Strategic Research Seed Funding Pilot

Guidelines

# Introduction

The Department of Education and Training (DET) is committed to decision-making and policy development grounded in rigorous, accurate, and up to date information.

The Strategic Research Seed Funding Pilot supports this commitment through purposeful and strategic engagement with the research community to contribute to the building of an innovative and contemporary education evidence-base.

The Pilot is a one-year program that will support high quality projects addressing DET’s strategic research priorities with co-funding of up to $70,000 per project.

The Department will support the academic publication of findings from completed Strategic Research Seed Funding projects.

# Eligibility

To be eligible for Strategic Research Seed Funding, the research projects must:

* be conducted by an organisation that undertakes research and which is able to enter into a Funding Agreement with DET as a legal entity
* be co-funded by the research organisation
* be based in Victoria
* have, or be likely to receive, ethics approval from the research organisation’s Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC)
* be able to be completed within 12 months of commencement unless otherwise agreed
* align with the Department’s strategic research priorities.

Researchers located outside of Victoria may partner with a Victorian based research organisation. It is incumbent on researchers to make these arrangements prior to application, with applications to be submitted with endorsement of the Dean, Chair, or CEO of research organisations.

# Other conditions

Projects are not eligible for Seed Funding if:

* they are part of a commercial enterprise or for-profit venture
* they are already in receipt of funding by a third party (applicants must disclose all current and future funding applications for the same research project)
* the research team or organisation have already applied for Strategic Research Seed Funding for another project.

A certificate of currency relating to the organisation’s Public Liability Insurance must be provided to DET to verify the appropriate insurance cover.

Projects conducted in school or early childhood settings will require that all researchers in direct contact with children hold valid Working with Children Checks.

# Funding

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a Funding Agreement with the Victorian Government through the Department of Education and Training. DET will provide funding of up to $70,000 per research project, with co-funding required by the recipient research organisation.

The terms and conditions of the Funding Agreement are fixed and no substantive changes will be accepted. Once this agreement has been entered researchers must not enter into any arrangements with other parties that could prevent them from meeting their obligations under the Strategic Research Seed Funding Pilot Funding Agreement.

Under the agreement, Strategic Research Seed Funding can be used to cover:

* salary costs for research and dedicated technical staff
* project costs
* travel within Australia required as part of the project (not including travel for the attendance of conferences).

Items not covered by this funding include:

* institutional overheads
* costs associated with ongoing programs or organisational core business
* administrative staff salaries
* conference costs
* operational and infrastructure costs
* overseas travel or conference travel.

Funding will be provided to successful applicants in three milestone instalments.

* 40 per cent on signing of the Funding Agreement
* 35 per cent on DET’s satisfaction with midpoint progress report (occurring at 6 months for a 12 month project), including a presentation of preliminary findings
* 25 per cent on DET’s satisfaction with completion of agreed project outputs, including provision of a summary and presentation of key findings, return of any datasets provided by the Department, and provision of any new datasets collected as part of the research to the Department (in a de-identified format, if required).

# Application evaluation

Funding will be available to a limited number of projects only. Applications will be evaluated in a competitive, merit-based process against the pilot scheme’s assessment criteria by a panel of representatives from across DET business areas.

In some cases, the Assessment Panel may request applicants to provide additional information, including evidence of support and responses to specific ethics considerations.

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. **Research Priorities and Policy Impact – 40%**

How does the research align with the Department’s research priorities? Does the research have the potential to provide actionable insights pertaining to Department policy and programs?

1. **Design and Methodology – 20%**

Does the project, as described, demonstrate a high-quality design? Does the methodology reflect a systematic and rigorous approach to answering the research questions?  Does the planned budget, resourcing, and proposed timelines accurately reflect the requirements of the project? Have ethical considerations been addressed?

1. **Research Team: Qualifications and Experience – 20%**

What are the qualifications and experience of key personnel involved in the research project? Do the researchers demonstrate sound knowledge of current theory and practice in education research? Do the researchers have experience communicating research findings to a government or public policy audience?

1. **Co-Funding Value – 20%**

Do the research project’s outputs reflect good public value for the Department’s contribution? What proportion of project resourcing, including financial and in-kind support, will be provided by the research organisation and Department respectively.

# How to apply

To apply for Strategic Research Seed Funding you must complete the application form below with reference to the supporting information provided in these guidelines.

The closing date and time for submitting applications is 5.00pm, Friday 2 February 2018.

Funding will be available to a limited number of projects only, and there is no guarantee of approval at any stage in the process. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application in writing.

# Contact and enquiries

For information please contact the Strategic Research Team at research@edumail.vic.gov.au or on (03) 7022 0353