Enterprise Partnerships Scheme

Pilot Research Grants

Funding Rules

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1. Purpose of Scheme
The Macquarie University Enterprise Partnerships Scheme is intended to support the establishment and development of mutually beneficial links with private sector and government enterprises. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, the scheme is aimed at a link with a partner where no partnership existed previously or a partner who has a current low level relationship with the university. The primary aims of the scheme are:

- to facilitate a diversification of the university’s research funding base, including direct funding from research end-users by way of commissioned research and collaborative arrangements;
- to enhance the process of transferring the results of our research to our environment; and
- to increase the efficiency of resources engaged in acquiring research funding, principally by the creation of repeated research funding from these enterprises.

While the University is committed to continuation of its well-established record with Australian Competitive Grants, it needs to broaden its research funding base to achieve the MQ@50 target of more than doubling its research income reported under HERDC from 2005 to 2014. This target is seen as a crucial ingredient in achieving the corporate goal that, at 50, Macquarie will be among the top eight research universities in Australia and among the top 200 in the world.

To further this strategy, under this Scheme University staff may seek support for research projects involving private or government enterprises which are prepared to provide a cash
contribution to the project which at least matches the sum requested from the University. The maximum amount that may be requested from the University is $50,000.

Where an application is unsuccessful, applicants are encouraged to reapply. While the Scheme is intended to be for pilot projects (to encourage ongoing collaboration with a particular partner), researchers are not precluded from applying to the Scheme a number of times, either with different partners, or the same partner (although in the latter case the projects must be clearly differentiated).

2. Eligibility

2.1 Eligibility of Applicant

To be eligible to apply for funding, an applicant must normally be a member of the academic staff holding a continuing or annual appointment at the commencement, and for the duration, of the grant period.

2.2 Eligibility of Industry Partners

Most external agencies and institutions are potential collaborators in any proposed project. In addition to the private sector organisations, the following may also be accepted as “industry partners”:
- Commonwealth government agencies (excluding research organisations such as CSIRO, DSTO, and ANSTO);
- State government agencies;
- Local government authorities; and
- Foundations and charitable organisations.

There is no distinction between overseas-based and Australian-based collaborating partners. However, the establishment of a strong partnership must be shown to have potential economic, social or environmental benefit to Australia.

The Enterprise Partnerships Scheme is designed to promote genuine linkages between the University and suitable research end-users. Applicants must demonstrate in their applications that the project and the partnership will fulfil that aim, and is not merely a stratagem to elicit maximum subsidisation from the University for the benefit of the partner.

3. Enterprise Partner

3.1 Costing and Implications

The nature of the scheme is designed for situations where both the University and the Enterprise partner contribute resources to a research project aimed at establishing a longer term relationship, and both benefit from the results.

Researchers should understand the real cost of research, and convey this understanding to any intending collaborating partner: it is important that both researchers and research end-users alike realise that the cost of research is far higher than the direct project costs. Indirect costs (infrastructure, administrative and management costs) average around 230% of direct salaries across the university. Thus, even where an Enterprise partner provides 50% of the direct costs for the project in cash, it should be understood that the University is still providing a very significant subsidy to the research.

Where a research end-user insists on owning all project output (materials and/or intellectual property), the policy of the University is that the end-user pay full costs. However, with careful negotiation this outcome will only be considered necessary by both parties in the minority of cases. Most Enterprise partners will be quite prepared to accept rights to exploit the results of the project on reasonable commercial terms as an acceptable return for the co-investment.
3.2 Enterprise Partner Agreements
It is a condition of any award under this scheme that before any University account is opened to accommodate either the University or the collaborating partner funds, there must be a written and fully-executed Enterprise Partner Agreement, providing for specific matters including the role and contribution of each partner in the project, arrangements for any postgraduate research student engaged upon the project, ownership of intellectual property, confidentiality, publications issues, and so on. The Research Office generates all agreements relating to this funding scheme. The Enterprise Partnerships and Commercialisation team will assist the researcher to negotiate the commercial terms of the agreement. It would usually be advantageous if the researcher were to contact the relevant member of that team prior to applying for funds under this scheme (see p 5, Section 11). That team member is also available to assist researchers find eligible partners for the scheme.

No staff member may commit the University, that is, sign contracts or agreements on behalf of the University. Only the Vice-Chancellor or his delegates may do so, and in the case of research agreements and contracts, this is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

3.3 Requirements Regarding Collaborating Partners
The application must include a letter of commitment from the intended collaborating partner. This letter must state the cash sum the collaborating partner intends to contribute, and a statement to the effect that the partner has read and understands these Funding Rules and the purpose of the scheme. The cash contribution must at least match dollar-for-dollar the amount requested from the University under the Scheme. The maximum available from the University is $50,000; collaborating partners may wish to contribute more than this amount.

4. The application process
4.1 Submission
The application form is available electronically via the Research Office Website (provide link). Applicants are encouraged to consult the relevant Faculty member of the Enterprise Partnerships and Commercialisation team prior to completing the form.

4.2 Assessment
Upon receipt of an application, the Partnerships Panel will carry out an evaluation of the project. The nominated members may consult with the applicant, via the Grants Officer, if clarification is required. The Chair of the Panel, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), has authority to approve funding. The result is then conveyed to the applicant by the Research Office.

It is University policy that, where a member of the Partnerships Panel has a vested interest in an application, that member will dissociate her/him from its assessment. The Panel's decision can be appealed only on process grounds.

5. Budget
A budget must not merely state proposed expenditure in general terms. The University will not support vague, general requests for assistance. It is essential that accurate cost estimates are provided and a justification is given for all budget items. This justification must be made in relation to the aims and the research plan of the project. Without justification, applications are not likely to be successful in gaining support.
As the overall aim of the scheme is to foster strong relationships with industry and government by delivering useful results in a timely manner, activities that are likely to support this aim are most likely to be funded. Examples are bona fide teaching relief so that the researcher can focus on the project and travel expenses that will facilitate an ongoing face-to-face communication with the partner. More general items which can probably be sourced by other means, for example computers, are unlikely to be funded.

6. Criteria for Assessment
In assessing an application, the Partnerships Panel will use the following criteria:

- The primary criteria are:
  - The extent to which the applicants have demonstrated the collaborative nature of the project and its benefits to the University and the collaborating partner
  - The extent to which the proposal is likely to lead to a substantial long-term collaborative relationship between the Enterprise Partner and the University.

- The secondary criteria are:
  - Significance of the problem to be solved and innovation of the research
  - Track record of applicant in delivering on time and within budget. A demonstrated commitment to using formal project management methodology will be well regarded.
  - Economic, social or environmental benefits for Australia
  - Soundness of planning and methodology. Evidence of substantial input by the Enterprise partner in the project planning process will be highly regarded.
  - The extent to which the budget is justified and appropriate to the aims of the scheme and the project.
  - The extent to which the project is feasible within the budget available and the capacity of the researcher(s) to undertake and manage the research.

Other aspects of an application which the Partnerships Panel will take into account are:

- The project summary should be prepared with great care using plain English and should include aims, significance and expected outcomes of the project. Unnecessary use of jargon, technical terms or specialised terminology may jeopardise the success of the application.

- The Outline of Proposed Project should be set out simply and clearly in plain English, such that the multidisciplinary Panel, which is likely to include non academic staff and/or advisors can understand what it is the applicant is trying to do, how this might be achieved, and the value of doing it. This outline should relate directly to the budget requested.

7. Appeals
Unsuccessful applicants have the right to appeal the outcome, on procedural grounds only, to the University’s Research Strategy & Policy Committee. Applicants intending to appeal should first discuss the grounds for their appeal with the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research). Appeals should be clearly marked “Confidential Appeal” and be addressed to the Secretary of the Research Strategy & Policy Committee, Office of the DVC(R), Building E11A. Appeals should utilise the form on the Research Office website.
8. Privacy Policy
The conduct of research projects supported under all internal Macquarie University Schemes is subject to the provisions of the Commonwealth Government’s National Privacy Principles and other statutory provisions relating to ethics and biosafety.

9. Certifications
Applications that involve more than one Faculty must be forwarded via the Faculty of the first Named Investigator. However, note that each Executive Dean of Faculty involved must endorse the application.

10. Conditions of Grant and Reporting Requirements
- Grants are for one year only (from the date of notification of success), and it is expected that they will lead to further funding from the Enterprise partner on the same or other projects.
- Any request to carry forward unspent funds must reach the Research Office at least one month prior to the end of the funding period. The appropriate form for such requests can be found on the Research Office website:
- Named investigators cannot receive any part of their salary from the scheme if that part is appropriately funded from another source.
- Any Grant under the scheme is conditional upon, and funds will not be released until, the completion of a suitable Industry Partner Agreement.
- Where the proposed research requires ethics and/or biosafety approval, funds will not be released until the necessary clearances have been obtained.
- The collaborating partner’s cash contribution must be paid into a designated Macquarie University account, upon an invoice from the Office of Financial Services.
- Grantees must produce a Final Report, countersigned by the Enterprise partner, within two months of the end of the grant period. The Final Report should describe outputs and outcomes relating to the original aims outlined in the application, and should describe any plans for further work with the Enterprise partner. The Final Report should be delivered (electronically or in hard copy) to the Research Office.
- Researchers may hold more than one grant under the scheme at a time with different collaborating partners and different projects.
11. Contacting Enterprise Partnerships and Commercialisation

Any queries relating to these Funding Rules or procedures should be directed to the appropriate faculty member of the Enterprise Partnerships and Commercialisation team:

- Enterprise Partnership and Commercialisation
  - Faculty of Arts: Andrew McKenna andrew.mckenna@mq.edu.au
  - Faculty of Business and Economics: James Keene james.keene@mq.edu.au
  - Faculty of Human Science: Warren Bailey warren.bailey@mq.edu.au
  - Faculty of Science: Dr. Bill Russell bill.russell@mq.edu.au