



## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The objective of the Melbourne Research Fellowships (Career Interruptions) Program is to enable eligible researchers who are University of Melbourne staff and who do not have a continuing tenured research position whose careers have been severely interrupted, delayed or otherwise constrained by chronic illness, child rearing or primary responsibility for the sustained care of a dependent family member, to enhance or re-establish their academic research careers. A number of Fellowships will be awarded, each up to the value of \$60,000 (oncost inclusive). To strengthen the duration and impact of the Fellowship, co-investment from the host faculty is expected on the basis of matched salary funding. This would allow the applicant to be awarded up to 12 months of salary, together with project costs of \$20k. The project costs will be fully funded from the DVCR strategic budget.

## **2 OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1 The intention of the scheme is to allow Fellows to have an intensive period to focus on their research. The funding is normally used either to fund replacement of their teaching and administrative duties, either by full-time replacement of duties or part-time replacement over a longer period, to be negotiated with the host department or, for Research Only applicants, used to give applicants research time they would not otherwise have, i.e., extend their employment for similar purposes, giving them time to work on research and writing to enhance their chances of success for a future fellowship or academic employment. The funding offered by this fellowship must be matched by the host faculty.

## **3 FUNDING AND BENEFITS**

- 3.1 A number of Fellowships will be awarded, each to the value of up to \$60,000 (oncost inclusive) from the DVCR strategic budget, with the funding to be transferred to the host Department on receipt of a Themis account string.
- 3.2 Each successful applicant will also receive an additional \$20,000 for travel or research support (including small equipment purchases). This will be funded by DVCR strategic budget.
- 3.3 The Full-time equivalent (FTE) of each Fellowship is to be taken at the discretion of the awardee and relevant department.
- 3.4 In consultation with the awardee and the relevant Associate Dean, Research, a mentor will be arranged. The relevant Associate Dean, Research will be the default mentor.

## **4 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

- 4.1 At the time of application, applicants must:
- Have completed a PhD degree in their field three to ten years prior to the application closing date (for 2020 applicants: between 12 September 2009 and 12 September 2016). For this Program,

completion of the PhD is the date of the official notification letter from the institution at which the PhD was completed.

- ii. Have recognised evidence of high research achievement and promise prior to the career interruption(s).
  - iii. Be able to clearly demonstrate in their application that their research career has been significantly interrupted by circumstances such as, but not limited to, chronic illness, child rearing or other family responsibilities such as primary responsibility for the sustained care of a dependent family member (who may, for example, be elderly, sick or a person with disabilities). Where the applicant does not wish to disclose the nature of the medical issue, evidence of significant interruption can be provided by a medical practitioner.
  - iv. The applicant should demonstrate their research momentum prior to the career interruption and how a Research Fellowship would make a genuine difference to their career.
  - v. Be Australian citizens, permanent residents, or with appropriate visa arrangements
  - vi. Be currently employed at the University of Melbourne, but not have continuing tenure. Sessional academic staff would not normally be considered eligible
  - vii. Be employed at the University at the commencement of the Fellowship
- 4.2 Fellowships may be taken up in any of the University of Melbourne's Academic Divisions or the Melbourne Business School. Fellowships can only be awarded to salaried employees of the University of Melbourne.
- 4.3 Prospective applicants must discuss their application with the prospective 'host' Head of Department (HoD) or equivalent. Applications will only be considered where there is clear evidence of strong support from the Head of Department, including co-investment of salary funding from the faculty. Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact the relevant host department well before the closing date.
- 4.4 The Program is not intended to support additional graduate training. Applicants who have begun the process of enhancing or re-establishing their academic research careers through a fellowship awarded since the interruption, or similar mechanism are not eligible for this program.
- 4.5 Applicants who are awarded and accept an internal or external fellowship or similar funding for salary costs after submitting an application to this Program will no longer be eligible to hold the Melbourne Research Career Interruption Fellowship. Applicants who are awarded research projects costs are still eligible to hold the Melbourne Research Fellowships Career Interruption Fellowship. Successful Fellows will not undertake additional outside work.

## 5 ELIGIBILITY EXEMPTION REQUESTS

- 5.1 Applicants may include an eligibility exemption request (EER) with their application if they believe that they should be considered exempt from a particular criterion and have a compelling justification, as detailed in *Part C* of the application form.
- 5.2 Applicants submitting an EER are not guaranteed an exemption; this decision is at the discretion of the Committee.
- 5.3 EERs may only be included for the following circumstances:
- i. If the applicant was awarded their PhD prior to 12 September 2009 *but has experienced exceptional extenuating circumstances*.

- ii. If the applicant is a casual staff member *but has been employed by the University of Melbourne for a minimum of 12 months at the time of application (this may include multiple 'back-to-back' contracts totalling 12 months)*.
- iii. If there are other exceptional circumstances *and the applicant has been advised by RIC to submit an EER*.

## 6 PROPOSAL COMPLETENESS

### 6.1 Applications consist of two parts:

- i. Application form, completed and submitted via the University's SmartyGrants platform.
- ii. Academic referee report, provided directly to RIC in confidence (template provided).

### 6.2 All uploaded documents must be written in English and must comply strictly with the format and submission requirements. Formatting requirements are as follows:

- i. Typewritten in black type.
- ii. Single column.
- iii. Minimum 12 point highly legible font (e.g. Helvetica, Times New Roman or Arial). This includes reference lists, figure captions, table captions and table contents. Text within figures may be any font size, but should be legible for reviewers.
- iv. Must not include URLs except in reference lists (do not hyperlink URLs in reference lists).
- v. Colour may be used in figures, but any labelling must be in black type.

### 6.3 All sections of the application must be completed or marked as not applicable.

### 6.4 The application must contain all the information necessary for assessment of the project without the need for explanation or reference to further documentation or reference to external sources.

### 6.5 If using the term 'primary caregiver' in their application, applicants must provide a description that clearly defines the term, with reference to their specific circumstances.

## 7 EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

Applications will be assessed by a University Selection Committee comprising senior members of the University research community chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Capability). The assessment process is confidential and decisions of the Committee will be made based on the merits of each application's strengths in relation to demonstration of trajectory and how the fellowship will enable the applicant to resume that trajectory. Decisions are at the discretion of the Committee.

### 7.1 Assessment Process

7.1.1 Where there are multiple applicants from one department, the Department (or Faculty if the Department is a single Department Faculty) will be asked to rank the applications.

7.1.2 Applications will be assessed by a University Selection Committee comprising senior members of the University research community chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Capability).

7.1.3 The Melbourne Research Fellowship (Career Interruptions) Committee reserves the right to discuss applications, on a confidential basis, with Deans, Associate Deans (Research), Heads of Department and Centre Directors or other senior colleagues.

## 7.2 Assessment Criteria

7.2.1 The following selection criteria shall apply:

- The demonstrated nature and extent of the career interruption, including estimation of the length of interruption, in the context of the objectives of this Program (details of the interruption may be provided by the applicant or by the applicant's medical practitioner).
- The track record of the applicant, relative to opportunity
- The likelihood that the Fellowship would enable the applicant to re-establish or enhance their career and improve their research track record substantially to compete more effectively for academic employment
- The appropriateness of the proposed use of the fellowship to be successful in significantly enhancing the research career of the applicant
- The level of support for the application from the Head of Department including: matched salary funding; the provisions that the Department has made for the applicant; the overall workload the fellow would carry during the term of the fellowship; and the capacity of the applicant to make a significant contribution to the academic life of the host department and Faculty (Departments are encouraged to nominate additional support for the applicant)

## 8 APPLICATION PROCESS

- 8.1 Prospective applicants must contact their academic division's research office to ensure any specific requirements have been met. Details for academic division contacts can be found on the RIC webpage (<http://research.unimelb.edu.au/work-with-us/funding/internal/melbourne-research-fellowships>).
- 8.2 **Applicants must enter their application into Themis via the Grant Submissions Workbench.** The status of the Themis submission must be '*Submitted to Research Office*' by the closing date. For guidance, please see [http://research.unimelb.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/1665871/themis\\_ECR\\_help.pdf](http://research.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/1665871/themis_ECR_help.pdf).
- 8.3 This is an internal grant. Applications submitted will not be checked by RIC for completeness, or eligibility prior to final lodgement; this is the responsibility of the applicant. Ineligible or incomplete applications will be excluded and not considered by the Committee.
- 8.4 Applicants must ask their referee to complete the Fellowships Referee Report Form and request that their completed report is submitted as a single PDF file via email, no later than 3pm (AEST) Thursday 12 September to:  
Email: [ric-internalgrants@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:ric-internalgrants@unimelb.edu.au)  
Subject: MRF-CI 2020 – Referee Report – *NAME OF APPLICANT*

## 9 TIMETABLE

Wednesday 7 August	Release of Guidelines; applications open
3pm Thursday 12 September	Applications close

October	Melbourne Research Fellowships (Career Interruptions) Committee meet to assess applications)
January 2020	Commencement date; funds made available to host departments

## 10 PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT

- 10.1 The option for using the Fellowship full-time (i.e. one year) or part-time (i.e. two years, minimum 0.5 FTE including any existing appointment) should be discussed with your prospective 'host' HoD or equivalent, and advised to RIC once confirmed.
- 10.2 Fellowships will normally commence no earlier than 1 January 2020.
- 10.3 Fellows will normally take up appointment by 30 June 2020. The HoD must approve commencement dates. Deferral of the award past 30 June 2020 will not normally be approved. The offer shall lapse if the Fellow does not take up appointment by 1 December 2020.
- 10.4 Funding will be transferred to the host department in January 2020.

## 11 CONDITIONS OF THE FELLOWSHIP

- 11.1 Fellowship offers must be accepted in writing by the Fellow and their HoD or equivalent.
- 11.2 Fellows report to the HoD (or nominee).
- 11.3 Fellows are expected to participate fully in the academic life of the host department and academic division. Fellows are expected to conduct research diligently, and to the best of their ability, within the field proposed in their application, as approved by the Fellowships Committee.
- 11.4 Applicants who are awarded and accept an internal or external fellowship, or similar funding for salary costs, after submitting an application to this Program will no longer be eligible to hold the Melbourne Research Fellowship (Career Interruptions). Applicants who are awarded research projects costs are still eligible to hold the Melbourne Research Fellowship (Career Interruptions).
- 11.5 Successful Fellows may not undertake additional outside employment.
- 11.6 Fellowship funds may not be used to fund a legal entitlement to severance payments.
- 11.7 **Final Report**  
In addition to participating in the University's Performance Development Framework and satisfying the Department's particular performance and reporting requirements, Fellows are required to provide a Final Report on activities, research outcomes, benefits of mentoring and achievements to the Head of Department. The report should be provided to RIC within 6 months of the conclusion of the Fellowship. A copy of this final report is to be forwarded to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Capability) for presentation to the Fellowships Committee. Summaries of activities funded and project final reports may be published.

Pro forma (template) for the Final Report is available from the Internal Grants page.

### 11.8 **Financial Report**

Fellows are also required to provide a financial acquittal report. Any unspent funds remaining after the Fellowship period must be relinquished.

- 11.9 The host Department is also required to provide a short report at the end of each Fellow's term, which outlines how the resources were expended, the benefits the Fellow has brought to the Department, benefits of the mentorship, and any possible improvements to the Career Interruption Program. A template will also be provided for this purpose.

## **12 ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACT**

All administrative enquiries should be directed to [ric-internalgrants@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:ric-internalgrants@unimelb.edu.au).