Faculty Small Grant Scheme (FSGS)

Guidelines for Staff

1. Eligibility

- All VCA-MCM continuing and fixed-term academic staff members whose employment contract specifies that they must undertake research as part of their academic role are eligible to apply through the Faculty Small Grant Scheme (FSGS).
- This scheme does not provide funding for research activities undertaken whilst on leave, such as long service leave.
- Staff must be research active and have a research agenda.
- Staff who have not satisfactorily acquitted their previous FSGS funding are ineligible to apply.
- Staff who are on fixed term appointments are eligible to apply if their appointment will continue for six months from the deadline. If successful, funding may be awarded on a pro-rata basis according to the duration of appointment.
- Fractional staff may be awarded funding on a pro-rata basis according to their time fraction.
- With the exception of Emeritus Professors, sessional, casual and honorary staff are ineligible for funding from this scheme. Please see Appendix 1 for further details.

2. Eligible Activities

The FSGS supports on a competitive basis academic staff to undertake and successfully complete research projects which produce research outputs with regard to the Faculty definition of research activity: http://vca-mcm.unimelb.edu.au/research/policyandprocedures

FSGS can be used to:

- Support costs of a research project, for example:
  - Travel to undertake fieldwork or archival research
  - The costs of obtaining research materials not readily available through the University
  - Engaging a research assistant
  - Translation costs
- Support researchers to disseminate research findings, for example:
  - Presenting at a conference including registration fees, accommodation and travel expenses
  - Costs associated with exhibiting/performing in a national/international setting that meets the Faculty’s research active definitions and contributes towards the University’s publications collection;
  - Publication costs resulting in an ERA recognized research output.
- Development of pilot projects or establishment of collaborative research relationships that can then form the basis of a significant external research grant (e.g. ARC, NH&MRC) within a specified period of time.
- Per diems for travel will not be funded.
- Travel transfers may be funded up to a maximum of $200 in total.
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 throughout the year, 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 necessity of the expenditure for the completion of the project and the benefit to the Faculty or the research project;
- Whether the project will result in and/or contribute to quantifiable research outputs;
- Whether the project will contribute to the applicant’s research agenda and activities as per the Faculty’s Research Active Definitions;
- 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 funding from other sources, for example, ARC grants or Fellowship funding, that might be used to fund these activities;
- 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 FSGS budget

4. Funding Cap

- Academic staff can apply for up to $5,000 annually pro rata. The funding cap for staff is based on their time fraction (e.g. if somebody is 0.5 FTE, they can apply for up to $2,500 from FSGS/yr) and their contract length (if fixed-term).
- Funding is awarded on a competitive basis. Part funding may be awarded. This is a cap and not an entitlement.
- It is expected that staff will access other sources of research grant funding outside of the Faculty where possible (e.g. The University of Melbourne, ARC, industry and arts funding).
- 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 funding is provided). Evidence of this needs to be provided.
Applications are assessed competitively and within the confines of the annual FSGS budget. Hence, in some instances only partial funding may be awarded.

5. Ethics Approval

Some research projects require human research ethics approval. It is the researcher’s responsibility to ensure they have appropriate approval for their research project prior to commencing. Where appropriate, evidence of ethics approval, or approval applied for and pending, must be provided.

6. Time Limit on Use of Funds

Successful applicants must expend awarded funding within the calendar year of award or forfeit the award. The award does not roll over into the subsequent year.

The University of Melbourne finance team requires that all payments are made prior to the end of the calendar year and in order to allow for processing time, all FSGS monies must be fully expended by early November in the year of award. 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 the University’s financial system.

7. Payment of Funds

Successful applicants will be given advice on how to process expenditure from this fund. A range of standard university financial options will be available. Recipients must keep records of all tax invoices for acquittal and records purposes.

8. Acquittal Report to FSGS Committee

Recipients are required to provide a brief overview of how the funding has been used and the resulting benefits to their research project in the Acquittal process using the online form available on the Faculty Research Office webpage. Successful applicants will receive an Acquittal deadline with their funding letter. 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. This report will be tabled at a Faculty Research Committee meeting and used by the FSGS Committee in the assessment of future FSGS applications and will inform their funding decisions.

9. Queries

For any queries or assistance, please contact the VCA-MCM Research Office. Email: vcamcm-research@unimelb.edu.au Phone: 9035 9175
Appendix 1

Honorary staff

Even though honorary staff are not eligible to be funded from this scheme, if honorary staff are seeking research funding support, they should make an application through the same process that staff make to this scheme.

The FSGS Committee will then consider all timely applications by honorary staff and make a recommendation to the relevant Director, who may award funding, if available and at their discretion, from another source. Awarded funding carries the same processes and conditions as FSGS Staff Awards.