International Grants Accelerator Program Overview

The University of Melbourne continues to be an outstanding place for the pursuit of academic excellence, driven by the desire to benefit society through the transformative impact of education and research, as stated in Advancing Melbourne.

With this purpose in mind, it is important that academics have the best possible access to research funding opportunities from around the world. These provide an excellent source of support for the world-class research performed across all disciplines, and showcase the University of Melbourne as a highly effective partner.

Following the success of the US Grants Accelerator Program, in 2022 the International Grants team will be launching the next evolution of this program as it transitions to provide targeted support for research funding opportunities from around the world.

The International Grants Accelerator Program will have three main streams:

- Locating and Applying for International Research Funding
- Travel Funding for Academic and Professional Staff
- New international grant training resources

Locating and Applying for Funding Opportunities

To assist researchers in identifying international funding opportunities, the International Grants Program will include both:

- A Finding Funding program which will be open to all, with the International Grants team hosting a number of drop-in sessions to discuss available funding opportunities, and as well as
- An Early Career Researcher (ECR)-specific Pitch Your Project scheme, which will allow ECRs to have early-stage conversations with senior academics who have experience in applying to international funders.

Registration for both programs are available through SmartyGrants, with further details provided below.
1. Finding Funding

To help staff locate international research grant opportunities, the International Grants Accelerator Program will offer a Finding Funding scheme in 2022, providing dedicated drop-in sessions to discuss the international funding opportunities which are available to support academics and how to apply for these.

**Eligibility**

All are welcome to register for the Finding Funding program through SmartyGrants. This registration form is anticipated to take 10 minutes to complete, and will assist by collecting contact information and background information to help match researchers to appropriate funding sources.

**Key dates**

- **Registrations open:** 16 February
- **Registrations close:** 15 April
- **Drop-in sessions:** Drop-in sessions will be held between 1 April – 31 May, with further details emailed to participating researchers.

2. Early Career Researchers – Pitch Your Project

In addition to participating in the Finding Funding section of the program, Early Career Researchers (ECRs) will also have the opportunity to be included in the Pitch Your Project scheme.

The Pitch Your Project scheme will assist ECRs to develop an application for a specific scheme determined through the Finding Funding program. ECRs will be matched with senior academics to discuss the targeted funder and the planned project at an early stage of the application process. To facilitate this, ECRs will be asked to provide the senior academic with a brief written overview of their planned project. Following this a 30-minute discussion will then be hosted by the International Grants team to assist the ECR with their planned application.

The aim of this scheme will be to connect ECRs with University of Melbourne researchers who have received funding through the same opportunity. In cases where this may not be possible, for instance where an application is planned to a funder which the University does not frequently apply to, input from an alternative senior academic will be sought. Academic Divisions are invited to engage in this part of the process and assist in developing mentor opportunities for other funders.

ECRs will be able to register for the Pitch Your Project Scheme as part of the SmartyGrants registration.

**Eligibility**

In line with the National Institutes of Health’s early stage investigator policy, researchers who are within 10 years of completing their final research degree will be eligible to be involved in the Pitch Your Project scheme. Extensions to this timeframe due to career interruptions will be considered by the International Grants team (blake.plowman@unimelb.edu.au).
Key Dates

Registrations open: 16 February
Registrations close: 15 April

Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) pitch sessions: April
National Institutes of Health pitch sessions: August
Pitch sessions for other funders will be arranged according to submission deadlines.

Travel Funding

In recognition of the value that can be gained by meeting with funding organisations and collaborators in person, the International Grants Accelerator Program will offer researchers the opportunity to apply for support to travel internationally.

Funding for this program will be provided internally, with Chancellery matching contributions from the involved Academic Divisions on a 1:1 basis for up to $2,500 for a total of $5,000 AUD of travel funds per grant. There is no limit on how much an Academic Division may contribute above that figure, though it is expected that most participants will apply for a maximum of $5,000.

Up to 10 travel grants will be available for research staff, with up to two travel grants available for professional staff. Travel funding for research staff must be used to directly support the pursuit of an international grant valued at $100,000 AUD or greater returning to the University. The proposal must be submitted within a year of receipt of the internal award, or the funding will need to be returned. Travel funding for professional staff must be used to strengthen the University’s ability to apply for and/or administer international funding through capacity building or enhancement of Academic Division programming.

Applications for travel funding are strongly encouraged from research staff and professional staff across all disciplines including HASS disciplines.

All applications should demonstrate a defined plan of proposed activities and include a description of the expected impact of the travel funds on their future plans. Applications led by the University, as well as activities leading to funded consortium activities, are highly regarded, as are applications from ECRs.

Eligible Expenses

- Travel costs: Return travel to meet with international collaborators or funding agencies. Includes flights, per diem, accommodation and other costs in line with the University’s travel policy. Travel costs to support an international collaborator visit to Melbourne are also allowable
- Attending a planning day or future directions workshop overseas
- Activities outside of these mentioned above will be considered based on their merits bearing in mind the objectives of the program
- Consortium costs
- Staff professional development costs
Eligibility

Academic staff

Academic applicants must be University employees (0.5 EFT or above, and at level A6 or higher) for the duration of the award, or honorary employees whose primary academic affiliation is the University of Melbourne.

Applications for travel grants will be open to researchers who have not previously led a successful application to the targeted funding organisation, or received travel funding previously through the US Grants Accelerator Program.

Applicants must clearly identify at least one funding opportunity, either as lead or non-lead, which will be submitted to an international sponsor. Participation in the Finding Funding stream of the International Grants Accelerator Program is highly favoured. Other applications may be considered depending on the availability of awards, however the applicant should be prepared to receive feedback before an award is made. Of critical importance is the agreement by the Academic Division and Chancellery Research and Enterprise that the opportunity aligns with the intent of this program.

Professional staff

Professional staff applicants must be employed in a continuing position (0.5 EFT or above) or a fixed term position (0.5 EFT or above) for the duration of the award and have not previously received travel funding through the US Grants Accelerator Program.

Key Dates and How to Apply

Application due date: 5 P.M. Friday, 13 May 2022
Selection panel meeting: Late May 2022
Outcomes released: First week of June 2022

Application forms are available on the International Grants Accelerator Program website. Completed application forms, including confirmation of Academic Division support, are to be sent to Blake Plowman at blake.plowman@unimelb.edu.au.

Selection Process and Review Criteria

Applications from both academic and professional staff will be reviewed through a selection panel of delegates from Research, Innovation and Commercialisation and Chancellery Research and Enterprise.

Following review, recommendations will be made by the committee to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Professor James McCluskey AO, who will have final approval.

Review criteria include:

- Potential for the travel grant to strengthen the competitiveness of the external grant application
- Potential to develop or strengthen relationships with funding agencies and/or collaborating organisations leading to a funded proposal
- Alignment with Academic Division research priorities
- Alignment with University research priorities
Eligible Expenses

- Travel costs: Return travel to meet with international collaborators or funding agencies. Includes flights, per diem, accommodation and other costs in line with the University’s travel policy. Travel costs to support an international collaborator visit to Melbourne are also allowable
- Attending a planning day or future directions workshop overseas
- Activities outside of these mentioned above will be considered based on their merits bearing in mind the objectives of the program
- Consortium costs
- Staff professional development costs

Travel Grant Awardee Conditions

Travel is to be performed in accordance with University policy, with further information and guidance available through the University’s Travel Advice webpage as well as the Federal Government’s Smartraveller program.

Travel grant awardees will be responsible for all aspects of their travel, including planning, obtaining necessary clearances, booking and conducting their travel.

Funds are to be spent in 2022, and in accordance with the travel grant application budget. Significant changes to this will require a variation request to be approved by the International Grants team. Please return completed variation requests to Blake Plowman (blake.plowman@unimelb.edu.au).

In light of potential changes to international travel due to COVID-19, requests for travel funds to be used in 2023 may be made to the International Grants team.

Any unspent funds at the end of the approved period will be returned to the Academic Division and Chancellery, in proportion to their respective contributions.

Upon completion of the international grant application the applicant will be required to provide a final financial report for the use of funds and the Themis submission number for their external application to Blake Plowman. If evidence of an application is not provided, funds must be returned.

Professional staff award recipients are required to submit a report within eight weeks of completion of their travels. The report should summarize the main findings of the project that will be of benefit to the University of Melbourne and how the knowledge and experience gained can be disseminated to colleagues. The report should be in the form of advice to the University on opportunities enhancing administrative/management practices, including recommendations as appropriate.

New International Grants Resources

Hosted by the International Grants team, the International Grants Accelerator Program will develop new information sessions and material on international grants. Planned content development to assist researchers and professional staff include information sessions which will then be uploaded to the International Grants website, with topics to include:
Eligibility

Sessions will be open to all interested staff and MRI affiliates.

Key Dates and How to Register

Please refer to the attached calendar for information on when sessions will be held.

Links to register for sessions will be distributed through Academic Divisions in advance of sessions, and will be included on the International Grants Accelerator Program website.

Following the sessions recordings will be made available on the International Grants website.

Queries

For any queries about the program, please contact Blake Plowman, Research Partnership Leader (USA) (blake.plowman@unimelb.edu.au, 9035 8317).