

Research Infrastructure Block Grants (RIBG) Scheme

Funding Rules 2017

Submission: Only electronic copies will be accepted. You must complete the prescribed application form and submit it as a PDF attachment (converted not scanned) to research.preaward@mq.edu.au by the Research Office closing date (cc: to the Lead CI's Faculty Research Manager). Hard copies will not be accepted.

Please contact the Research Office (research.preaward@mq.edu.au) if your application has not been acknowledged within one week of submission.

Certification: You must also complete and submit an [APLI Form](#).

Research Office Contact:

Primary Contact	Belle Chinchen
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Key Dates:

<i>Faculty Closing Date</i>	Wednesday 26 September 2016, 5pm (AEST)
<i>Research Office Closing Date</i>	Wednesday 12 October 2016, 5pm (AEST)
<i>Notification of Results</i>	Late November 2016

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Purpose

The Research Infrastructure Block Grants (RIBG) Scheme is funded from an institutional block grant provided by the Commonwealth Government. The purpose of the RIBG Scheme is to enhance the development and maintenance of research infrastructure in higher education institutions for the support of high-quality research in all disciplines.

The main objectives for the Scheme as set by the government are to:

- Remedy deficiencies in current research infrastructure;
- Enhance support for areas of research strength; and
- Ensure that areas of recognised research potential, in which institutions have taken steps to initiate high quality research activity, have access to the support necessary for development.

Definition of Research Infrastructure

Research infrastructure consists of the institutional resources that are essential for the mounting of high quality research projects or programs – excluding direct costs that should be covered by research grants or the operating grant.

Relationship to the Strategic Infrastructure Scheme

The MQ Strategic Infrastructure Scheme (Research) is comprised of two components:

1. RIBG (administered by the University's Research Office and the subject of these guidelines);
2. Research Infrastructure Fund (managed by the Office of the DVC (Research) and subject to separate guidelines and [application process](#))

The two Schemes together are intended to ensure that there is:

- A focus on excellence in research across all research infrastructure investments made by the University, and
- A strategic approach to new research infrastructure investments.

While the RIBG Scheme provides specific infrastructure to the research programs of individual researchers and research groups, the MQSIS Research Infrastructure Fund provides more general research infrastructure support to Faculties. A supplementary aim of the Research Infrastructure Fund is to provide infrastructure resources which will assist in making external research funding applications from the Faculty more competitive.

Funding Available

Funding is available under the RIBG Scheme to research teams on a competitive basis for strategic research infrastructure purchases. RIBG budget requests will normally be between \$20,000 and \$100,000.

Applications for sums outside this range will not be considered unless a very convincing case is made in the Budget Justification at B7 of the application form. Applications consisting of a collection of minor items totalling a sum in excess of the minimum of \$20,000 are not accepted.

Eligible Items for Funding

RIBG funds may be used for any one or more of the following purposes:

- non-capital costs of facilities such as libraries, laboratories, computing centres, animal houses, herbaria, experimental farms;
- equipment purchase, installation, maintenance, hire and lease;
- salaries of research support staff (including research assistants, accounting and administrative staff, and technicians) employed to provide general support activity in a given area (e.g. a research assistant providing support for a number of research projects, however not a research assistant dedicated to a particular project); and/or
- travel costs to allow participation in international consortia.

RIBG funds may **not** be used for:

- capital works (i.e. construction of buildings);
- floor space costs (rental);
- salaries of teaching and research, and research-only academic staff (including the cost of 'buying time' to free such staff to conduct more research);
- salaries of staff supporting research at the institutional level (e.g. DVC(Research), Research Grants Officer);
- stipends of postgraduate research students; or
- travel costs directly associated with individual projects (with the exception of travel costs to allow participation in international consortia as above).

Eligibility

General Eligibility Requirements

Research teams of two or more eligible staff may apply for RIBG funding. At least one team member should hold a grant from the [Australian Competitive Grants \(ACG\) Register](#). Team members who are listed as Chief Investigators on grants administered by other Australian Universities, for example nodes of ARC Centres of Excellence based and funded at Macquarie, are eligible to apply for RIBG funding (funds must be awarded to Macquarie). Applicant teams who do not hold a grant from the ACG register need to make a case that they are positioned well to attract such funding in the future.

Eligible applicants are academic staff holding continuing or fixed-term appointments at the commencement and for the duration of the grant period, **1 January 2017 to 31 December 2017**.

- Applicants may be named as Team Leader (Lead CI) on only one RIBG application in this round.
- Applicants may be named on up to two RIBG applications in this round.
- A particular ACG can be used as primary justification for only one RIBG application in this round.

Eligibility of Honorary/Adjunct Staff

Staff holding University honorary or adjunct positions are eligible to apply for RIBG funding as team members provided their ongoing research is primarily carried out at Macquarie University. Applicants in this category must attach a brief statement addressing their status at Macquarie University with evidence that their research publications show a Macquarie attribution.

The Application

Applications are invited from research teams that have a demonstrated record of success in attracting funding from the Australian Competitive Grants (ACG) pool, or from teams that, on the basis of current achievements, can make a case that they are positioned well to attract such funding in the future. In the latter case, applicants will need to demonstrate a strong record of success in attracting significant external non-ACG funding, or with internal (University) competitive grant schemes including Macquarie University Research Development Grants (MQRDG) and Macquarie University Research Centres (MQRC).

Applicants should note the following:

- Each bid should be associated with a primary Australian Competitive Grant (ACG). Where ACG funding has not yet been attracted, a strong case must be made relating to the future potential to do so.
- Requested funds should not be targeted at the level of an individual research project as these should be covered by direct grants. RIBG funding should have broad benefit to a research area involving a number of projects.
- Projects funded with LIEF funding cannot be counted as ACG funded projects for RIBG as they have already been funded as infrastructure, and therefore cannot attract further infrastructure funding under the RIBG Scheme.

Location of Equipment

Section B9 of the application form must include information on the proposed location of the requested infrastructure item, and whether any minor works will be required to house it. Certification by Property (via a letter or email) should be provided along with the application if required. Where this cannot be provided at the time of application, any grant allocation will be provisional and funds held pending the provision of evidence of the appropriate approval from Property to the Research Office.

Budget

General Requirements

RIBG budget requests will normally be between \$20,000 and \$100,000. Applications for sums outside this range will not be considered unless a very convincing case is made in the Budget Justification at B7 of the application form. Applications consisting of a collection of minor items totalling a sum in excess of the minimum of \$20,000 are not accepted.

A budget must not state proposed expenditure in general terms. It is essential that accurate costings are provided (exclusive of GST), and that a strong and detailed justification is given for all requested budget items.

Equipment

A descriptive statement of each item of equipment must be included in the Budget Justification. Requests for individual items of equipment costing over \$10,000 must be accompanied by current quotation(s), as per the [Macquarie University Quotations Policy](#).

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

Personnel

Salaries of research support staff including research, administrative or technical assistants providing support for a number of research projects can form part of a RIBG budget – see specific restrictions under “*Eligible Items for Funding*” above. Requests for personnel must

indicate the level and duration of assistance required and the budget item must be costed accordingly. These requests must also include allowance for on-costs.

Travel

RIBG funding may be used to cover travel costs to allow participation in international consortia. However, travel costs directly associated with individual projects are not eligible expenses under the RIBG scheme.

Per Diem funding for payment of meals and incidentals whilst staff are on University business will be paid at a fixed University rate. Please refer to the [Travel \(Per Diem\) Schedule](#).

Note that *Per Diems* must be claimed before undertaking travel.

Selection Criteria

In assessing applications, the Panel will consider the following criteria which are equally weighted:

- Strength of the case presented to enhance University infrastructure in the area.
- Extent to which the funding will enhance the outcomes of present or future ACG-funded research and support the University Research Framework.
- Track record of the applicant team (CIs).
- Strength of the budget justification.

Assessment

The Partnerships and Infrastructure Panel will assess all eligible RIBG applications. The Panel may co-opt additional members from among Macquarie University academic staff to assist with the assessment process. Following the assessment of applications, the Panel will make recommendations for funding to the DVC (Research) for approval.

Review of Outcome

Unsuccessful applicants have the right to seek a review of outcome, on procedural grounds only. To request a review of outcome, please write a brief letter detailing the basis on which the review is requested. The letter, clearly marked "Confidential Appeal", should be submitted as an email attachment to derek.vandyk@mq.edu.au.

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. Documents created for entitlements in the RIBG Scheme are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (unless specifically exempted).

Research Integrity

Researchers are expected to be scrupulous in avoiding conflicts of interest (especially where commercial issues are involved) when engaged in the peer review process. In addition, by encouraging public scrutiny of research results by publication and other means, the University also wishes to help combat fraud and misconduct.

All researchers, research coordinators and supervisors of postgraduate students should be

familiar with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, and relevant external and internal ethical guidelines. These conditions include compliance with the Macquarie University Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

Certification

Certification must be conducted via the [APLI Form](#).

Applications that involve more than one Department/Faculty must be submitted via the Faculty of the Lead CI. However, note that each Head of Department and each Executive Dean of Faculty involved must endorse the application through email confirmation which must be attached to the APLI Form. Attachment of all endorsements is the responsibility of the Lead CI.

Submission of Applications

The application is to be made on the prescribed form available on the [Research Office Website](#). Applications must be in minimum 12pt Arial font and page/word limits for each question must be observed. Hard copy applications will not be accepted.

Applicants must email a PDF copy (converted not scanned) of their RIBG application (including quotations and/or certification by Property as required) by **5pm (AEST) on Wednesday 12 October 2016** to research.preaward@mq.edu.au (cc: to the Lead CI's Faculty Research Manager).

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

Conditions of grant

Awards made under the RIBG Scheme will run from **1 January to 31 December 2017**. RIBG grants must be fully expended by the end of the funding period and **no requests for carry forward will be considered**.

A [Final Report](#) must be submitted to the Research Office within one month of completion of the grant term (i.e. by 31 January 2018). **Failure to submit a Final Report by the due date will result in ineligibility for the next round of funding.**

The Partnerships and Infrastructure Panel, in recommending the award of an RIBG grant, may stipulate other Conditions of Award for approval of the DVC (Research). Where applicable, additional Conditions of Award will be contained in the Letter of Offer to the applicant.

Faculty Research Managers

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