

STEM⁺ Business

INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

Program and Eligibility Guidelines

SCIENCE AND
INDUSTRY
ENDOWMENT
FUND



1. Introduction

The *STEM⁺ Business* Fellowship Program is an industrial research program which supports the collaboration of Early Career Research (ECR) Fellows, employed by Australian Universities or Research Organisations, with participating Australian Small to Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) to work on technical projects that improve the SME's competitive advantage. *STEM⁺ Business* ECR Fellows work full-time for two to three years on a research project identified and led by the SME. The ECR Fellow is supported by the expertise of their employer University or Research Organisation.

The objectives of the program are to:

- build deep connection and collaboration between Universities/Research Organisations and SMEs that allow for knowledge flow between research and industry sectors
- accelerate the adoption of new ideas and technologies by Australian SMEs
- fast track solutions to increase the competitiveness of Australian SMEs
- elevate the significance of Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) disciplines as skills and capabilities central to industrial competitiveness
- provide practical experience in industry for ECRs, thus creating and sustaining a cohort of researchers capable of addressing national challenges

STEM⁺ Business Fellowships are provided through funding from the Science and Industry Endowment Fund (SIEF) and are administered by the CSIRO SME Engagement Centre. The program provides grant funding up to a maximum of \$105,000 per annum (excluding GST) for engagement of the ECR Fellow with the project. The SME is required to make an annual cash contribution to the project that is equal to, or greater than, the grant amount. Both the grant and the SME contribution is to be paid directly to the collaborating University or Research Organisation.

All enquiries regarding eligibility and applications should be directed to the SME Business Manager.

Contact

Jason Barkla
SME Business Manager
SME Engagement Centre
CSIRO
+61 3 9545 8246
jason.barkla@csiro.au

2. Eligibility

An application for the *STEM⁺ Business* Fellowship Program may only be made for eligible projects. To be eligible, a proposed Fellowship must satisfy all of the following eligibility criteria:

i. An eligible SME must:

- have completed, or be in the process of completing, an AusIndustry Researcher in Business or Research Connections / Innovation Connections Grant project

OR

- have an ACN, annual turnover or expenditure of \$1-100 million in the current or two preceding financial years; and
- have collaborated with a University or Research Organisation on a 1-to-1 basis for at least five months on a project that has direct commercial benefit to the SME; and
- have contributed at least \$25,000 in cash (not in-kind) to the University or Research Organisation to assist in delivery of that project.

In either case the business must be solvent.

Furthermore the SME must be prepared to support the following:

- participation of the ECR Fellow in 6 business meetings per annum (eg. Strategy, customer and other non-project meetings) that provide the ECR Fellow with business context
- professional development of the ECR Fellow eg. Allowing them to publish their research outcomes (without sharing sensitive IP).

ii. An eligible Early Career Research Fellow must:

- have completed a research higher degree in a STEM subject or a bachelor degree in engineering with relevant research experience
- have no more than 6 years relevant experience since conferral of the most recent degree
- be employable by an eligible University or Research Organisation
- have the required research skills to achieve the deliverables of the project

iii. An eligible University or Research Organisation must:

- be an Australian University, Publically Funded Research Organisation, or Research-focused Institute
- employ the eligible ECR Fellow for the duration of the project

iv. An eligible Project must:

- be led by an eligible Australian SME

- involve research whereby outcomes cannot be determined in advance on the basis of current knowledge, information or experience, but can be determined by applying a systematic progression of work based on principles of established science
- not be more effectively delivered by the private sector
- involve activities that do not form a normal part of doing business for the SME
- support the professional development of the ECR Fellow
- be aligned to the SME's strategy and be expected to result in commercial outcomes
- be 2 to 3 years in duration
- ensure the ECR Fellow is 100% allocated to the project with a target of over 30% of time engaged with the SME
- have a nominated Research Supervisor with expertise relevant to the project and who is employed by the University or Research Organisation
- have a nominated Mentor from within the SME, such as an experienced company manager who can provide guidance and business context to the researcher

3. Reporting Requirements

All Grant Recipients are expected to participate in bi-annual reporting requirements which will include written reports. There will also be a requirement for regular meetings between all participants on at least a quarterly basis. Through involvement in the program, the participants' name and logo, as well as the project title and grant amount awarded, may be used publically.

4. Funding

STEM Business* research projects are to be co-funded by the SME and SIEF. In-kind contributions from the Universities or Research Organisations are encouraged.

The eligible project is to be costed by the University or Research Organisation based on agreed research outcomes required by the SME. Any in-kind contributions by the University or Research Organisation are to be deducted to determine the annual cost of research delivery to be shared by the SME and SIEF*. SIEF will dollar-match the SME cash contribution up to a maximum of \$105,000 per annum. ie. For projects with an annual cost of delivery under \$210,000, the SME and SIEF are expected to co-fund an equal share. For projects with an annual cost of delivery over \$210,000, SIEF will fund a maximum of \$105,000 per annum and the SME will be expected to fund the remaining balance.

It is suggested that participating SMEs will be invoiced on a quarterly basis, in advance, by the Research Organisation. It is also recommended that quarterly meetings be held between the SME, Research Organisation and ECR Fellow to coincide with the invoicing cycle.

*Please note that certain costs are not fundable by SIEF, particularly those that do not directly support the research project in question. Examples of non-fundable items include:

- Capital works or infrastructure costs
- Professional membership fees, visas, insurance and other indirect costs

It is recommended that the Research Organisation bear these costs as in-kind contribution to ensure clarity regarding the SME/SIEF funding balance.

5. Selection and Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be assessed on eligibility, the opportunities for knowledge transfer between the SME and the University or Research Organisation, anticipated commercial benefit for the SME, and professional development of the ECR Fellow and the SME's staff.