



**UNSW**  
SYDNEY

Australia's  
Global  
University

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

## UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme

Supporting UNSW's commitment to ethical  
animal research

# UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme Guidelines for Funding in 2023-2024



# 1 OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

The principles of the 3Rs (Russell & Burch 1959<sup>1</sup>) are central to the ethical conduct of research involving animals and are defined in the Governing Principles in Australia's animal research [Code](#)<sup>2</sup> as:

## Replacement

*of animals with other methods or with less sentient organisms*

*This can include the use of epidemiological data, physical and chemical analysis; computer, mathematical and inanimate synthetic models; simulations, in-vitro systems; non-sentient organisms; cadavers; and clinical cases.*

*Through using appropriately designed and analysed animal experiments that are robust and reproducible; optimising breeding to minimise production of excess animals; maximising data available from each animal with ACEC-approved reuse; sharing tissue and biological material or banking for subsequent distribution; and reducing variability in experimental results.*

## Reduction

*in the number of animals used to achieve outcomes*

## Refinement

*of techniques used to minimise the adverse impact on animals*

*Improving research animal welfare by using the latest in-vivo technologies; improving the understanding of the impact of welfare on animal studies and ensuring that all procedures are performed to the highest standards of competency by skilled persons.*

The UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme was established to support science-based research projects into the replacement, reduction and refinement of the use of animals in research and highlights UNSW's commitment to these principles.

A total of \$525,000 will be available for a combined 2023 and 2024 round to support projects of up to 18-months.

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<sup>1</sup> The Principles of Human Experimental Technique. Russell, WMS & Burch RL 1959

<sup>2</sup> The Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes ('the Code'), 8<sup>th</sup> edition (2013). <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/australian-code-care-and-use-animals-scientific-purposes>

## 2 RESEARCH GRANTS UNDER THE 3Rs SCHEME

Research grants up to \$100,000 will be offered in the 2023-2024 round to support projects for 12 months from December 2023 to December 2024. Projects for an 18-months period from December 2023 until June 2025 will be considered if a particular project would benefit from a longer timeframe.

To be eligible for funding, projects may be in any science-based field relevant to the 3Rs including:

- Modifications to existing research techniques using whole-animal models and/or the development of novel techniques which fully or partially supersede animal models.
- Innovative research from tissue-based models (such as organoids, stem cells), molecular techniques, analytical and computational models, study design or refinement techniques, and translational medicine applications.
- The investigation of environmental conditions for the containment of animals to ensure that their welfare and husbandry is supported and their physical, behavioural and social needs are met.
- The replacement of sentient animal models with other life forms considered less capable of experiencing pain and distress such as invertebrates or immature forms of vertebrates.
- Development of biobanks of animal-derived material that would facilitate tissue-sharing and lead to a reduction in animal numbers.

Applications will be viewed most favourably if they feature one or more of the following:

- The primary focus of the project is on the advancement of the 3Rs rather than the 3Rs being an incidental element.
- The project has the potential to significantly impact the research culture around the use of animals.
- The project is unlikely to be eligible for funding under other grant schemes such as government or philanthropic medical research funding programs.
- Have considered the application of existing infrastructure and equipment at UNSW, such as the [Tecniplast Digital Ventilated Caging](#) system, [Biospecimen Services](#) or the [BRIL](#) imaging modalities.
- Organoids and related technologies, given the high promise these technologies hold for the 3Rs. If considering a project in this field, you are encouraged to consult the UNSW [3D Culture Laboratory](#) to explore opportunities for collaboration across UNSW and eliminate potential duplication of projects.
- Involve the acquisition and sharing of technical skills that improve competency in *in-vivo* animal procedures and will lead to improved welfare outcomes for experimental animals.

Eligible persons from UNSW affiliated organisations are welcome to apply. Collaboration with other institutions is welcome although at least one leading member of the research team must be a member of the academic staff of UNSW (further details below).

### 3 ELIGIBILITY

At least one leading member of the research team named on the application must be a member 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 affiliated research institutions.

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.

Emeritus and honorary staff are eligible to apply for support from this scheme provided another senior member of the project team meets the above criteria.

Applicants may be named on a maximum of two proposals in the same funding round.

Projects involving animals must meet all requirements for Animal Ethics and other regulatory approvals. For the purposes of this scheme, the term 'animal' refers to any live non-human vertebrate (that is, fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals encompassing domestic animals, purpose-bred animals, livestock and wildlife) as well as cephalopods and decapod crustaceans.

### 4 FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

#### 4.1 Source and limits on funding

The UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme is supported by the University's Strategy 2025 funding.

UNSW will provide a total of \$525,000 for the 2023-2024 round to support projects of up to \$100,000 for a 12-month period from December 2023 to December 2024 or 18-month period from December 2023 to June 2025.

There is no lower limit on the level of funding requested. However, proposals must be significant in terms of scientific merit and/or potential contribution to advancing the 3Rs as outlined above in Section 2.

If project funds are not expended (or not likely to be expended) within the budgeted timeframe due to unforeseen circumstances, funding may be carried forward for a maximum of six months. Requests for an extension for project expenditure should be submitted prior to the final report.

Funding will be released to successful applicants in late 2023 and early 2024.

Funds not awarded or distributed in the 2023-2024 round will not be carried forward.

#### 4.2 Items supported

Any costs that would be incurred directly in pursuing the aims of the project may be supported by funds from the UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme. These could include, for example:

- Support services or materials such as IT resources, animal facility charges, consultancies, regulatory fees, access to specialist services and publication costs to help disseminate findings;
- Purchase of animals and consumables;
- Equipment purchase, installation, maintenance and upgrades;

- Salaries (whole or in part) for technical or research support arising directly from the needs of the project; and
- Travel if essential for the project's key research objectives.

Salary levels (where applicable) must be justified in the application.

Funding for this initiative will be allocated centrally. All project expenditure will be managed by the relevant School/Faculty from an approved account on presentation of an appropriate invoice or order.

If funding through the UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme is offered in subsequent years, successful applicants are free to apply for new grants under the scheme whether to build on a previously funded project or to initiate a new project.

### **4.3 Items not supported**

The following items are not supported by the UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme:

- The provision of regular office or laboratory infrastructure or equipment which would normally be supplied to members of staff.
- '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.
- Funding cannot be used for major capital works or rental of accommodation.
- Salaries of existing teaching and research staff employed on other grants or University funds (including the cost of "buying time" to free such staff to do more research).
- Salaries of staff supporting research at an institutional level or staff involved in research administration (e.g. Research Grants Officer).
- Overheads not included in the initial application.
- "Rainy day" funds, such as funds for potential future repairs, or funds to purchase equipment on an "ad-hoc" or "as-required" basis.
- Costs associated with networking events and workshops, including venue hire, promotional material (printing etc), catering, gifts, entertainment costs and conference travel.
- Funding will not be provided for projects that have substantial overlap with projects funded through other internal or external sources.
- Costs that can be reasonably funded through other means, such as commercial research contracts or other grant schemes.
- Equipment or services that are reasonably available to the research team as an existing or shared resource or through collaboration.

## **5 ASSESSMENT PROCESS AND CRITERIA**

Applications are to be submitted to the PVCRI and may be assessed in consultation with Research Ethics and Compliance Support (RECS) and Estate Management (EM) with regard to eligibility, duplication, ethics and other compliance, WHS, space and services risks. Note, however, that applicants are also expected to have carefully considered these and other risks prior to submitting an application.

Eligible proposals will be assessed by a specially constituted UNSW 3Rs Grant Panel which will decide which proposals are approved and funded. The Panel will operate under procedures for managing confidentiality and Conflicts of Interest.

Membership of the UNSW 3Rs Grant Panel will be comprised of:

- Director, Animal Services (Chair)
- Head of the Biological Resources Imaging Laboratory
- A representative from the Faculty of Medicine and Health
- A representative from the Faculty of Science
- A representative from the Faculty of Engineering
- A person from a non-scientific background with a demonstrable interest in animal welfare or ethics nominated by the PVCRI
- Non-voting representative from the office of the PVCRI with oversight of the budget.

The Panel may co-opt individuals to provide additional expertise when considered necessary. Applicants must clearly specify in their application if there are any restrictions they wish to be applied to consultation with parties other than the constitutive members of the Panel.

The key criteria to be considered by the Panel will be:

- The quality of the science.
- The potential to advance the 3Rs.
- The extent to which the project is innovative or novel.
- The feasibility of achieving the stated aims.
- The degree of alignment with the priorities outlined in Section 2 above.

The Panel reserves the right not to award the full quantity of available funding if the applications received are deemed not to warrant this.

## 6 PROCUREMENT

Any acquisition of items under this scheme MUST, as any procurement activity made on behalf of UNSW, be in accordance with the University's [Buying and Procurement procedures](#).

If funds are awarded for items 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.

## 7 SPACE REQUIREMENTS, RISK ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE SUPPORT

Applications under the UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme must demonstrate that consideration has been given to:

- The availability of on-going suitable space to house or otherwise meet the needs of any animals that would be involved in the proposal in accordance with the *Australian Code for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes*.
- Any other requirements associated with ethics, radiation safety, gene technology or other compliance. In particular, proposals involving animals which would be subject to the Code or other regulations relating to best practice in animal research (whether mandatory or voluntary) can only be supported in principle, subject to approval from the UNSW Animal Care and Ethics Committee and other regulatory requirements.
- The availability of on-going suitable space to house/operate the equipment/staff requested.
- If equipment is requested as part of the proposal:
  - installation requirements for the equipment must be fully costed in the budget. For this purpose, a Site and Services Checklist must be completed, signed by the Head

of School and the applicant, in consultation with Estate Management 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.

- The WHS and risk assessment requirements for the design, manufacture, importation, supply, installation/erection, commissioning, use, alteration, dismantling, storage and disposal of the equipment.
- The on-going maintenance and technical staff requirements for the equipment beyond this funding application, if there are any. These costs must be covered by the School/Faculty budget.
- Any need for refurbishment of existing space to accommodate equipment or other requirements of the proposal. These must be covered by the School/Faculty budget. Such applications can only be supported in principle, subject to approval of the refurbishment budget.

## 8 APPLICATION PROCESS

### 8.1 Forms

Applications must be submitted via email to [pvcresin@unsw.edu.au](mailto:pvcresin@unsw.edu.au) as a single, searchable pdf file using the application form (and supporting documentation if applicable) downloadable via the [UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme website](#).

All mandatory sections of the application, including the attachment of any supporting documentation, must be completed. Failure to attach the required supporting documents with your application may result in the application being deemed ineligible for funding.

Applications must be submitted by the deadline shown in the table below.

### 8.2 Timetable

Key dates for the 2023-2024 3Rs Grant scheme are as follows:

Phase	Event/Milestone	Dates
Call for applications	Applications open and guidelines published	Wednesday 27 September 2023
	<b>Applications close</b>	<b>Sunday 29 October 2023</b>
Review and approval	<b>Announcement of funding outcomes</b>	<b>Mid November 2023</b>
Funding	Release of funds	Early 2024

## 9 CONDITIONS AND REPORTING

### 9.1 Named investigators

All personnel named as investigators on the application are expected to provide direct intellectual and/or practical input into the project. Personnel providing only material support or whose association is only in an indirect or *ex officio* capacity should not be listed among the named investigators.

### 9.2 Post-award variations

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Infrastructure) must be consulted as soon as possible if a substantial variation from the funded research plan is considered necessary. Any such changes may require approval from the UNSW 3Rs Grants Panel before proceeding.

Any proposed changes involving the use of animals are subject to the approval processes and policies of the UNSW Animal Care and Ethics Committee.

### 9.3 Dissemination of outcomes

In addition to supporting innovative research directed towards advancing the 3Rs, the scheme seeks to encourage others to explore and implement new opportunities to replace, reduce or refine the use of animals in research. It is therefore important that all recipients of 3Rs funding ensure their findings are disseminated widely including, where appropriate, outside the scientific community.

Recipients may be required to give a presentation of their findings at a meeting of the UNSW ACEC or other event(s) that would help raise awareness of the 3Rs Grants Scheme, its outcomes and the 3Rs more generally.

Whenever presenting their findings, recipients must acknowledge the source of funding as the UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme.

### 9.4 Post-award reporting

Recipients of funding from the 2023-2024 UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme round must submit a final report by 30 June 2025 unless an extension is agreed in advance.

Reports should be submitted in the reporting template to be made available through the Scheme, and must include:

- A description of the research outcomes in lay terms and how the project has contributed to advancing the 3Rs.
- A summary of research outcomes in technical terms if not covered above.
- An account of expenditure of funds.
- A list of presentations or publications resulting from the work.

Reports will be used by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research Infrastructure) to assess project outcomes and guide further development of the UNSW 3Rs Grants Scheme.

Failure to comply with reporting requirements may affect approval for carrying funds forward, if required, and may impact eligibility for future rounds of the UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme.

## 10 CONTACTS

For enquiries, please contact the Office of the PVC (Research Infrastructure) via [pvcresin@unsw.edu.au](mailto:pvcresin@unsw.edu.au).

Further information is also available on the [UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme website](#).

## 11 RESOURCES

- UNSW 3Rs Grant Scheme Website: <https://research.unsw.edu.au/unsw-3rs-grant-scheme>



- UNSW Buying and Procurement website: <https://unsw.sharepoint.com/sites/finance-hub/SitePages/Buying%20and%20Paying.aspx>
- Animal Ethics Infolink (NSW Department of Primary Industries): Three Rs. <https://www.animaethics.org.au/three-rs>
- The National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Replacements of Animals in Research (UK): <https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/who-we-are/3rs>