Macquarie University
2022 Research Acceleration Scheme
Guidelines and Application Form

OVERVIEW
The 2022 Macquarie University Research Acceleration Scheme [MQRAS] is designed to seed excellent projects that have a high potential to attract external funding; to assist researchers whose research has been adversely affected by the impacts of COVID-19; and to support researchers who have returned from a significant period of parental or carer’s leave.

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 (competitive external research income) in the short term (12-24 months). It is expected that awardees of MQRAS funding will apply for external research funding within 12 months of completing their MQRAS project.

KEY DATES
The 2022 Macquarie University Research Acceleration Scheme will have two funding rounds in 2022. It is expected that the assessment process will take 5 weeks following the closing dates.

June Round: Applications must be submitted by 11:59 pm Tuesday 31 May 2022

September Round: Applications must be submitted by 11:59 pm Wednesday 31 August 2022

ELIGIBILITY
- Applicants must demonstrate clear linkage with at least one of Macquarie’s five Future-shaping Research Priorities. Successful applicants will have demonstrated clear linkages with the Priorities, Themes and Streams and shown evidence of being embedded in the research ecosystem of their relevant discipline, department, school, and faculty.
- Applicants must adhere to the word count limits and formatting requirements listed for each criterion.
- To be eligible to apply as a Lead Chief Investigator for a MQRAS, applicants must hold a continuing or fixed-term appointment for a period of 24 months from the commencement of the MQRAS award.
  - Employment for the Lead Chief Investigator must be confirmed and attached to the Pure application record as continuing through the term of the project in WorkDay. Emails from HoDs or other research leaders relating to the commitment to extend the employment of the applicant through the term will not be accepted.
  - Noting one of the priorities of the scheme is to seed additional external HERDC-reportable research income, applicants must be employed for a sufficient term to be...
able to submit applications for external research income with Macquarie as the Administering Organisation following the award of the MQRAS funding.

- MQ honorary staff can be named on the research team as a Macquarie University Chief Investigator, but not as the Lead Chief Investigator.
- Macquarie Higher Degree Research Candidates and non-Macquarie researchers may be named as Associate Investigators on the research team as an indication of current or potential collaboration.
  - MQRAS funding cannot be transferred to an external institution or researcher.
- 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, providing the other eligibility requirements are also met.
  - In such circumstances, the MQRAS applicant must declare that the project requested under the MQRAS application is distinctly different from the project(s) already funded and from which the lead CI is employed. If this declaration is not provided, the application will be deemed ineligible and not be considered for funding. The declaration form is included in the application form and, if relevant, must be submitted at the time of the application.
- When applying for MQRAS funding, applicants must have confirmation from the relevant Head of Department(s) that all CIs have sufficient time to undertake the proposed MQRAS project, within the context of their existing research and/or teaching responsibilities and have access to the basic infrastructure resources necessary to pursue the new project to successful completion.
  - Head of Department/School approval of the lead Investigator and CIs from the same department will be captured through the PURE approvals process
  - Applications with additional Chief Investigators from other Departments/Schools must approve via the application form as per Section 10.
- Lead Chief Investigators who have been awarded MQRAS funding are not eligible to apply for additional MQRAS funding (as the lead CI) within 3 years of the start date of an award.
- Applicants who do not meet the eligibility requirements listed above will have their applications deemed ‘not for further consideration’ and will not be assessed by the panel.
- It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure they meet all eligibility requirements for MQRAS funding.

**Additional Information for Applicants**

- In submitting an application for MQRAS funding you agree:
  - That any publications arising from the research will be uploaded to Pure at the publication acceptance stage;
  - That Research Services may ask you to report on the progress of your proposed external funding applications as you outlined in your application for MQRAS funding. Failure to provide a report when requested by Research Services may impact ongoing eligibility for internal strategic research funding;
  - All information submitted at time of application is accurate and can be verified at any time, upon request.

- Applicants who have identified external partner(s) that are ready to contribute cash and/or in-kind to a project are recommended to apply for support through the Macquarie Enterprise Partnership Scheme (EPS), which provides matched funding by Macquarie University.
MQRAS sole Chief Investigator applications will be accepted but priority will be given to cross-disciplinary applications that exhibit consilience – enhancing linkages across the University, as per Research Strategy 2025.

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.

It is expected that applicants have reviewed the guidelines, application form, and assessment rubric (in Appendix B) in full prior to applying.

The MQRAS panel is comprised of individuals from various academic and professional staff levels, career backgrounds, and disciplines. Applicants must draft their application in plain language and avoid the overuse of technical jargon, including the use of acronyms. Failure to do so will impact the funding outcomes.

Late applications will not be considered, under any circumstance.

Applicants are advised that the panel recommends funding for applications of Outstanding or Excellent quality, according to the assessment rubric (see Appendix B).

**ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

1. **Strategy and schedule for attracting substantial external funding (40%)**
   a. The application demonstrates that there is a clear and achievable strategy and schedule for attracting substantial external funding within the next 12-24 months. 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 scheme/s, 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, how this MQRAS will increase competitiveness in the proposed external schemes.

2. **Alignment with at least one of Macquarie University’s 5 Future-shaping Research Priorities (10%)**
   a. In order to be considered for funding, 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, Research Strategy 2025. An outstanding application will describe alignment with priorities, themes and streams as well as reference to the research strategy/ies of the relevant faculty/ies, school/s, and/or department/s.

3. **Summary of novel research project and rationale for needing internal funds to accelerate outcomes (40%)**
   a. Applicants must define and describe the proposed project including:
      i. Novelty of project
      ii. Timeline of project
      iii. Proposed/intended outcomes of project (outcomes can include academic outputs such as journal articles or book chapters, but must also include wider benefits)
b. Strategic relevance of this project and rationale for requiring *internal* strategic funding to accelerate the proposed project:
   
i. Applicants must demonstrate the strategic relevance of their project and provide insights as to how the project will assist in furthering their research career/trajectory/ambitions.

   ii. Applicants should demonstrate the need for internal funding to support this project and how the internal funds will help to apply for external research funding in a period of 12–24-month post award of MQRAS funding.

   iii. Applicants must describe what, if any, other funding has been sought to support this project.

   If external research funding has not been applied for, applicants must provide an explanation as to why they are seeking internal strategic funding in the first instance.

4. **Budget and budget Justification (10%)**

   a. 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 describe the rationale (*the why*) for the request and should not be presented as an itemised list of expenses. Applicants are encouraged to review Appendix A for a list of ineligible funding items.
Appendix A: Eligible Project Costs

Award of funding is based on the justification and is awarded at the discretion of the Assessment Panel.

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 panel will look favourably on applications that offer employment to current HDR candidates (within the applicable parameters).
- The University will not fund requests for CI or AI salaries, including costs associated with HDR candidates.


Applicants are reminded that approval from the Recruitment Exceptions Board (REB) will be required prior to commencing recruitment (this does not apply to the recruitment of staff on casual contracts).

Teaching Relief

The 2022 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 in order 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

Consumables and any equipment, software or licenses costing less than $1,000 should be listed in this section. Each of these items must be fully justified and 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.

As travel may not be possible due to COVID-19 restrictions, applicants who are requesting funds for travel must provide a one paragraph mitigation plan that addresses how the project will remain feasible if travel is not possible.
If the application does not have a mitigation plan outlined, it will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered by the panel for funding.

**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 January 2017) 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.

As travel may not be possible due to COVID-19 restrictions, applicants who are requesting funds for visiting researchers must provide a one paragraph mitigation plan that addresses how the project will remain feasible if collaborators are unable to travel. If the application does not have a mitigation plan outlined, it will be deemed ineligible and will not be considered by the panel for funding.

**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); and

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 is 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 DVCResearch 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. HDR stipends, tuition or other related HDR costs;

iii. teaching relief;

iv. teaching materials;

v. basic facilities that should normally be funded by Macquarie University;

vi. capital works and general infrastructure costs;

vii. 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;

viii. fees for international students or the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS);
## APPENDIX B: Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Grading</th>
<th>Alignment with Five Future Shaping Research Priorities (10%)</th>
<th>Summary of novel research project and rationale for needing internal funds to accelerate outcomes (40%)</th>
<th>Budget and budget Justification (10%)</th>
<th>Strategy and schedule for attracting substantial external funding (40%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(90+)</td>
<td>Outstanding. Of the highest merit, at the forefront of international research in the field</td>
<td>Exceptional alignment that is well justified and linked to themes/steams.</td>
<td>A highly significant and/or innovative project with clearly justified need for immediate funding. Clearly demonstrates why funding is needed now to accelerate research.</td>
<td>Near-flawless in design/concept and justification. No errors in calculations and very well justified budget that clearly outlines why the funding is needed.</td>
<td>Highly feasible strategy to apply for external funding within the 12-24 term. Very clear plan aligned with career stage and discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(80-90)</td>
<td>Excellent. Strongly competitive at international levels</td>
<td>Excellent alignment that is well justified and linked to themes/steams.</td>
<td>Significant and/or innovative project with clearly justified need for immediate funding. Clearly demonstrates why funding is needed now to accelerate research.</td>
<td>Well-defined budget and justification. No errors in calculations and very well justified budget that clearly outlines why the funding is needed.</td>
<td>Feasible strategy to apply for external funding within the 12–24-month term. Clear plan that aligns with career stage and discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(70-80)</td>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Alignment that is justified and linked to 5 Future Shaping Priorities, but loosely linked to themes and streams.</td>
<td>Important and/or innovative project with clearly justified need for immediate funding. Clearly demonstrates why funding is needed now to accelerate research.</td>
<td>Generally clear budget request and contains only minor concerns as to justification. No errors in calculations.</td>
<td>Strategy and schedule for external funding applications is clearly articulated and aligned with career stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(60-70)</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Alignment that is adequately justified but not linked to themes and streams</td>
<td>Innovative project with clearly justified need for immediate funding. A sound research proposal that lacks a compelling element in some respect.</td>
<td>Budget request is reasonable but lacks solid justification and may have errors in calculations.</td>
<td>Strategy and schedule for external funding applications requires additional planning and is not fully aligned to career and/or discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(50-60)</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>Minimal alignment referenced. Lacks clear links to themes and streams.</td>
<td>The proposal has potential, but lacks clarity, and would require significant development to be supportable</td>
<td>Contains some major budget design flaws and fails to fully justify the reason why funding is needed.</td>
<td>Strategy and schedule is poorly articulated and misaligned to career stage and discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(less than 50)</td>
<td>Poor or flawed</td>
<td>Poorly articulated alignment.</td>
<td>The proposal is unclear and does not address a research question that is important for the relevant field</td>
<td>Has one or more fatal design flaws, fails to justify the reasons for funding.</td>
<td>Fails to provide strategy or schedule and lacks coherent narrative.</td>
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