

La Trobe Institute for Social and Environmental Sustainability Multidisciplinary Research Assistance Grants

Introduction

Applications are invited for the 2011 La Trobe Institute for Social and Environmental Sustainability Research Assistance Grants, Round 2. Grants will be awarded by the Institute under a competitive scheme.

Applications close: Friday 4 November 2011

Multidisciplinary Research Assistance Grants are available to all University staff to a maximum of \$5,000, expended over 1 year. Preference may be given to new researchers (Level A and Level B) or early career researchers who have not received grants previously.

The purpose of the grants is to encourage staff to work collaboratively on multidisciplinary projects that lead to publication in an ERA (Excellence in Research for Australia) journal,¹ and to develop projects and apply for future competitive research grants (e.g. ARC Discovery and ARC Linkage grants).

New or early career researchers without an established research record are encouraged to include an experienced researcher as co-investigator, to act as a mentor.

An early career researcher is defined as someone awarded a PhD within 5 years prior to application closing date (as in the ARC Discovery Projects Funding Rules for Funding commencing in 2011, Section 8.3.1).

Grants are primarily for the support of University staff. However, staff may consider collaborative projects with researchers from other universities or organisations; however, the Chief Investigator must be a La Trobe University staff member.

Eligibility

1. There must be at least two faculties represented on the research team; please refer to the Institute research report for possible team members.²
2. Staff may submit up to two applications for funding.
3. Full-time or fractional (0.5 or above) academic staff of the University are eligible to apply.

¹draft 2012 list: http://www.arc.gov.au/era/current_consult.htm

²www.latrobe.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/132835/LISES-Research-report-final_EM_SM_090511_V11for-website.pdf

4. A staff member shall be ineligible to apply for a grant if s/he:
 - is employed to work solely on a research project or projects (e.g. a Research Fellow employed to work full-time on an ARC research project)
 - is seeking a grant for research that forms part of his/her higher degree studies
 - holds an honorary appointment with the University
 - terminates his/her employment in the University prior to the end of the year of application.
5. If staff have been funded previously and substantial progress has not been made, applications will not be considered for funding. In these cases, staff must provide written proof (e.g. conference presentations, journal submissions or publications) as part of any new application.

Scope of research

The Institute will provide research assistance funding for research contributions that have practice and policy implications concerning the interactions between economic, social and environmental sustainability. Projects may be drawn from a range of socioeconomic and political settings, and have international, national or organisation-specific focus.

Suggested themes include, but are not limited to:

- links between sustainability policy, practice and performance
- links between environmental management and/or policy, sustainability performance and sustainability accounting; organisational processes, structures, behaviour and dynamics, including strategic decision making; risk management; reputation management; corporate governance; stakeholder engagement; performance measurement; internal control; work conditions and employment practices; impact on communities; corporate rhetoric; reporting processes and organisational culture and behaviour
- impacts of national culture on social and environmental sustainability accounting, organisational functions, organisational behaviour and sustainability performance
- international and cross-sectoral agreements on issues such as fair trade, human rights and environmental protection
- methods for practice and stakeholder engagement
- theorisation of research engagement and practice, change toward improved sustainability performance, institutionalisation and managerial capture.

Selection criteria

Grants will be allocated by the La Trobe Institute of Social and Environmental Sustainability after being assessed by, and on the recommendation of, a multidisciplinary selection panel. Each application will be assessed using the following criteria:

- demonstration of the multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary nature of research project
- scope of research within the ambit of social and environmental sustainability
- academic quality of the proposal in terms of aims and significance
- national or societal benefits of project
- link to the University's research strengths/strategic plans
- justification provided for the budget

- soundness of planning and research methodologies
- project outcomes (e.g. contribution to knowledge in the relevant fields, publication in quality refereed journals)
- potential for developing the project into a large external grant application (e.g. ARC Discovery and ARC Linkage).

Progress reports

Grants are awarded for period of 12 months and recipients must submit a progress report on the project within three months of the end of the grant period. Recipients applying for a renewal of their grants will be required to submit a copy of this report with their application for renewal.

Application process

General comments

Applicants should complete the Research Assistance Grants Application Form (below) and attach the requested documentation. Applicants are to limit their research proposal to the space provided or as indicated on the form. Applications should be submitted as developed research plans, ready to be implemented. Please refer to selection criteria above.

An application should contain all the information necessary to assess the project, without the need for oral explanation or reference to further documentation. Applications will be the sole source of information available to the selection committee.

Project title

Please choose a short, informative title. The title should describe the project in terms that make sense to the general public, in 20 words or less. Avoid technical terms, Latin names and formulae.

Project summary

The project summary must be intelligible to the lay reader. It must set out what the project will do and why it is important, but nothing else. It must be a maximum of 750 characters, including spaces.

Project description

A maximum of 5 pages (single space 10 point) is allowed for the following items of the proposal including the reference section:

1. Aims and significance

The aims and significance of the proposal should be stated succinctly. Applications must be written in such a way that persons who are not experts in the applicants' fields, but knowledgeable in some neighbouring fields, will understand them. Applicants should take into account that all research grant assessment panels are made up of a variety of academic backgrounds and sometimes representatives of the public as end-users.

Remember: this section of the proposal should provide a snappy overview to capture the reader's interest.

Use the following checklist for this section:

- outline the problem and why it is important to solve it
- set out clear and specific aims, which can be 'ticked off' as they are completed and are clearly achievable in the time-frame of the project
- describe why this work is important enough for the funding body to fund it — how is it significant, what is the good idea, how will the outcomes will be useful and what specific difference will the project make?
- demonstrate that you are the right person or team to do the job
- list specific outcomes in terms of new knowledge
- explain how the new knowledge will be taken up.

2. Approach and methodology

Research approach and methodology must be clear and logical. Flow charts or tables can be added for this section and not be included in the 5-page limit. Do not go into too much detail regarding formulae and statistical models.

Use the following checklist for this section:

- make clear precisely what will be done
- relate the plan specifically to the aims
- explain the timetable
- identify standard methods or explain novel approaches
- demonstrate the competence of the CIs
- explain how the plan will achieve the aims.

3. The budget and its justification

Applicants should pay special attention to the costing of individual items in the budget and ensure that, as much as possible, *all* items of expenditure are costed separately and as accurately as possible.

The budget section of the application requires three sets of information about financial matters:

- specification of the various items requested under the following headings
 - Personnel
 - Maintenance
 - Equipment
 - Travel
 - Other
- ranking of each item in terms of priority
- costing of each item at current prices and according to University regulations (for further details, refer to University Research and Graduate Studies website).

Within the body of the application, a justification of these three aspects of budgeting is required. It is critical that applicants justify items in order of their importance to the success of the project.

Salary on-costs

In determining the budget for personnel, applicants should include salary on-costs as found in the Finance Budgeting information:

intranet.latrobe.edu.au/finance/budget/budgets/2012 (see 2012 Salary Service Rates).

Salary rates can be found at:

intranet.latrobe.edu.au/people-culture/benefits/salary.

Items and types of work not supported

Requests for funding for the following will not be considered:

- travel and associated expenses to attend conferences
- travel and subsistence during an outside studies program
- stipend of research students
- entertainment expenses
- symposia or seminars
- costs associated with bringing an overseas visitor to the University
- retrospective claims for research expenditure incurred
- book purchases and journal subscriptions
- teaching relief
- personal computers, laptops, and software.

Financial support received

If you have received a La Trobe University or Faculty research grant in the past, please indicate the principal outcomes associated with that grant, be it a conference presentation, a publication, a subsequent external grant application or new inter-institutional collaborations.

4. Intended outcomes

Emphasise the intended outcomes of the project and be as specific as you can. For example, identify targeted journals by name and ranking, and/or identify an external grant agency that will be approached in the future.

5. Previous publications

Provide a list of publications for each investigator over the past five years (2006 to 2010) under the following headings.

- books
- book chapters
- refereed journal articles.

For journal articles, indicate those based on any previous Faculty-funded research. Provide information about the appropriateness of identified ERA listed journal(s) to your research.

TIPS

Write in simple, plain English that is active, confident and positive (i.e. 'this project will' rather than 'this project would', 'we will ...', 'the project requires ...').

Endorsement

Applications must include a signed statement from the Associate Dean (Research) or the Executive Dean of each applicant's Faculty, confirming that the research is appropriate and that the facilities are available within the Faculty for the project to proceed.

Submission of applications

The application must be submitted to the La Trobe Institute for Social and Environmental Sustainability electronically to s.muir@latrobe.edu.au, no later than 4:00 pm on the closing date specified.

Before you lodge it

Get a colleague who is experienced in grantsmanship to read the application with the following checklist as a guide:

- Is all the information given under the right headings?
- Is overall length OK (concise, but making good use of space permitted)?
- Is style positive or tentative? Are you 'grabbed' when you read it?
- Does the application convey enthusiasm, excitement, originality?
- Will the project make an original contribution to knowledge?

LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Contact:

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