

David Syme Research Prize



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Faculty of Science Funding Guidelines

Trustee	<i>Mr David Syme; David Syme and Company Limited, publishers of The Age newspaper</i>
Funding type	Research prize
Applicants	Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics disciplines (within Australia) Academics at level of professor are ineligible to apply
Maximum award (AU\$)	The prize consists of a medal and a cash prize. (prize value confirmed each year - approx. \$10,000)
Rounds per year	1
Funding duration	Prize will be paid as a one-off payment
Academic Lead	Prof Andy Martin (Faculty of Science Associate Dean Research)
Science Research Office Lead	Julia Beveridge (Award Coordinator)
Scheme Contact Information	Email: Science Research Office
University Trust Record	UTR6.17

Introduction

The David Syme Research Prize was established following a donation from Mr David Syme in 1904 to the University of Melbourne. The annual prize rewards the best original research in Biology, Physics, Chemistry, or Geology produced* in Australia during the two years preceding the closing date for applications. Other things being equal, preference will be given to original research of value to Australia's industrial and commercial interests. The David Syme Research Prize was first awarded in 1906. The David Syme Research Prize is awarded by nomination only. A letter of nomination must be submitted with each application.

* **produced** - for example published, received patents etc.

Funding Amount

The prize consists of a medal and a cash prize, the value of which will be confirmed each award year.

Applicant Eligibility

- i. Research period: The original research described in the nomination must be published in Australia during the TWO years preceding the closing date for each prize round (1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025). However, the nomination may include research results or publications accepted up to the award closing date of 30 April 2026, if this is considered vital to the nomination.
- ii. Other accepted submissions, if vital to the nomination:
 - Unpublished results or manuscripts suitable for publication, from work during the Research period above.

- iii. Researchers associated with *any* Australian university and researchers in Australia without university connections are eligible for nomination, **except** those who have the position of Professor (level E) or similar level of seniority outside university), or will obtain that position at the time of award.
- iv. Applicants must have been in Australia for at least five out of the seven years preceding the closing date for each prize round.
- v. The original research may be done, in whole or in part, in collaboration with other persons. In such cases, the value of the candidate's contribution to the joint work will be considered.

Application Process

Applications are submitted through the Faculty of Science SmartyGrants homepage, and must include:

- **A letter of nomination** must accompany each application, and should be:
 - Written by senior members of the academic or research community such as co-authors or co-researchers, heads of department or deputy vice-chancellors (research).
 - 1-page in length, on relevant letterhead.
 - Clearly describe why the nominated candidate would be a deserving winner of the prize.
 - Attest to the information provided by the candidate and to their research leadership.
 - Note: Self-nominations will not be accepted. The committee reserves the right to approach co-authors / researchers / nominators for evidence of the nominee's research leadership.
- **The candidate's record of original research** (e.g. papers published or unpublished, during the research period described above, submit up to a maximum of 3 papers).
 - Note: Scholarly reviews will not be held in the same regard as original refereed articles
- **A plain English summary of the work** (accessible to the general public; may be used for public release)
- **A statement describing the main purpose and trend of the research.**
- **A statement describing the scientific and commercial impact of the work:**
 - This may include reference to field weighted metrics, citations (appropriately justified), conference invitations, patents and consultancies.
 - This may also include evidence, or a description of the likelihood, that the research could lead to an application of relevance to industry or commercialisation.
 - NOTE: The University of Melbourne will consider the candidates use of metrics in line with the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment guidelines ([SFDORA](#)).
- **A statement clearly describing the originality and importance of the work** including 'breakthrough' aspects.

- **A statement of the candidate's share in the work**, for work carried out in collaboration with other persons:
 - Clearly map the nominee's role in the totality of the research presented in leading research ideas and analysis. This is especially important if the research is in collaboration with established senior researchers who are not joint nominees for the award.
 - This should be presented as a percentage and include a summary of the nominee's role in leading research ideas and analysis of results.
 - If more than one researcher is being nominated, outline the reasons why a joint nomination is being submitted and include a statement that clearly maps the role of each nominee in the totality of the research presented.

- **A summary Curriculum Vitae** - focusing on aspects relevant to the work during the research assessment period (1 January 2024 to 31 December 2025), with supporting material from the previous 10 years where relevant. Maximum 3 pages (12-point font), including the following headings:
 - Full name
 - Full details of education, present and past appointments
 - Seminar/conference presentations - *invited talks only*
 - Peer recognition of research - *awards or prizes (include \$ amount where applicable)*
 - Outreach activities - *e.g. public events, media*
 - Nationally competitive grants and other research income
 - Details of published works – *this publication section is not included in the 3-page limit, organise these works in the following categories:*
 - Original refereed journal articles
 - Provide date of acceptance for unpublished papers
 - Include journal ranking within discipline (not impact factor) and citations
 - Reviews
 - Books, chapters and monographs
 - Full published conference proceedings
 - Do not include conference abstracts
 - Patents
 - Other publications
 - e.g. popular articles, periodicals, submissions to government reviews, policies
 - Optional – a URL link may be provided for one manuscript suitable for publication that embodies unpublished results of work carried out during the award period provided that knowledge of the previous work is necessary to the correct evaluation of the research.

Evaluation and Assessment

Applications for this prize are assessed through a Selection Committee chaired by the Faculty of Science Academic Lead and Research Office Lead.

The prize is awarded to the candidate who, in the opinion of the Selection Committee, submits the record of original research making the *most* important contribution to one or other of the following branches of Science: Biology,



Chemistry, Geology or Physics. Other things being equal, preference will be given to original research of value to the industrial and commercial development of Australia.

If a nomination is being made for two or more people who are eligible in respect of research that is their joint work, they will be judged as one candidate. If the prize is awarded, the nominees will each receive a medal and will equally share in the prize money.

Early career researchers will not receive special consideration because of a relatively short research career. Nominations will be assessed on the strength of research and publications during the two years relevant to the award and relative to opportunity.

If two or more records of original research of equal merit are submitted and the Selection Committee are unable to determine which of them constitutes the most important contribution to the relevant branch of Science, the prize may be shared.

Funding Conditions

The recipient of the prize will be listed on the University of Melbourne webpage:

<https://science.unimelb.edu.au/research/awards-grants-and-support>

Timeline

Process	Date
Scheme open	2 February 2026
Scheme close	30 April 2026
Outcomes	May 2026
Funding	June 2026

Contact: Julia Beveridge, Research Development Officer

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