



# Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Program Stage Two Funding Rules

## 1. Definitions

Table 1 MCRIP Definition of Terms

DVCR	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
MCRIC	Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Committee (“the Committee”)
MCRIP	Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Program (“the Program”)
RIF	Research Initiatives Fund
University	University of Melbourne

## 2. Introduction

Research Infrastructure Platforms represent an organised structure that permits internal and external researchers to access the University of Melbourne’s capabilities without the need for formal research collaborations. Such facilities are often characterised as having an end user base beyond a single department/school, an accumulation of sophisticated equipment, relatively high operational costs, elements of cost-recovery and a need for specialised technical expertise to effectively operate and manage.

The Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure Program (MCRIP) aims to enhance existing Platforms and facilitate establishment of new Platforms that fit the criteria of Collaborative Research Infrastructure, specifically addressing:

- technical expertise and continuous learning
- researcher access to capabilities, both from academia and industry
- quality assurance
- information management towards evidence-based decision making
- efficiency and avoidance of duplication
- long-term operational sustainability
- precinct partnerships to maximise opportunities

MCRIP Stage One funds have been fully committed and funded positions in 13 Platforms. MCRIP Stage Two will be implemented during the period 2016-2019 and will continue to support eligible existing Platforms and extend support to new Platforms.

## 3. Scheme Objective

MCRIP Stage Two aims to support a cohesive and consolidated approach to University of Melbourne Research infrastructure provisioning through the support of staff embedded in collaborative research infrastructure Platforms. Under MCRIP Stage Two, three categories of funding are available:

- Category 1** Existing Platforms seeking continuation of support; no co-investment required.
- Category 2** Existing Platforms requesting additional staff support; co-investment required.
- Category 3** New Platform activities seeking support for staff; co-investment required.

*The term ‘existing Platforms’ applies to those Platforms funded as part of MCRIP Stage One while ‘new Platform activity’ applies to any collaborative infrastructure activity, existing or new, that is not currently supported through MCRIP.*

## 4. Enquiries

Researchers requiring assistance should direct their enquiries to members of Major Initiatives (Research, Innovation and Commercialisation) via [ric-majorinitiatives@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:ric-majorinitiatives@unimelb.edu.au).

## 5. Eligibility Requirements

These requirements should be read in conjunction with MCRIP Instructions for Applicants. These terms may change at any time at the discretion of the DVCR.

For all application types:

- 5.1. Applications are restricted to Platforms operated by the University of Melbourne. However, precinct partners may benefit from MCRIP funding through co-investment from Departments, Schools and Faculties.
- 5.2. Staff time funded by the program must exclusively support the research of others without bias. If staff time funded by MCRIP is fractional, such staff may at other times conduct independent research based on other funding sources (e.g. ARC/NHMRC funded).
- 5.3. Any supported staff position must be for a minimum of three years unless it can be demonstrated that initial seeding is required to develop a brand new capability and related Platform.
- 5.4. Ongoing funding over awarded duration is conditional to reporting on annual key performance indicators.
- 5.5. Requests for funding beyond MCRIP support of 2.0FTE at \$60,000 per position per year will require significant justification. This includes Category 1 applications where greater than \$120,000 per year was awarded in Stage One.

### Category 1 – Existing Platforms seeking continuation of support

- 5.6. A maximum of three years' funding from MCRIP Stage Two may be requested, at the same or similar level of financial support secured in MCRIP Stage One.
- 5.7. Matched co-investment is not a requirement for MCRIP Stage Two support for Platforms awarded MCRIP funding in Stage One, on the proviso that:
  - 5.7.1. The funding request equals or is similar to that awarded through MCRIP Stage One; **and**
  - 5.7.2. The Platform has completed a total of three years under matched DVCR and Academic Division co-investment.

If these requirements are met, the entire investment equivalent of Stage One funding, including previous Academic Division co-investment, will be awarded from the MCRIP Stage Two budget.

- 5.8. To be considered eligible, the most recent annual report must be submitted prior to, or along with, the application for evaluation by MCRIC.
- 5.9. Pilot Platforms funded under MCRIP Stage One for a term of less than three years are not eligible to apply for Category One funding. These Platforms are required to secure a further term of co-investment to meet a total of three years of co-investment, after which time the Platform may submit a Category One application.

### Category 2 – Existing Platforms requesting additional staff support

- 5.10. Category 2 applications require a 1:1 DVCR to partner cash co-investment for staffing above Stage One levels. It is encouraged that co-investment is sought from multiple Academic Divisions (not including precinct partners).
- 5.11. Requests for funding to expand the staff of an existing Platform will be accepted both with, or independent of, a Category One application to cater for urgent needs for additional support.

### Category Three – Applications for support for new research infrastructure Platforms.

- 5.12. The Platform must be deemed by MCRIC to have sufficient critical mass and utilisation from researchers in multiple faculties to be considered eligible.
- 5.13. Category 3 applications require a 1:1 DVCR to partner cash co-investment. It is encouraged that co-investment is sought from multiple Academic Divisions (not including precinct partners).
- 5.14. Requests for funding from MCRIP are capped at a maximum of 2.0FTE at \$60,000 per position per year for three years. Department/School/Faculty/Precinct partner co-contributions must account for the remainder of the salaries.

- 5.15. The proposed Platform name is required to be prefixed with 'Melbourne' for consistency in branding across the University of Melbourne Platform portfolio, and within the Precinct.

## **6. Researcher Responsibilities**

- 6.1. Applicants are required to prepare applications according to the specific instructions for each category. Application templates are provided and guidance on how to complete the application can be found in the Instructions to applicants. Applications submitted that exceed the specified length will be returned to the applicant for editing.
- 6.2. Where cash co-contributions are required (Category 2 and Category 3 applications), applicants are required to liaise with Departments, Schools and Faculties to secure cash co-investments. Evidence in the form of signed letters of support must be provided as supplements to the application.
- 6.3. For Category 2 and 3 applications, applicants are required to be available to attend the MCRIC meeting their application is assigned to, in order to present to MCRIC and answer questions.

## **7. Submitting an application**

MCRIP Stage Two applications will be evaluated on a rolling basis from 8 August 2016. Draft applications should be submitted by the Chair of the proposed Platform's Steering Committee (or delegate) to the Research Infrastructure Unit of RIC Major Initiatives via email ([ric-majorinitiatives@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:ric-majorinitiatives@unimelb.edu.au)). Category 3 applications for submission in 2017 will be accepted until 10 November 2017. RIC Major Initiatives should be consulted as early as possible to discuss the development of the application. From 2018, an annual call for applications will be held mid-year (dates TBC).

The Research Infrastructure Unit in RIC Major Initiatives will review, provide feedback and advise the applicant prior to the formal submission if further work is required.

A final version is required to be submitted a minimum of two weeks prior to the MCRIC meeting in order to be included in the agenda. Applicants are strongly encouraged to liaise closely with RIC Major Initiatives to prepare for submission timelines. Applications received less than two weeks prior to a meeting will be deferred at the discretion of RIC Major Initiatives and MCRIC.

## **8. Assessment process**

Evaluation of applications based on eligibility and merit will be undertaken by MCRIC. The Committee provides oversight of the University's research infrastructure strategy under the leadership of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research Infrastructure and Systems) as Chair. A committee member will act as a 'shepherd' to draft a summary of the application and open the discussion with other committee members. Following this discussion, applicants will be asked to make a short presentation to the Committee and answer any questions that may arise.

The committee will evaluate the application, which may involve further review beyond the meeting itself. Based on the MCRIC evaluation, a recommendation will be made to the DVCR. Applications not endorsed by MCRIC will not be forwarded to the DVCR. The Team Leader (Research Infrastructure & Strategy Support) will communicate the outcomes to applicants.

## **9. Resources**

The following resources are available in the Supporting Documents Section of the Melbourne Collaborative Research Infrastructure website:

- Funding Rules (this document)
- Application templates (Category 1, 2 and 3, and budget template)
- Instructions to applicants
- Frequently asked questions