THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME AUSTRALIA

Procedure:

Research Funding Schemes

Effective: 20 September 2024

Audience: Employees and Students

Policy Category: Academic
Policy Sub-category: Research

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1 PURPOSE

1.1 This Procedure outlines the process for funding under the University's Research Funding Schemes, as per the *Policy: Research Funding Scheme*. The University's current three Research Funding Schemes are:

1.1.1 Early Career Researcher (ECR) Award

1.1.2 Research Development Grants (RDG)

1.1.3 Big Ideas – Pro Vice Chancellor Research (PVCR) Strategic Initiatives Fund

2 RELATED POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

2.1 This Procedure should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

2.1.1 *Policy: Research Funding Schemes*

2.1.2 *Policy: Academic Integrity (Staff)*

2.1.3 *Employee Code of Conduct and Ethical Behaviour*

2.1.4 *Policy: Code of Conduct Research*

2.1.5 *Procedure: Travel*

2.1.6 *Guideline: Travel*

2.1.7 *Procedure: Financial Grant Management*

2.1.8 *Policy: Research Funding and Agreements*

3 RESEARCH FUNDING SCHEMES (RFS)

3.1 The Research Funding Schemes are aligned with the University Strategy 2022-26 and the University Research Strategy 2023-26 and are aimed at improving research performance. They are underpinned by the principles contained in the *Policy: Research Funding Schemes*.

3.2 Applications for the ECR Award and Research Development Grants will be submitted via IRMA and assessed against the advertised criteria by a suitably qualified panel of internal reviewers for each scheme, appointed by the Pro Vice Chancellor, Research (PVCR) (or delegate) and with representation from each Faculty. Expressions of Interest (EOIs) for the Big Ideas scheme will be assessed by the PVCR who will co-opt relevant internal expertise to assess and develop the pitch, including the strategic, financial, and business case expertise. The PVCR may also co-opt external expertise to assist in the assessment of any research funding scheme (RFS) application.

3.3 If any reviewer has a conflict of interest in relation to any of the applications under consideration, they must declare such conflict and refrain from taking part in any consideration of the relevant application. A Staff Member cannot serve as a reviewer for a research funding scheme in which they are also an applicant in the same round.

3.4 The PVCR (or delegate) will determine the awarding of research funding scheme (RFS) funding, upon recommendation from the relevant review process. The decision of the PVCR (or delegate) is final and there is no right of appeal for determinations made in respect of the research funding scheme (RFS). The PVCR also reserves the right to award no funding in a given

research funding scheme in a given year, for example, if insufficient applications are received that perform strongly against the assessment criteria.

3.5 The research funding scheme (RFS) will fund activity during the grant award period only and funds must be expended by the end of the grant award period.

3.6 Recipients of research funding scheme (RFS) funding are required to report outcomes of their funding via the process provided by the Research Office within 6 months of the RFS-funded project ending. The recipient may also be required to provide additional reports upon request by the PVCR (or delegate) including to report to the wider University community and external media about the research project outcomes. Failure to provide a final report as per the guidelines may result in a staff member not being eligible for future research funding scheme (RFS) rounds.

4 EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER AWARD (ECR AWARD)

4.1 Purpose

4.1.1 The ECR Award supports early career researchers at the University to establish their research profile by producing high quality research outputs in their field, building research collaborations, and applying for external grants.

4.1.2 The ECR Award scheme provides funding up to $10,000 as well as tailored researcher development and mentoring opportunities, such as an ECR Incubator.

4.1.3 The ECR Award may be used for buy-out costs associated with teaching, marking or administration, research assistance, publication costs or other research project costs.

4.2 Eligibility

4.2.1 To be eligible to apply for the ECR Award, the applicant must:

- Be an Academic Staff Member.
- Be employed a minimum of 0.4FTE at the time of application and for at least 6 months after the RFS-funded project ends.
- Have been awarded their PhD within the past 5 years (taking into account career interruptions, as defined in the ARC Eligibility and Career Interruptions Statement).
- Be proposing a research project that is aligned with the University Strategy 2022-26 and the University Research Strategy 2023-26.
- Not be applying for the Research Development Grants in the same calendar year.

4.3 Assessment criteria

4.3.1 Applications for the ECR Award will be assessed using the following criteria:

- **Applicant track record and capability** (50%): Evidence of the quality and impact of the applicant's research to date, including track record of high-quality research outputs (commensurate with career stage and research opportunity). Capability of

the applicant to build national and international research collaborations with universities, industry, or community.

- **Project quality and innovation** (25%): Quality of the proposed research project. Contribution to the field, originality, and innovation.
- **Feasibility and strategic alignment** (25%): Feasibility of the project plan, budget, and timeline. The likelihood that the proposed project will produce high quality research output(s) and/or secure significant HERDC-reportable research income where the University is an Administering Institution (grant, industry, or donor), and/or deliver transformative impact to beneficiaries.

5 RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

5.1 Purpose

5.1.1 The Research Development Grants scheme provides targeted support to research projects that will produce high quality research output(s) and/or secure significant external research income where the University is an Administering Institution, and/or have a transformative impact for beneficiaries of the research.

5.1.2 Research Development Grants provide funding of between $2,000 and $15,000.

5.1.3 The Research Development Grants scheme includes a sub-scheme for 'Near-Miss Category 1 Grants'. Priority funding will be allocated to applications in this sub-scheme that perform strongly against the assessment criteria.

5.1.4 Research Development Grants may be used for buy-out costs associated with teaching, marking or administration, research assistance, publication costs or other research project costs.

5.2 Eligibility

5.2.1 To be eligible to apply for the Research Development Grants, the applicant must (or, for team-based projects, at least one investigator on the project team must):

- Be an Academic Staff Member.
- Be employed a minimum of 0.4FTE at the time of application and for at least 6 months after the RFS-funded project ends.
- Hold a PhD (or have a combination of qualifications and/or research experience equivalent to holding a doctoral degree in accordance with the *Procedure: Qualifications and Equivalence of Experience for Staff Teaching or Supervising Higher Education Programs*).
- Be proposing a research project that is aligned with the University Strategy 2022-26 and the University Research Strategy 2023-26.
- Not be applying for the ECR Award in the same calendar year.

5.2.2 In addition to the above criteria, to be eligible to apply for the priority funding sub-scheme 'Near-Miss Category 1 Grants', the applicant must:

- Have received a near miss for an NHMRC grant of being scored a Category 5 or above.
- Have received a near miss for an ARC grant (Discovery, DECRA, Future, Laureate, Linkage etc.) of being scored in the top 25% of applications that missed out.

5.3 Assessment criteria

5.3.1 Applications for Research Development Grants will be assessed using the following criteria:

- **Applicant(s) track record and capability** (50%): Evidence of the quality and impact of the applicant(s)' research to date, including track record of high-quality research outputs and external research income (commensurate with career stage and research opportunity). Capability of the applicant(s) to build national and international research collaborations with universities, industry, or community. Evidence of the commitment of any named collaborators and partners.
- **Project quality and innovation** (25%): Quality of the proposed research project. Contribution to the field, originality, and innovation.
- **Feasibility and strategic alignment** (25%): Feasibility of the project plan, budget, and timeline. The likelihood that the proposed project will produce high-quality research outputs and/or secure significant HERDC-reportable research income where the University is an Administering Institution (grant, industry or donor), and/or deliver transformative impact to beneficiaries of the research.

6 BIG IDEAS – PVCR STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FUND

6.1 Purpose

6.1.1 The Big Ideas – PVCR Strategic Initiatives Fund invests in highly strategic and ambitious research collaborations with national and international universities, industry, and community to drive world-leading research, address national and global challenges and deliver transformative impact to beneficiaries.

6.1.2 The Big Ideas scheme accepts EOI pitches for funding requests between approximately $15,000 and $50,000.

6.1.3 Big Ideas funding may be used for buy-out costs associated with teaching, marking or administration, research assistance, salaries, top-up costs, PhD stipends, publication costs or other research project costs.

6.2 Eligibility

6.2.1 To be eligible to pitch for Big Ideas funding, the applicant must (or, for team-based projects, at least one investigator on the project team must):

- Be an Academic Staff Member.
- Be employed a minimum of 0.4FTE at the time of application and for at least 6 months after the RFS-funded project ends.
- Hold a PhD (or have a combination of qualifications and/or research experience equivalent to holding a doctoral degree in accordance with the *Procedure:*

Qualifications and Equivalence of Experience for Staff Teaching or Supervising Higher Education Programs).

- Be proposing a research project that is aligned with the University Strategy 2022-26 and the University Research Strategy 2023-26.
- Have already secured the commitment of aligned collaborator(s) or partner(s) (universities, industry, or community) for the proposed research project.
- Have already secured some external funding for the proposed research project (e.g., successful grant, commitment from a donor or industry partner(s) – can be cash contribution or in-kind).
- Have Faculty support from the Executive Dean.
- Be proposing a research project that will produce significant high-quality research outputs and/or secure significant HERDC-reportable research income where the University is an Administering Institution (grant, industry or donor), and/or deliver transformative impact to beneficiaries of the research.

6.3 Assessment criteria

6.3.1 EOIs for Big Ideas will be assessed using the following criteria:

- Applicant(s) track record and capability, and partner commitment (40%): Evidence of the quality and impact of the applicant(s)' research to date, including track record of high-quality research outputs and external research income (commensurate with career stage and research opportunity). Track record of building national and international research collaborations with universities, industry, or community. Strong evidence of the commitment of named collaborators and partners, and their alignment with the University Strategic Plan (2022-26). Strong evidence of commitment of the Faculty.
- Project quality and innovation (20%): Quality of the proposed research project. Contribution to the field, originality, and innovation.
- Feasibility, strategic alignment and ROI (Return on Investment) (40%): Feasibility of the project plan, budget, and timeline. Strength of the case for strategic alignment, research performance, major partnerships, transformative research impact, and the business case for ROI (return on investment). The likelihood that the proposed project will produce significant high-quality research outputs and/or secure significant HERDC-reportable research income where the University is an Administering Institution (grant, industry or donor), and/or deliver transformative impact to beneficiaries of the research.

7 DEFINITIONS

7.1 For this Procedure, the definitions outlined in the Policy: Research Funding Scheme apply.

7.2 In addition, the following definitions apply to this Procedure:

7.2.1 ***HERDC*** means Higher Education Research Data Collection.

7.2.2 ***IRMA*** means the Integrated Research Management Application, which is the University's Research management software

Version	Date of approval	Approved by	Amendment
1	7 June 2018	Vice Chancellor, following endorsement by Executive Council	New Procedure
2	28 June 2018	Vice Chancellor, upon recommendation of PVC, Research	Deleted references to requirement for two year contract as part of eligibility criteria in sections 3.2 and 4.2.2.
3	20 March 2019	Pro Vice Chancellor, Research	Procedure transferred to new template; amendment of clause 4.4.3.
4	3 August 2022	Vice Chancellor, on recommendation of the PVC, Research.	Align the Procedure with Research Funding Scheme Principles and schemes with the new University Strategic Plan (2022-2026); converted to current template.
5	20 September 2024	Vice Chancellor, on recommendation of the Academic Council	Minor updates to align with current University Research Strategy 2023-26 and policy documents.

8 PROCESS SUMMARY

Application	***Responsibility***
Application submitted using the relevant research funding scheme-specific form in IRMA.	Applicant



Assessment	
Applications assessed through the relevant review process, using the assessment criteria.	PVCR



Assessment Notification	
Applicants will be notified by the Research Office as successful or unsuccessful.	Research Office



Reporting	
Successful applicants report on RFS funding outcomes using the prescribed reporting process at the conclusion of the grant.	Applicant