The University of Melbourne
Interdisciplinary Seed Funding Scheme
GUIDELINES FOR FUNDING IN 2011
Please refer to the Applicant Instructions which will be downloadable from

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The University of Melbourne Interdisciplinary Seed Funding Grant Scheme is an initiative of Melbourne Research which commenced with 2010 funding. This scheme is intended to complement the funding of University Research Institutes and to further catalyse the drawing together of academic staff from across disciplines to engage in research addressing complex societal challenges.

1.2 It is expected that this scheme will run for 3 years (2010-2012) in the first instance. The level of funds available and the designated focus areas will vary over that period to reflect changes in the profile of the University’s Research Institutes.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 The objectives of the Scheme are to:
   • fund highly innovative small- to medium-scale interdisciplinary research projects that show significant potential for future funding by granting bodies; and to
   • catalyse the drawing together of academic staff from across disciplines to work on interdisciplinary problems consistent with the broad research objectives of one or more of the Melbourne Research Institutes or designated emerging areas of focus.

2.2 Each application should address a problem that is aligned with the broad objectives of one of the following:
   • the Melbourne Energy Institute (MEI) www.energy.unimelb.edu.au
     o Contact Mike Sandiford mikes@unimelb.edu.au or ext 47221; alternate contact Susannah Powell powells@unimelb.edu.au, ext 43519
   • the Melbourne Sustainable Society Institute (MSSI)
     http://www.sustainable.unimelb.edu.au/
     o Contact Craig Pearson c.pearson@unimelb.edu.au; alternate contact Annie Bolitho abolitho@unimelb.edu.au or ext 49151
   • the Melbourne Materials Institute (MMI), www.materials.unimelb.edu.au
     o Contact Steve Prawer s.prawer@unimelb.edu.au
   • the Institute for a Broadband-Enabled Society (IBES), www.broadband.unimelb.edu.au
     o Contact Kate Cornick cornickk@unimelb.edu.au or ext 46692; alternate contact Rod Tucker r.tucker@unimelb.edu.au
   • the Melbourne Neuroscience Institute (MNI)
     o Contact Trevor Kilpatrick kilpatrick@hfi.unimelb.edu.au
   • the Victorian Life Sciences Computation Initiative (VLSCI), www.vlsci.unimelb.edu.au
     o Contact Helen Gardiner helen.gardiner@unimelb.edu.au or ext 42055
   • the Bio21 Institute, www.bio21.unimelb.edu.au
     o Contact Tony Bacic abacic@unimelb.edu.au; alternate contact Malcolm McConville malcolm@unimelb.edu.au
   • the emerging focus area of Social Equity
     o Contact Julie McLeod jmcleod@unimelb.edu.au or ext 43455
   • the emerging focus area of Asian Studies
     o Contact Abdullah Saeed a.saeed@unimelb.edu.au; alternate contact Tim Lindsey t.lindsey@unimelb.edu.au
   • the emerging focus area of Innovation & Creativity
     o Contact Beth Webster e.webster@unimelb.edu.au; alternate contact Su Baker barkerse@unimelb.edu.au
3. **FUNDING**

3.1 Grants shall be awarded with a maximum value of $70,000

3.2 Grants below $20,000 will not be awarded.

3.3 Grants will be awarded for one year 1 January 2011 - 31 December 2011. Projects may subsequently apply to receive a second year of funding but are not automatically renewable.

3.4 Expenditure on equipment should only be proposed in exceptional circumstances and a compelling justification will be required.

4. **APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

4.1 Applications will be prepared by a proposing Team, and each application must nominate a “Co-ordinating Investigator.” The Co-ordinating Investigator must hold a salaried academic appointment at the University of Melbourne of at least 0.5 EFT and their appointment should run until at least December 2012. There are no restrictions on other members of the proposed project team.

4.2 A simple signoff process will be used. It will be assumed that in submitting an application, all project team members have consulted appropriately with their Heads and Deans and have the time and basic infrastructure resources to pursue the project concerned, within the context of existing research, teaching and higher degree supervision responsibilities.

5. **NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS**

5.1 Applicants may be involved in only one application as Co-ordinating Investigator, but may be participating Team Members on other applications.

6. **RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROPOSAL TO OTHER PROJECTS**

6.1 Because this scheme is intended to fund ground-breaking initiatives, applications which request funds to supplement another current internal University grant, external grant or research contract will be excluded from consideration.

7. **EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT**

7.1 **Assessment Process**

7.1.1 Applications will be assessed on a competitive basis by a Selection Committee comprising University Research Institute Directors and representatives of designated emerging areas of focus as listed in Section 2.2. The Committee will be chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Collaboration), Liz Sonenberg.

7.1.2 The Selection Committee reserves the right to discuss applications with Deans, Associate Deans (Research), Heads of Department/School, or other senior colleagues, and reserves the right to seek further information from applicants before making a final decision.

7.2 **Assessment Criteria**

- demonstrably innovative interdisciplinary research
- consistent with the broad research objectives of one or more of the Melbourne Research Institutes or designated emerging areas of focus
- involves a team of academic staff from relevant disciplines with appropriate and complementary expertise for the proposed research
- shows significant potential for future funding by granting bodies
- budget expenditure is aligned with claimed outcomes
8. APPLICATION PROCESS

8.1 An application will consist of three elements:
1. Checklist – 1 page
2. Project Proposal – 2 pages
3. CVs – for each Team Member, a statement of no more than 1 page in total including (a) current position, (b) expertise relevant to the proposed role in the current proposal, including track record of prior collaboration, and (c) a representative list of grants and/or publications in areas relevant to the proposal.

8.2 Applicants are expected to discuss their proposal with the designated contact person most closely aligned with the area of focus of the proposal, as detailed in section 2.2.

8.3 The submission process to be advised closer to the date.

9 KEY DATES

Applications due: 22 September 2010.
Advice re outcome: 29 October, 2010.
Funds available: January 2011.

10. CONDITIONS OF GRANT

10.1 Grant Offers must be accepted in writing by the Co-ordinating Investigator and their Head of Department/School.

10.2 The Co-ordinating Investigator will be the contact person for all administrative matters to do with the project and is responsible for internal reporting requirements.

10.3 The Co-ordinating Investigator must ensure that the research is conducted in accord with University policy, including compliance with the Code of Conduct for Research and policies on human research ethics, animal experimentation ethics, requirements of the Office of Gene Technology Regulator, health and safety and intellectual property. No project may proceed unless the appropriate ethical or other required clearances have been obtained.

10.4 Funding is for one year only, commencing January 2011. Projects must be completed and funds expended by 31 December 2011. Extensions to this completion date will be considered only in exceptional circumstances, with a maximum extension date of 30 June 2012. Where exceptional circumstances exist, a written request must be approved by the Co-ordinating Investigator’s Head of Department and submitted to the Executive Director (Research) no later than 1 November 2011.

10.5 The Co-ordinating Investigator must comply with any instructions or conditions in the Offer of Grant relating to approved items of expenditure.

10.6 Unless special conditions are set down by the Committee, the grant should be regarded as a ‘one-line budget.’ The Co-ordinating Investigator is responsible for ensuring that the expenditure of the grant is broadly in accord with the budget presented in the application and is consistent at all times with the nature and aims of the specific project approved and the objectives of the Scheme.

10.7 The Co-ordinating Investigator will be required to provide written reports and presentations on the progress and outcomes of the project as requested by the Selection Committee from time to time. Summaries of projects funded and project final reports may be published. It is anticipated that at least one University Showcase will occur during 2011 at which all funded projects will be required to report on progress.

10.8 Successful applicants are expected to provide appropriate acknowledgement of University support when communicating research outcomes.