Macquarie University
Research Acceleration Scheme
Guidelines 2024

KEY DATES

Application Open date:	Thursday 21 March 2024
Application Close date:	**Monday 22 April 2024 (11:59PM)**
Notification of results (pending DVCR approval):	Friday 31 May 2024
Expected start date	Monday 1 July 2024 (or 30 days from Awards notification email)

OVERVIEW

The 2024 Macquarie University Research Acceleration Scheme [MQRAS] is designed to seed outstanding projects that have a high potential to attract external funding.

It is expected that awardees of MQRAS funding will apply for external research funding within 12 months of completing their MQRAS project.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

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).

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 the below eligibility requirements for MQRAS funding. Applicants who do not will have their applications deemed 'not for further consideration' and it will not be assessed by the panel.

- Lead Chief Investigators must be appointed at Academic Level A, B or C. Applicants appointed at an Academic Level D or E can *only* be named as *additional* Chief Investigators.

- Lead Chief Investigators must define the type and term of their appointment in the application.

- Lead Chief Investigators must be employed at Macquarie University until at least **30 June 2026.** Noting one of the priorities of the scheme is to seed additional external HERDC-reportable research income, applicants must be employed and able to submit applications for external research income with Macquarie as the Administering Organisation within 12 months of completing the MQRAS project.

- **Honorary** staff can be named on the research team as a Chief Investigator, but not as the Lead Chief Investigator.

- Macquarie **Graduate Research** Candidates may be named on the research team as Associate Investigators where the proposed research project is aligned with their research area/s and their involvement will genuinely aid in the career development of the candidate.
  - MQRAS funding cannot provide support for Graduate Research candidates – see eligible costs in Appendix A

- **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 grants *may* lead an MQRAS application:
  - If a researcher on a fixed-term contract funded by external research income applies 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 previously been awarded MQRAS funding (as the lead chief investigator) are not eligible to apply as the Lead Chief Investigator again.
  - If a researcher has been named on a previous MQRAS project as a chief or associate investigator they can apply as a lead chief investigator in the current round.

- 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 Macquarie investigators from different Departments and/or Schools 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 Lead 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.

- 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. Funds must be fully expended by the end date of the award.

- MQRAS sole Chief Investigator applications will be accepted but priority will be given to cross-disciplinary applications that exhibit consilience and involvement in, or collaboration with, a University or faculty-based research centre – enhancing linkages across the University, as per the *Research Strategy 2025*.

- The MQRAS panel is multidisciplinary, and applicants should write 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 must 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).

- Successful applicants will be required to report on the future external funding application(s) outlined in the MQRAS application. This will be managed via an Award milestone in Pure.
    - Failure to provide such a report may impact ongoing eligibility for internal strategic research funding.

CERTIFICATION BY LEAD CHIEF INVESTIGATOR

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

- all information submitted at time of application is accurate and can be verified at any time.
    - records of the email correspondence between other internal collaborators and their line management must be kept by the Lead Chief Investigator as Research Services may ask for these records at any time. Failure to provide evidence when asked will make the application ineligible for funding.

- MQRAS funds are ***not eligible for carry forward*** beyond the 12-month award. Funds must be fully expended by the end date of the award.

- any publications arising from the research will be uploaded to Pure at the publication acceptance stage.

- they have reviewed the guidelines, application form, and assessment rubric (Appendix B) in full prior to applying.

- 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.

- I understand I will be required to report on future external funding application(s) developed following the completion of the MQRAS application via an Award milestone in Pure.

APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

Please complete the MQRAS application form (available from the MQRAS website)

The application form must be uploaded to Pure as a single PDF file and should be named according to the following convention: *"Surname_MQRAS" e.g. "Smith_MQRAS"*

All information must be set out simply and clearly, in plain English**, such that applications are accessible to non-experts. Avoid technical terminology and acronyms.** Assessors must be able to understand, in general terms, what you are proposing to do, why the research is important, and how impactful results will be achieved.

Applicants should complete all fields in the application and comply with the stated word limits, where applicable. All text must be size 12 Calibri font type as per the application form.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Completed application forms must be submitted and approved via Pure by the closing date and time (11:59pm, Monday 22 April 2023).

See **Appendix C** for instructions on how to complete the Pure record. Pure records which are incomplete or contain inaccurate information may cause applications to be deemed ineligible for further consideration. It is the responsibility of the lead chief investigator to ensure that the Pure record is complete and accurate at time of submission.

A Pure Quick Reference Guide is available which explains how to create and submit a grant application as a Researcher through the PURE system.

Applicants must obtain Head of Department/School and Deputy Dean Research and Innovation approvals via PURE prior to the submission deadline. We recommend allowing 5 days 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 approvals are finalised prior to the deadline.

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.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

1. Summary of novel research project and rationale for needing internal funds to accelerate outcomes (40%)

In this section, applicants must outline the ways in which their proposed project is highly significant and/or innovative with a clearly justified need for immediate funding to accelerate their research objectives. Responses must be grouped under the headings outlined in the Application Form. Applications must outline the novelty, timeline, and intended outcomes of the project. An *outstanding* application will demonstrate the strategic relevance of the proposed project and provide a robust rationale for funding which describes a highly feasible strategy to apply for external funding within 12 months of completing the project.

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%)

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. Strategy and schedule for attracting substantial external funding (40%)

The application demonstrates that there is a clear and achievable strategy and schedule for attracting substantial external funding within 12 months of completing the MQRAS project. 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 schemes, 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

4. Budget and budget Justification (10%)

The requested budget must not exceed **$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 should 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.

ASSESSMENT PRINCIPLES

- Each application will be assessed against the above selection criteria.

- Every application will be assessed and ranked based on the contents of the application only. No other outside information or knowledge from the panel members will be incorporated into the scoring process.

- Panel members must declare any conflict of interest which could impact the assessment process. Assessors will not assess an application where a conflict of interest exists.

- Funding outcomes will be decided based on ranking of assessments.

- Panel members must treat the panel process, all related materials and correspondence, and outcomes as confidential.

- The MQRAS scheme will only fund applications which are of 'Outstanding' or 'Excellent' quality, according to the assessment rubric (see **Appendix B**).

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The process for assessing and recommending MQRAS projects is outlined below:

1. **Initial assessment of applications**: the Grant Development Team, Research services will assess all applications and establish whether they meet the eligibility requirements as listed above.

2. **Determination of conflicts of interest**: in accordance with MQ policy, assessors will be asked to identify and declare any conflicts of interest. The assessor will not score an application where a conflict exists.

3. **Distribution of applications**: the applications will be distributed to the panel of non-discipline expert assessors.

4. **Assessment of applications**: the panel will assess each application against the selection criteria.

5. **Assessment review**: the Grant Development Team, Research Services will review the completed assessment forms and prepare a report for the DVCR with a recommendation for funding based on the most highly ranked applications. **An equal number of applications will be awarded to STEMM and HASS.**

6. **Determination of projects to be funded:** projects to be funded will be determined and approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Prof. Sakkie Pretorius, informed by the MQRAS review panel and assessment process.

7. **Notification of outcomes:** Lead Chief Investigators will receive their outcome from the Grant Development Team, Research Services via email by Friday 31 May 2024.

8. **Preparation of awards:** the Awards team, Research Services will liaise with the Lead Chief Investigator to setup the award record in Pure. You must accept the Award within 10 business days to receive funding.

9. **Expected state date:** it is expected that the project will commence by **1 July 2024** or 30 days from the date you receive correspondence from the Post Award team, Research Services.

10. **External funding application:** awardees must report on future external funding application(s) outlined in the MQRAS application via an Award milestone in Pure 12 months after the completion of the MQRAS project.

APPENDIX A: ELIGIBLE/INELIGIBLE 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 University will not fund requests for CI or AI salaries, including costs associated with Graduate Research 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

Any consumables and equipment, software or licenses costing less than $1,000 must be 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 July 2019) 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).
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 are 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.   To support research activities at another higher education institution.
iii. Graduate Research stipends, tuition, or other related Graduate Research costs.
iv.   teaching relief.
v.   teaching materials.
vi.   basic facilities that should normally be funded by Macquarie University.
vii. capital works and general infrastructure costs.
viii. 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.
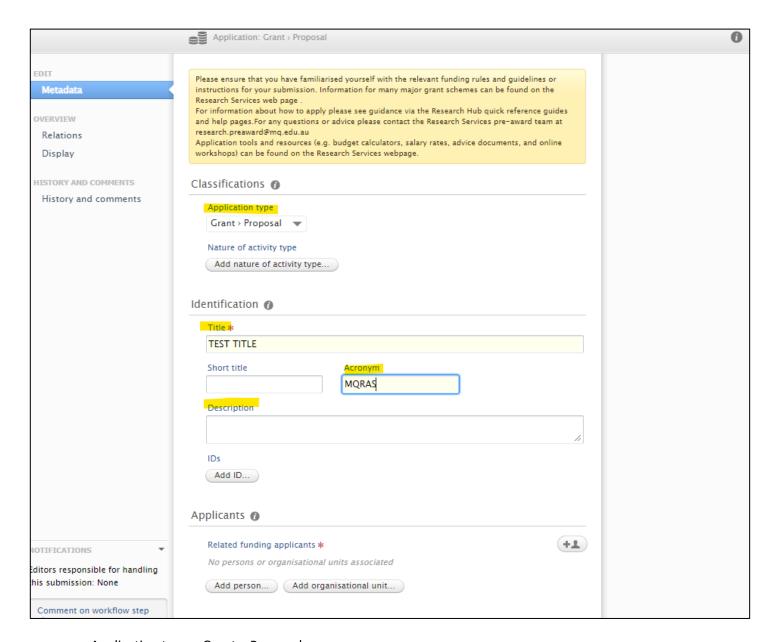ix.   fees for international students or the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS).

APPENDIX B: ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

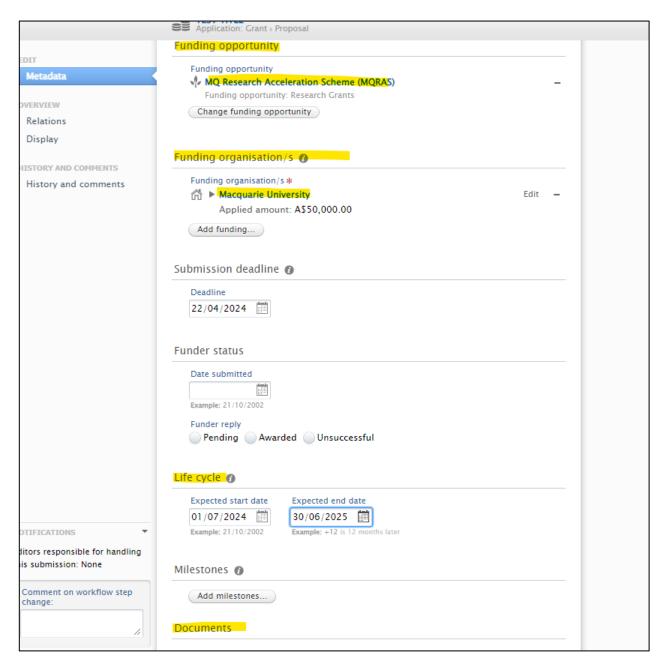| Score	Grading	Summary of novel research project and rationale for needing internal funds to accelerate outcomes (40%)	Alignment with Five Future Shaping Research Priorities and University or faculty-based research centres. (10%)	Strategy and schedule for attracting substantial external funding (40%)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

APPENDIX C: HOW TO COMPLETE YOUR PURE RECORD

We encourage you to complete all fields in the application Pure record. The below screen shots will assist you in completing each section in Pure correctly to ensure it is received by the Grant Development Team.

- o Application type = Grant > Proposal
- o Title = ensure the title matches your MQRAS application
- o Acronym = MQRAS
- o Description = copy the project summary from your application
- o Applicants = add any additional chief/associate investigators

- o Funding opportunity = MQ Research Acceleration Scheme (MQRAS)
- o Funding organisation = Macquarie University
- o Applied amount = must match your MQRAS budget
- o Submission deadline = 22 April 2024
- o Life cycle= must start by 1 July 2024 (and end by 30 June 2025)
- o Documents = upload your MQRAS application form saved *surname_MQRAS*

Once you have completed the Pure record please 'Send to internal approval'