



1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowships are a leading institutional researcher development scheme. In supporting the University of Melbourne's outstanding postdoctoral researchers during a pivotal early career stage, the scheme contributes to the ambitions of our [Advancing Melbourne](#) strategy to place the University of Melbourne at the leading edge of discovery, understanding and impact through research.
- 1.2 Launched as an initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowships scheme provides career development and research support for early career researchers across the University.
- 1.3 Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowships are available to University of Melbourne PhD graduates and academic staff currently employed at the University of Melbourne (fixed-term or casual) who may have graduated with a PhD from another university.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objectives of the 2024 Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowships scheme are to:
 - Attract and retain talented recent doctoral graduates from the University of Melbourne in areas that are a research priority for the University;
 - Retain researchers who have the potential to build and lead interdisciplinary collaborative research activities inside and across Faculties; and
 - Promote research that aligns with institutional research strategies and research priorities in Faculties.

3 FELLOWSHIP FUNDING AND APPOINTMENT STRUCTURE

- 3.1 Jointly funded by DVCR strategic funding and Faculties, each Fellowship will be awarded to commence at Academic Level A6 in the University Salary Band (plus oncosts and superannuation) as per the terms and conditions of employment set out in the applicable University of Melbourne enterprise agreement. Salary funding for each Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowship is split 2:1 (DVCR:Faculty). DVCR strategic funds will also fund an additional single allocation of \$25,000 for the Fellow's research project costs over the full term of the Fellowship.
- 3.2 The default term of the Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowships is for three years (at 1.0FTE) of research focused activity.

- 3.3 *[These guidelines were updated on 27 September 2023 to remove reference to a possible fourth year, as this option is no longer available].*
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- 3.5 DVCR strategic funding for this scheme does not cover visa or relocation expenses for Fellows.
- 3.6 Where a Faculty cannot identify an eligible, competitive and ranked applicant from their Faculty, then a Fellowship will be available for award to an overall top ranked competitive applicant from any of the other Faculties. This selection will be made by the Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowship Selection Committee and be subject to the relevant Faculty agreeing to contribute the requisite salary contribution.

4 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

- 4.1 This scheme is open to recent PhD graduates from the University of Melbourne, or casual/fixed term early career academic staff currently employed by the University of Melbourne. Applicants must have graduated or have met the requirements to graduate with a PhD from the University of Melbourne; or, where they are current (fixed term or casual) employees of the University of Melbourne, applicants must have graduated or have met the requirements to graduate with a PhD from the University of Melbourne or another university.
- 4.2 Applicants must have been awarded¹ their PhD within the following timeframe:
- a) Between 1 November 2020 and the full application due date;
or
 - b) On or after 1 November 2018 and had a period of significant research career interruption between 1 November 2018 and the full application due date.
- 4.3 The University recognises that significant interruptions relating to career and/or life experiences may affect a researcher's capacity, productivity, or contribution. The University recognises that the impact of any interruption may extend beyond the duration of a specific event, and the full extent of any interruption, reflecting individual circumstances, can be included for consideration by the Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowships Selection Committee. Interruptions can include, but are not limited to:

¹ The date of the award is the date of the official notification letter. For applicants attending institutions where no such letter is provided, equivalent evidence that they have graduated or have completed all the required steps to be eligible to graduate with a PhD must be provided on request.

- a) Unemployment,
- b) Non-research employment,
- c) Limited or no access to facilities and resources, such as through workplace interruptions,
- d) Disaster management and recovery,
- e) Misadventure,
- f) Medical conditions,
- g) Disability,
- h) Caring and parental responsibilities, and
- i) Community obligations, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and protocols.

Where the COVID-19 pandemic compounded the impact of the constraint or interruption this can be documented as a contributing factor. Applicants should note that accepting applicants' eligibility *with demonstrated career interruption* under this section is at the determination of the Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowships Selection Committee.

Applicants who fit this criterion must indicate this in Part B3 of the Application Form and answer the additional question that appears.

- 4.4 Applicants must be able to commence their fellowship from 1 January 2024 and no later than 31 March 2024. Where applicants have a current contract with the University of Melbourne that extends beyond 31 March 2024, the Fellowship starting date will be negotiated separately and ordinarily must be commenced by 30 June 2024.
- 4.5 A researcher may only ever be awarded one Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowship.
- 4.6 Applicants to this scheme cannot apply for the McKenzie Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme in the same year.
- 4.7 Applicants must not have been awarded a competitively funded research fellowship² from any institution since the award of their PhD.

Eligibility Exemption Request

- 4.8 In addition to the eligibility requirements above, an Eligibility Exemption Request (EER) may be submitted to obtain eligibility through exemption request if:
 - a) The applicant's PhD was awarded between 1 November 2012 and 31 October 2018 and there are exceptional circumstances; or
 - b) The applicant has another candidate eligibility issue due to exceptional circumstances.

² A competitively funded research fellowship provides funding for a researcher's salary to pursue their own independent research for at least 12 months full time equivalent. Awards that are titled or described as 'fellowships', but fund only non-salary costs, are not deemed fellowships under this rule.

4.9 If submitting an EER, applicants must make a compelling argument by submitting an Eligibility Exemption Request form which is separate to the application form, as to why the exemption request should be approved. Submission of an EER does not guarantee an exemption and is at the determination of the EER Committee chaired by the DVCR's delegate. (Please see Section 6.3 of this document for further information on submitting an EER).

5 APPLICATION FORM REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Applicants can only submit one application to the 2024 Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme.

5.2 The Application Form consists of 6 parts:

- Part A: Administrative Summary
- Part B: Education and Appointment Details (including EER/career interruptions)
- Part C: Project Description
- Part D: Proposed Budget
- Part E: Curriculum Vitae and Research Outputs
- Part F: Referees and Declaration

5.3 All questions must be answered or marked 'not applicable'. No sections of the Application Form are to be left blank. Ineligible or incomplete applications will be excluded and not considered by the Committees.

5.4 The application must be written in English and must comply strictly with the format and submission requirements. Applications submitted will not be checked by RIC for completeness or eligibility prior to final lodgement; this is the responsibility of the applicant.

5.5 The application must contain all the information necessary for assessment of the project without the need for explanation or reference to further documentation, including reference to external websites.

5.6 As applications are reviewed by a multi-disciplinary committee, applicants should ensure that their application, including the project description, is clearly written and accessible to an expert in another discipline.

6 APPLICATION PROCESS

6.1 Applicants should review the administrative contact details and any specific requirements of their proposed host Faculty under the 'How to Apply' section of the [scheme website](#).

6.2 All applicants must establish an Academic Contact at the University of Melbourne and the Academic Contact must be listed in Part A2 of the Application Form. Applicants should use the University's [Find an Expert](#) search tool to find academics in their field and liaise with the relevant Faculty administrative contact on how best to connect with academic staff members.

- 6.3 Applicants who have an approved EER must indicate this in Part A of the Application Form. All EERs must be submitted using the EER Form via SmartyGrants and be received by RIC by **3pm (AEST) Monday 15 May 2023**. The link to the EER Form will be published on the scheme webpage.
- 6.4 Outcomes of EERs will be provided to applicants by Friday 2 June 2023. Where an EER has been approved, prospective applicants will be invited to submit a full application by the closing date.
- 6.5 Applications are to be completed via the University of Melbourne's SmartyGrants Portal. The link to the application form will be published on [the scheme webpage](#). Applications close at **3pm (AEST) Monday 26 June 2023**.
- 6.6 Each application must be supported by the relevant host Head of School/Department. The certification is managed at the School/Faculty level. Once your prospective host department is aware that you will be applying to the scheme, they can arrange to certify their support of your application.
- Applicants must ask two referees to each complete a reference letter as a written testimonial to be submitted in their application. Referees are requested to address the following points:
- Relationship with applicant (in what capacity they know the applicant and how long),
 - Comment on the quality of their research outputs (within the context of the discipline),
 - Comment on their overall achievements relative to their opportunities.
- 6.8 The referees must submit the written testimonial via email to the address below by no later than **3pm (AEST) Monday 26 June 2023**.
- Email: res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au
Subject: Confidential Report – SURNAME OF APPLICANT

7 BUDGET ITEMS

Research budget items supported under the Fellowship.

- 7.1 Items that directly support the research program may be funded, including:
- a) Personnel,
 - b) Relief from other duties,
 - c) Equipment,
 - d) Maintenance,
 - e) Travel,
 - f) Other.

Research budget items not supported under the Fellowship.

- 7.2 Funds will not be provided for the following purposes:

- a) Fees for international students or Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) or Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) liabilities.
- b) Funding for postgraduate studies.
- c) Costs not directly related to research or the project.
- d) Funds that duplicate or supplement another current internal University grant, external grant, or research contract.
- e) Non-specialist equipment available readily to University staff through Faculties, such as desktop computers or laptops;
- f) Salaries for research collaborator(s). This does not include salaries for research support staff or technical support staff.
- g) Article Processing Charges, Chapter Processing Charges or Book Processing Charges (APCs, CPCs or BPCs – sometimes called open access fees) to make a work openly accessible where the University already has an institutional subscription to the journal (hybrid journals) or Read and Publish agreement with the publisher. Researchers who wish to publish in subscription journals can make their work openly accessible through the deposit of a copy of their work in the institutional repository, Minerva Access. Applicants are also encouraged to take advantage of the University's Research and Publish agreements to support. Applicants should contact their local liaison librarians for further advice.
- h) Society membership fees.
- i) Visa or relocation expenses.

8 SELECTION CRITERIA

8.1 All applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

a) Proposed Research Project (40%)

This includes its appropriateness to the area in which it would be located; feasibility; anticipated project outcomes; and contribution to the creation of strong opportunities for the fellow to gain further externally funded fellowships or academic employment.

Note on research that proposes to engage with Indigenous knowledge, people or communities; applicants should take account of the advice provided by the [AITSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research](#) and the [NHMRC Ethical guidelines for research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples](#).

b) Track Record (40%)

This includes an evaluation of the research experience and publication record of the applicant relative to opportunity, as well as the relationship between the research proposed and existing research in their discipline.

c) Strategic alignment with University and faculty research priorities (20%)

This includes how their proposed research will contribute to strategic research directions and how it will foster broader collaboration and linkages in the University of Melbourne.

9 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 A panel of senior researchers in each Faculty will review and rank all applications that nominate their Faculty as the proposed host of the Fellowship. Each application that is supported must include confirmation of co-investment from the Faculty for Fellowship salary.
- 9.2 Applications ranked by the Faculties will be reviewed on a competitive basis by the Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowship Selection Committee comprising senior members of the University research community and chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Capability) or other as nominated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). The Faculty rankings of their candidates is provided as non-determinative advice to the Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowships Selection Committee. This University level selection committee assesses the full range of ranked applications with reference to scheme objectives and selection criteria, and recommends a final ranking of all applicants.
- 9.3 Application and assessment of applications should align with the [University's Diversity and Inclusion strategy](#) and underpinning principles.

10 TIMETABLE

Thursday 6 April 2023	Release of Scheme Guidelines and application portal.
Monday 15 May 2023, 3pm	Eligibility Exemption Requests submitted via SmartyGrants
Friday 2 June 2023	RIC to provide outcomes of Eligibility Exemption Requests
Monday 26 June 2023, 3pm	Completed applications to be submitted via SmartyGrants.
	Referees to email completed written testimonials to res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au
End of September 2023	Notification of results to Faculties
October 2023	Outcomes announced and successful applicants notified. Successful applicants should discuss their contract, start date, and visa (if applicable) with their respective faculties (contact the Faculty Research Managers [FRM]). Awardees are to return the signed acceptance form to res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au (coordinate with FRMs for the required Head of Department/School signature) Successful applicants should discuss their contract, start date, and visa (if applicable) with their respective faculties (contact the Faculty Research Managers [FRM]). Awardees are to return the signed acceptance form to res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au (coordinate with FRMs for the required Head of Department/School signature)
October-December 2023	Faculties to issue formal offer letters and employment contracts
End of January 2023	Funds made available to Faculties

1 January – 31 March 2024	Successful applicants must commence their Fellowship. (Except where individual arrangements are reached.)
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11 EMPLOYMENT AND FUNDING CONDITIONS

Funding expectations

- 11.1 Applicants who are successful in being awarded a Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowship cannot apply for any other University of Melbourne Researcher Development Schemes while holding the Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowship appointment.
- 11.2 An applicant may only ever be awarded one Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowship.
- 11.3 To accept the appointment, successful Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowship applicants must complete and/or acquit any other University of Melbourne Researcher Development Scheme (institutional) funds they are holding at the time of the fellowship offer.
- 11.4 Funding is contingent upon achieving satisfactory performance in the annual academic performance review meetings. Funding will be provided to the host Faculty as an annual transfer, with the Fellowship itself to be managed via the relevant department/school. A final report should be submitted by the Fellow to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Capability) via RIC.
- 11.5 Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellows will be employed by the University of Melbourne and be responsible to their host Faculty. Once accepted, Fellowships are transferred to the host Faculty and any further questions relating to funding opportunities or reimbursement need to be taken up with the host Faculty. Any additional requests for reimbursement that do not form part of this Program should be referred to the host Faculty.
- 11.6 Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellows who apply for, and are successful in gaining, externally-funded fellowships prior to the end of the appointment of the Fellowship can retain any balance of the \$25,000 project costs if the Fellow remains at the University of Melbourne for the externally funded fellowship. The salary component of the Fellowship will cease.
- 11.7 Otherwise, any salary or project funds remaining at the cessation and or completion of the Fellowship may be recovered by the relevant contributing unit (i.e. Chancellery Research and Enterprise, or Faculty).

Appointment structure and length of fellowship, and variations

- 11.8 Fellows must take up the Fellowship no later than 31 March 2024. The Head of Department or School must approve the commencement date.

- 11.9 Fellows will report to their Head of School or nominee as part of their annual performance review process.
- 11.10 The Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowship is, as default, a three-year research focused appointment (1.0FTE).
- 11.11 The Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellowship may be held by a full-time or part-time research employee (ordinarily no less than 0.8FTE) of the University, but cannot be held in conjunction with any other University of Melbourne appointments, outside work or remuneration that imposes commitments that conflict with the Fellowship. Requests for part-time appointment of less than 0.8FTE will be considered on case-by-case basis through request via RIC, and will be assessed in line with scheme objectives and the University's workplace policies and entitlements under enterprise bargaining.
- 11.12 *[These guidelines were updated on 27 September 2023 to remove reference to a possible fourth year, as this option is no longer available].*
- 11.13 Permission to vary the Fellowship time fraction in any way other than described above is only approved where exceptional circumstances apply and on case-by-case request to Chancellery Research and Enterprise (via RIC).
- 11.14 It is the intent of the scheme that Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellows will actively contribute to collaboration and research building in the University. Fellows cannot spend more than six months of the duration of the Fellowship overseas and/or away from the University of Melbourne except where extensive fieldwork is required for the purposes of the research and only with the explicit prior approval of their Head of Department/School. Fellows should refer requests to work on their research away from the University to their Head of Department/School and provide information on this in their annual report.
- 11.15 Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellows must be employed through a Department/School of the University of Melbourne upon commencement of the Fellowship.
- 11.16 Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellows cannot be directly employed by an affiliated medical research institute or nonmedical affiliated institute and should not work full-time in affiliated institutes while holding the Fellowship.

Supports and resources

- 11.17 To support their work, Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellows are provided access to a suite of specific researcher development workshops, seminars and early career researcher supports offered by the University's Researcher Development Unit.
- 11.18 The \$25,000 project funding is intended to support core project costs that are not otherwise provided by Faculties or the University (see Budget Items – Part 7).
- 11.19 Academic Contacts nominated in the application are expected to be a regular point of contact at the University of Melbourne, and to either provide informal mentoring to the successful Fellow throughout the period of their Fellowships, or nominate an appropriate mentor.

Visas and relocation expenses

- 11.20 If necessary, it is the responsibility of the awarded Melbourne Postdoctoral Fellows to apply for and satisfy the requirements for the issue of an appropriate entry visa to Australia, and to maintain their eligibility throughout the Melbourne Fellowship period. Fellows will be able to access the University's Talent Acquisition team and Human Resources support for guidance through the visa process.
- 11.21 The offer of a Fellowship does not guarantee that a visa will be granted, and any offer of funding or employment is conditional upon the Fellow gaining an appropriate visa. Where there are delays in securing visas, the host Faculty needs to be kept informed of developments by the Fellow. Ordinarily, Fellowship offers and approved variations are valid for one year only and after that time may be rescinded, unless there are exceptional circumstances approved by Chancellery.
- 11.22 Any costs associated with obtaining the visa and any relocation expenses are the responsibility of the Fellow, in negotiation with their Host Faculty.

Leave

- 11.23 In the case of parental or extended personal leave (requiring leave of absence from Fellowship) being taken during the Fellowship, the completion date of the Fellowship will be extended by the length of the leave taken. Fellows should advise both their Faculty and RIC when the leave is approved. It is the responsibility of the Fellow to liaise with their Head of Department or School and local Human Resources contact to ensure their employment contract is modified accordingly.
- 11.24 Any additional costs associated with a variation of the Fellow's employment contract or leave under the industrial agreement are the responsibility of the Faculty and/or host Department/School.

Annual progress reports

- 11.25 Continuation of the award into the second and third years is dependent on the Fellow having demonstrated satisfactory progress through annual performance review processes. Fellows are required to submit an annual progress report for the first two years of their Fellowship (i.e., one report at the end of their first year and one report at the end of their second year). Progress reports should be submitted one month prior to the annual anniversary of the Fellow's start date and should demonstrate how Fellows are building their research and their broader research linkages across the University.

Final report and financial acquittal report

- 11.26 Fellows are required to submit a Final Report within three months of completing their Fellowship and will include a financial acquittal. The Final report template is available on the Researcher Development Schemes website. Substantial variations from the budget proposed in the Fellowship application need to be explained. Any unspent DVCR strategic funds remaining at the conclusion of the Fellowship must be relinquished.

12 ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACT

- 12.1 All administrative enquiries for the scheme should be directed via email to res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au