



Research Support Funds (RSF), Competitive Additional Funds (CAF) and Fieldwork Support Funds (FSF)

Guidelines for Students

1. ELIGIBILITY

A person may apply to the Research Committee for Research Support Funding if they are a graduate research student with a full or partial enrolment in Melbourne Law School.

Applications for retrospective funding will be approved only in exceptional circumstances, and an explanation for the delay in applying must be provided.

2. USE OF FUNDS

Research Support Funds may be used for fair and reasonable costs associated with:

- Presenting at conferences (domestic and international), including registration fees, accommodation and travel expenses;
- Attending a conference that is clearly related to the research area but at which the applicant is not presenting, limited to registration and accommodation costs (airfares will be made available for such conferences only in *exceptional* circumstances, e.g. the applicant is an organiser of the conference or attendance will have a significant and substantial benefit to their research work);
- Travel in support of research projects (e.g. fieldwork and archival work);
- Translation costs;
- Obtaining necessary material for course-related research work that is not available through the Law Library (such as archival material);
- Business cards for the purpose of a student's research project, which may include fieldwork or face to face interviews/ surveys/ consultation who are required to identify themselves, their project and their affiliation with Melbourne Law School;
- Other expenses directly related to the costs of undertaking course-related research work.

Funds will usually **not** be provided to support costs associated with third-party assistance (such as the use of Research Assistants or Editorial Assistance). Only in rare and exceptional circumstances and with the knowledge and support of supervisors, should students use paid editorial assistance from an outside source. One circumstance where this is permitted applies to international students for whom English is not their first language, who may apply for up to \$1,000 additional research support funds for thesis editing, provided they are not receiving this support from an Australia Awards scholarship or another source of funding from the University or elsewhere. A student applying for this additional support for editorial assistance must ensure compliance with the University of Melbourne's [Graduate Research Training Policy](#) which requires editorial intervention to be restricted to copyediting and proofreading.

Where a student is jointly enrolled in Melbourne Law School and another Faculty, costs will generally be shared by Melbourne Law School and the other Faculty on a pro-rata basis. Accordingly, a student who is jointly enrolled in Melbourne Law School and another Faculty will, if their application is successful, normally receive pro-rata funding (unless, for example, the amount requested is less than \$500 or funding for the activity in question is not available from the other Faculty in which the candidate is enrolled, in which case the Research Committee may decide to award the full amount).

3. ASSESSMENT OF APPLICATIONS

When assessing an application for RSF, the Research Committee will give consideration to the following factors:

- The necessity of the expenditure for the completion of the project and the resulting benefit to Melbourne Law School or the research project;
- Whether the applicant has previously obtained funds from the Research Committee for this project;
- Whether the applicant has sought funding for this expenditure from another source; and
- The supervisor's recommendations and supporting statement.

4. FUNDING CAP

For graduate research students there is a cap of \$4,000 for the duration of candidature. It is important to note that this is a **cap** (i.e. the maximum amount that can be awarded during candidature) and not an entitlement. As per section 2 above, international students for whom English is not their first language may apply for up to \$1,000 additional research support funds for thesis editing, provided they are not receiving this support from an Australia Awards scholarship or another source of funding from the University or elsewhere. The cap is reduced pro-rata where a student is jointly enrolled in Melbourne Law School and another Faculty (i.e. a student whose enrolment is 60% in the Faculty of Arts and 40% in Melbourne Law School will have an RSF cap of \$1,600).

5. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Applications are assessed by the Research (Finance) Sub-committee of the Research Committee. The Sub-Committee considers applications throughout the year and reports decisions on applications to the four annual meetings of the Research Committee.

6. COMPETITIVE ADDITIONAL FUNDING (CAF)

(a) Description

In addition to the \$4,000 in research support funding for which all graduate research degree students can apply, **PhD students** may apply for up to an additional \$1,500 in competitive additional funding during their candidature. As with the standard RSF, this cap is reduced pro-rata where a student is jointly enrolled in Melbourne Law School and another Faculty.

This funding is not guaranteed and will be awarded on a competitive basis. There will be four rounds of funding each year. In each round, the Research Finance Sub-committee may distribute up to \$2,500 in funding. In the final meeting, additional funds may be distributed up to a total cap for the year of \$10,000. In exceptional circumstances, the Sub-committee may decide to award more than \$2,500 in a round if the quality of applications is exceptionally high or in the case of significant financial need, provided that sufficient funds remain for later rounds.

(b) Eligibility

- Applicants must apply for any other [relevant university funding](#) where applicable. CAF or RSF is a supplement to and not a substitute for University funding;
- The applicant must have been confirmed before the money will be released (although it may be applied for up to two (2) months before confirmation).

(c) Use of Funds

- Funding may be used for any activities specified in section two (2) of these guidelines ('Use of Funds').

- If the application requests Competitive Additional Funding before \$4,000 in Research Support Funding has been exhausted, justification must be provided.

(d) Application Process

Applicants should complete the standard RSF application form indicating that they are applying for CAF and attach the relevant documentation, including a statement of support from their supervisors (of up to one page). The applicant should write a justification of up to 500 words explaining how the funding would benefit the applicant in thesis writing, disseminating research results, or developing an international profile or network. Applications should be submitted to the Office for Research by the following submission deadlines (where those dates fall on a weekend or University holiday, by close of business the next working day):

- 1 March
- 1 June
- 1 September
- 1 December

Please note, if the application contains a request for standard RSF and CAF, the entire application will be considered by the Sub-Committee following the next submission deadline for CAF (unless a compelling reason is presented indicating that it would be beneficial to the student to have the standard RSF component of the application assessed earlier – e.g. if a conference fee or flight needs to be paid in advance).

(e) Decision-making process

Applications will be assessed by the Research (Finance) Sub-Committee within three (3) weeks of the closing date and applicants will be notified within one (1) month of the closing date for the round. The Sub-Committee may award the full amount requested or a smaller amount, taking into account:

- The quality of the proposed activity;
- Its benefits for the applicant's thesis;
- The benefits to the applicant's scholarly reputation;
- The involvement of the applicant in the life of the Law School; and
- The recommendation of the supervisor.

7. FIELDWORK SUPPORT FUNDS (FSF)

(a) Description

In addition to RSF and CAF, **PhD students** who travel to undertake field research during their candidature may also apply for up to \$2,000 in Fieldwork Support Funds (FSF). For the purpose of this scheme, fieldwork includes travel within Australia or overseas to collect data in support of their PhD project. As with the standard RSF, this cap is reduced pro-rata where a student is jointly enrolled in Melbourne Law School and another Faculty.

There will be two rounds of FSF each year aligned with the first and third rounds of CAF (1 March and 1 September). The Research Finance Sub-committee may distribute up to \$12,000 each year. This funding is not guaranteed and will be awarded on a competitive basis.

(b) Eligibility

- Applicants must apply for any other [relevant university funding](#) where applicable. RSF, CAF and FSF are a supplement to and not a substitute for University funding;
- The applicant must have been confirmed before the money will be released (although it may be applied for prior to confirmation);
- If applicable, the applicant must have obtained ethics approval; and
- Evidence of meetings that have been arranged or institutions that will be visited as part of an applicant's field research must be provided.

(c) Use of Funds

FSF may be used for travel and associated expenses in support of fieldwork including:

- accessing archival records; and
- conducting interviews and observations.

Funds will not be provided to support costs associated with presenting at conferences (domestic and international), as RSF and/or CAF can be sought for this purpose.

(d) Application Process

Applicants should complete the standard RSF application form indicating that they are applying for FSF and attach the relevant documentation, including a statement of support from their supervisors (of up to one page). The applicant should write a justification of up to 500 words explaining how the funding would benefit the applicant in collecting research data. Applications should be submitted to the Office for Research by the following submission deadlines (where those dates fall on a weekend or University holiday, by close of business the next working day):

- 1 March
- 1 September

Please note, if the application contains a combined request for RSF and/or CAF and/or FSF, the entire application will be considered by the Sub-Committee following the next FSF deadline (unless a compelling reason is presented indicating that it would be beneficial to the student to have the standard RSF component of the application assessed earlier – e.g. if an airfare needs to be paid in advance).

(e) Decision-making process

Applications will be assessed by the Research (Finance) Sub-Committee within three (3) weeks of the round closing date and applicants will be notified within one (1) month of the closing date for the round. The Sub-Committee may award the full amount requested or a smaller amount.

When assessing an application for FSF, the Research (Finance) Sub-Committee will give consideration to the following factors:

- The necessity of the expenditure for the completion of the project;
- The quality of the proposed activity;
- Its benefits for the applicant's thesis;
- The involvement of the applicant in the life of the Law School; and
- The recommendation of the supervisor.

8. INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL – GRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

(a) Applicants must ensure that they have approved [Overseas Study Leave](#) for the period of study prior to international travel. Application must be made via the Student Portal at least one (1) month prior to travel.

(b) Graduate Research Students are provided with limited travel insurance through the University whilst on University approved travel. Students must register with the [Insurance Office](#) at least one (1) week prior to travel in order to be covered by this policy. Students **cannot** be covered for Travel Insurance where their travel has already commenced, or where their travel is primarily or solely 'private' in nature. Students wishing to obtain more extensive travel insurance must make arrangements to purchase travel insurance for the duration of their trip and this cost must be included in the budget. Information on the University of Melbourne's travel insurance for students and purchasing additional coverage is available from the [Insurance Office](#).

9. FUNDING FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) FACILITIES

Applicants seeking funding for IT facilities must, prior to submission of their application, discuss their requirements with the appropriate IT staff member in [Facilities](#).

10. ETHICS APPROVAL

Research may require ethics approval. Where appropriate, evidence of ethics approval, or approval pending, must be provided.

11. TIME LIMIT ON USE OF FUNDS

Successful applicants have six (6) months from the date they are notified of the approval of their application in which to use the funds allocated by the Research Committee.

12. PAYMENT OF RESEARCH SUPPORT FUNDS

If your Research Support Funds application is approved, you will be contacted by Central Finance to supply or confirm your bank account details. The agreed amount will be deposited to your nominated bank account. If you are unable to undertake the project as described in your application once awarded, you are required to repay the full amount of the award to Melbourne Law School.

13. PART-TIME STUDENTS INCOME TAX IMPLICATIONS

Scholarship and bursary payments are normally exempt from income tax provided that all of the following conditions are fulfilled (s51.10 Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (Cth)):

- the payment is to a student enrolled as a full-time student;
- the scholarship is provided for educational purposes and not as part of an employment agreement;
- the student is not required to be, or become, an employee of the University or a scholarship sponsor as a condition of the scholarship; and
- the terms of the scholarship do not amount to a contract for labour with the scholarship sponsor or the University.

Scholarship and bursary payments to students who are enrolled part-time may be subject to income tax. If applicable, the University withholds income tax to prevent students from accumulating a tax debt.

14. REPORT TO RESEARCH COMMITTEE

Successful applicants are required to provide a brief overview of how the funding has been used and the resulting benefits to their research project within seven (7) months of the date of notification of approval of an application. This report is then tabled at a Research Committee meeting.

Further information

Should you have any queries as to any part of these guidelines or the application process, please contact:

Administrative Officer

Office for Research (Law)

Telephone: (03) 8344 8946

Email: law-graduateresearch@unimelb.edu.au