

Macquarie University Research Infrastructure (Large) Scheme 2024

FUNDING RULES

Faculty submissions due to the Research services:
11.59pm 31 OCTOBER 2023

Research Services Contact

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Faculty Research Office Contacts

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Key Dates

Opening Date	Monday 28 August 2023
Submissions from Faculties to the Research Services	11.59pm 31 OCTOBER 2023 ***No late applications will be accepted under any circumstance***
Notification of Results	Late November 2023

Submission: All applicants must contact their Faculty Research Office if considering applying to this scheme. As applications will be ranked prior to submission by each Faculty, individual applications that are not included in the Faculty ranking list will not be considered.

Purpose

The purpose of the Macquarie University Research Infrastructure Scheme (MQRIS) is to develop Macquarie University's research infrastructure in a strategic way that is aligned with the University's [Research Strategy 2025](#) and Faculty Research Infrastructure Plans. The MQRIS is administered through two schemes run in parallel, the MQRIS (Large) and the MQRIS (Small).

While the MQRIS (Small) provides specific infrastructure to the research programs of individual researchers and research groups, the MQRIS (Large) provides more general research infrastructure support to Faculties.

These Funding Rules apply to MQRIS (Large)

Definition of Research Infrastructure

The definition of Research Infrastructure for this scheme is to have the following inclusions and exclusions.

For the purposes of the MQRIS (Large and Small) scheme, research infrastructure and items eligible for funding include:

- Non-capital costs of facilities such as libraries, laboratories, computing centres, animal houses, herbaria, experimental farms;
- Equipment purchase, installation, hire and lease;
- Research installations (e.g., plant growth facility) but **not** buildings;
- Travel costs to allow participation in international consortia (note that one-off costs for consortia access may be considered providing an appropriate case is made. Access costs to consortia which represent continuing or annual fees are not covered by this scheme as they are considered an operational expense);
- Access to facilities/equipment; or
- Access to databases.

MQRIS (Large) funding **does not apply to**:

- High Performance Computing (HPC) including specialist programs, platforms, and Cloud Computing;¹
- Personnel involved in developing databases or providing software training;
- Personnel costs associated with establishing or creating the requested research facility;
- Salaries of research support staff – RAs, accounting & administration, technicians – providing general support in a given area (not to a specific project, and not ongoing);
- Minor works that would be funded by Property;
- 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 (except for travel costs to allow participation in international consortia as above).

¹ High Performance Computing (HPC), including specialist programs, platforms, and Cloud Computing, are not typically considered through this scheme. Urgent requests that may align with MQRIS must detail how they are distinct from currently available resources and must be supported by the Deputy Dean, Research and Innovation, and both the Chief Information and Digital Officer and the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research Services.

Funding Available

Depending on LIEF commitments for 2024, it is estimated that approximately \$1 million will be available to Faculties for MQRIS (Large) on a competitive basis for strategic research infrastructure purchases in 2024.

Note that any allocation made for 2024 must be expended within the calendar year. No carry-overs will be approved.

Funding requests shall normally be for between \$25,000 and \$150,000. Applications for sums in excess of \$150,000 will not be considered unless a very convincing case can be put to the Selection Panel, Chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research). For any items costing more than \$150,000, it is expected that the Faculty will make a significant cash contribution; such a proposal should also include justification why external support (e.g., LIEF) for major infrastructure has not been sought.

It is possible for a Faculty to combine two or more priorities to purchase one larger piece of equipment, however a good case will need to be made as to why the item is not appropriate for application to LIEF or similar external major equipment funds. Applications consisting of a collection of minor items totalling a sum in excess of the \$25,000 minimum are strongly discouraged (see Funding Rules).

Please note, the number of prioritised applications each Faculty can put forward for funding in 2022 are:

1. Macquarie Business School: 1
2. Arts: 3
3. Medicine, Health and Human Sciences: 6
4. Science and Engineering: 6

Funding Rules

Each Faculty must rank their items in order of priority. This priority order should reflect the respective strategic importance of the item and the rationale for the priority order should be given in section 5 of the application. Budget constraints and competitive applications may mean not all items will be funded.

For an application to be consistent with the purpose of the MQRIS the following general rules apply to proposed expenditure under this Scheme:

- Routine software (including upgrades) will not be funded. However, *specialist* software underpinning major research programs may be funded.
- Items that involve alterations to University fixtures and fittings that might be deemed 'Minor Works' and would be eligible for funding by Property will not be funded. Where there is doubt as to the categorisation of an item, it is strongly recommended that advice be sought from Property. Where an item is not considered 'Minor Works' by Property, written confirmation of this by Property must be included in the application.
- A minimum amount of \$25,000 is allowable for any single item/installation/initiative. If the item is comprised of multiple components, they must form a coherent whole. The MQRIS (Large) is designed to assist Faculties to purchase larger items: research infrastructure costing less than \$25,000 should normally be supported from the Faculty Operating Budget. For any facility comprising an assembly of small items (e.g., a computer facility), a very strong case must be put forward for coherence of the

installation as a research facility.

- To ensure that the University [Procurement Policy](#) (governed via the [ProcureRight Framework](#)) is followed upfront, quotes are to be sourced as per methods prescribed below:
 - i) Items up to \$100K require a minimum of 1 written quote. This is to be obtained using the [RFQ Template](#).
 - ii) Items between \$100-\$250K require a minimum of 3 written quotes. These must be obtained using the [RFQ Template](#).
In the case multiple suppliers are not an option, a [Sole/Single Source Supplier Form](#) is to be completed and submitted. Note, this is not required to be signed off until funding is formally approved.

Note: The ProcureRightDesk@mq.edu.au may be contacted for assistance and guidance for the above.

- Please make sure that shipping costs are included, where applicable.
- Multi-year lease arrangements will be considered where it can be demonstrated (costings to be provided) that this is the most efficient way to support the facility. In this case, only the capital component of any lease agreement may be funded. Support of maintenance components in lease agreements must be borne by the Faculty.
- Funds must be expended in the 2024 calendar year. Carry forward of unexpended funds will not be approved. Funds remaining unexpended on 1 January 2025 will be recovered by the University.
- An expenditure report relating to 2023 research infrastructure funding is an essential part of the 2024 application process.

Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, the case put forward by a Faculty must:

- Be aligned to the strategic research priorities of that Faculty;
- Estimate required expenditure on third-party suppliers using the approach described in section Funding Rules above;
- Show a clear link to researchers and research programs of merit; and
- Meet the Funding Rules.

Where an application has space implications (occupation and/or modification of University space), it must include:

- Location of the proposed facility and total expenditure involved;
- Evidence of approval of Property for the facility establishment/modification;
- Certification by Property or the relevant Faculty Technical Manager of appropriateness of space and work to be undertaken to order, install and maintain the equipment;

Where no extra or modified space is requested, the application should make this clear, and state that the proposed equipment or facility can be located within existing areas. In the case of animal facilities, the Faculty must show that the requested equipment has been discussed and approved by the Head, MARS.

Selection Criteria

Selection of proposals for funding is competitive and will be based upon the following aspects of the application:

1. Evidence of benefit to researchers using the equipment. Applications must outline the history of research excellence within the relevant area and note how the proposed equipment will add value to that area of research excellence – including how the equipment will add to the current research capacity and to external research income. **(See Question 4)**
2. A very clear budget justification. The application must include a brief outline of the proposed equipment's lifespan and schedule/plan for routine maintenance of the equipment and how costs of ongoing maintenance and consumables will be met by the Faculty. 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. All quotes included in the application must be accurate at the time of submission. Errors in the quotes may have negative effects on the outcome of the application. **(See Question 3)**
3. Alignment with relevant Faculty research strategies and description of benefits that equipment will have on research impact and HERDC-reportable research income. **(See Question 2)**

Prior to reaching a decision the Selection Panel, Chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), reserves the right to interview applicants (with or without the Panel) in order to clarify any aspect of their application or to seek further information as required. Funding decisions made by the Selection Panel, Chaired by the DVCR, are final and appeals will not be considered, except on procedural grounds.

Submission and formatting instructions

Applicants must complete the application form and submit it as a single PDF (combined with any additional documents e.g., quotes) attachment to a [Pure Research Management System \(PURE\) application record](#). Applicants *must* obtain the necessary approvals via PURE prior to the submission deadline.

We recommend allowing a week for your application to progress through PURE to ensure all approvals are received before the due date. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure approval is finalised prior to the deadline.

A [Quick Reference Guide](#) is available which explains how to create and submit a grant application as a Researcher through the PURE system.

Applicants must ensure to meet the below formatting requirements for their MQRIS (Large) application:

- All text must be in black type and 12-point Arial font. Do not adjust the set margins.
- References, if required, may be reproduced in 10-point Arial font.
- The application must be written so a *non-expert* in the field can understand and assess your application

- Single PDF only. All quotes or other relevant attachments must be included in the single PDF submission.
- Filename must be saved as: 'Surname_MQRIS_large'
- The instruction page (page 1) of the application form should be removed.

Faculty submission to the Research Services:

11.59pm 31 OCTOBER 2023

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED – NO EXCEPTIONS