grant Scheme Collaborative Test

