

## **GUIDELINES**

### **Acknowledgement of Country**

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands on which we work and live, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We also acknowledge the continuing and unceded sovereignty of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Federation University is committed to bringing together people with differing perspectives, lived experiences and skills to make choices that reflect our integrity and community, and to creating an inclusive work environment for all. We value diversity and encourage Early Career Researchers from all backgrounds, abilities, and identities to apply.

### **Ethics, IP and Research Data Management**

All applicants must ensure, that if successful they are able to meet the requirements of any additional approvals before commencing the research project (for example, ethics approvals), and comply with FUA policy/procedures and expectations on Research Data Management and Intellectual Property including Indigenous Cultural IP and Indigenous Knowledges.

**Scheme Opens: Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

**Scheme Closes: 12 noon, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

**Late applications will not be accepted.**

## 1. Introduction

The ECR Seed Funding program aims to provide opportunities for Early Career Researchers (and mid-career researchers with career interruption), without a strong history of applying for external competitive research funding opportunities, to develop the skills in building research teams, writing grant proposals, undertaking funded research and successfully delivering research outcomes.

### Research at Federation University

Research at Federation University is largely, but not exclusively, delivered via our Research Centres, including the National Centre for Reconciliation, Truth and Justice (NCRTJ).

Where possible proposals should:

- engage with collaborators in and across our Research Centres; and
- be aligned to Federation University's current Research Priority Areas:
  - **Health and Wellbeing:** Developing the best prevention, treatment and care for bodies and minds. Our research tests scalable and transferable models of cost-effective healthcare delivery in regional and rural settings.
  - **Society and the Environment:** Understanding and managing the world in which we live in, from the constructed to the natural. Our research supports sustainable regional economic and social development that enhances and protects Australia's unique landscapes and ecosystems.
  - **Virtual, Digital and Computational Environments:** Exploring, analysing and creating our new reality through innovative technologies. Our research supports businesses and communities through secure integrated data systems, optimised process modelling and realising the power of artificial intelligence.

## 2. Eligibility

Early and mid-career researchers (with career interruption) at FUA who hold a full-time or fractional academic appointment (minimum appointment is 0.2FTE) are eligible to be a Lead Chief Investigator (Lead CI, i.e. first-named among a team). The application may include other researchers at any career stage.

All CIs named in an application must take responsibility for the authorship and intellectual content of the application, designing and managing the budget, appropriately citing sources

and acknowledging all significant contributions. The proposal must clearly outline the role of all CIs named on the proposal.

An **Early Career Researcher (ECR)** is one who was awarded their PhD no more than 5-years prior to the closing date of the application. This period may be extended by eligible periods of career interruption (if they are explained in the proposal).

Career interruptions may include caring responsibilities, community obligations, medical conditions and ill health, disaster management, limited access to facilities/resources, or non-research employment.

A **Mid-Career Researcher (MCR)** is generally one who was awarded their PhD no more than 6-10 years prior to the closing date of the application. For an application to be led by an MCR the lead applicant must show they have had a significant period of career interruption which would result in them being considered an ECR.

### **3. Scope and timeframes**

Early Career Researcher Seed Funding grants are awarded through a competitive internal review and ranking process based on assessment criteria.

The scheme will open for applications on Friday 19 April 2024 and close at 12 noon, Friday 10 May 2024. Announcements will be made week beginning 27<sup>th</sup> May.

### **4. Grant amounts and funding period**

Each grant will support project costs up to a maximum of \$10,000 for an initial duration of 7 months (June to December). Carry forwards of funding into the following year will be considered on case by case and based on progress of the project.

The final amount funded will be determined through the assessment panel review process, with final approval by the VCST Lead (Research) in accordance with these guidelines. Funding approved may be less than funding requested.

### **5. Eligible grant activities**

Research activities that meet the definition of 'research', are eligible to be supported under this program. Research is defined as the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

## 6. Eligible expenditure

Budget requests will be reviewed by the Assessment Panel, who will recommend funded projects and amounts to the VCST Lead (Research). Final approval of projects and budgets is at the discretion of the VCST Lead (Research).

Funding requested must directly support the completion of the research project. Such items may include:

- access to national and international research and infrastructure facilities including specialist archives, collections and databases;
- access to technical workshop services linked to and justified explicitly against the project (for example, machine tools and qualified technicians);
- expenditure on field research essential to the project, including technical and logistical support and travel expenses (accommodation, meals and incidental costs);
- expert services of a third party if the services are directly related to and essential for the project. Such services include, but are not limited to:
  - language translation services, transcribing services;
  - purchase of bibliographical or archival material (electronic or hard copy);
  - testing services; and
  - data collection and analysis services;
- equipment (and its maintenance) and consumables essential for the project. Funding will not be provided for equipment or consumables that are considered to be for broad general use;
- publication and dissemination of project research outputs and outreach activity costs including presentation of results at conferences;
- personnel, for example postdoctoral research associates, research assistants, technicians and laboratory attendants. Salary support must be requested at the appropriate salary level for FUA, including on-costs;
- specialised computer equipment and software essential to the project;
- web hosting and web development specific to the project; and
- workshops or focus groups that are essential for the conduct of the project (including reasonable hospitality costs such as morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea).

You must justify all items for which the grant money is sought in your application. You can only spend grant funds on approved grant activities.

**7. Assessment criteria**

You must address all of the assessment criteria listed below in your application. Different weightings are assigned to individual criteria. Use these headings to structure your 'Project Description'.

**a. Investigator Capacity and Capability 20% (1 A4 page maximum)**

This section should demonstrate that the Investigators have an appropriate mix of research skills, experience and expertise to successfully undertake this specific research project and produce research outcomes, benefit and impact.

The weighting of this section recognises that we will receive proposals from less experienced researchers and/or those that have had significant periods of career interruption. Applicants might for example describe:

- The team's expertise and experience relevant to the proposed research (include description of the entire team, highlighting the lead investigator);
- Evidence of research impact through knowledge gain, translation or implementation of research findings;
- Evidence of ability to build local, state or national and partnerships; and
- Time and capacity of each investigator to undertake the research project.

**b. Project Quality and Innovation 40% (1 A4 page maximum)**

This section should describe:

- The extent to which the research addresses a significant problem;
- Evidence that the conceptual/theoretical framework is innovative and original;
- The extent to which the research project includes aims, concepts, methods and results which will advance knowledge; and
- The extent to which the research has the potential to enhance local, state, national and/or international collaboration and lead to future competitive grant proposals.

**c. Feasibility 10% (1/2 A4 page maximum)**

Describe:

- How the project's design, participants and requested budget will result in the timely and successful completion of the project;

- The existing or developing, supportive and high-quality research environment for this project; and
- The availability of the necessary facilities/resources to complete the project.

**d. Benefit 30% (1 A4 page maximum)**

Describe:

- The benefit of this project to the lead researcher;
- The project's local, state or national significance and especially the contribution to/impact on regional, rural and remote communities; and
- How this project will contribute to future funding opportunities (including identification of those opportunities).

**8. Assessment process**

All eligible applications will be assessed and merit ranked using all assessment criteria.

Each application will be considered on its merits, based on:

- a. how well it meets the assessment criteria; and
- b. how it is ranked against other applications.

The review panel will make grant recommendations to the VCST Lead (Research) who will make a final decision on which applications are approved for funding and the level of funding.

**9. How to apply**

To apply:

1. only submit one application as the lead Chief Investigator for this program;
2. make sure that your application is submitted in accordance with these grant guidelines and application form;
3. certify that the application is compliant with these grant guidelines;
4. complete and submit the Application Form via email to [researcher.development@federation.edu.au](mailto:researcher.development@federation.edu.au).

You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and all details are accurate and current at the time of submission. Giving incomplete, false or misleading information will exclude your application from further consideration.

You cannot change your application (additions, deletions or modifications) after the grant closing date and time.

You must not include additional attachments. No additional material will be considered during the evaluation process.

### **10. Project completion**

Successful applicants will be expected to report on outcomes at project completion.

### **11. Questions during the application period**

Questions during the application period should be directed to Research Services via [researcher.development@federation.edu.au](mailto:researcher.development@federation.edu.au).