



## **THERAPEUTIC TECHNOLOGIES RESEARCH INITIATIVE (TTRI)**

### **SEED FUNDING SCHEME 2017**

### **FUNDING RULES**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Hallmark Research Initiatives are intended to enable the maturing of focused research communities that build on existing strengths across our University. They are in selected areas that have identified significant potential to harness cross-University capabilities to open up new targeted funding opportunities.

The Therapeutic Technologies Research Initiative (TTRI) serves to enhance and profile the existing groups across the University and in Institutes that work in areas related to therapeutics. The Initiative is particularly focused on new applications of mechanobiology and organ-on-a-chip technology to transform drug-screening processes. Mechanobiology is a discipline at the interface of biology and engineering examining the effects of physical forces on cells, tissues and organs. Cellular mechanics strongly influences development, physiology and disease. New screening processes are needed to examine therapeutic candidates that target mechanosensing and/or cellular mechanical performance. The TTRI will bring together the expertise needed to achieve drug screening in microfluidic environments that are mechanically appropriate, with a focus on use of human cell culture.

The Initiative has selected three Research Themes as initial areas of focus:

- Cell/Tissue/Organ-on-a-chip drug screening technology
- Cellular biomechanics
- Stem cells and disease modelling

#### **2. OBJECTIVES**

The Hallmark TTRI will offer Seed Funding with a priority aimed to assist research aligned within one of the three focused areas (as mentioned above).

The main objective of the Seed Funding will be to scope opportunities for funding research with a new collaborator to jointly develop a research proposal for a third party funder, e.g. ARC Linkage Project Grants, NHMRC Partnership Projects, or major industry player in the corresponding 2017-2018 rounds.

### **3. FUNDING**

The Hallmark TTRI will offer Seed Funding between \$5,000 and \$15,000. The funds will be awarded for one year.

#### **Funded expenses**

Funding is restricted to the following activities:

- Employing Research Assistants or Research Fellows to undertake the project.
- Raw materials/consumables and lab equipment usage fees.
- Modest equipment purchase or manufacturing (specific justification for this item is required).

Funding will be awarded on the commencement date of the project and all funding must be expended by the completion date.

#### **Definitions**

The Lead Chief Investigator is a term applied to a University of Melbourne staff member who provides the intellectual, administrative and ethical leadership to the research project submitted under this scheme. The Lead Chief Investigator must ensure that all investigators on the project are fully informed of University policy and administrative requirements associated with the project. The Lead Chief Investigator must take responsibility for the authorship and intellectual content of the Proposal, appropriately citing sources and acknowledging significant contributions where relevant, and to conduct of the Project, and any strategic decisions required in its pursuit and the communication of its results. The Lead Chief Investigator must satisfy the eligibility criteria under these Funding Rules.

### **4. ELIGIBILITY**

Applications will be prepared by a Team as defined above, and each application must nominate a Lead Chief Investigator.

The Lead Chief Investigator must hold a salaried academic appointment at the University of Melbourne of at least 0.5 FTE and their appointment must run until at least December 2017.

Applicants must only be listed as Lead Chief Investigator on a single application and project but can be listed as Partner Investigator on other applications and projects.

### **5. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA**

Applications will be assessed against the selection criteria. The Selection Committee will be comprised of the Steering Committee of the Hallmark TTRI and co-chaired by the Initiative Chair and Academic Convenor.

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

The selection criteria are summarised below, in order of importance:

- Consistent with the focus areas of the Hallmark TTRI described in section 1.
- Involves a team of academic/research staff from relevant disciplines with appropriate and complementary expertise to complete the proposed research.

- Shows significant potential for future funding by third party funder, e.g. NHMRC, ARC Discovery, ARC Linkage Project.
- Budget expenditure is aligned with the project objectives.
- Interdisciplinary research Teams involving more than one School or Faculty may be favoured over applications within a single School or Faculty.
- Teams involving early career researcher will be favoured.

For the purpose of this award an **early career researcher** is considered to be a researcher who has had their PhD award within a *five-year window* between **21 December 2011 and 21 December 2016**. Researchers whose doctorate was awarded more than five years ago, but whose research career has been interrupted, may still be eligible. *Research* career interruptions could include non-research employment, misadventure, illness, or family and career responsibilities.

## 6. KEY DATES, APPLICATION FORMS AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

### Key Dates

- Application must be submitted by close of business (5 pm) **Wednesday 21 December 2016**.
- Outcomes advised by Friday 20 January 2017.
- Funds available: Monday 1 February 2017.

### Application Form

The application form consists of four elements

- A) Checklist.
- B) Project Proposal: maximum 2 pages.
- C) Each Team Member must provide a statement of no more than one page in total with the following information: (1) current position; (2) expertise relevant to the proposed role in the current proposal, including track record and (3) list of current grants and/or publications in areas relevant to the proposal.

### Application Submission Process

Applications should be submitted via email to [therapeutic-technologies@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:therapeutic-technologies@unimelb.edu.au) by close of business (5 pm) **Wednesday 21 December 2016**, using this format:

- Email subject: SF-Application-Year-CI's Initial+LastName. (example: SF-Application-2017-JSmith)
- Application in a single file (PDF format) with the file name: SF-Application-Year-CI's Initial+LastName. (example: SF-Application-2017-JSmith)

All the elements in this application must be completed. Applications with missing sections may be regarded as non-eligible by the Selection Committee.

The application must be submitted as a single PDF file.

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 have the time and basic infrastructure resources to undertake the project concerned, within the context of existing research, teaching and higher degree supervision responsibilities.

## **7. CONDITIONS OF GRANT**

The decision of the TTRI is final. No feedback or comments about individual applications will be provided.

Grant offers must be accepted in writing by the Lead Chief Investigator and by the Head of the Department of the Lead Chief Investigator.

The Lead Chief Investigator will be the contact person for all administrative matters to do with the project and is responsible for internal reporting requirements.

Successful teams are expected to provide appropriate acknowledgement of the Hallmark TTRI support when communicating research outcomes.

The Lead Chief Investigator must ensure that the research is conducted in accordance 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.

Funding is for one year only, commencing 1 February 2017. Projects must be completed and funds expended by the completion date.

The Lead Chief Investigator must comply with any instructions or conditions in the post award documentation relating to approved items of expenditure.

The Lead Chief 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.

The Lead Chief Investigator will be required to provide a written research and financial report on the outcomes of the project within one month of the project's completion. The Lead Chief Investigator is also required to participate in the relevant TTRI Seminars and Workshops and to provide a six month progress report.

The TTRI may use summaries of projects funded and project final reports for promotional purposes and publications.

## **8. CONTACT DETAILS**

If you require any further information please contact [therapeutic-technologies@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:therapeutic-technologies@unimelb.edu.au) with the subject line: "SF-query".