

Macquarie University Postgraduate Research Fund (PGRF) Conference Paper/Poster Travel and/or Supplementary Research Funding Rules

AIMS AND APPLICATION CONDITIONS

The primary goals of the Macquarie University Postgraduate Research Fund (PGRF) are:

- to add value to the research thesis
- to provide the University's postgraduate research students with the means to enhance their postgraduate research experience, and
- to gain firsthand experience of the grant writing process.

PGRF applications are accepted biannually and are considered on a **competitive** basis, considering individual merit and academic benefit. Not all PGRF applications can be funded, and PGRF funding is not automatic nor a right. Students and supervisors should work together to produce as high quality an application as possible, so that it performs well in the competition.

A student may normally hold only one PGRF award during the life of their research degree candidature. However, if their first PGRF award was unused due to COVID-19 restrictions, students are encouraged to apply again.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor Graduate Research reports to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and PGRF funds are part of the University's research budget.

Commencing from Round 1, 2024, the maximum value of a PGRF grant is **\$6,000 AUD**. Funds from Round 1 in any year are for activities between January 1 and June 30 of that year. Funds for Round 2 cover activities between July 1 and December 31.

In exceptional circumstances, funding will be provided for activities that fall outside of the funding period. Examples of this might be:

- a conference spanning the beginning or end date of the funding period (for example from June 29 to July 2)
- a conference only announced after PGRF applications have closed for the relevant round. This circumstance should be rare, as applying for PGRF should be part of a student's long-term planning of their degree, including subscribing to conference announcement alerts.

If students have applied to give a presentation at a conference, they should not wait for final acceptance of their proposal before applying for PGRF funding, to make sure they apply in the round covering the period of the conference.

Please Note: Applications for PGRF expenses related to the research project must be supplementary to those covered by Departmental/Faculty postgraduate funding. Applicants are reminded that basic research expenses necessary for the completion of the research project will **not** be funded from the PGRF scheme. Host Departments/Schools are required to meet the basic

research and infrastructure costs incurred by their research students, e.g., lab equipment, fieldwork, photocopying, postage, and other day-to-day project costs. PGRF scheme funds may not be used to meet such costs. Departmental assurances of basic infrastructure support for research students are mandatory when the Executive Dean approves enrolments. Enrolments should not be accepted on the assumption that central funds, such as those offered by the PGRF scheme, will be approved.

ELIGIBILITY

Research students are eligible for the PGRF if, at the application closing date:

- they are enrolled in full or part-time research degrees, including if they are Graduate Teaching Associates (GTA);
- they have not submitted their theses for examination;
- (for students enrolled before 1/1/14) they have not exceeded 3.5 full-time/equivalent years for PhD or 1.5 years for MPhil;
- (for students enrolled after 1/1/14) they have not exceeded 2.5 full-time/equivalent years for PhD and 1.5 years for MPhil.
- Master of Research (MRes) students are not eligible to apply for the PGRF.

For students who enrolled **after 1/1/14**, the normal expectation is that they will be in the mid-late second year of doctoral enrolment, or early second year of MPhil enrolment, with significant research results achieved.

Research students outside these candidature time parameters may submit special case arguments for eligibility as part of the PGRF application but will normally have lower priority in the allocation of funds.

Please note that PGRF applications for a conference/other research support, which is scheduled after the student's Expected Work Submission date will not be considered.

PGRF SCHEDULE 2024

<i>Scheme</i>	<i>For Activities Between</i>	<i>Applications due at GRA Office</i>	<i>Notification of results</i>
<i>Round 2, 2024</i>	<i>1/7/24 - 31/12/24</i>	<i>26/2/2024</i>	<i>5/4/2024</i>
<i>Round 1, 2025</i>	<i>1/1/25 - 30/6/25</i>	<i>12/8/2024</i>	<i>20/9/2024</i>

SUBMISSION ADDRESS

All documents are to be submitted electronically to the Graduate Research Academy (GRA) at the following address: gr.pgrf@mq.edu.au. If you are unable to submit electronically, please contact this email address or the GRA for submission information (+61 (2) 9850 4741).

APPLICATION PROCESS

All forms and information for the PGRF can be found [here](#).

There are separate application forms for conference travel and supplementary research costs, depending on the primary purpose of the application.

Applications must be submitted on the prescribed form, completed in not less than 12-point font type. Applications must not be handwritten, or over-length: prescribed word lengths must be observed. Failure to conform to guidelines may make your application ineligible.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the application includes the necessary signatures: Applicant, Principal Supervisor and Head of Department/School. The GRA will obtain the Associate Dean Research Training and Performance (RTP) signature after submission.

THE PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR'S ROLE

The principal supervisor must be involved in the preparation of the application to assist the research student in developing grant application skills. In addition to overseeing the preparation of the application, the applicant's principal supervisor must complete the 'Supervisor's Report' Form and submit it, independently of the associated application, by the closing date. Supervisors are asked to provide a report on the progress of the thesis project and comment on why a PGRF grant would enhance that project. This information is critical to the assessment of an application and applicants should ensure their supervisor is aware of this requirement and of the closing date. Applications for which no 'Supervisor's Report' Form is received by the closing date will be ruled ineligible.

ELIGIBLE AREAS OF GRANT EXPENDITURE

Applications may be made to cover the following costs:

- Conference travel:
Applicant attendance at a national or international conference, including registration fees, travel, and accommodation, only where the applicant has had a paper or a poster presentation accepted. Official confirmation of the acceptance of the student's paper/poster, or an invitation to the student to present at a conference, should be included with the application. Where such evidence is not available at this time, it must be submitted to Graduate Research Liaison team (gr.pgrf@mq.edu.au) as soon as it is received. PGRF funds will not be released without this documentation. All travel will be subject to current COVID-19 restrictions and must align with University guidance at the time of travel.
- Supplementary Research Costs (for costs incurred in pursuing new or additional aspects of the research project):
These costs might include community consultation costs, production of creative works, supplementary fieldwork, supplementary visits to off-campus libraries or archives, visits to research laboratories with the intention of acquiring additional research skills or purchase of small items of equipment not normally supplied by the Department or School. These claims must not relate to costs that would normally be incurred in the completion of the thesis as originally planned.

Please note that the costs of thesis production, publication fees and requests for laptop computers are ineligible. Grants are for individual students; therefore, applications submitted on behalf of larger research projects or groups are ineligible.

PRIMARY CARER COSTS

Applicants with primary carer responsibilities can include in their budget extraordinary carer costs they may need to cover to complete their PGRF activity. Applications should include details of why particular costs are necessary.

RETROSPECTIVE CLAIMS

Retrospective requests for support will not be considered under any circumstances, as to do so would contravene the University's audit requirements. For the purposes of this scheme, a retrospective request is defined as a request made for funds that have been spent or committed before the closing date for the current round.

PREPARATION AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE BUDGET

A comprehensive budget is an essential part of all applications. There are two basic principles that must be used in determining and justifying budgets—full and accurate costing of budget items, and a clear explanation of the reasons for all proposed expenditure in relation to the research plan. A justification of a budget is not merely a statement of the proposed expenditure. Applicants should explain why each item of expenditure is essential in relation to the application, and why the amount requested is appropriate. Please include all relevant evidence for costings. Flight bookings must be made through Corporate Travel Management (Macquarie University's travel management supplier) and a quote must be attached to the application form. Flight bookings should not be made until after the funds are approved.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Students travelling for the purpose of graduate research are automatically covered by the University's travel insurance for up to 180 days. For definitions, conditions and what to do if travel exceeds 180 days, please see the following websites:

Travel [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#)
Insurable Risk [Policy](#) and [Guideline](#)

Please note: University travel insurance does *not* cover students for *any* period of private travel.

PER DIEM EXPENSES

Successful applicants can claim per diem expenses *ahead* of travel. The University's policy on per diems is within the [Travel Procedure](#). Applicants may claim per diems for any part of a trip *not* spent at a conference. The approach to conferences is that if the conference provides all meals, you should claim a per diem at the "Incidental Conference Rate." If the conference does not provide meals, you can claim at the full rate. However, to make this claim, you will need to provide a copy of the conference program. A travel diary detailing daily expenses must be kept.

Per Diem rates for travel can be found [here](#) under the [Travel Procedure](#) (Section 5, clause 45h). You must consult the University Per Diem Schedule for complete information on how to budget for per diems.

FULL JUSTIFICATION IS REQUIRED

While a maximum of \$6,000 AUD will be awarded to each successful applicant, the activity for which the funds are requested must be fully costed and included in the budget section of the application, even if the total exceeds the maximum amount of the award. Applicants must then state the source(s) of funding of the budget items not covered by the \$6,000 AUD maximum. This may include project

or travel grants awarded by outside bodies or, where permitted, internal graduate research project support funds, or their own funds.

OFFSITE TRAVEL

Students intending to use a PGRF grant to support their offsite research must obtain permission. Approval of short term (less than six (6) months) graduate research related activities away from the Wallumattagal campus must be approved via the relevant Faculty processes prior to travel date.

ETHICS

Successful applicants whose projects require ethical and/or biosafety clearance will not gain access to awarded funds until they have provided the GRA (gr.pgrf@mq.edu.au) with a copy of the relevant clearance letter.

For information on ethical and/or biosafety issues, contact: Ethics Secretariat

Email: ethics.secretariat@mq.edu.au

Telephone: +61 2 9850 4490

ASSESSMENT OF PGRF APPLICATION

Applications are assessed by a panel convened by the Faculty, which includes a representative from outside of the Faculty. Applications will be assessed according to the following criteria, as appropriate:

1. How the project adds value to the thesis by:
 - Allowing the student to present their research findings and receive quality feedback in a way that will potentially improve the final thesis; and/or
 - Allowing the student to supplement fieldwork by gathering extra data, relevant but not indispensable to the project; and/or
 - Providing the student with relevant skills that will assist with the final completion of the thesis.
2. How the project enhances the postgraduate research experience by:
 - Providing the student with experiences that aid their professional development; and/or
 - Allowing the student to develop research networks; and/or
 - Equipping the student with valuable and relevant skills; and/or
 - Allowing the student to become familiar with a key research institution.
3. The quality and professionalism of the PGRF application:
 - The application is accessible to a non-specialist audience;
 - The value and scope of the research project is clearly defined;
 - The proposed activity and its relationship to the research project is fully and clearly explained;
 - The budget is clearly presented and fully justified;
 - The application contains all necessary information and documentation.
4. How the application shows alignment with the [Macquarie University Strategic Research Framework 2025](#)(see below).
5. The appropriateness of timing of project in relation to candidature progress.

Applicants will be formally notified of the results of PGRF awards by email, sent by the GRA (gr.pgrf@mq.edu.au) to their Macquarie University student email address. PGRF funds will be available from 1 January/1 July. Grants will be made available to students and individual accounts will be established by MQ Financial Services. The Faculty Finance/Departments are responsible for recording and monitoring expenditure, which will be subject to the usual University policies, financial checks, procedures, and audits.

ALIGNMENT WITH [MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC RESEARCH FRAMEWORK 2025](#)

The *Framework* identifies four key objectives and five future-shaping research priorities for the University's research over the period 2015-25. The research priorities are designed in an inclusive way to identify broad inter-disciplinary topics that can bring the wide range of the University's research projects into relationship with one another. They are not designed to prioritise certain research projects over others or to pick winners, but to find a language in which different research projects can encourage and inspire one another.

Similarly, the *Framework* identifies four key objectives. One of these is the development of world-ready HDR candidates. You are asked as part of the PGRF process to demonstrate how your application aligns with the research priorities and/or key objectives. In preparing your answer, look closely at the *Framework* and think how your project might be seen to fit with it. Asking for evidence of this kind of alignment is standard practice in applying for funding.

CONDITIONS OF AWARD – ACCESSING PGRF FUNDS

Successful applicants will receive a 'Letter of Offer', detailing their award, and an 'Acceptance of Offer' (AOO) form. Once the AOO has been signed by the applicant and Supervisor, it must be returned to the GRA (gr.pgrf@mq.edu.au). Provided all conditions of award have been met, an account will then be established by MQ Financial Services, prior to the funding period. The applicant will then be advised of their PGRF account code by their Department/Faculty Finance Officer. Please note that under no circumstances can the funding be released prior to the grant commencement date, which is 1 January/1 July each year. If payment is required for conference registration, air fares or other time-restricted expenses prior to the grant commencement date, students will need to make arrangements with their Department/Faculty for bridging funds.

Note: Administration of the funds including reimbursements, payment of airfares, etc., is handled via the Department and/or Faculty Finance Offices. For details of financial arrangements, students should seek advice from the relevant Faculty, School or Department.

PRICE INCREASES

If the cost of your airfare or other budget items has increased by the time you have to pay it, contact your Faculty office to discuss. No further PGRF funds will be made available if you have already received the maximum \$6,000 AUD grant. Do not submit a Variation of Expenditure Request form, as this is used only if you are changing your planned activity.

POST AWARD

Grant funding must be expended prior to the submission of the applicant's thesis and prior to the advised maximum candidature or Funded Expected Completion (FEC) date. If a successful PGRF applicant has not submitted their research thesis within twelve months of the date of award, the grant will automatically be terminated and any surplus funds in the student's PGRF account will be recouped.

VARIATION OF EXPENDITURE REQUEST

Funds granted may not be spent for purposes other than those detailed in the original application budget unless the permission of the PVC GR has been obtained, using the appropriate form (see below). Any variation to the activities originally approved, including dropping, or changing side visits, requires PVC GR approval. If there is a change to your budget you must submit a fully revised budget, budget justification and itinerary via your faculty. You have access to your funds for a period of 12 months, there are no extensions to this time.

FINAL REPORT

Grantees must submit a Final Report on their funded project **no later than one year** after the award was made, or at the time of thesis submission if earlier. The form allows for a one-page account of the use of the funds and their value to the thesis project.

FORMS

All the above PGRF forms can be found [online](#).

All PGRF forms must be submitted via the GRA email gr.pgrf@mq.edu.au unless otherwise agreed.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT THE PGRF:

- The fund is intended to enhance the postgraduate experience and add value to the thesis – it is not to be used to meet basic research and infrastructure costs associated with the applicant's candidature.
- From Round 1, 2024, the maximum value of the grant is \$6,000 AUD. Applicants submitting budgets more than this amount must demonstrate how the extra expense will be met, e.g. Departmental/School/Faculty funds.
- Applications must not be handwritten, and entered text must be submitted in not less than 12-point font type.
- A "Supervisor's Report Form" must be submitted independently of the application by the Supervisor, by the closing date. Applications for which no Supervisor's Report Form is received by the closing date will be ruled ineligible.
- Applications for domestic or international travel are supported; however, at the time of travel, University guidelines must be adhered to (e.g., restrictions in place due to COVID-19).
- Conference travel costs will be considered only where the applicant has had a paper accepted or is making a poster presentation. Where such evidence is not available at the time of application, it must be submitted to the GRA as soon as possible (gr.pgrf@mq.edu.au), and prior to the release of funds. Likewise, supplementary research costs such as fieldwork, archival or resource visits are only appropriate where the applicant demonstrates additional research skills or additional materials which will add value to the thesis will be acquired.
- Advice regarding account details and administration of the funds including reimbursements, payment of airfares, etc., is provided via the Departmental/School and/or Faculty Finance Offices.
- All grant funding is subject to all University policies and occasional audit by the University auditor.

Failure to follow guidelines and provide all information and documentation by the closing date, or to conform to word limits may result in your application being marked down or disqualified.

WORKSHOPS

To enroll in the PGRF grant writing workshop delivered by the Graduate Research Development team in collaboration with faculties, please visit the [Researcher Development Calendar](#).

Your Department/School might also offer workshops. For more information, please contact your [Department/School Research Training Director](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Applicants are required to consult with their Principal Supervisor when preparing their submission. Most issues relating to preparation of applications are addressed in these Funding Rules, and applicants should read this document carefully before compiling their application. If after careful review of the Funding Rules and consultation with the Principal Supervisor further clarification is required, applicants should contact: gr.pgrf@mq.edu.au.

*Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Graduate Research
Graduate Research Academy*

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