



1 OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 The Research Impetus Grants scheme (pilot round) is open for applications in 2024. It aims to support promising early-career and mid-career researchers who have experienced significant career disruption by providing targeted funds to assist them to regain their research momentum.
- 1.2 The University recognises that significant interruptions to research and career opportunity, or disruptive life experiences, may affect a researcher's capacity, productivity, outputs, or outcomes; and that the impact of a disruption may extend beyond the duration of a specific event.
- 1.3 This scheme aims to:
 - Improve the overall equity of research opportunity through financial support to alleviate well-documented career interruptions that have created barriers to research continuity.
 - Strengthen grant recipients' research continuity and research career trajectory; and
 - Support grant recipients' ability to progress research programs, build partnerships and networks, and produce research outputs and outcomes of high quality and impact that benefit the individual researcher's program and the calibre of research conducted at the University of Melbourne.
- 1.4 The Research Impetus Grants scheme supports the ambitions of the University's strategic plan, [Advancing Melbourne 2030](#), by retaining outstanding academics and nurturing research careers.

2 SCHEME PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The Research Impetus Grants (RIG) scheme pilot is guided by the following principles:
 - *Equity*: Building increasingly inclusive and equitable research career support at the University.
 - *Flexibility*: Responding to researchers' specific needs in re-establishing career momentum;
 - *Accessibility*: Streamlining the application and award process for the applicants and selection committees, given the personal nature of common career disruptions;
 - *Impact*: Providing funding for modest but targeted research support that has strong likelihood of supporting academic staff to thrive (return to their potential prior research trajectory) by alleviating the negative impacts of disruption/s.
 - *Scale*: Expanding resources available to researchers by establishing a joint and coordinated Chancellery/Faculty scheme to support more researchers to regain their research productivity and momentum, in alignment (concurrently) with Faculty-led support initiatives.
 - *Strategic development*: Institution-wide access to this scheme will provide an evidence base for greater insight into the needs and gaps in supports across eligible researchers.

3 FUNDING AND ALLOCATION

3.1 Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (DVCR) strategic funding will contribute an annual sum of funding to this scheme, with the expectation that, where their supported applicants are successful, Faculties (Schools/Departments) will match the sum of funding that is provided to awardees in this scheme.

4 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

4.1 Applicants must be academic staff of the University who:

- Have held, for a minimum of six months, a salaried fixed-term or continuing appointment with the University of 0.5 FTE or more, at Level A, B or C, and will continue to hold an appointment for a requisite period to achieve the proposed outcomes of the grant; and
- Have a minimum research allocation of 40% of their employment fraction (i.e. Education & Research, Academic Specialist, or Research Focussed) during the proposed duration of the grant; and
- Have experienced a significant disruption/s that demonstrably impeded their research or career trajectory and occurred (or was continuing) within the timeframe 24 May 2019 to 24 May 2024 (i.e., within the prior five years to the closing date for applications under this scheme).

4.2 Applicants must not have outstanding Progress Reports or Final Reports from any other University of Melbourne researcher development scheme.

4.3 Research Impetus Grants are only available to salaried staff of the University of Melbourne who meet the above criteria and are based in any of the University of Melbourne's academic divisions or in the Melbourne Business School.

4.4 Honorary staff of the University of Melbourne are not eligible for this scheme.

Significant disruption/s

4.5 A significant disruption is one or more of the following:

- Caring responsibilities (with reduced research opportunity as a result)
- Health conditions (including mental health)
- Parental leave or equivalent¹
- Unemployment or employment that offered no provision for research²
- Disability (temporary or permanent)
- Disaster management and recovery

¹ Inclusive of all forms of a new parenthood including but not limited to newly adopted/fostered child, a birth child (including a surrogacy arrangement), or child bereavement leave.

² Where unemployment or non-research employment is relied on, faculty delegates should sight a copy of the relevant position description or contract to verify the lack of research opportunity.

- Limited or no access to facilities and resources—such as through workplace interruptions or lack of access to facilities
 - Community obligations under Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and protocols
 - Gender affirmation
 - Other extraordinary/unanticipated life events.
- 4.6 To be significant, the disruption/s must be of a duration of three consecutive months (90 days) at minimum and can be shown by the applicant to have had a negative impact on the applicant’s research program and trajectory.
- 4.7 Where COVID19 pandemic lockdowns and restrictions are relevant to an above category of disruption as an exacerbating factor, applicants should identify and explain the specific impact of the pandemic to their disciplinary or research requirements, or personal situation.

5 APPLICATION PROCESS AND FORMS

- 5.1 Applicants should review the ‘How to Apply’ section of the [scheme website](#), including the Instructions to Applicants, and the scheme dates below.
- 5.2 Applicants may submit only one application to the Research Impetus Grants scheme in a given year of award.
- 5.3 The application process has two key forms: the *Faculty Confirmation* form (separate document), and the *Application Form* (SmartyGrants form).
- 5.4 The *Faculty Confirmation* form should be completed through a discussion between the applicant and the nominated ‘Faculty delegate’ for this scheme (the Associate Dean (Diversity and Inclusion), Associate Dean Research or a Head of Department/School), with mutual understanding, agreement and verification of the information provided therein, including the outline of disruption/s experienced by the applicant. Faculties should advise scheme administrators of their Faculty delegate under this scheme, and contact details of the delegates will be posted on the scheme website.
- 5.5 The *Faculty Confirmation* form contains:
- A table with summary information about the disruption/s, the duration of the timeframe/s, and the total time of the claimed disruption.
 - Confirmation by the nominated Faculty delegate that the claimed disruptions were discussed with the applicant, verified to the delegate’s satisfaction, and where necessary, the delegate has viewed appropriate evidence.
 - Confirmation by the nominated Faculty delegate that the total disruption is a significant disruption under the terms of the scheme that has impeded the applicant’s research productivity and career trajectory.
 - Confirmation by the Head of Department/School that employment conditions and reasonable workload adjustments will be put in place to enable the applicant to make full use of the grant, if successful.
- 5.6 The *Faculty Confirmation form* should be signed by the applicant, the nominated Faculty delegate, and Head of Department/School, and uploaded to the application by the Applicant.

5.7 The *Application Form* consists of:

- **Part A: Administrative Summary**
- **Part B: Education and Appointment Details** - including education record and appointment history, current appointment conditions and workload allocation.
- **Part C: Researcher Profile and Case for Support** - including academic CV of 4-pages maximum, PDF only; and outline of grants, funds, or supports that have been already awarded to the applicant (from any source) within the eligible disruption period and thereafter.³
- **Part D: Outline of Research Trajectory** - applicant's academic record and achievements (relative to opportunity) prior to the disruption and after the disruption/s, including explanation of how the disruption/s impeded their research outputs and career trajectory.
- **Part E: Proposed Budget components** - outline of grant package requested, approximate costings and intended usage (see below) including: applicant's research plan outlining the activities proposed with the grants; how the grant/s will positively impact and/reestablish the applicant's research profile and trajectory post-disruption/s; and how the proposed activities will strengthen the ability of the applicant to deliver high quality research and impact in their discipline.

5.8 All questions in the *Application Form* must be answered or marked 'not applicable'.

6 GRANT CATEGORIES

- 6.1 Applicants can apply for relevant grant components to a maximum of \$50,000 grant (i.e. \$25,000 DVCR funds, \$25,000 Faculty funds) per application under this scheme to support the regaining of their research momentum.
- 6.2 Applicants, in discussion with their faculty delegate, are encouraged to consider their unique circumstances and goals when tailoring the funding request. Applicants are also encouraged to apply for grant components that are reasonable and justifiable in view of the severity and duration of the disruption/s they have experienced.
- 6.3 Successful applications will be partially or fully funded based on the Selection Committee's consideration of the strength of the application, the appropriateness of the grant request in light of the full circumstances of the applicants' disruption/s, and overall equity and fairness in grant allocation.
- 6.4 Where Fringe Benefit Tax applies (categories (a) and (d) in the table below), applicants must include an estimation of this in their proposed grant budget in the budget line indicated (see Instructions to Applicant). unless otherwise agreed, DVCR and faculties will equally contribute the calculated FBT amount. The DVCR-funded FBT share will be provided to the faculty post award of the grant, along with the other grant components, for faculty to administer.

³ Where applicable, applicants should include any receipt of the Retention Benefit which is available under the Enterprise Agreement to all Academic and Professional staff returning to work from a period of parental leave (noting that the Retention Benefit is provided as a salary contribution to support the return to work, but not as a research grant to fund specific research-focused activities).

	Component grants for research support	Maximum per application	DVCR/Faculty split
a	<p>Carer or childcare expenses for research-related travel costs <i>i.e. expenses incurred by the staff member that are directly related to the cost of care during the time the staff member is travelling. For example: babysitting, alternative child carer travel costs, airfares for children, access to childcare at conference venue.</i></p> <p>*This grant component may require an additional budget line to cover Fringe Tax Benefit – see Instructions to Applicants</p>	Up to \$4,000	\$2000/\$2000
b	Conference funding	Up to \$4,000	\$2000/\$2000
c	External grant writing support	Up to \$5,000	\$2500/\$2500
d	<p>Childcare or caring related expenses (non-travel related) where applicant is primary carer for school aged children (up to age 16) or other dependents to enable focused research time and productivity</p> <p><i>For example: babysitting, access to childcare services located at research event/activities, after school/day-care costs.</i></p> <p>*This grant component may require an additional budget line to cover Fringe Tax Benefit – see Instructions to Applicants</p>	Up to \$5,000	\$2500/\$2500
e	<p>Research project funds</p> <p><i>Reasonable costs will be considered – may include specialised personnel; equipment and maintenance; applicant’s own travel for research related purposes; funding for academic visitors to attend University of Melbourne where outbound travel is not available to the researcher</i></p>	Up to \$15,000	\$7500/\$7500
f	<p>Funding for a short-term Research Assistant, Technical Assistant, Administrative Assistant or Research Fellow dependent on the type of research and area of need for support</p> <p><i>i.e. RA, to continue field work, extra lab work or project coordination tasks</i></p>	Up to \$40,000	\$20,000/\$20,000
g	<p>Disability adjustments relating to research capability</p> <p><i>Where supports are not covered by other institutional/faculty schemes</i></p>	As needed to the \$50,000 cap	Co-funded as per award sum
h	<p>Focused research time (e.g. cover or reduction in duties to undertake concentrated period to focus on research objectives)</p> <p><i>Approval of the HoS/HoD on the feasible timeframe for implementation of this funding (including workload adjustments) is required to enable faculty planning (see Faculty Confirmation form).</i></p>	Up to \$40,000	\$20,000/\$20,000

7 SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA

- 7.1 Based on the responses in the *Application Form*, the Faculty Confirmation Form and the selection criteria in these guidelines, Faculty ranking committees are asked to provide an indication to the Selection Committee on a ranked list of their applicants, with the top ranked being those for whom the proposed grant/s would be most impactful in re-establishing or uplifting their research trajectory.
- 7.2 The Faculty delegate who verifies the disruption/s through the Faculty Confirmation form process is encouraged to be involved in Faculty review and ranking process.
- 7.3 The Central RIG Committee is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Capability) or other as nominated by the DVCR. The Central Selection Committee will allocate grants across the applicant pool, informed by the selection criteria, Faculty ranked lists, and overall strategic and equity considerations.

Selection criteria:

- The applicant's track record and achievements (relative to opportunity) and anticipated research trajectory (prior to the disruption/s).
 - The feasibility of how the requested grant (in components and as a whole) will assist them to re-establish their research trajectory.
 - The critical and transformative potential impact of the requested funds, considering previous supports provided in relation to the disruption, to establish the relative need for funding.
 - The reasonableness and appropriateness of the grant request in view of the length and severity of the applicant's disruption/s.
 - The presence of support from the Faculty/School/Department in enabling the conditions for the grant of funding to be fully utilised and effective.
- 7.4 As guidance to faculty delegates and selection committees, this scheme is *not* intended for:
- applicants who experienced disruption/s but have already demonstrably recovered their strong career trajectory; or
 - applicants who had not yet demonstrated a promising research trajectory prior to disruptions.

8 FUNDING CONDITIONS

- 8.1 The grant should be used within maximum two years of date of award.
- 8.2 Recipients of a grant under this scheme will be asked to report on outcomes of the grant within two months of the grant end date. The Final Report template will be available on the Researcher Development Schemes website.
- 8.3 Permission to vary the grant is only approved on a case-by-case basis where exceptional circumstances apply and where it would be consistent with the scheme objectives and must be

requested in writing to Chancellery Research and Enterprise via the variation of project agreement form sent to the Researcher Development Schemes team (res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au) in RIC.

- 8.4 In the case of parental or extended personal leave under Enterprise Agreement or legislative entitlement (requiring leave of absence or significant reduction in work fraction) being taken during the grant period, the completion date of the grant will be extended by the length of the leave/reduction taken. Awardees should advise both their Faculty and RIC when the leave is approved. Faculty Human Resources (HR) business partners are expected to amend employment records to reflect updates to leave or FTE reductions and RIC will update grant award records.
- 8.5 To support scheme evaluation, CRE may request further information from faculties about supported applicants, so suitable records should be maintained by faculties.

9 TIMETABLE

<i>Monday, 15 April</i>	Applications open
<i>Monday, 6 May</i>	Scheme webinar
<i>3pm Friday 24 May</i>	Applications closing date
<i>24 June to 18 July</i>	Faculty ranking/recommendations
<i>Mid-August</i>	Central selection committee
<i>September/October</i>	Notification of outcomes
<i>November</i>	Earliest date funds made available to awardees/Faculties
<i>Grant recipients' final report</i>	<i>Within two months of the grant end date</i>

10 ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACT

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