2016 Prestigious Overseas Travel Scheme (POTS)

Guidelines for Graduate Researchers

1. Eligibility

- Applicants must be currently enrolled in a doctoral research degree within the Faculty of the VCA & MCM. Applicants must have passed Confirmation and be within their maximum term of enrolled candidature (i.e. must be enrolled and not lapsed or under examination).
- Applicants must have an approved Study Away application and have obtained the student travel insurance available from the University prior to applying, otherwise the application (see section 5) will be deemed ineligible.
- Applicants must be enrolled FULL TIME for the duration of the overseas travel.
- Applicants must have Human Research Ethics approval in place if their project requires it.
- Applicants must have Supervisor support in the form of a Supervisor Support Letter.
- Applicants who has previously received their full entitlement to FSGS funds, but who meets the POTS criteria, may apply for, and receive a grant from, these funds.
- Applicants can only receive POTS funding once during their PhD candidature.
- Applicants must obtain additional funds for this trip. It is expected that the applicant’s supervisor, department and/or faculty will provide the additional funds.
- Applicants must not hold a full-time or fractional full-time academic staff position at any university.

2. Use of Funds

The purpose of POTS is to support the presentation of doctoral research at an international level. This fund aims to support the travel costs for doctoral researchers to present at international conferences, forums and networks, by funding on a competitive basis:

- International Travel of at least 10 days research-related activity (including direct travel time), that entails at least one distinct purpose that is clearly relevant and academically justifiable but not essential to the completion of the thesis. The purpose must include the presentation of doctoral research. Evidence for each purpose must be attached to the application. Acceptable purposes include the following:
  - presentation of doctoral research (Essential);
  - collecting field data;
  - accessing research materials or facilities that are unavailable in Australia;
  - working in a research institute;
  - meeting researchers overseas;
  - presenting a paper or a poster at an overseas conference that the department or faculty is unable to fully fund.
• Activities that in addition to above, also result in a reportable Research Output, and indicate affiliation with University of Melbourne. See: http://vca-mcm.unimelb.edu.au/research/researchoutputs

3. Assessment of Applications

Applications are considered and approved by the FSGS Committee, a sub-committee of the Faculty Research Committee. The FSGS Committee considers applications throughout the year and reports decisions on applications to the meetings of the Faculty Research Committee.

There will be three submission deadlines in 2016, as follows:

• 1 February
• 1 May
• 1 September

Applications must be submitted by 5pm on the deadline and early applications are encouraged. Late applications will not be accepted. If the deadline falls on a weekend or public holiday, applications must be submitted by 5pm on the next business day.

When assessing an application through this Scheme, the Committee will give consideration to the following factors:

• The purpose of the travel and the resulting benefit to the Faculty;
• What the proposed quantifiable research outputs are;
• Whether the budget is fully justified;
• Whether the applicant has previously obtained funds from the Faculty for this or any other project;
• Whether the applicant has sought funding for this expenditure from other sources;
• What the timeframe for the activity is and what round is most appropriate (e.g. applications in February for a conference presentation in November need to apply in a later round).
• Whether any previous funding through the FSGS has led to a successful acquittal (i.e. undertook the research activity as stated and produced the research outcome/output as promised);
• The funding available within the POTS budget.

4. Funding Cap

• Each POTS award will usually be worth up to $1,500. In exceptional circumstances the Committee may, at its discretion, award a scholarship up to the value of $2,000.
• For graduate research students there is a limit of receiving one POTS award only in the duration of PhD candidature.
• Funding will not be provided through this scheme if the applicant has already received alternative sources of funding for the item (e.g. invited conference/performance/exhibition presentation for which is funding is provided). Evidence of this will need to be provided with the application.
• Applications are assessed competitively and within the confines of the annual FSGS budget. Hence, in some instances only partial funding may be awarded.
• Pro-rata funding will apply where a graduate researcher is jointly enrolled.

5. **International Travel**

Applicants must ensure that they have approved Leave to Study Away for the period of study to be spent away from campus, prior to travel and prior to making an application to the POTS. This application must be submitted and approved at least one month prior to the planned travel (longer if the destination is a high risk location or the travel is for more than three months)

Graduate Researchers can register to access travel insurance through the University whilst on University approved travel. Information on the University of Melbourne’s travel insurance for students and purchasing additional travel is available from the Insurance Office. This must be approved at least five days prior to travel. Graduate researchers cannot be covered by UoM Travel Insurance where their travel has already commenced or where their travel is primarily or solely ‘private’ in nature. Those wishing to obtain more extensive travel insurance must make arrangements to purchase travel insurance for the duration of their trip and this cost must be included in the POTS budget.

6. **Ethics Approval**

Some research projects may require human research ethics approval. It is the student’s and their supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that the project has the appropriate approval prior to commencing. Where appropriate, evidence of ethics approval, or approval applied for and pending, must be provided in this application.

7. **Time Limit on Use of Funds**

Successful applicants must be reimbursed within the calendar year of award or forfeit the award. The award does not roll over into a subsequent year.

The University of Melbourne finance team requires that all payments are made prior to the end of the year and in order to allow for processing time, all POTS monies must be paid by early November. Recipients with research activities towards the end of the year should keep this in mind as it is not possible to extend the payment period further due to these limitations.

8. **Payment of Funds**

Successful applicants will be given advice on how to be paid from this fund. Recipients must have all tax invoices for budget items in order to be paid from this fund.

9. **Report to FSGS Committee**

Recipients are required to provide an Acquittal Report on how the funding has been used and the resulting benefits to their research project within one month of funded activity using the online form available on the Faculty Research Office webpage. This report should clearly list the outcomes of the project and where they differ to those stated in the original application. The report must also certify that any publication or output resulting from the project has been entered into the University’s research publications system as a research output attributable to the Faculty. The report must include all financial documentation evidencing the award has been spent on the funded activity. This report will be tabled at a Faculty Research Committee meeting.

10 June 2016
Page 3 of 4
9. Queries

For any queries or assistance, please contact:
Bianca Durrant, Research Coordinator, VCA-MCM Research Office.
Email: bdurrant@unimelb.edu.au  Phone: 9035 9241