



## The Manchester-Melbourne-Toronto (MMT) Research Fund 2024

### Guidelines for Applicants

**Deadline: 3 June 2024**

The University of Manchester, the University of Melbourne, and the University of Toronto are contributing matching funds to support collaborative bilateral and trilateral research initiatives through a joint call for proposals.

In recognition of strong bilateral partnerships between the three universities, [the universities formed a trilateral alliance in 2021](#). The alliance aims to facilitate further collaboration between the three partners, drawing on joint expertise and resources.

The overall aim of the MMT Research Fund (the Fund) is to encourage and provide initial support for the development of high-quality research activities that include Early Career Researchers (ECRs). Funding is available from each of the three institutions to develop bilateral or trilateral research projects. The Fund seeks to support proposals that will lead to long-term research collaborations with a view to enabling principal investigators (PIs) to subsequently apply for external funding to support the next phase of their joint research.

The Fund is open to applications from all research areas and up to 15 proposals will be selected for funding.

Proposals demonstrating strong relevance to strategic priorities at the participating institutions and that aim to provide opportunities for collaborative doctoral training and mobility at a future stage are encouraged.

### Activities and Scope

Proposals may include targeted research support such as joint workshops, researcher exchanges, and the formation or development of a collaborative network. Projects will commence from September 2024 for a maximum of 18 months.

All proposals must be led by, or include in a significant role, ECRs. Emphasizing the development of networks, proposals should include at least two academics from each partner institution on the team. Doctoral students, post-doctoral fellows, and adjunct faculty may also participate.

Proposals can be **Bilateral** (between two alliance partners) or **Trilateral** (between all alliance partners).

Mutual external collaborators (including researchers from other universities internationally, or those working in non-academic contexts such as industry or government) cannot lead an application but can

be involved in the proposed activities at their own expense, where the benefit of their involvement to the collaboration is justified in the proposal.

## Costs

The funding provided is intended to support expenses, including but not limited to costs of travel (PIs, post-doctoral fellows, research associates, graduate researchers) between the institutions, and costs associated with workshops and meetings. Details of eligible and ineligible costs are detailed in the table below.

Each partner should pay its own costs and there can be no transfer of funds between institutions. For example, travel costs for Manchester staff should be in the Manchester budget, costs for subsistence for Toronto staff should be allocated in the Toronto budget and costs of hosting a workshop in Melbourne, should be costed in the Melbourne budget.

Eligible Costs	Ineligible costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Travel costs including flights, hotels and subsistence</li><li>• Costs associated with organising workshops and meetings (excluding RA/administrative staff)</li><li>• Research costs, including consumables (up to a maximum of 2,400 AUD, 1,400 GBP and 2,200 CAD respectively)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Replacement research/teaching costs</li><li>• Directly incurred staff e.g. Research Assistant</li><li>• Directly allocated costs including applicants' time</li><li>• Indirect costs/estates costs</li><li>• Equipment</li><li>• Scholarships</li><li>• Conference attendance</li><li>• Tuition fees</li><li>• Honoraria</li></ul>

**Manchester:** We ask that Manchester applicants take into consideration the [University Travel Policy](#) and the [Before Travelling](#) guidance, including the associated [Travel Decision Tree](#). These documents and links are designed to assist colleagues in making informed decisions about travel and where possible, reduce the university's overall carbon footprint.

## Eligibility

To be eligible, a proposal must include researchers from **at least two** institutions and must be led by, or include in a significant role, ECRs (as defined by their institution of employment<sup>1</sup>). **Proposals must include at least two academics from each partner institution on the team.** Eligible applicants (see details below) may only lead one application as a PI but can be listed as a co-investigator on other applications.

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<sup>1</sup> **Manchester:** an individual who is within six years of their first academic appointment. This duration excludes any period of career break; **Melbourne:** an individual who is within ten years (full-time equivalent) of PhD conferral; **Toronto:** an individual who is within five years of their first faculty appointment. This duration excludes any period of career break.

Applicants from all disciplines are welcome to apply. Proposals demonstrating strong relevance to strategic priorities at the participating institutions are strongly encouraged.

Awardees from any of the previous bilateral/trilateral seed funding schemes between Manchester, Melbourne and Toronto may only re-apply to this scheme if their application seeks to significantly expand the number of researchers in their collaboration (for example, by including researchers from the third institution).

**Manchester:** Academic staff members at all levels are eligible. Applicants do not need to have a permanent post, but they must have an existing contract at the time of application, and that contract must cover the full period of the grant. Emeritus and honorary staff are not eligible to apply as Co-PI but may be members of the project team.

**Melbourne:** Applicants must hold an appointment at the University of Melbourne at Academic Level A (6) or higher and 0.5 FTE or higher at the time of application and for the duration of the award. Honorary employees whose primary academic affiliation is the University of Melbourne are eligible to lead the application if their primary employer has entered into an agreement with the University for the support of the Australian component of the collaborative activity; or may participate at their own expense if they are otherwise unaffiliated (for example, they hold an emeritus position). The relevant Heads of Department must endorse applications.

Melbourne academics must not have outstanding Progress Reports or Final Reports from any other University of Melbourne Researcher Development Scheme.

**Toronto:** Applicants who are Faculty members in continuing Toronto appointments are eligible to submit proposals. Faculty members in continuing Toronto appointments, and students and fellows under their supervision at Toronto, are eligible to participate in exchange activities. Proposals demonstrating strong relevance to the UofT's [Institutional Strategic Initiatives](#) are strongly encouraged.

### **Equality/Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

Adherence to respective equality/Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies are an important feature of this program to ensure that all participants can do their best work, thrive and succeed. Applicant teams should consider how they can take meaningful steps in their future collaborations to foster an environment that values, supports and respects a diverse range of views, knowledge and experiences. Applicants should consider EDI as it applies to gender, indigenous peoples, disabilities, career stages, and sectors.

### **Value and Duration**

Funding will be provided to support up to 15 proposals, across bilateral and trilateral projects, for a funding period of 18 months. Participation of applicants from each institution will be supported by that institution:

- Trilateral proposals, with PIs from all three institutions, can access funding from all three institutions.
- Bilateral proposals, with PIs from two alliance institutions, can access funding from those two institutions.

Recipients will be awarded up to:

- 15K AUD from Melbourne to support Melbourne applicants;
- 9K GBP From Manchester to support Manchester applicants; and
- 14K CAD from Toronto to support Toronto applicants.

Requested budgets must be proportionate to the nature and scale of activity. For example, if a proposal concerns a trilateral workshop held at one institution, the requested budgets for the hosting and sending institutions should be calculated and justified accordingly.

Each institution will pay funds directly to its researchers. Approval of expenditure will be governed by each university for the portion of funding provided, with any significant variations requiring approval from all participating institutions.

### Evaluation Criteria

A joint review committee will assess each proposal according to its academic merit using the following criteria

- **Project design and rationale (10 points):** How clearly presented and justified is the basis for, and design of, the project? How do the proposed activities assist with establishing new and emerging research collaborations? What are the anticipated benefits of involving ECRs and/or graduate researchers?
- **Collaborator complementarity (10 points):** What is the added value of the new or emerging collaboration? How do the proposed activities combine mutual areas of interest and strength?
- **Potential impact (10 points):** What desired outcomes do the planned activities set out to achieve? What are the anticipated benefits of the activities to local or international communities? How does your proposal demonstrate strong relevance to strategic priorities of the participating institutions?
- **Capacity for future collaboration/funding (20 points):** What is the potential for this project to foster ongoing collaboration, and through what mechanism(s)? How well does the proposed collaboration plan to access external funding?

The proposals will be assessed and recommended for selection by a committee composed of members of all three institutions appointed by the Associate Vice-President for Internationalisation for Manchester, the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research (or delegate) for Melbourne, and the Office of the Vice-President International for Toronto.

### How to Apply

This is a joint call and one joint application per project should be submitted online using [SmartSurvey](#). The form can be previewed [here](#). Applicants can use the 'save and continue' feature to save the proposal and continue later (a link is sent to the applicant's email address).

The full proposal is comprised of the following elements:

#### 1) Application Information

- 2) **Co-Investigator (Manchester) information**
- 3) **Co-Investigator (Melbourne) information**
- 4) **Co-Investigator (Toronto) information**
- 5) **Research Proposal**
  - i. **Title of Research Project**
  - ii. **Abstract** – a brief description of the project (150 words)
  - iii. **Project timeline and planned activities** (200 words)
  - iv. **Collaborator complementarity** (250 words) – a description of how the proposed activities combine mutual areas of interest and strength and the added value of these combined expertise.  
**Rationale and potential impact** (3x 250 words)
  - v. **Potential scholarly impact** - description of the expected academic gains for the project as a result of the proposed cooperation and mobility, and the identification of corresponding performance indicators e.g. a publication, blog, meeting report etc.
  - vi. **Potential broader impact** – describe how your proposal aligns with the strategic priorities of the participating institutions and the anticipated benefits of the activities to local or international communities.
  - vii. **Early career and graduate researcher involvement** - any opportunities for their engagement and anticipated benefits to the project and the early career and graduate researchers themselves, as applicable.
  - viii. **Capacity for future collaboration** (250 words) - a description of the potential future collaborations and outcomes that will be possible as a result of having undertaken the current collaboration. For example: joint publications, joint supervision of graduate researchers, joint teaching (including Global Classrooms<sup>2</sup>), joint patent applications, joint reports to governments, joint funding applications, growth of research team size at each partner, collaborations with corporate partners.
  - ix. **Equality/Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** (100 words) - discuss how the proposed project reflects the EDI priorities of the involved institutions.
- 6) **Budget** - a breakdown of the cost of the activity e.g. flights, travel, hotels etc.
- 7) **Project Team** - a list of the project teams.
- 8) **Supporting documents**

**Melbourne/Manchester/Toronto** collaborators will need to attach abbreviated Curriculum Vitae for the Co-Is, with a selected list of publications. CVs for all the project teams are not needed.

**Melbourne** collaborators will need to complete a Themis Grants Submission for Head of Department approval and email the Themis Submission number to [res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au)

**Manchester** collaborators will need to include a letter of support from their Head of

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<sup>2</sup> Global Classrooms (GC) offer an accessible way to internationalize teaching and learning experiences by combining cross-cultural collaborations with online teaching. They enable faculty and instructors to work closely with peers abroad. GCs benefit students and organizations in participating regions by offering a cost-effective complement to student mobility. They include a range of online approaches including guest lectures, group projects with students from each partner institution, to full co-taught courses.

Department/Research Domain which includes an explanation of how the project aligns with their Faculty's research strategy. A fEC costing is not required. The budget section of the application can be easily completed and should not require input from Research Services teams. If however, you feel you need support then please follow local School procedures for submitting grant applications.

**Toronto** collaborators should only submit the application through SmartSurvey. No additional approvals or MRA are required.

### **Timeline**

Call for proposals launch	27 March 2024 (9am BST)
Deadline for submission	3 June 2024 (5pm BST)
Communication of results	August 2024
Start date of awards	September 2024

### **Reporting**

All awardees must, as a condition of receiving an award under this call, complete a narrative report (of between 1 and 2 pages) that describes the outcomes, nature of collaboration, project impact, graduate researcher involvement and opportunities for future collaboration that evolved from their project. A single joint report should be submitted to all involved institutions within three months of the project end date, using the contacts listed below.

Any publications (e.g. abstracts, articles) or dissemination of research (e.g. public presentations) arising from activities supported by this Grant should acknowledge financial assistance received from The Manchester-Melbourne-Toronto Research Partnership Development Fund 2023. Copies of the publications and/or information about the presentations should be included in the above report. The title for acknowledgement is "The Manchester-Melbourne-Toronto Research Partnership Development Fund 2023, provided by the Universities of Manchester, Melbourne and Toronto."

### **Information about this Call**

All queries related to this call for joint research proposals should be directed to:

#### **The University of Manchester**

Helen Lusty, International Officer

E: [international.partnerships@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:international.partnerships@manchester.ac.uk)

#### **The University of Melbourne:**

Researcher Development Schemes team

E: [res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au)

#### **The University of Toronto**

Rikki Zhao, Director, China Partnership

E: [rikki.zhao@utoronto.ca](mailto:rikki.zhao@utoronto.ca)