

1. BACKGROUND

The DVCR is responsible for overseeing the strategic development of the University's research profile and for developing financial support mechanisms to achieve specific research outcomes for the institution. This *Research Investment in Externally Funded Grants Guidelines and Processes 2025* document¹ encapsulates this mandate and the hierarchy of potential financial support available within the University for grant applications.

External grant schemes may require applicant institutions to contribute cash and/or in-kind contributions to the grant application for it to be eligible, e.g. ARC LIEF requires a minimum cash contribution of 25% from participating organisations. Major schemes such as the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) and ARC Centres of Excellence (CoE) require significant cash and in-kind contributions. Although many schemes do not mandate a contribution, the University may elect to contribute to particular schemes as a strategic investment priority. This guideline sets out agreed contribution arrangements for specific grant schemes, and the guiding principles and processes to request University contributions for other applications, that take into account the actual scheme requirements to ensure eligibility, the strategic importance of individual applications and the need to supplement the grant funds requested with an investment of University funds (inclusive of university funded HDR scholarships).

This document serves as a guide as to when it is appropriate to seek a university cash contribution and to encourage applicants to fully represent the direct project costs and indirect University costs (including researcher salaries, office space, University research equipment and facilities, and grant administration support provided by offices such as OR, GE, Finance, Legal Services), as a significant in-kind (or cash if allowed) contribution within budgets rather than demonstrating the University's commitment to a project through an additional cash commitment. The University contribution as a 'value-add' to any application may be presented as a 'total university support' package thus maximising the visibility of the University's support for an application.

These Guidelines and Processes apply to grant applications led by Griffith researchers, external universities or partner organisations.

1.1 Research Investment Principles

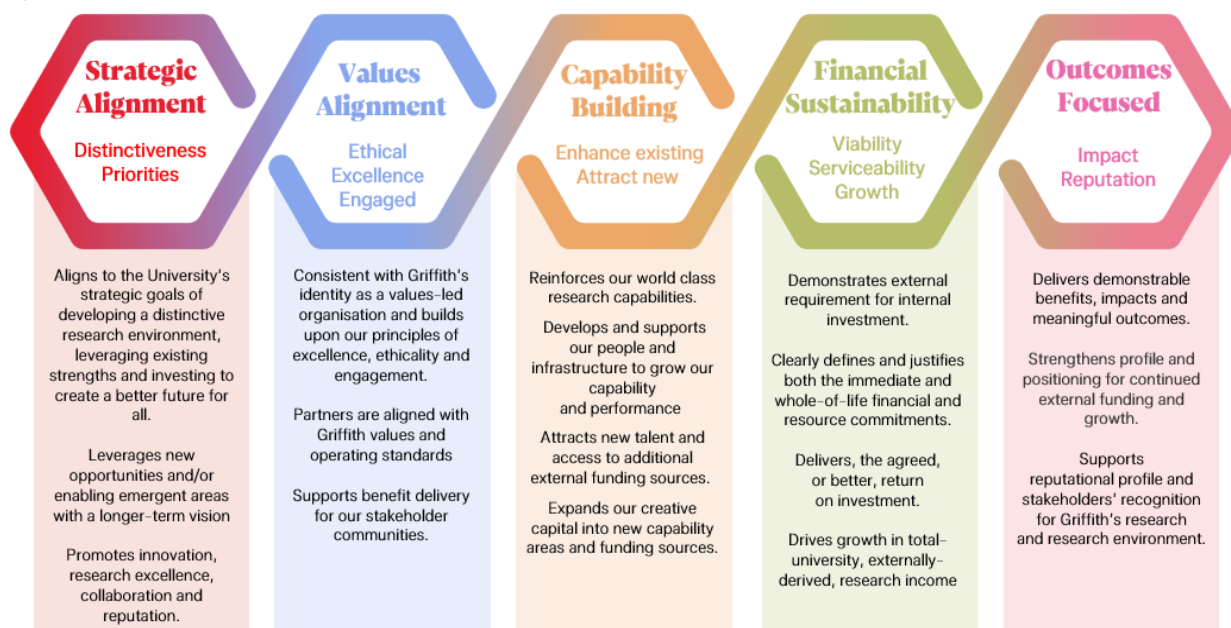
Griffith has developed the following Research Investment Principles (over page) to provide high-level guidance for researchers and managers as they plan, propose and endorse research initiatives in which the Griffith University may wish to strategically invest. The principles apply to, and will optimise, research investment support across the entirety of our research ecosystem, irrespective of where those proposals originate within Griffith, fostering a highly productive culture that adheres to the principles of responsible research conduct.

¹ These Guidelines are based on a previous document called *Contributions to External Grant Guidelines*.

Research Investment Principles

Griffith invests to drive opportunity - to build capability - to increase competitiveness - to leverage external investment - to drive impact

Purpose: These high-level principles will guide researchers' and managers' planning for, and decision-makers' consideration of, requests for internal investment toward research opportunities on which Griffith may seek to capitalise. The goal is to optimise support in a highly productive research culture, founded on the code of responsible research conduct.



1.2 Applying the Research Investment Principles

- A. Any cash contribution is at the discretion of the DVCR and Group PVCs.
- B. Researchers should aim to form grant application budgets fully funded by the granting agency, that are consistent with the maximum funds allowable for the specific grant scheme. Researchers should not presume the University will subsidise items not costed into the budget requested from the funding body.
- C. Application budgets should include the maximum administrative overhead (also known as indirect costs) allowed by the scheme. As described above, these are essential to ensure the successful delivery of the project by providing university services and facilities. Researchers should not seek to have those funds returned for use on the project. See [External Research Funding Management Policy](#) and [External Research Grant Procedure](#) for details on how and when to include indirect costs in an application.
- D. The University will only consider making a cash contribution to a research grant application where:
 - a. It is a scheme eligibility requirement to include a cash contribution; **and**
 - b. There is a compelling and strategically important reason to exceed the scheme budget with a Griffith cash contribution, **and**
 - c. The anticipated Return on Investment (ROI) is **at a minimum** 4:1 (defined as cash from the project that is administered by Griffith being 4-times the cash investment requested – see [Section 4](#) for the approved formula for calculation). Requests for a contribution where the ROI is less than 4:1 will not normally be considered unless there are extraordinary circumstances; **and**
 - d. The project meets the definition of research, and the funding is eligible for inclusion in the HERDC Report² (unless specifically excluded – e.g. some Infrastructure grants); **and**

² The HERDC Report is used to calculate the Research Block Grant that comes back to Griffith from the Federal Government to support research. Funds that are awarded to Griffith that are then distributed to external collaborators are still included in Griffith's HERDC calculations as long as the external collaborator is not also eligible to claim HERDC funds. Generally those HERDC-eligible organisations are other Australian Universities but does include other research organisations such as Medical Research Institutes. See HERDC website for list of current [HERDC-eligible Universities](#).

- e. The relevant Academic Group³ endorses the project being considered for funding support and attests that the application meets the above criteria, including ROI requirements. Group co-contributions are required and will continue to be shared 50/50 with the DVCR. Note: The University is transitioning towards a simplified future state of centralised funding of co-contributions. Group commitments made now, and the funds to honour them, will eventually be transferred into these central schemes and managed accordingly.
- E. Researchers should initially look to source cash contributions through alternative avenues such as industry partner funds, or their own surplus funds (that can be moved into the grant account if successful), prior to requesting additional University funds.
- F. All requests for additional funding from the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research (DVCR) and Groups must demonstrate that the application is highly competitive.
- G. If an external funding scheme permits funding of HDR stipend scholarships, one must be included in the project budget as funded by the scheme **before** a Griffith funded stipend scholarship can be requested. (Note, it is not mandatory for an application to include a HDR stipend scholarship. HDRs should only be included if they are needed for the project and fully written into the project description and justification.)
- H. An exemption to G. above is that one pre-approved Griffith-funded HDR stipend scholarship can be included in ARC DECRA, ARC Future Fellowship, ARC Early Career Industry Fellowship and NHMRC Investigator Emerging Leader 1 applications, without the requirement to request a stipend scholarship from the funding body (due to the small amount of project costs available in these schemes).
- I. One pre-approved Griffith-funded HDR stipend scholarship can also be included in other National Competitive Grants scheme applications if they are led by a Griffith 'Early Career Researcher' - as defined by the specific scheme/funding body guidelines. In this scenario, requirements for inclusion of a grant funded stipend scholarship and a 4:1 ROI would still need to be met. If a project is not led by an ECR, then a request will need to be made to include a Griffith-funded stipend scholarship through the normal processes described in this Guideline.
- J. If a Griffith-funded HDR stipend scholarship is approved for a project, it would be considered a cash contribution and should therefore be included in Griffith's total \$ investment when determining the ROI.
- K. Researchers must not "double dip" where university funds have already been committed through other initiatives, Schemes, Schools or Research Centre/Institutes.
- L. All cash contribution requests (with relevant Element/Group approvals) must be submitted **4 weeks prior to the application due date** to the Office for Research. Approved cash contributions will be recorded in the Commitments Register maintained by Finance.

2. GRIFFITH STRATEGIC SUPPORT INITIATIVES

2.1 Major Contestable Research Funding

To support researchers in both leading and participating in externally-led Major Research Funding applications that will grow individual and institutional research profiles, enable large scale, high impact research, and build research capacity, Griffith has developed a Major Research Funding Framework to provide a development pathway, governance mechanism and resources for the development of applications.

To apply for bid development support and cash co-contributions for major bids, researchers should contact researchdevelopment@griffith.edu.au and visit the [Major Research Initiatives Opportunities and Information](#) webpage, for further information on the support available.

³ For the avoidance of doubt, the Institute for Biomedicine and Glycomics is considered the equivalent of an Academic Group in this scenario.

2.2 Infrastructure grants

Some infrastructure grants, such as ARC LIEF, NCRIS and the Queensland Research Infrastructure Co-Contribution Fund (RICF) directly fund the acquisition of research equipment facilities and support staff, may not be HERDC eligible forms of income. However, as securing funding for the purchase of new equipment and facilities is essential for mounting high quality research and institutional cash contributions is a requirement of these schemes, requests for cash contributions for applications to these schemes will be considered as long as applications:

- Have Academic Group support;
- Have submitted an internal EOI as required for the particular scheme; and
- Meet the eligibility criteria for the scheme.

2.3 ARC, NHMRC and MRFF Project and Fellowship grants

Increasing Griffith's success in ARC, NHMRC and MRFF schemes is strategically important. A [Schedule of Contributions for these schemes](#), both DVCR and Academic Group funded, has been developed and is available from the Office for Research's [Grant Resources SharePoint](#) site. In some instances, no additional requests for approval of standard contributions will be required (e.g. 1 PhD Stipend and \$20,000 pa for ECR-led ARC applications is a standard, but must meet any specific conditions for the scheme).

Applications in which an excess of \$2 million will be returned to Griffith University, such as ARC Laureate Fellowship, NHMRC Investigator L3 and NHMRC Synergy schemes, can seek significant support, including application development support, under the Major Contestable Research Funding process, outlined above. Please contact researchdevelopment@griffith.edu.au to discuss.

2.4 Including Salary Gaps in Grant Applications

In general, salary gap contributions can be included in a grant application in the following circumstances:

- Pre-approved, named fellowship applications (eg ARC DECRA & Future Fellowships, NHMRC Investigator grants or similar (as detailed in the approved list of grant fellowship schemes, maintained and updated as needed by the Office for Research)) submitted by current Griffith academic staff members.
- Other NHMRC schemes where the grant is able to fund a full salary, but those funds do not fully cover the actual salary costs (eg NHMRC Ideas PSPs [Personnel and Salary Support Packages]), for one named Chief Investigator.
- Other schemes where the grant is able to fund a full salary but those funds do not fully cover the actual entire salary costs, for a named Chief Investigator, as long as the fellowship (and, where relevant, other external sources – e.g. Advance Qld Industry Research Fellowship scheme) covers a minimum of 70% of the actual full-time salary costs.

2.4.1 Salary Gap Processes

- Approved Griffith salary gap contributions are to be included in applications as a cash contribution, unless funding guidelines advise otherwise.
- A maximum of one position for a named Chief Investigator will have their salary gap covered per application.
- Applicants must seek approval for salary gap support prior to the application being submitted to the Office for Research, as per the process below.
- For staff, such as postdocs and research assistants funded through PSPs directly appointed to work on these grants, the entire salary will need to be fully funded by the grant. Researchers need to adjust their grant application budgets accordingly to accommodate this requirement.
- The DVCR and Group PVC(s) reserve the right to review the level of contribution at any stage to ensure that the level of contribution provided aligns with the ROI to Griffith.

- Group PVCs and Deans Research will be asked annually (by the Office for Research) to confirm the schemes for which they will support salary gaps.
- To manage salary gap approvals for the schemes listed in the [Schedule of Contributions](#), applicants should follow the process below:

At application stage:

- Academic Groups are not *required* to calculate the salary gap or obtain approval from the PVC/DVCR, at this stage, although this may still need to be done for specific schemes or for Academic Group internal purposes.
- For relevant schemes the Office for Research can provide a comparison of the scheme salary/PSP rates with the related GU position salary rates.
- Applicants identify the appropriate scheme salary/PSP rate that matches as closely as possible to the salary rate of the named Chief Investigator that salary gap is being requested for.
- Where Griffith salary contributions are required in an institutional statement of support (e.g. for ARC DECRA and Future Fellow applications), the Office for Research can provide a salary gap calculation spreadsheet to be used to identify the actual salary gap. This information is not required to be sent to Office for Research.
- It is the responsibility of the Academic Groups (Director and/or Head of School (or both if on a balanced appointment) and relevant Dean Research) to ensure that the level of appointment is appropriate. Heads of Elements will be asked by the Office for Research to confirm the appropriate salary/PSP rate is being used for the applicant, during the grant review process.
- Group PVC/DVCR approval by project will not be sought at the application stage.
- These Group pre-approvals for specific schemes are to be documented and provided to the Office for Research for their records, either as a blanket pre-approval for all schemes, or on a scheme-by-scheme basis, as preferred by the Academic Group.

At Postaward stage:

- At the time of establishing the grant account and salary budgets in the Finance system, the Finance Research Team will calculate the salary gap amount for successful grants and advise the Office for Research and Groups.
- Any changes made in salary arrangements at the grant establishment stage will be managed with the understanding that there will not be any increase upon the pre-approved salary levels.
- Normally any reduction to the project funds awarded will see a commensurate reduction in the funds being committed by the University.

For schemes not listed in the Schedule of Contributions, a request for a University cash contribution should be requested via the [Request for Cash Contributions Form](#), following the *Submission Process* outlined below.

2.5 Including Contract Extensions in Grant Applications

For ARC DECRA and Future Fellowships applications, a University commitment to a contract extension after the life of a project may be possible to include, on the following basis:

ARC DECRA – A contract extension post-fellowship may be negotiated, prior to submission of the application, with the appropriate Head of School **and** Dean Research, on a case-by-case basis. A two-year extension may be possible, but on the expectation that the candidate will have successfully contributed 0.2 FTE to teaching in the school during the term of the Fellowship and will continue this contribution during the extension period.

ARC Future Fellowship – A contract extension post-contract or continuing appointment may be negotiated, prior to submission of the application, with the appropriate Head of School **and** Dean Research, on a case-by-case basis. A post-Fellowship extension of contract is based on the expectation that the candidate will have successfully contributed 0.2 FTE to teaching in the school during the term of the Fellowship, and will continue to contribute a minimum of 0.2 FTE during a two-year extension or move to a balanced profile (40:40:20) in a continuing appointment, unless other arrangements are agreed with the Head of School and Dean Research.

2.6 Including PhD Scholarships in Grant Applications

If funding body guidelines allow, a grant-funded (or industry partner-funded) HDR stipend scholarship, that is retained at Griffith, must be included in the application before a Griffith-funded stipend scholarship (known as a “ring-fenced” scholarship) can be requested. This supports an increase in the number of externally funded scholarships as well as growth in HDR candidates who are part of a strong externally-funded research team.

If the funding body guidelines do not allow the inclusion of a stipend scholarship, a Griffith-funded stipend scholarship ([GUPRS](#)) may be approved for inclusion in Griffith-led grant applications. The inclusion of a Griffith-funded stipend will be supported on a case-by-case basis where the *Research Investment Principles* outlined in [Section 1.2](#) have been applied.

Follow the *Submission Process* as outlined in [Section 3](#) below to request the inclusion of a Griffith-funded stipend scholarship.

Further information on grant funded and Griffith funded ring-fenced HDR stipend scholarships is as follows:

- If a grant or partner-funded stipend cannot be included in an application budget, evidence must be provided to this effect before a Griffith-funded stipend will be considered.
- A request for a Griffith-funded stipend scholarship in an **externally-led grant** can be made to support enrolment at Griffith as long as the minimum 4:1 ROI to Griffith is met from the grant.
- A request for an exemption to the 4:1 ROI requirement may be considered for applications with not-for-profit partners.
- Where applicable to the project, a Griffith University Indigenous Australian Postgraduate Research Scholarship ([GUIAPRS](#)) can be requested for inclusion in a grant application. In these instances, the requirement for a 4:1 ROI is relaxed due to the larger dollar value of the stipend.
- When calculating the ROI, Griffith funded HDR stipend scholarships are to be costed at the current annual [GUPRS](#) rate, for up to 3.5 years. Scholarships should be written into applications for the standard 3-year term, with up to 6 months extension. (Awardees may be eligible to apply for up to a 6-month scholarship extension where the grounds for an extension are met).
- The CI must be accredited to supervise HDR candidates as a principal supervisor or as co-principal supervisor with an accredited other co-principal supervisor until accredited, and have capacity to supervise.
- When a funding body’s allocated HDR stipend scholarship rate is less than that of the Griffith [GUPRS](#) rate (or less than the [GUIAPRS](#) rate for a First Peoples awardee), the University will fund the gap (for both internally-led and externally-led projects). In these cases, the scholarship gap funding is to be included in the grants as Griffith cash contribution.
- Where the grant includes an industry partner, a HDR stipend scholarship can be established that is fully funded or co-funded by the partner/grant. In instances where the grant does not accommodate the inclusion of a co-funded scholarship, a Griffith co-funded [Industry PhD scholarship](#) can be requested.
- To be awarded a ring-fenced stipend scholarship, HDR applicants must meet the university’s quality scholarship standards as outlined in the [HDR Scholarship Procedure](#).
- International candidates who are awarded a grant-funded or ring-fenced stipend scholarship will also be awarded a [GUIPRS](#) tuition scholarship. (Domestic candidates are provided a Commonwealth Government Research Training Program Fee Offset, supplemented by tuition fee support from the University to exempt liability for tuition fees.)
- First Peoples candidates who are awarded a ring-fenced stipend scholarship will be awarded a [GUIAPRS](#).
- All preapproved ring-fenced stipend scholarships for inclusion in a grant application are subject to the success of the application and will be recorded in the Scholarship Commitment Tracker maintained by OR and GGRS.

- Where a grant application is successful but the request for a grant-funded stipend scholarship is not, a request for a Griffith-funded ring-fenced stipend scholarship to support the grant can be made and will be considered on a case-by-case basis as per the provisions above. A request will not be supported where funds have been awarded for a stipend scholarship but a choice has been made to reallocate those funds to a different grant budget line item.
- Ring-fenced stipend scholarships must be awarded, accepted and the preferred candidate commenced within either 1) 12 months of commencement of a three-year grant or 2) within 24 months of commencement of a four-year or longer grant to accommodate candidature within the remaining grant duration. Otherwise, allocated scholarships will return to the scholarship pool and will no longer be available unless a compelling case is made to Dean, GGRS at hdr-scholarship@griffith.edu.au.
- Additional information on setting up and advertising a grant funded or ring-fenced stipend scholarship is available from [the GGRS website](#).

3. SUBMISSION PROCESS

To apply for cash contributions (including “ring-fenced” scholarships) for eligible grants, submit the completed [Request for Cash Contribution](#) form (completed with all relevant Element/Group approvals) to preaward@griffith.edu.au at least **4 weeks prior to the scheme closing date**.

4. CALCULATING THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)

The ROI is calculated by subtracting the **initial cost of the investment** (Griffith’s total \$ investment) from its **final value** (Total net funds coming to Griffith – i.e. total funds awarded from a funding body and/or partner organisations, minus any funds that will be distributed to HERDC eligible organisations⁴), then dividing this new total by the **initial cost of the investment** (Griffith’s total \$ investment).

$$\text{ROI} = \frac{(\text{Total net funds coming to Griffith} - \text{Griffith's total \$ investment})}{\text{Griffith's total \$ investment}}$$

Example 1 – ROI not meeting 4:1 required	Example 2 – ROI meeting 4:1 required
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Total net funds coming to Griffith = \$500,000 2. Griffith’s total \$ investment = \$110,000 3. Item 1 minus Item 2 = \$390,000 (Griffith’s Net Research \$ Income) 4. Item 3 divided by Item 2 = 3.5 5. ROI = 3.5:1 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Total net funds coming to Griffith = \$1,000,000 2. Griffith’s total \$ investment = \$200,000 3. Item 1 minus Item 2 = \$800,000 (Griffith’s Net Research \$ Income) 4. Item 3 divided by Item 2 = 4.0 5. ROI = 4.0:1

As indicated in the [1.2 Applying the Research Investment Principles](#) section, a portion of the Griffith investment may be sourced through alternative avenues such as industry partner funds, or academic staff surplus funds that are able to be moved into the grant account, if successful.

Follow [this link](#) to find a simple ROI calculator.

⁴ Total net funds coming to Griffith = total funds that can be counted towards Griffith’s HERDC Report, even if they get distributed to external collaborators (See Footnote 2)