

Researcher Development Grants

Faculty of Science - Funding Guidelines



Trust	The Albert Shimmins Fund
Funding type	Researcher Development Grants
Applicants	Early Career Academics & Mid-Career Academics (Levels B & C)
Maximum award (AU\$)	\$125,000 pa (Faculty: \$100,000 pa & School: \$25,000 pa); two awards
Rounds per year	1
Funding duration	2 years
Academic Lead	Prof Andy Martin (Associate Dean Research)
Science Research Office Lead	Veronica Loew (Award Coordinator)
Scheme Contact Information	Science Research Office
University Trust Record	UTR 7.220

Introduction

Early-Mid Career Researchers face the challenge of building a track record of supervising research staff when applying for funding opportunities. Recent teaching and research academics also face the additional challenge of maintaining research momentum through competing demands of academic teaching and service requirements.

The Faculty of Science Researcher Development Grant will support a continuing Level B or Level C academic for two years, building their independent research capacity and boosting their competitiveness in applying for external funding opportunities or obtaining industry contracts. The funding may support a postdoctoral researcher under their supervision and/or essential project related costs.

The Selection criteria is based on the candidate's plan to build independent research capacity, and potential development of an application for an externally funded opportunity. This funding is conditional on the candidate's School providing a co-contribution of at least \$25,000 per annum for two years.

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be a Level B or Level C continuing staff within the Faculty of Science in 2026.
- Continuing Research Contingent staff must have an appointment until at least the 1 June 2028. Applicants who do not meet this requirement must have, from their Head of School, confirmed salary support for a contract extension to at least the 1 June 2028.
- Have not received significant external project funding* within the last 5 years as lead investigator (this does not include salary received by the applicant as part of a fellowship).

***Significant external project funding means more than \$250,000.**

- Not have received a Researcher Development Grant in prior years.

Eligibility will be confirmed by the Science Research Office using grant outcome data (recent successes), HR contract data (contract status) and Workday/Cayuse project data and budgets (active grants, expected income in 2026 and incomplete reports).

Funding

- Two awards will be made in 2026, with at least one being awarded to a female academic.
- Successful recipients will typically receive \$125,000 per annum. for two years, with co-contributions by:
 - The Faculty of Science: \$100,000 per annum for two years.
 - The Host School: at least \$25,000 per annum for two years.

Application and Assessment Process

- Applicants will complete a SmartyGrants application form by the closing date.
- The Science Research Office will review applicants' eligibility.
- Associate Dean Research, or delegate, will assess applications and endorses outcomes.
- Successful recipients will be notified and the first payment will be made in mid-2026.

Selection Criteria

- Potential of project to increase applicants independent research capacity towards development of an application for an external funding opportunity (including competitive grants and industry contracts). [50%]
- Potential benefit and impact of proposed research. [30%]
- Competitiveness of track record relative to opportunity. [20%]

Requirement

- A significant (>\$100,000) external funding opportunity is applied for within two years of the commencement of the grant.
- Successful applicants must participate in a School based "internal review" and Faculty based "out-of-field review" if preparing an ARC or NHMRC application, or comparable mentoring for other grant schemes.

Timeline

Process	Date
Scheme open	30 March 2026
Scheme close	31 May 2026
Outcomes	May 2026
Funding	July 2026 – June 2028
External funding opportunity application	Before June 2030

Contact – enquiries about the scheme can be sent to: science-research@unimelb.edu.au