

International Research Partnerships

Global Victoria

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

CONTENTS

1. Description and objectives of the program	2
1.1 Purpose.....	2
1.2 Objectives	3
1.3 Grant Program Outcomes	3
2. Negotiated Grant Program	4
3. Eligibility	5
3.1 Eligible activities, projects and organisations	5
3.2 Ineligible Projects and Activities	6
4. Program Funding	6
5. Application, assessment and approval process:	6
5.1 Application, Assessment and Approval	6
5.2 Assessment Criteria	7
6. Conditions of funding	8

1. Description and objectives of the program

On 24 November 2020, the Victorian Government announced a commitment of \$33.4 million to support the short-term economic recovery of the international education sector, and to continue support to international students, in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This investment will confirm Victoria as a high-quality study destination, and Melbourne as Australia's number one student city, third best in the world.

The International Education Short-Term Recovery Plan outlines a comprehensive package of initiatives that will reset and stimulate the sector. This investment will also lay the path for a new long-term International Education Strategy to be released mid-2021.

As part of the package of initiatives, the Victorian Government will be providing funding to deliver an International Research Partnerships Program (the Program) for Victorian education institutions. The Program will provide grants to support international research partnerships, projects and exchanges and build relationships in future growth regions.

The ability of Victorian education institutions to initiate collaborative research projects has been impeded by the closure of Australia's international borders. This has implications on the ability of institutions to attract overseas talent (including students, academics and researchers), which in turn threatens Victoria's ranking and reputation as a world-leading research provider and curtails an important source of research to address Victorian government policy objectives.

The Program will consist of two streams:

- **Stream 1** – a core multidisciplinary research partnerships stream, providing Victorian education institutions with grants of up to \$200,000 for significant international research partnership projects
- **Stream 2** – the *Innovation Alliance* stream to support partnerships between Victorian Edtech companies, education institutions and international organisations, to test and promote efficacy of Victorian Edtech products for export growth

1.1 Purpose

The international education sector has been severely impacted by COVID-19.

Research activities, which are an integral aspect of university and education provider initiatives, have been hampered due to travel bans restricting the usual face-to-face collaboration between Victorian and international researchers.

Increased research partnerships are key to developing awareness of Victoria's education capabilities in international markets, which will in turn drive further collaboration.

The purpose of the International Research Partnerships Program is to provide research grants to Victorian education providers to:

- Support strategic international research partnerships in areas of mutual interest
- Facilitate Victorian academics' access to markets with high-quality research and research funding
- Build Victoria's reputation and recognition in emerging markets.

The Program will support the strategic objectives and delivery outcomes of the broader International Education Short-Term Recovery Plan.

1.2 Objectives

The objectives of the International Research Partnerships Program are to:

- Establish new partnerships that will increase research engagement with key regions and internationalise research outputs
- Grow research revenue streams by securing engagement and access to international research funds in established, high-quality research markets
- Ensure Victorian education providers retain their prestigious rankings by securing a pipeline of postgraduate students and talent
- Encourage the adoption of innovative education practices by education institutions.

1.3 Grant Program Outcomes

Program Outcomes

The International Research Partnerships Program will provide a number of outcomes, that will benefit Victorian education providers and the international education sector, including:

- The increased capability of Victorian education providers to initiate collaborative research projects to address Victorian policy objectives
- The attraction of overseas talent (including students and academics) to collaborate with Victorian education providers on research projects

- The building of Victoria's brand recognition as a quality education destination in emerging regions
- The positioning of Victoria as a thought leader and high-quality provider of EdTech solutions and education innovation.

Long Term Outcomes

The long-term outcomes of the Program include:

- The increased value of commercial partnerships for Victorian providers
- The retained and/or improved rankings of Victorian education institutions as world-leading research providers
- The attraction of global talent and knowledge to Victoria, and the encouragement of future student and academic mobility between Victoria and international markets
- The increased awareness of Victoria's capabilities, leading to trade, investment and other commercial outcomes.

2. Negotiated Grant Program

The International Research Partnerships Program will consist of a targeted application process for Stream 1 and Stream 2. Each funding application will be considered against established project criteria on a case-by-case basis.

The grants are characterised by direct engagement with a specific organisation (or a select number of targeted organisations) to realise individually negotiated outcomes and grant amounts.

These grants will seek to leverage financial and / or in-kind co-investment from international partners to grow Victorian providers' access to markets with high-quality research, as well as building the reputation of Victoria's education, training and research strengths in emerging markets.

The negotiated grant program does not involve a public invitation process, as the potential recipients are identified, targeted, and/or nominated by institutions for the application process in Stream 1 and there will be an Expression of Interest process for Stream 2, targeting Victorian EdTech companies. The department will ensure that the highest standards of probity are observed throughout the application and selection process.

The Victorian Government's Global Education Network will play a key role in facilitating the rollout of the Program. In particular, the network's Education Services Managers will assist in identifying and facilitating the development of individual grants.

3. Eligibility

The International Research Partnerships Program grant funding is available to Victorian education providers and EdTech companies, through a negotiated process with the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (the department) and any additional project delivery partners.

The department or a third party engaged by the department, will approach Victorian organisations for applications for Stream 1 and Stream 2 through a targeted outreach process.

3.1 Eligible activities, projects and organisations

Activities and projects that are funded:

The Program seeks to achieve its objectives through providing grants to Victorian education providers, for research projects that focus on areas of interest to the State and international partners, including, but not limited to:

- Education technology and innovation
- Food and Fibre
- Agriculture
- Health, medical technologies and life sciences
- ICT and digital technologies
- Sustainability and energy
- Mining and resources
- Advanced manufacturing

It is expected that all activities under the research project will be delivered within twelve months from the signing of the grant agreement.

Eligible organisations

Stream 1 is open to Victorian public education institutions.

Stream 2 is open to Victorian EdTech companies and/or Victorian public education institutions.

For both Stream 1 and Stream 2, applicants must partner with an international organisation, which may include an education institution, research body and/or an industry organisation.

In addition to partnering with an international organisation, applicants may also partner with another Victorian organisation.

Applicants must demonstrate an understanding of their responsibilities under the *Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020* and for ensuring relevant research agreements are submitted to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for assessment.

3.2 Ineligible Projects and Activities

Activities and projects that will generally not be considered:

- Requests for retrospective funding where projects have been completed
- Requests for funding where projects have already commenced
- Requests for 100 per cent of the funding for a project
- Projects requiring ongoing funding from the Victorian Government
- Ongoing operating costs or salary subsidies, except where a salary subsidy provides project management support for the funded project
- Private sector projects undertaken as a result of a Victorian Government contract

4. Program Funding

Funding is capped at a maximum value of \$200,000 (excluding GST) per grant for Stream 1 and \$50,000 per grant for Stream 2.

To be eligible for Program funding, matched funding is not a requirement, however applications will be assessed on the level of financial or in-kind contribution proposed by the applicant.

5. Application, assessment and approval process

5.1 Application, Assessment and Approval

The grant application, assessment and approval process under the program is outlined below:

- all applicants are to complete an on-line proposal form for request for funding
- applications must be received by the application deadline
- all applications will be reviewed against the eligibility criteria and assessment criteria as defined in Section 5.2 by the department or a third party engaged by the department, and then endorsed by the Director International Education

- a recommendation is made to the Minister for Trade or Ministerial delegate for funding
- the Minister or Minister's delegate will consider the advice and determine whether to approve the application for funding
- applicants will receive a letter of offer confirming the outcome of the application, where practical
- successful applications are required to enter into a funding agreement with the department or a third-party organisation engaged by the department to manage the Program detailing all funding obligations and conditions.

5.2 Assessment Criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed, by the department or a third party engaged by the department, against their response to the criteria listed below as well as supporting documents.

- how well the project meets the Program objectives (as detailed in Section 1.2)
- how well the project:
 - supports the strategic direction of the participating organisations
 - aligns with one of the areas of interest identified in Section 3.1
- the capacity of the lead institution and partner organisations to deliver the Research and Development (R&D) elements of the project, including the ability of the staff employed or proposed to be employed
- the extent to which end-users will benefit from the R&D activities of the project, including the potential to commercialise the R&D activities
- the expected long-term outcomes and impact of the project, including how these long-term outcomes will be sustained after the funding period of the project ends. These outcomes may include:
 - long-term partnerships, including formal partnership agreements for R&D and/or commercialisation
 - skills development, including the expected skills transfers and the subsequent application of these skills
 - educational outputs, including increased enrolments, and increased higher degree by research completion rates
 - research outputs, including improved publication and citation rates
 - commercial outputs, including creation or improvement of products, employment, firms and businesses, business investments and sales
 - other benefits, to be identified and justified by the applicant.

Project aims

The application demonstrates the extent to which the project:

- addresses objectives of the Program (Section 1.2)
- the project will deliver the outcomes of the Program (Section 1.3)

Project delivery and capability

The application demonstrates the extent to which the project:

- is supported by a clear project management approach, including a realistic project plan and governance model
- is financially viable, based on sound cost estimates and represents value for money
- be successfully delivered within anticipated timeframes (no more than 12 months after the signing of the agreement) and budget
- if appropriate to the project outcomes, proposes a collaborative approach with an international partner and indicates how they will contribute to the project.

6. Conditions of funding

Successful applicants must enter into a funding agreement with the department or a third-party organisation engaged by the department to manage the Program (which may be in the form of online terms and conditions and must be agreed by the applicant). The funding agreement outlines the commitments and obligations under the grant, as well as the general funding terms and conditions.

All eligible project expenditure is to be incurred only after the funding agreement has been executed.

Grantees will be required to submit progress reports against milestones and provide evidence of project completion.

Successful applicants will be required to report on the outcomes of their project and contribute information and data about the funded project to the department for the evaluation of the program.

Applicants may be subject to audit by the Victorian Government or its representatives and must be required to produce supporting evidence at the request of the Victorian Government for a period of four years after funding has been awarded.

If any information in the application is found to be false or misleading, or funds have not been applied for the purposes of the program in accordance with the terms of funding as set out in these guidelines, application and the funding agreement, the grant will be repayable on demand.

The funding agreement should also be complemented by a Project Plan, a detailed budget with breakdown of expenditure and timelines as well as details of planned activities.

Funding agreements are legally enforceable documents that clearly set out the obligations of both parties. The funding agreement aims to protect the Victorian Government's interests and the efficient and effective use of public money.

The agreement also ensures there is appropriate recognition of Victorian Government support in project-related publications, media releases and promotional material.

Funding agreements must be signed in accordance with the regulatory framework under which the application operates and will:

- describe the purpose for which the funding must be used
- set out any requirements or conditions that must be met prior to the payment of a grant instalment
- outline agreed milestones and project outcomes that must be achieved before payment of a grant instalment

Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

Successful applicants will be required to contribute to an evaluation which is undertaken during and/or after completion of the project. Successful applicants will be required to submit the evaluation as part of the final project report and provide evidence of project completion. The evaluation must assess the project's success in meeting its stated objectives, outputs, outcomes and impacts.

These arrangements will allow the department to undertake a robust evaluation of the Fund.

Acknowledgement

Successful applicants need to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support through the provision of a grant from the Fund. The funding agreement includes a requirement that all activities acknowledge Victorian Government support through logo presentation on any activity-related publications, media releases and promotional material in accordance with the department's guidelines.

Communication of Initiative

Successful applicants must liaise with the department or a third-party organisation engaged to manage the Program to coordinate any media communications related to the activity. Successful applicants may be required to contribute information on activity outcomes for the state to use in communications materials.

Privacy

Any personal information about the applicant or a third party in the application will be collected by the department for the purpose of grant administration. This information may be provided to other Victorian Government agencies for the purposes of assessing applications. If personal information about third parties is included in the application, ensure third parties are aware of the contents of this privacy statement and the contents of the department's Privacy Policy available from the Privacy Officer (details below).

Any personal information about the applicant or a third party in correspondence will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic), Health Records Act 2001 (Vic) and other applicable laws.

DJPR is committed to protecting the privacy of personal information.

The department's privacy policy is available from:

Privacy Officer

Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions GPO Box 2392
Melbourne, VIC, 3001, AUS
Email: privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Enquiries about access to information about you held by DJPR should be directed to:

Freedom of Information Manager Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

GPO Box 2392
Melbourne, VIC, 3001, AUS
Email: foi@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Authorised by the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
1 Spring Street Melbourne Victoria 3000
Telephone (03) 9651 9999

© Copyright State of Victoria,
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions 2021

Except for any logos, emblems, trademarks, artwork and photography this document is made available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Australia license.

This document is also available in an accessible format at economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au