OVERVIEW

The 2023 Macquarie University Research Acceleration Scheme [MQRAS] is designed to seed outstanding projects that have a high potential to attract external funding.

Applicants can apply for funding up to $50,000 to cover research project costs for a maximum period of 12 months. The intention of this scheme is to enable research productivity and to accelerate opportunities that will result in increases in HERDC-reportable research income (external research income) in the short term (12-24 months). It is expected that awardees of MQRAS funding will apply for external research funding within 12 months of completing their MQRAS project.

KEY DATES

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Application Open date:</th>
<th>Monday 7 August 2023</th>
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<tr>
<td>Application Close date:</td>
<td>5pm, Wednesday 30 August 2023</td>
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Please complete the MQRAS application form (available from the MQRAS website) and submit via Pure by the above closing date and time.

Late applications will not be considered under any circumstance. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure the Pure application record has Faculty approvals (Head of Department/School and Deputy Dean of Research and Innovation) in place prior to the deadline. Applications that do not have approvals in place will not be considered for funding by the assessment panel.

CONTACT

Grant Development Team
Research Services
grant.development@mq.edu.au
(02) 9850 6848
ELIGIBILITY

It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure they meet all eligibility requirements for MQRAS funding. Applicants who do not meet the eligibility requirements will have their applications deemed ‘not for further consideration’ and it will not be assessed by the panel.

- Applicants must define the type and term of their appointment in the application.
- Noting one of the priorities of the scheme is to seed additional external HERDC-reportable research income, applicants must be employed for a sufficient term to be able to submit applications for external research income with Macquarie as the Administering Organisation within 24 months of the award of the MQRAS funding.
- Macquarie Honorary staff can be named on the research team as a Macquarie University Chief Investigator, but not as the Lead Chief Investigator.
- Macquarie Higher Degree Research Candidates may be named as Associate Investigators on the research team where the proposed research project is aligned with their research area/s and their involvement will genuinely aid in the career development of the HDR candidate.
  - MQRAS funding cannot provide support for HDR candidates – see eligible costs in Appendix A for details.
- Non-Macquarie researchers (external collaborators) may be named as Associate Investigators on the research team as an indication of current or potential collaboration.
  - MQRAS funding cannot be used to support ANY employment costs associated with external collaborators.
- A researcher who is employed to undertake a specific research project(s) that is/are funded by one or more externally funded grant may lead an MQRAS application:
  - If a researcher on a fixed-term contract funded by external research income does apply to lead an MQRAS application, they must ensure that the project requested under the MQRAS application is distinctly different from the project(s) already funded and from which the researcher is employed.
- Lead Chief Investigators who have been awarded MQRAS funding are not eligible to apply for additional MQRAS funding (as the lead CI) within 3 years of the start date of an award.
- For applications that involve research teams from different Departments and/or Schools within Macquarie:
  - It is the responsibility of the Lead Chief Investigator to ensure that the Macquarie collaborators who are from Departments and/or Schools that are different to the Lead Chief Investigator have discussed the proposal with their line management and have approval to dedicate workload to the MQRAS project as outlined in the application.
  - By submitting the application for funding, the Chief Investigator is certifying that the wider research team on the MQRAS project has approval from their relevant line management to undertake the project within their allocated workload.
- Funding from MQRAS awards CANNOT be transferred to an external institution, partner or organisation.
- Applicants must adhere to word count limits and formatting requirements listed for each criterion. Assessors will not read beyond the word count limit and applications that are well beyond the word count limit will not be considered by the assessment panel under any circumstance.
- Projects that are substantially the same as those that have previously received funding under any MQ internal research funding scheme are not eligible for MQRAS funding.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICATIONS

- MQRAS funds are **not eligible for carry forward** beyond the 12-month award. If awarded, applicants must discuss any carry forward requirements with the Head of School/Department and Faculty Research Office prior to submitting a request to carry forward.

- MQRAS sole Chief Investigator applications will be accepted but priority will be given to cross-disciplinary applications that exhibit consilience – enhancing linkages across the University, as per Research Strategy 2025.

- The MQRAS panel is multidisciplinary, and applicants should draft their application in plain language and avoid the overuse of technical jargon, including the use of acronyms to ensure a diverse audience can understand the proposal. Failure to do so will impact the funding outcomes.

- Applicants who have identified external partner(s) that are ready to contribute cash and/or in-kind to a project are recommended to apply for support through the Macquarie Enterprise Partnership Scheme (EPS), which provides matched funding by Macquarie University.

- Applicants are advised that the panel recommends funding for applications of **Outstanding** or **Excellent** quality, according to the assessment rubric (see Appendix B).

CERTIFICATION BY LEAD CHIEF INVESTIGATOR

In submitting an application for MQRAS funding, the Lead Chief Investigator certifies:

- That all information submitted at time of application is accurate and can be verified at any time, including evidence that other Macquarie-based researchers listed in the application have discussed their involvement in the MQRAS project and have approval from their line management in place prior to submission of the application.
  - The Lead Chief Investigator must keep email records of the correspondence between other internal collaborators and their line management as Research Services may ask for these records at any time. Failure to provide evidence when asked will make the application ineligible for funding.
- That MQRAS funds are not eligible for carry forwards. Funds must be fully expended by the end date of the award.
- That any publications arising from the research will be uploaded to Pure at the publication acceptance stage;
- That Research Services may ask you to report on the progress of your proposed external funding applications as you outlined in your application for MQRAS funding. Failure to provide a report when requested by Research Services may impact ongoing eligibility for internal strategic research funding;
- That they have reviewed the guidelines, application form, and assessment rubric (Appendix B) in full prior to applying
- That the proposed MQRAS project has not been awarded internal and/or external research funding, nor does it replicate any research projects that have previously been awarded funding, either internally or externally.
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

1. Strategy and schedule for attracting substantial external funding (40%)
   A. The application demonstrates that there is a clear and achievable strategy and schedule for attracting substantial external funding within the next 12-24 months. It is expected that the application will provide specific details of the external funding and/or partnerships pathways that will be targeted based on the success of this project. An outstanding application will provide specific details of proposed external funding including: targeted funding body and scheme/s, timelines, individual versus team-based applications, a robust justification for selecting the relevant scheme/funding body that includes reference to the funding opportunity relative to career level and discipline area/s

2. Alignment with at least one of Macquarie University’s 5 Future-shaping Research Priorities and demonstration of membership or involvement in one of the University’s research centres or collectives (10%)
   A. Applicants must provide a well justified alignment with at least one of the 5 Future-shaping Research Priorities, including connections to relevant themes and streams listed in the Research Framework, as well as demonstrate involvement in, or collaboration with, a University or faculty-based research centre. An outstanding application will describe alignment with priorities, themes and streams as well as reference to their involvement in research collectives, such as the University-level Research Centres.

3. Summary of novel research project and rationale for needing internal funds to accelerate outcomes (40%)
   A. Applicants must define and describe the proposed project including:
      i. Novelty of project
      ii. Timeline of project
      iii. Proposed/intended outcomes of project (outcomes can include academic outputs such as journal articles or book chapters, but must also include wider benefits)
   B. Strategic relevance of this project and rationale for requiring internal strategic funding to accelerate the proposed project:
      i. Applicants must demonstrate the strategic relevance of their project and provide insights as to how the project will assist in furthering their research career/trajectory/ambitions.
      ii. Applicants should address the cross-disciplinary scope of the project OR demonstrate the rationale as to why the project should be undertaken within a single discipline.
      iii. How the internal funds will help to apply for external research funding in a period of 12–24-month post award of MQRAS funding.
         a) Applicants must describe what, if any, other funding has been sought to support this project. If external research funding has not been applied for, applicants must provide an explanation as to why they are seeking internal strategic funding in the first instance.

4. Budget and budget Justification (10%)

Applicants can apply for up to $50,000 over a 12-month period. An itemised budget is not required.

Applicants must ensure that the budget is well justified and appropriate to the project. Requests may not be funded in full if not well justified and the panel reserves the right to refuse funding if the application has not provided a well-justified budget. Budget justifications describe the rationale (the why) for the request and should not be presented as an itemised list of expenses. Applicants should refer to Appendix A for a list of eligible project costs.
APPENDIX A: ELIGIBILITY PROJECT COSTS

Personnel

- Applicants should indicate the level and duration of assistance required and cost it accordingly.
- All requests for funding of casual research personnel must include allowance for on-costs at the rate of 17%.
- The panel will look favourably on applications that offer employment to current HDR candidates (within the applicable parameters).
- The University will not fund requests for CI or AI salaries, including costs associated with HDR candidates.

Use this link for current ‘MQ Salary Rates for Proposals’

Applicants are reminded that approval from the Recruitment Exceptions Board (REB) will be required prior to commencing recruitment (this does not apply for staff on casual contracts).

Teaching Relief

MQRAS will not provide support for teaching relief (or similar, such as marking buy-out).

Equipment

A descriptive statement of each item of equipment must be included in the budget justification. Quotation requirements are outlined in the Macquarie University Strategic Procurement process.

Applicants are reminded that all equipment purchased with research grants remains the property of Macquarie University.

Effective 1 May 2020, all purchases of ICT hardware, software and services (including ICT related consulting and as-a-service subscriptions) across the University and its controlled entities must follow an established process via the OneHelp (Service Now) platform.

- For items not available on the Service Now Catalogue, Chief Information Officer (CIO) approval must be obtained in advance of the commencement of a procurement process or a purchase. This approval can be initiated via a OneHelp ticket under the CIO Approval for ICT Expenditure request type in OneHelp. Purchase requisitions and procurement processes for ICT-related expenditure will require a copy of the completed OneHelp approval to proceed.
- If the purchase is intended to be made using a corporate credit card, approval from the CIO via OneHelp must be obtained before purchasing on a credit card and a copy of the OneHelp approval must be attached to the credit card claim.
- The ICT asset management and expenditure approval protocol does not replace normal financial delegations required for procurement; it is an additional approval protocol established to complement the financial approval process.

Consumables and Maintenance

Consumables and any equipment, software or licenses costing less than $1,000 should be listed in this section. Each of these items must be fully justified and essential to the project.

Travel

Requests for travel funds are discouraged and will only be considered when the travel is essential to the research project.

Any funds awarded for travel are subject to the Macquarie University Travel Policy.
**Visiting Researchers**

Travel requests for overseas or interstate research collaborators, must be essential to the delivery of the project. The role of the visitor must be clearly identified within the project plan in terms of the research to be undertaken, the expertise of the visiting researcher and outcomes to be achieved across the duration of the visit.

Requests for short visits for the purposes of general networking, meetings, and the strengthening of collaborative links are not supported.

A two-page, informative CV and a list of refereed publications (since 1 January 2018) for the proposed visitor must be attached to the application.

The visit must take place during the grant funding allocation period (without exception). Visiting researchers will be appointed via normal Faculty procedures.

**Other eligible costs, which may include:**

i. access to national and international (where remote access is feasible) research and infrastructure facilities including specialist archives, collections and databases;

ii. access to technical workshop services linked to and justified explicitly against the project (for example, machine tools and qualified technicians);

iii. workshops and focus groups that are essential for the conduct of the project (including reasonable hospitality costs such as morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea); and

iv. reasonable essential costs to allow a participant who is a carer, or who personally requires care or assistance, to undertake domestic travel essential to the project;
   a. Given these costs attract Fringe Benefits Tax [FBT], calculation of related carer costs must apply a multiplier of x 2.5 (for example: if the relevant cost totals $100, the actual cost which should be reflected within the budget should be $250 and should note ‘including FBT’). The maximum allowable primary carer related costs in any application is not allowed to exceed $2,000 per application, including FBT.
   b. Applicants must be advised that failure to adequately budget for FBT will lead to project budget shortfalls that then must be covered by the Department/School/Faculty budgets. No additional allocation of funding from the DVCR strategic research budget will be awarded to manage incorrect budgeting of FBT.

**Grant funds cannot be used for the following:**

i. Any portion of a CI’s salary;

ii. HDR stipends, tuition or other related HDR costs;

iii. teaching relief;

iv. teaching materials;

v. basic facilities that should normally be funded by Macquarie University;

vi. capital works and general infrastructure costs;

vii. costs not directly related to the project, including but not limited to professional membership fees, professional development courses, fees for patent application or visas, relocation costs, entertainment costs (other than reasonable hospitality costs), purchase of alcohol, insurance, gifts, mobile phones (purchase or call charges) and other indirect costs;

viii. fees for international students or the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS);
# APPENDIX B: ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Alignment with Five Future Shaping Research Priorities and University or faculty-based research centres. (10%)</th>
<th>Summary of novel research project and rationale for needing internal funds to accelerate outcomes (40%)</th>
<th>Budget and budget Justification (10%)</th>
<th>Strategy and schedule for attracting substantial external funding (40%)</th>
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<td>(90+)</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Exceptional alignment that is well justified and linked to themes/streams. Evidence of strong involvement in research collectives, such as the University-level Research Centres.</td>
<td>A highly significant and/or innovative project with clearly justified need for immediate funding. Clearly demonstrates why funding is needed now to accelerate research.</td>
<td>Near-flawless in design/concept and justification. No errors in calculations and very well justified budget that clearly outlines why the funding is needed.</td>
<td>Highly feasible strategy to apply for external funding within the 12-24 term. Very clear plan aligned with career stage and discipline.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(80-90)</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent alignment that is well justified and linked to themes/streams, and is associated with research collectives, such as the University-level Research Centres.</td>
<td>Significant and/or innovative project with clearly justified need for immediate funding. Clearly demonstrates why funding is needed now to accelerate research.</td>
<td>Well-defined budget and justification. No errors in calculations and very well justified budget that clearly outlines why the funding is needed.</td>
<td>Feasible strategy to apply for external funding within the 12–24-month term. Clear plan that aligns with career stage and discipline.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(70-80)</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Alignment that is justified and linked to 5 Future Shaping Priorities, but loosely linked to themes and streams.</td>
<td>Important and/or innovative project with clearly justified need for immediate funding. Clearly demonstrates why funding is needed now to accelerate research.</td>
<td>Generally clear budget request and contains only minor concerns as to justification. No errors in calculations.</td>
<td>Strategy and schedule for external funding applications is clearly articulated and aligned with career stage.</td>
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<td>(60-70)</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Alignment that is adequately justified but not linked to themes and streams.</td>
<td>Innovative project with clearly justified need for immediate funding. A sound research proposal that lacks a compelling element in some respect.</td>
<td>Budget request is reasonable but lacks solid justification and may have errors in calculations.</td>
<td>Strategy and schedule for external funding applications requires additional planning and is not fully aligned to career and/or discipline.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(50-60)</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Minimal alignment referenced. Lacks clear links to themes and streams.</td>
<td>The proposal has potential, but lacks clarity, and would require significant development to be supportable</td>
<td>Contains some major budget design flaws and fails to fully justify the reason why funding is needed.</td>
<td>Strategy and schedule is poorly articulated and misaligned to career stage and discipline.</td>
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<td>(less than 50)</td>
<td>Poor or flawed</td>
<td>Poorly articulated alignment.</td>
<td>The proposal is unclear and does not address a research question that is important for the relevant field</td>
<td>Has one or more fatal design flaws, fails to justify the reasons for funding.</td>
<td>Fails to provide strategy or schedule and lacks coherent narrative.</td>
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