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Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor
(Research Infrastructure)



Research Infrastructure Scheme

Supporting Collaborative Research

Faculty of Medicine and Health Infrastructure Projects

Guidelines for Funding in 2021

Version: V1.0

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1 OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

The Research Infrastructure Scheme (RIS) will provide UNSW with a world-class research environment to attract and retain a critical mass of research excellence. Our investment in research infrastructure and equipment is a strategic commitment to enable our researchers to work at the cutting edge of local, national and international research. To achieve this goal, the scheme aims to enable strategic acquisition of high-end research infrastructure across all research areas at UNSW.

[This scope of this document is to provide funding guidelines specific to the requirements of the Faculty of Medicine and Health's open call for proposals for funding in 2021.](#)

Please refer to communication by your Faculty Dean's Unit for additional information.

2 ELIGIBILITY AND FUNDING RULES

2.1 General Eligibility Criteria and Funding Rules

- a) Applicants must be members of the academic staff of UNSW, and on the payroll of UNSW or have been formally appointed to UNSW according to established processes for Conjoint or clinical appointments for Area Health Services or associated research institutions.
- b) Conjoint and clinical staff must have all their research productivity (e.g., grant applications, postgraduate research student supervision, UNSW affiliation on publications) submitted through and administered by UNSW to be eligible to apply for support under this scheme.
- c) Applicants may be named on a maximum of two proposals in the same funding round.
- d) Emeritus, adjunct, and honorary staff are not eligible to apply for support from this scheme.

3 FUNDING SOURCES AND ARRANGEMENTS

- a) The UNSW RIS is supported by the University's 2025 Strategy funding. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Equipment Grant funding will also be rolled into this scheme.
- b) For Faculty Infrastructure Projects, a formula is used to calculate the distribution of funds across Faculties based on each Faculty's research income averaged over the last three years. HERDC Category 1 income is weighted at 60%, Category 2-4 income at 40%.
- c) Successful projects will be fully funded when possible, hence a Faculty's allocation in a particular year may not exactly match the allocation formula. Adjustments will be made in future years to ensure appropriate allocation over time.
- d) On closure of a RIS project, any unspent funds will be made available to the relevant Faculty's RIS allocation for the next round.
- e) For 2021 allocations, due to the financial impacts of Covid-19 on the RIS budget, Faculties can apply to administer their allocation internally to eligible Faculty infrastructure projects or initiatives. Under this approach, Faculties will need to provide:
 - i. The infrastructure projects or initiatives that they intend to fund, and how these align with their research priorities
 - ii. A brief statement on the eligibility of these projects or initiatives based on the current RIS funding guidelines, including any possible duplication with existing infrastructure.
 - iii. A report on the outcomes of the funded projects and initiatives during the next RIS reporting round (January 2022).

4 SUPPORTED EQUIPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

4.1 Faculty Infrastructure Projects

For the purpose of these projects, research infrastructure is defined as a single significant item (or a complete system or infrastructure initiative) required to support research activity at UNSW.

4.1.1 Items supported:

- a) Faculty-based research infrastructure, including:
 - i. Equipment purchase, installation, maintenance and upgrades;
 - ii. Equipment and major facilities to underpin research activities, excluding capital works;
- b) Items eligible under the NHMRC Equipment Grants Scheme, as assessed against the following additional criteria:
 - i. The equipment should support the highest quality health and medical research, as supported by the NHMRC (or other competitive grant support);
 - ii. Consideration should be given to the lack of access to similar equipment in the institution or region; and,
 - iii. The collaborative gain through the use of the equipment should be explained, e.g. multi-user equipment which crosses disciplines, research groups or departments.

4.1.2 Level and duration of funding:

- a) Approved funds will be released in July 2021 and must be expended by end of 2021.
- b) There is no lower limit set on the level of funding requested. However, proposals must be significant and will be assessed on the basis that they will make a real and positive contribution to the University's research effort and 2025 Strategy.
- c) There is no defined upper limit of funding that can be requested, however, Faculties should consider the size of projects relative to their funding allocation when ranking proposals. The allocation of funds across Faculties is calculated as described under Section b).
- d) For equipment and infrastructure above \$200,000, there must be a compelling reason why this should not be more appropriately obtained through the Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Infrastructure and Equipment Facilities (LIEF) Scheme¹, or other eligible major infrastructure schemes.
- e) Funding for this initiative will be allocated centrally. The payment for equipment and infrastructure will be made by the relevant School/Faculty/MWAC from an approved account on presentation of an appropriate invoice or order.

¹Further details on the ARC LIEF scheme are available from the ARC website at:
<http://www.arc.gov.au/linkage-infrastructure-equipment-and-facilities>

4.2 Items Not Supported

The following items are not supported by the RIS:

- a) Support for libraries, database subscriptions or the creation of new research databases, research computing centres, animal houses, herbaria and salaries.
- b) Offsetting (or partly offsetting) the salaries of technical or research support staff who support research activities (including computing and IT support staff, laboratory technicians, support staff for major instruments and databases, etc.).
- c) The provision of regular office or laboratory infrastructure, which would normally be supplied to members of staff.
- d) Computing equipment designed to support undergraduate teaching programs (e.g. general computer laboratories) or office equipment.
- e) Costs for equipment hire, the acquisition of services or purchase of time on computers, vessels, aerial photography or access to specialised facilities are NOT permitted.
- f) UNSW does not provide 'grant-in-aid' or contributions to equipment that will become assets of other institutions. Any items purchased through this initiative must be listed as assets of UNSW. If they are purchased and installed 'off-site', they still need to be recorded on the University's Assets Register with a fractional ownership if the equipment is jointly owned.
- g) Funding cannot be used for major capital works (buildings, also see Section 0), rental of accommodation, or travel costs directly associated with individual projects.
- h) Salaries of teaching and research staff, including the cost of "buying time" to free such staff to do more research (e.g. through the appointment of administrative staff),
- i) Salaries of staff supporting research at an institutional level or staff involved in research administration (e.g. Research Grants Officer), or postgraduate research student stipends.
- j) Network Lab costs not listed under Section 0, such as overheads for reporting and cost recovery mechanisms, operational costs, equipment upgrades, or maintenance not included in the initial application.
- k) Ongoing maintenance of funded infrastructure beyond the initial application – applicants will need to demonstrate how routine maintenance and operational costs will be met.
- l) "Rainy day" funds, such as funds for potential future repairs, or funds to purchase equipment on an "ad-hock" or "as-required" basis.
- m) Costs associated with networking events and workshops, including venue hire, promotional material (printing etc), catering, gifts and entertainment costs.

5 ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

- a) In 2021, due to the financial impacts of Covid-19 on the RIS budget, Faculties can apply to administer their allocation internally to eligible Faculty infrastructure projects (i.e. via a closed call or otherwise), hence may implement their own assessment and selection process (see section 3(g)).

The following points pertain to applications submitted directly to the PVCRI as part of an open round.

- b) Expression of Interest:
- i. For 2021, there will be no new Network Labs funded, due to the budget reduction.
 - ii. For all other project-types, your School/Faculty or Unit may elect to hold an internal Expression of Interest (EOI) process prior to the invitation for full applications. You will need to enquire with your School/Faculty or Unit to check if this is relevant to you and for the details of the EOI process. You may also check the RIS website for any news regarding internal EOI processes.
- c) Proposals for Faculty Infrastructure Projects will be ranked and recommended for funding by Faculties based on the selection criteria and strategic research priorities for the Faculty.
- d) Proposals together with ranked lists and recommendations are then submitted to the PVCRI who will assess them in consultation with Estate Management (EM) and Research Ethics and Compliance Support (RECS) with regard to eligibility, duplication, ethics and other compliance, WHS, space and services risks. Ultimately, the PVCRI approves infrastructure projects for funding based on Faculty/MWAC ranked recommendations.
- e) Cross-Faculty Infrastructure Project proposals that are ranked disparately will be discussed with the relevant Faculties with the aim to resolve such borderline proposals.
- f) Proposals will be assessed based on the following selection criteria. However, it is acknowledged that Faculties may base their ranking on additional Faculty specific criteria.
- i. Demonstrated need for the proposed infrastructure support 50%
 - What is the current availability and accessibility of this type of infrastructure at UNSW?
 - Is there demonstrated need from researchers wanting to utilise the proposed infrastructure to support current or emerging research strengths?
 - Does the proposed infrastructure improve the use of currently available but underused equipment/facilities?
 - Is there a demonstrated need for specialist staffing and support?
 - What are the access and support plans; e.g. role of the requested support staff?
 - ii. Capability of the proposed infrastructure to enhance collaborations 30%
 - Is the infrastructure relevant to researchers from multiple disciplines/research areas?
 - Has there been strong interest from researchers from other Schools/Faculties to access this equipment?
 - Would any already-established, planned projects or collaborations be dependent on, or benefit from, the proposed infrastructure?
 - iii. Significance and innovative nature of research supported by proposal 20%

- Does the research supported by this infrastructure address a significant problem?
- Is the research supported by this infrastructure innovative and novel?
- How does the research supported by this infrastructure align with Faculty research priorities and the 2025 Strategy²?

6 PROCUREMENT

- Any acquisition of research equipment or infrastructure under this scheme **MUST**, as any procurement activity made on behalf of UNSW Sydney, be in accordance with the University's procurement policy and procedure³. Detailed information is available in the "Buying" section of the Strategic Procurement website⁴.
- According to the University's procurement policy and procedure, minimum three written competitive quotes must be obtained for goods/services above AUD50,000 (excl. GST) and one quote for goods/services below AUD50,000 (excl. GST). Quotes are not required for goods/services below AUD3,000 (excl. GST). See sections 4.3 and 4.10 of the UNSW Procurement Procedure⁵
- When requesting quotes from suppliers for applications to the RIS, please use the "Request for Quotes" (RFQ) template provided by Strategic Procurement⁶.
- If funds are awarded for infrastructure to be placed at an organisation affiliated with UNSW, then UNSW at all times retains title to goods purchased using these funds. The affiliated organisation is also responsible for: a) maintaining the equipment in good working order, unless the goods have, as reasonably agreed between UNSW and the affiliated organisation, reached the end of their useful life; and b) protecting the goods against theft, loss, damage, or unauthorised use.
- It is recommended that you contact the UNSW Strategic Procurement team to discuss your requirements and the support services they offer before commencing any major procurement process.

²See <https://www.2025.unsw.edu.au/>

³ UNSW's procurement policy and procedure link: <https://www.fin.unsw.edu.au/policies-procedures>

⁴<https://www.fin.unsw.edu.au/services/buying> (login required)

⁵ <https://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/procurementprocedure.pdf> (login required)

⁶ The template is available via RIS website: <http://research.unsw.edu.au/unsw-research-infrastructure-scheme>

7 SPACE REQUIREMENTS, RISK ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE SUPPORT

- a) Any application for research equipment or infrastructure under this scheme needs to demonstrate that consideration has been given to:
- i. The availability of on-going suitable space to house/operate the equipment/staff requested.
 - ii. Installation requirements for the equipment; these must be fully costed in the budget. For this purpose, a Site and Services Checklist⁷ must be completed, signed by the Head of School and the applicant, in consultation with EM where necessary, and attached to all applications. In many cases, there will not be any issues regarding installation or space. However, unforeseen issues can lead to major project delays and cost blow outs. The checklist has been designed to pick up any unforeseen circumstances, and as such submission of the completed and signed checklist is mandatory.
 - iii. Any need for refurbishment of existing space to accommodate the equipment. In this case, such costs must be covered by the School/Faculty budget **or** the School/Faculty submission for funding through the Capital Works Program. Such applications can only be supported in principle, subject to approval of the refurbishment budget.
 - iv. The OHS and risk assessment requirements for the design, manufacture, importation, supply, installation/erection, commissioning, use, alteration, dismantling, storage and disposal of the equipment.
 - v. Any other requirements associated with ethics, radiation safety, gene technology or other compliance⁸.
 - vi. The on-going maintenance and technical staff requirements beyond this funding application. These costs must be covered by the School/Faculty budget.

⁷The checklist is available via RIS website: <http://research.unsw.edu.au/unsw-research-infrastructure-scheme>

⁸For more information, visit <https://research.unsw.edu.au/recs>

8 APPLICATION PROCESS

- a) For the 2021 round, please ensure that your Faculty has approved an open call for proposals before proceeding to the application process. If unsure, please contact the PVCRI or your Faculty's Research Management team.
- b) Where the Faculty advises that they will use the normal application process run by the Office of PVCRI, individuals (or teams of individuals) will put forward a strategic case and obtain approval from their Head of School using the scheme's online Application Management System (AMS). The link to AMS as well as detailed guides and instructions are available on the RIS website.
- c) Schools/Faculties may elect to run an internal EOI process prior to accepting full applications. These EOI processes are managed by the Schools/Faculties, and are not managed by the PVC (Research Infrastructure). Please contact your local research office to check if you are required to submit an EOI.
- d) All mandatory sections of the online application, including the attachment of any **supporting documentation**, must be completed. A preview of the application questions is available on the RIS website⁹. These sections include:
 - i. a clear and concise description of equipment, infrastructure or support requested;
 - ii. the strategic purpose of the request including the impact the equipment or infrastructure will have on improving UNSW's research capacity;
 - iii. a statement of the research programs or groups which will be supported by the equipment or infrastructure;
 - iv. details of the funding requested **including quote(s)** and budget justification (equipment funded under the RIS will be expected to undergo a rigorous procurement process to ensure value for money is achieved and probity and risks are managed. This means that the eventual supplier may not be the same as the supplier named in the application. At the same time, it is important that budgets are based on competitive quotes and fully justified); and
 - v. a completed and signed **Site and Services Checklist** (see Section 7a (ii) above).
- e) Failure to attach the required **supporting documents** (i.e. Site and Services Checklist and quote(s)) with your application may result in the application being deemed ineligible for funding.
- f) Applications must be submitted by the deadline in the timeline below.
- g) The Faculty will be required to conduct a ranking and approval process based on RIS selection criteria and Faculty priorities (via the AMS portal or manually) by an agreed deadline (see below). All approved applications, together with their ranking and recommendations, will be forwarded to the PVCRI.

⁹RIS website: <http://research.unsw.edu.au/unsw-research-infrastructure-scheme>

h) Timetable for the 2021 RIS – The [Faculty of Medicine and Health](#) only

Phase	Event/Milestone	Dates
Application Phase	RIS 2021 guidelines published	End May 2021
	Call for full applications via Online Application Management System (AMS) open	Start June 2021
	Applications close	Mon 28th June 2021
Review and Funding	Faculty to complete review, ranking and approval of applications	Monday 12 th July 2021
	Announcement of funding outcomes	Mid July 2021
	Distribution of funds	Mid-Late July 2021

9 POST-AWARD REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

9.1 Faculty Infrastructure Projects

- a) As a condition of the award, all projects must submit a final report by January 31, 2022.
- b) Reporting will be conducted via an online survey system that will be made available to successful applicants in November of the year of release of funds.¹⁰
- c) Requests for an extension for project expenditure can be submitted during the annual and final reporting process.
- d) Reports will be used by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Infrastructure) to assess project progress and to establish a register of equipment / infrastructure funded under the Research Infrastructure Scheme. The register will be made available on the Research Infrastructure Scheme website.
- e) Failure to comply with reporting requirements may affect approval for carrying funds forward, if required, and may impact eligibility for future rounds of RIS.

10 RESOURCES AND CONTACT

- a) Additional resources for this funding scheme, such as templates, report forms and Frequently Asked Questions, are available on the Research Infrastructure Scheme website: <https://research.unsw.edu.au/unsw-research-infrastructure-scheme>.
- b) For enquiries or advice on this scheme, please contact the Office of the PVC (Research Infrastructure) via pvcresin@unsw.edu.au.

¹⁰ Link to current RIS report form: <https://forms.office.com/r/CNvivhvCff>