
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CENTRES (MQRC) SCHEME

FUNDING RULES AND APPLICATION GUIDELINES 2017

Applications must be submitted as a PDF attachment to the Research Office (via email to research.preaward@mq.edu.au) by

5pm Wednesday 7 September 2016

Late applications will not be accepted.

Please read the MQRC Proposal Instructions document carefully in conjunction with these Funding Rules, and adhere to the page limits and formatting procedures as outlined.

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Enquiries regarding MQRC applications should be directed in the first instance to:

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1. OUTLINE OF THE MQRC SCHEME

The Macquarie University Research Centres (MQRC) Scheme is the means by which major, coordinated, cohesive and high-performing research groupings are branded, promoted and supported as Macquarie University Research Centres. Some of the reasons that a MQRC would be established include:

- to seed the development of future externally funded research Centres
- to support the clear identification and further development of a high quality research environment
- to aid in branding and visibility of a group of high performing researchers.

This list is not exhaustive.

MQRCs established in this application round will be for a period of three years, after which they may seek extension of Centre status in accordance with Section 10 below. MQRCs established in this application round will receive annual funding of up to \$50,000 per year, subject to satisfactory annual progress reports.

Funds awarded to Centres under the MQRC Scheme are not to be used to fund research projects directly. They are intended to provide support for the Centre management and administration (e.g. to provide teaching relief and/or administrative assistance for the Centre Director) or to support Centre activities (e.g. workshops and inviting key visiting scholars to the Centre).

Expected characteristics of MQRCs are:

- alignment with Macquarie's Research Framework
- the Director should be a senior research leader, noting that there is no requirement about the academic appointment level of the Director
- each Centre will have a constitution that deals with issues including: the aims and structure of the Centre, including membership, executive and advisory committees, meetings of the Centre and of its committees; financing; intellectual property; ethics approvals and contracts;
- involvement of at least six continuing staff members, with the profile of membership to be appropriate to the discipline, the need to build capacity and having regard to appropriate gender balance. The involvement of external members, either from research institutions or from other organisations, is encouraged however MQRC funds are not to be expended to support external members of the Centre.

The expected outcomes of establishing MQRCs include:

- increased research output
- increased research income
- increasing levels of excellence in the research area
- increased profile in the research area.

A limited number of new MQRCs will be established each year, to maintain a total number of funded Centres of approximately 12-16. Applications will be evaluated by the Centres Panel against the Selection Criteria, with recommendations made to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).

MQRCs do not have the status of Departments and HDR student enrolments will continue through the Host Departments. Distribution of block grant funding to MQRCs is at the discretion of the relevant Executive Dean(s).

A listing of common activities and functions of existing MQRCs is given in Appendix A.

2. APPLICATION PROCESS

MQRC applications must follow the format specified in the MQRC Proposal Instructions document, which is available on the Research Office website at:

http://www.mq.edu.au/research/research-opportunities-at-macquarie/funding-fellowships-and-partnerships/internal_funding/mq-research-centres

3. SUBMISSION PROCESS

Applications must be in minimum 12pt font and stated page limits for each question must be observed. Applicants must submit their application and signed Host Faculty Executive Dean Support Letter via email to research.preaward@mq.edu.au (cc: to the Lead CI's Faculty Research Manager) by the closing date. A hard copy of these documents is not required. A Macquarie University Application Project Form/Coversheet ([APLI](#)) must also be completed and approved appropriately by the closing date (see "MQRC certification" section below for details) for new applications. Existing Centres reapplying for funding are not required to complete a Project Form.

The application should be a non-scanned PDF with the file name "**MQRC 2016_[CentreDirectorSurname]_Application.pdf**" (e.g. "MQRC 2016_Smith_Application.pdf").

The signed Host Faculty Executive Dean Support Letter should be provided as a scanned PDF with the file name "**MQRC 2016_[CentreDirectorSurname]_Letter.pdf**" (e.g. "MQRC 2016_Smith_Letter.pdf").

The deadline for receipt of applications (including the Executive Dean Support Letter) via email, and the corresponding Macquarie University Application Coversheet is **5pm on Wednesday 7 September 2016**.

Late applications will not be accepted and incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible.

4. CERTIFICATION

All proposals must be certified electronically via the Macquarie University Project Form, which can be found at: <http://www.mq.edu.au/research/research-opportunities-at-macquarie/funding-fellowships-and-partnerships/macquarie-research-project-form>

It is the lead investigator's responsibility to ensure that the APLI Form progresses to completion by the closing date.

5. SELECTION CRITERIA

1. ***Alignment with Research Framework***
2. ***Subject matter:***

- Focus of the MQRC is on a significant research problem or issue
- Coherence of proposed program of activities.

3. *Researchers:*

- Quality of the key researchers (including publication track record, success in external competitive grants and HDR supervision and completions)
- Appropriateness of the gender balance and of academic level profile of the key researchers.

4. *Research environment:*

- Competitive advantage relative to other research being conducted in Australia and internationally
- Appropriateness of Macquarie as a location for the Centre including availability of relevant infrastructure
- Quality of mentoring and coaching environment for early- and mid-career researchers.

5. *Governance and structure:*

- Quality of advisory board
- Quality of proposed Director in terms of research and research leadership experience and expertise.

6. SELECTION PROCESS

Applications will be evaluated by the Centres Panel against the above Selection Criteria. Typically, there will be a short listing of applications for interview. Key staff associated with short-listed applications will be offered the opportunity to give a brief presentation to the Panel and to respond to questions (particular issues that may be identified by the Panel in advance of the interview). Following the interview stage, the Panel will make recommendations to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and applicants will be advised of the outcome.

7. ELIGIBILITY

Any grouping of researchers may apply to form a MQRC under this Scheme, with the exception of a Centre that has National Research Centre status and/or is receiving other direct central funding from the University. Therefore, CRCs, ARC Centres of Excellence, Major National Research Facilities, and similar Centres funded externally are not eligible to apply to the MQRC Scheme. Uncertainty concerning eligibility must be resolved in advance of submitting an application. The Panel reserves the right to make a determination on eligibility issues not specifically addressed in these Guidelines.

8. FUNDING

Awards made under this round of the MQRC Scheme will commence on 1 January 2017 and will normally be funded until 31 December 2019. Funding will be available on or after 1 January each year.

It is expected that allocated funding will be fully expended each year. Carryover of funding from one year to the next is not permitted.

9. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Director of each MQRC will provide the Research Office and the appropriate Executive Dean(s) with an Annual Progress Report each year by 30 November. The report should cover 1 January to 31 December, including plans and financial commitments through to the end of the year.

The report should describe the activities funded and the outcomes of those activities. Examples might include:

- Workshops: describe the theme, attendance, identity of organisations involved, and any outcomes from the meeting (such as agreements to pursue collaborative research)
- Visiting scholar: the activities of that scholar (e.g. public lectures, seminars, grant collaboration etc) should be described.
- Administration: describe the activities of the administrator in relation to the goals of the Centre e.g. seminar organisation
- Brand recognition: the report could include details of how many times the name of the Centre appeared in the media, or other evidence that that funding received enhanced the recognition of research conducted by Centre members and raised the public profile of the University/Centre

A description of how the Centre has achieved the expected outcomes of the MQRC scheme should be provided. The report should outline any difficulties encountered by the MQRC during the reporting period as they relate to achievement of the Centre's targets for the year.

The expenditure of MQRC funding must explicitly be reported against the particular activities funded, enabling a reviewer to assess whether the funds have been expended appropriately. A budget request and justification for the following year is required.

The Research Office will confirm the report format and submission process at least one month prior to the due date.

10. APPLICATION FOR EXTENSION

In the third year of funding an MQRC may apply for extension of its MQRC status. This involves submission of a new MQRC application. Applications will be assessed against the same criteria as listed above with the addition of assessment against the degree to which the Centre has achieved the expected outcomes of the MQRC scheme.

Where it is deemed by the Centres Panel that a MQRC is no longer functioning adequately, a recommendation for possible disestablishment may be made through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). The relevant Executive Dean/s of Faculty/s and Centre Director will be given the opportunity to comment on the review committee's recommendation.

APPENDIX A – ACTIVITIES AND FUNCTIONS OF MQRCs

Macquarie University Research Centres (MQRC) are expected to perform functions aimed at strengthening, extending and promoting the research of members, enhancing the research training activities of students, and building research linkages both nationally and internationally. MQRCs would normally be expected to support high quality research that contributes to regional and national research objectives, and to promote national and international collaboration in achieving these objectives. Functions might include:

- focus the activities of its research staff and students, and in so doing, use available research infrastructure more efficiently;
- foster collaborative research efforts between individuals and research teams within and outside the MQRC;
- encourage inter-disciplinary approaches to particular research problems;
- establish and maintain regional, national, and international links with individuals and teams conducting research in similar, or complementary fields;
- complement and enrich the higher degree/research training programs of the University;
- where possible, strengthen the links between research activities and teaching within the various Departments/Faculties of the University;
- enhance the status of the University by raising the level and public profile of research activity;
- seek to attract funds from the public and private sectors to help support the University's research program;
- provide opportunities for the professional development of staff, particularly new and early career researchers; and
- undertake research and consultancy activities on behalf of industry, government, the community, and the region.