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***WESTERN SYDNEY HANDS-ON RESEARCH GRANT***

**2024 Funding Guidelines and EoI Form**

Communities, businesses and ecosystems of western Sydney face many current and future challenges. WSU has the remit and intellectual capacity to help solve many of these challenges through its diverse research programs.

This grant provides funding to support the ideas and initiatives of Early Career Researchers (ERC). It is available to ECRs only and aims to invigorate creativity and enthusiasm when beginning your research career. For the purpose of this grant, ECR is defined as an academic that has been awarded their PhD up to a maximum of 5 years ago (career interruptions may apply).

The Western Sydney Hands-on Research Grant offers two awards, each worth up to $12,000, to support research activities that directly benefit the western Sydney region. As indicated by the name of the grant, its purpose is to support on-ground research by funding ‘research tools’ that are currently out of reach. See below for the definition of a ‘research tool’.

**1. Roles & Responsibilities**

It is the applicant’s responsibility to:

1. complete the EoI form (below).
2. source the necessary quote(s) for the research tool(s).
3. submit the EoI and quote(s) as **one combined PDF document** to the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor REI by 26 April 2024 to researchthemeprogram@westernsydney.edu.au
4. ensure provided funding is spent by the end of July 2024 to support research activities.
5. assist in the production and distribution of a podcast with Dr Sebastian Pfautsch (WSU Research Theme Program Coordinator) in the first half of 2025 to explain the supported project, its outcomes and impacts for Western Sydney.
6. ensure that purchased research equipment is handed over to the School/Institute at the end of the project.

**2. Assessment**

Expressions of Interest (EoI) will be assessed based on relevance and feasibility of the proposed research, value for money, and anticipated outcomes and impacts. The WSU Research Theme Coordinator will assess each EoI and make recommendations for funding to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor REI. The outcome of the assessment will be communicated to all applicants on 3 May 2024.

**3. Eligibility Criteria**

1. The Grant is for individuals only – not teams.
2. Applicants must be ECRs (PhD awarded after May 2019).
3. ECRs that have experienced career interruption are eligible but must detail the nature of the career interruption and when it took place.
4. Applicants must either be tenured or contracted academic employees (whose contract does not finish before 31 December 2024) in a School or Institute.
5. Applicants must be employed 0.5 FTE or more.
6. Funding can be requested for research tools relating to a new initiative/project or an ongoing project.
7. The initiative or project must make a direct impact on communities, businesses and/or ecosystems in the western Sydney region.
8. All budget items must be fully justified.
9. Funding must be expended by 30 July 2024.

**4. Guidelines for completing the EoI**

1. **Complete EoI Template**

Applicants must complete all sections of the EoI template for this grant. Please ensure that a supporting paragraph from the Dean/ Director or equivalent representative of your School/Institute is included. A complete template must include a recent (up to 3 months old) quote for the requested research tool.

1. **Definition of ‘Research Tool’**

For this grant, a (Hands-on) research tool can be a purchased or hired piece of equipment, a device or machine, costs for internal or external sample analyses, access to a research facility or data base, etc. It is possible to apply to fund IT equipment and/or a paid software license. If IT equipment is requested, WSU IT Procurement rules must be followed. The research tool must be directly linked to an existing or upcoming research project.

1. **Use and total funding**

It is possible to request a single or multiple research tools. Minimum requested funding is $500; maximum requested funding is $12,000. It is not necessary to max out funding. Each requested item must be fully justified. WSU Procurement rules apply – single items <$5,000 can be purchased directly; single items >$5,000 require one recent quote from a supplier.

1. **Excluded from Funding**

Funding cannot be used for the purchase of equipment that would be provided to you as an employee such as:

* + - Office computer, screen or data storage hardware
		- Consumables – stationery, lab supplies, office equipment
		- Basic laboratory equipment
		- Phones

 In addition, funding cannot be used

* + - to extend an existing employment contract.
		- to employ a Research Assistant or any other personnel.
		- to cover travel expenses, conference attendance, associated travel costs of publication fees.
1. **Relevance to the Western Sydney region**

The applicant must demonstrate that the funding will be spent on an existing or upcoming research project that has direct relevance and impact on communities, businesses or ecosystems of western Sydney. Please note that potential impact does not relate to publications, citations, conference presentations or other academic outputs. It relates to ‘real world’ impact and how your research will translate into a tangible difference or outcome/s.

1. **Submission of the EoI**

Submissions will be accepted in PDF format only. This should be ONE document with the completed EoI template, signatures and quote(s) merged into one PDF file. The submission must be signed by the Dean/Director (or equivalent representative) of your School/Institute.

1. Submissions must be lodged via email by CoB 26 April 2024.
2. Applications should be sent, as **one** PDF document to researchthemeprogram@westernsydney.edu.au
3. The email subject line should state “Hands-on” followed by your School/Institute, then your surname (e.g., Hands-on/MARCS/Smith)

**5. Timeline *(subject to minor changes if required)***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date** | **Action** |
| 02 April 2024 | Call for applications |
| 26 April 2024 | Applications to Office of the DVC REI (due CoB) |
| 29 April-2 May 2024 | Assessment of applications |
| 3 May 2024 | Notification of grant outcomes |
| 13 May 2024 | Start of purchasing period |
| 31 July 2024 | End of purchasing period |
| 2nd half of 2024 | Research using the equipment |
| 1st half of 2025 | Production of podcast |

**6. Specifics of the Grant**

1. **Early Career Researcher**

The grant supports ECRs in STEM and HASS disciplines to explore their own research ideas. This means that work using the awarded tool(s) represents an important addition to any existing/forthcoming/new project. Applicants should make sure to discuss options with their supervisor.

The Guidelines define an Early Career Researcher as someone who has been awarded a PhD within the past 5 years and are employed at Western Sydney as academic at Level A to C. For eligibility extensions due to significant career interruptions, applicants must provide information in the relevant section of the EoI, including a short justification, career interruption timeline and some form of proof (e.g., email from the School/Institute Research Director/Associate Dean Research).

1. **Podcast**

This grant is connected to the production of a podcast. The podcast is an audio documentary of the work undertaken by the awardee and must be co-scripted by the awardee and the WSU Research Theme Coordinator. The awardee is responsible to organise access to audio content, which includes interviews (e.g., awardee, supervisor, colleagues, project participants, community) and project-relevant sound recordings. Any recordings and final production of the podcast is the responsibility of the WSU Research Theme Coordinator. The resulting audio file will be distributed through the WSU Research Theme Program, Yammer and other social media feeds.

**7. Assessment Criteria**

Each application will be assessed using the following criteria:

1. Originality and significance of the research — capacity for change in the relevant discipline.
2. Relevance and impact for western Sydney.
3. Research quality and methodological robustness.
4. Likelihood of future external funding as a result of this project and/or anticipated enhancement of recipient’s research profile; clearly articulated outputs; potential to build collaborations or partnerships.
5. Fully justified budget provided.
6. Alignment with the [UN Sustainable Development Goal](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/sustainable-development.html)s (SDG) to the project.

 For further information about this funding scheme, please contact: **researchthemeprogram@westernsydney.edu.au**

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***WESTERN SYDNEY HANDS-ON RESEARCH GRANT* 2024**

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

Expressions of Interest are invited from Early Career Researchers, to support the purchase of research equipment up to the value of $12,000. The research must be directly related to Western Sydney and the funding must be spent before 31 July 2024. Please see the grant guidelines for the definition of a ‘research tool’.

Please send the completed EOI to: researchthemeprogram@westernsydney.edu.au

**CLOSING DATE: 26 April 2024**

**1. The Project**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title**  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **2-sentence Summary** |  |

**2. Project Lead Details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project Lead Name** |  |
| **School/Institute** |  |
| **Email** |  |

**3. ECR Status** (ECR is defined as <5 years since the award of PhD)

**a. *Alma Mater***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Year of PhD Award** | **Awarding Institution** |
|  |  |

**b. Career Interruption** If you are outside of the 5 years since the awarding of your PhD, and are claiming a career interruption for this period, please provide details

**4. Project Details**

**a.** **Project description**

Please provide a concise description of the planned research.

(Research question(s); Method (use of the tool); Timeframe; Outcomes; Cost – max 1 page)

**b. How does your research relate to and impact the western Sydney region?**

(1 paragraph)

**c. How does your research link into existing research initiatives/projects?**

(1 paragraph)

**d.** [**Sustainable Development Goal**](https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/sustainable-development.html) **(SDG)** Please name the UN Sustainable Development Goal that relates to your research project and explain in one sentence the reason for your selection.

(Multiple SDGs can be identified)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SDG** | **Relevance** |
|  |  |

**5. Budget**

**a. Research tool** Please provide information about the type, provider and cost of the requested tool. WSU Procurement requirements apply. For items <$5,000 one recent quote must be supplied; items >$5,000 require provision of three quotes. In case highly specialised research tools are requested, a sole supplier statement must be provided.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Item (Research Tool)** | **Provider** | **Amount**  |
|  |  | $ |
| **Total cost (inc. GST)** | **$** |

**b. Budget justification** Explain how this purchase will enhance your research. Please include details such as: What is it exactly you wish to purchase? What does it do? How will it assist/further your research?

(1 paragraph)

**6. Support by Dean/Director**

Support by the Dean or Director is essential. How will winning this grant generate novel research impact and assist career development of the ECR?

(1 paragraph)

**Applicant Signature Date**

**………………………………………………………………………………………. …………………………………………………**

**Dean/Director (or equivalent representative) Name**

**…………………………………………………………………………………………**

**Dean/Director (or equivalent representative) Signature Date**

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