



COMPUTATIONAL
BIOLOGY RESEARCH

A Hallmark Research Initiative

COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY RESEARCH INITIATIVE (CBRI)

SEED FUNDING SCHEME

FUNDING RULES

1. INTRODUCTION

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

The Hallmark Computational Biology Research Initiative (CBRI) aims to promote and facilitate computational biology research and researchers across the University of Melbourne research community. The broad themes of the CBRI are to support and facilitate collaborative and interdisciplinary research by involving research staff from across University faculties, departments, and schools, and by facilitating connections and introductions with our partner organisations and with external researchers (including international linkages). The CBRI plans, delivers and supports research targeted events, such as seminars, workshops and symposia.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the CBRI Seed Funding Scheme is to increase cross-disciplinary academic collaboration in computational biology across the University and with external partners; to scope opportunities for funding research within new collaborative groups and/or to jointly develop a research proposal to a third party funder, e.g. ARC Linkage Project Grants, NHMRC Partnership Projects, or major industry player; and to raise public awareness and engagement of the computational biology research community and activity at the University of Melbourne.

3. FUNDING

In order to be more flexible in the current research funding environment and facilitate new ideas and initiatives across the computational biology research community at the University of Melbourne, we have implemented a rolling application process for the CBRI seed funding scheme.

It is strongly recommended that applicants first contact a CBRI steering committee member to discuss the proposal in order to refine the application and maximise opportunity for funding.

Applications will be assessed by a panel from the CBRI steering committee on a monthly basis with a cap of \$20,000 for each proposal.

The University of Melbourne values equity and diversity in its research work force and seeks to provide equal opportunities for support to diverse groups of researchers. The CBRI encourages applications from groups of collaborating researchers, and preference may be given to teams of applicants that incorporate diversity in terms of gender, academic discipline and career stage.

Funded expenses

Applications are sought to support the following activities:

- Collaborative early career researcher (ECR) Seed Funding for "blue-sky" projects, which may include a senior investigator as mentor.
- Research-enabling activities, such as seminars, workshops, etc. that benefit the wider computational biology community at the University of Melbourne.
- Travel funding for visiting academics in areas relevant to planned workshops or theme areas, with matched funds from host department/faculty/school or other sponsors.
- Funding to support development of new industry partnerships with evidence of strong research potential.
- Funding to progress existing industry partnerships (50/50 matched funding from an industry partner).
- Employment of Research/Technical Assistant(s) to facilitate a computational biology project.
- Modest expenses for technology, equipment usage or consumables (in preparation of preliminary data, for example) that are otherwise difficult to fund.

Funding will be awarded on the commencement date of the 'project' and all funding must be expended by the completion date (12 months from commencement).

Questions about funding allowable under Hallmark rules should be directed to the Academic Convenor ([Andrew Siebel](#)) or Chair of the CBRI. Note that funding towards conference travel or related support for UoM researchers, internal infrastructure and service charges are not permissible.

Definitions

The [Lead Chief Investigator \(LCI\)](#) is a term applied to a University of Melbourne staff member who provides the intellectual, administrative and ethical leadership to the proposal submitted under this scheme. The LCI must ensure that all investigators are fully informed of University policy and administrative requirements. The LCI 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 LCI must satisfy the eligibility criteria under these Funding Rules.

For the purpose of the ECR award, an [early career researcher \(ECR\)](#) is considered to be a researcher who has had their PhD awarded within a *five-year window* as at the date of seed funding proposal submission. 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 primary carer responsibilities. Career interruptions will be confidentially assessed on a case-by-case basis by the CBRI Academic Convenor and Chair.

4. ELIGIBILITY

Applications will be prepared by a team as defined above, and each application must nominate a Lead Chief Investigator (LCI).

The LCI 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 the end of the funding period.

Applicants may only be listed as LCI on one (1) application but can be listed as Partner Investigator (PI) or mentor on other applications.

5. ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Applications will be assessed against the selection criteria below. The Selection Committee will be comprised of members of the CBRI Steering Committee and co-chaired by the CBRI 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 summarized below, in order of importance:

- Consistent with the aims of the CBRI, described above.
- Involves a team of academic/research staff from relevant disciplines with appropriate and complementary expertise to complete the proposed research/activity.
- 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.
- Where relevant, shows significant potential for future funding by third party funder, e.g. NHMRC, ARC Discovery, ARC Linkage Project.

Teams involving ECRs only will be considered separately for an ECR award. ECR awards can include a senior researcher as mentor, who may be independent of the ECR's supervisor and whose track record is not included.

6. APPLICATION FORM AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

Application Form

The application form consists of three elements:

A) Checklist.

B) Proposal.

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.

Submission Process

Applications may be submitted as a single PDF file via email to a.siebel@unimelb.edu.au, using this format:

- Email subject and file name: CBRI-SF-DDMMYY-CI Initial+LastName

Example: CBRI-SF-011216-JSmith

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 School/Department/Institute 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. The application form must be signed by the LCI's Head of Department/School/Institute and in the case of ECR applications, an additional signature is required by the supervisor/laboratory head.

7. CONDITIONS OF GRANT

The decision of the CBRI Selection Committee is final.

Grant offers must be accepted in writing by the LCI and by the relevant Head of the Department/School/Institute.

The LCI will be the contact person for all administrative matters and is responsible for internal reporting requirements.

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

The LCI 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 from the date of commencement. Funds must be expended by the completion date.

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

The LCI 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 LCI 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 LCI is also required to participate in the relevant CBRI Seminars and Workshops and provide a six-month progress report.

The CBRI may use titles and summaries of funded proposals and final reports for promotional purposes and publications. Please keep this in mind when determining proposal titles.

8. CONTACT DETAILS

If you require any further information please contact a.siebel@unimelb.edu.au with the subject line: "CBRI-SF-query".