1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The University of Melbourne Interdisciplinary Seed Funding Grant Scheme is an initiative of Melbourne Research which commenced with 2010 funding. This scheme is intended to complement the funding of University Research Institutes and to further catalyse the drawing together of academic staff from across disciplines to engage in research addressing complex societal challenges.

1.2 It was expected that this scheme would run for 3 years (2010-2012) in the first instance; this has been extended by one year to include 2013 funding. The level of funds available and the designated focus areas has varied over that period to reflect changes in the profile of the University’s Research Institutes.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objectives of the Scheme are to:
- fund highly innovative small- to medium-scale interdisciplinary research projects that show significant potential for future funding by granting bodies; and to
- catalyse the drawing together of academic staff from across disciplines to work on interdisciplinary problems consistent with the broad research objectives of one or more of the Melbourne Research Institutes or designated emerging areas of focus.

2.2 Each application should address a problem that is aligned with the objectives of one of the following:
- the Melbourne Energy Institute (MEI) www.energy.unimelb.edu.au. With a focus on large-scale sustainable energy systems, the MEI will consider all interdisciplinary proposals that address energy resource development, integration, distribution and consumption, including legal and social acceptance issues.
  - Contact Mike Sandiford mikes@unimelb.edu.au or ext 47221; Sandra Kentish sandraek@unimelb.edu.au or ext 46682; alternate contact Susannah Powell powells@unimelb.edu.au, ext 46538
- the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute (MSSI) www.sustainable.unimelb.edu.au will consider all interdisciplinary proposals that align with MSSI’s current themes:
  - People & Values
  - Health Equity
  - Cities and Towns
  - Climate Change
  - Water, Food & Energy
  - Biodiversity and Conservation
  - and preference may be given to the development of the following two areas i) public opinion and processes about sustainability; and ii) transformational processes to enhance resilience, either to low-carbon cities or to low-carbon rural and regional living
  - Contact Craig Pearson c.pearson@unimelb.edu.au; alternate contact Craig Prebble cprebble@unimelb.edu.au or ext 43099
- the Melbourne Materials Institute (MMI) www.materials.unimelb.edu.au will consider all interdisciplinary proposals that align with MMI’s research themes that include but are not limited to the following, with other materials-related research proposals welcome:
  - Materials conservation
  - Materials for energy
  - Materials for medicine
  - Materials processing
  - Quantum and nanophotonic materials
The MMI can also provide additional funding for access to the Melbourne Centre for Nanofabrication, if required as part of the project.
  - Contact Steven Prawer s.prawer@unimelb.edu.au or ext 45460; alternate contact Gaby Bright gbright@unimelb.edu.au or ext 47605

- the **Institute for a Broadband-Enabled Society (IBES)** [www.broadband.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.broadband.unimelb.edu.au) will consider all interdisciplinary proposals that align with IBES’s research themes:
  - Education and Learning
  - Health and Wellbeing
  - Network Development and Economics
  - Service and Business Transformation
  - Social Infrastructure and Communities
    - Contact Kate Cornick cornickk@unimelb.edu.au or ext 46692; alternate contact Rod Tucker r.tucker@unimelb.edu.au

- the **Melbourne Neuroscience Institute (MNI)** will consider all interdisciplinary proposals that align with the following themes:
  - Neural Networks
  - Neural Engineering
  - Regenerative Medicine
  - Clinical Neurosciences
  - Neuroscience in the modern society
  - Next Generation Technologies
    - Contact Trevor Kilpatrick tkilpat@unimelb.edu.au or ext 41820

- the **Melbourne Social Equity Institute** will consider all interdisciplinary proposals that align with the following themes:
  - Access to public goods
    - including access to health, education, space, shelter, employment, transport
  - Citizenship and Cultural Difference
    - including cultural identity, social diversity, community, migration, legal pluralism
  - Human Rights
    - including discrimination and anti-discrimination, national and international human rights
  - Social Policy across the Life Course
    - including labour, taxation and income-support policy, transitions and pathways from early childhood to youth, family and aged care
    - Contact Charlene Edwards charlene.edwards@unimelb.edu.au or ext 54738; alternate contact Julie McLeod j.mcleod@unimelb.edu.au or ext 43455

- the **Bio21 Institute** [www.bio21.unimelb.edu.au](http://www.bio21.unimelb.edu.au) will consider all interdisciplinary proposals that align with Bio21 research themes:
  - Structural Biology
  - Chemical Biology
  - Nanobiotechnology
    - Contact Tony Bacic abacic@unimelb.edu.au; alternate contact Malcolm McConville malcolmm@unimelb.edu.au

3. **FUNDING**

3.1 Grants shall be awarded with a maximum value of $70,000

3.2 Grants below $20,000 will not be awarded.

3.3 Grants will be awarded for one year 1 January 2013 - 31 December 2013. Projects may subsequently apply to receive a second year of funding but are not automatically renewable.

3.4 Expenditure on equipment or conference travel should only be proposed in exceptional circumstances and a compelling justification will be required.
4. **APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

4.1 Applications will be prepared by a proposing Team, and each application must nominate a “Co-ordinating Investigator.” At least one Investigator must hold a salaried academic appointment at the University of Melbourne of at least 0.5 EFT to at least December 2014, or hold an honorary appointment in one of the following Medical Research Institute based Departments of the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences: Florey Department of Neuroscience; MHRI Department of Neuroscience in Mental Health; or Medical Bionics Department; until at least December 2014.

There are no restrictions on other members of the proposed project team, including international team members. If the Co-ordinating Investigator does not hold a University appointment meeting the above conditions, the proposing team must also nominate a University Contact member who meets those conditions and who will be responsible for University matters as listed in Section 10.

4.2 A simple signoff process will be used. It will be assumed that in submitting an application, all project team members have consulted appropriately with their Heads and Deans and have the time and basic infrastructure resources to pursue the project concerned, within the context of existing research, teaching and higher degree supervision responsibilities.

5. **NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS**

5.1 Applicants may be involved in only one application as Co-ordinating Investigator, but may be participating Team Members on other applications.

6. **RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROPOSAL TO OTHER PROJECTS**

6.1 Because this scheme is intended to fund ground-breaking initiatives, applications which request funds to supplement another current internal University grant, external grant or research contract will be excluded from consideration.

7. **EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT**

7.1 **Assessment Process**

7.1.1 Applications will be assessed on a competitive basis by a Selection Committee comprising University Research Institute Directors and representatives of designated themes as listed in Section 2.2. The Committee will be chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Collaboration), Liz Sonenberg.

7.1.2 The Selection Committee reserves the right to discuss applications with Deans, Associate Deans (Research), Heads of Department/School, or other senior colleagues, and reserves the right to seek further information from applicants before making a final decision.

7.2 **Assessment Criteria**

- demonstrably innovative interdisciplinary research
- consistent with the broad research objectives of one or more of the Melbourne Research Institutes or designated emerging areas of focus
- involves a team of academic staff from relevant disciplines with appropriate and complementary expertise for the proposed research. Teams involving early career researchers will be viewed favourably
- shows significant potential for future funding by granting bodies
- budget expenditure is aligned with claimed outcomes
8. APPLICATION PROCESS

8.1 An application will consist of three elements:
   1. Checklist – 1 page
   2. Project Proposal – 2 pages
   3. CVs – for each Team Member, a statement of no more than 1 page in total including (a) current position, (b) expertise relevant to the proposed role in the current proposal, including track record of prior collaboration, and (c) a representative list of grants and/or publications in areas relevant to the proposal.

8.2 Applicants are expected to discuss their proposal with the designated contact person most closely aligned with the area of focus of the proposal, as detailed in section 2.2.

8.3 Applicants will be required to complete the on-line version of the checklist and submit a single PDF file, containing the application form, project proposal, and CVs of all participants, to the Interdisciplinary Seed Funding Sakai site by the deadline.

9 KEY DATES

   Applications due: TBA.
   Advice re outcome: TBA.
   Funds available: January 2013.
10. CONDITIONS OF GRANT

10.1 Grant Offers must be accepted in writing by the Co-ordinating Investigator (or University Contact person if required\(^1\)) and their Head of Department/School.

10.2 The Co-ordinating Investigator will be the contact person for all administrative matters to do with the project and is responsible for internal reporting requirements.

10.3 The Co-ordinating Investigator must ensure that the research is conducted in accord with University policy, including compliance with the Code of Conduct for Research and policies on human research ethics, animal experimentation ethics, requirements of the Office of Gene Technology Regulator, health and safety and intellectual property. No project may proceed unless the appropriate ethical or other required clearances have been obtained.

10.4 Funding is for one year only, commencing January 2013. Projects must be completed and funds expended by 31 December 2013. Extensions to this completion date will be considered only in exceptional circumstances, with a maximum extension date of 30 June 2014. Where exceptional circumstances exist, a written request must be approved by the Co-ordinating Investigator’s/University Contact member’s Head of Department, and endorsed by the relevant Institute Director/theme area designated representatives and submitted to the Executive Director (Research) no later than 1 November 2013.

10.5 The Co-ordinating Investigator must comply with any instructions or conditions in the Offer of Grant relating to approved items of expenditure.

10.6 Unless special conditions are set down by the Committee, the grant should be regarded as a ‘one-line budget.’ The Co-ordinating Investigator is responsible for ensuring that the expenditure of the grant is broadly in accord with the budget presented in the application and is consistent at all times with the nature and aims of the specific project approved and the objectives of the Scheme. Any queries should be raised with the relevant Director.

10.7 The Co-ordinating Investigator will be required to provide written reports and presentations on the progress and outcomes of the project as requested by the Selection Committee from time to time, with a formal final report required on the outcomes of the project within 6 months of the project’s completion. Summaries of projects funded and project final reports may be published. In addition, it is anticipated that at least one University Showcase will occur during 2013 at which all funded projects will be required to report on progress.

10.8 Successful applicants are expected to provide appropriate acknowledgement of University support when communicating research outcomes.

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\(^1\) If the Coordinating Investigator does not meet the criteria set out in Section 4.1, the grant offers must be accepted in writing by the University Contact member and their Head of Department/School, and the University Contact member has carriage of formal responsibilities relating to adherence with University policies and processes.