



The Manchester-Melbourne-Toronto (MMT) Research Fund 2025

Guidelines for Applicants

Deadline: Monday 2 June 2025

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

Aim of the fund

The overall aim of the MMT Research Fund is to initiate or develop new research partnerships. Funding is available from each of the three institutions to develop **bilateral** (between two alliance partners) or **trilateral** (between all alliance partners) research projects.

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

For proposals from colleagues working in the Humanities, we encourage applicants to link their proposals to one of the four focus areas of the [Global Humanities Alliance](#) that Manchester, Melbourne and Toronto are all members of.

Projects will commence from September 2025 for a maximum of 18 months.

Project leads and teams

All proposals must be led by, or include in a significant role, Early Career Researchers (ECRs). To be eligible, there needs to be at least two academic staff members from each partner institution named in the project application and at least one of the project team must be an ECR.

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

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:

- Proposals 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 employment¹).
- **Proposals must include at least two academics from each partner institution in the application and at least one of the project team must be an ECR.**
- Applicants (see details below) may only lead one application as a PI but can be listed as a member of the project team on other applications. If applicants submit more than one application as a PI will be asked to withdraw one of the applications.

¹ **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). If this is the case, please ensure a clear explanation of this, otherwise your application may be seen as ineligible.

Applicants who have previously applied to the scheme but did not have their application awarded may reapply to the scheme if their collaboration is still considered a new initiative and collaboration. Applicants in this situation should also reference how they have improved their project proposal from their previous submission.

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 a 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: U of T faculty members who meet the [University's definition of a Principal Investigator \(PI\)](#) are eligible to apply. PIs must hold an appointment for the full duration of the grant's funding period plus one year. Successful status-only PIs must hold grant funds at an account within the University.

U of T aims to increase tri-agency 'market share' and the associated allocation benefits that accrue. When evaluating closely ranked proposals, preference will be given to U of T PIs who currently hold tri-agency funding or have an active application in progress for a tri-agency funding opportunity.

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, sectors, LGBTQ+ and race/ethnicity.

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.

U of T will provide supplemental funding up to CAD\$3000 for projects which involve a collaborator from other GHA (Global Humanities Alliance) partner institutions to U of T applicants. Please find the details [here](#).

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:

Application Information

- **Applicants' details – affiliations from each institution with contact details**
 - Principle Investigator (Manchester) information
 - Principle Investigator (Melbourne) information
 - Principle Investigator (Toronto) information
- **Research Proposal – details of the project**
 - **Title:** of Research Project
 - **Key words** that relate to the main topic of your proposal
 - **What is your project idea** – a brief, plain English description of the project (project design and rationale)?
 - **Why is this impactful and important work** (project design and rationale)?
 - **Project timeline and planned activities:** project dates, a project timeline and a description of the planned activities (project design and rationale).
 - **Collaborator complementarity** - a description of how the proposed activities combine mutual areas of interest and strength and the added value of these combined expertise.
 - **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.
 - **Potential impact**
 - **Potential scholarly impact** – a 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.
 - **Potential broader impact** – a description of how your proposal aligns with the strategic priorities of the participating institutions and the anticipated benefits of the activities to local or international communities.
 - **Capacity for future collaboration:**
 - What plans do you have for future funding after the end of the project?
 - What other potential future collaborations and outcomes do you anticipate as a result of having undertaken the current collaboration? For example: joint publications, joint supervision of graduate researchers, joint teaching, growth of research team size at each partner, collaborations with corporate partners.
 - **Equality/Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** discuss how the proposed project reflects the EDI priorities of the involved institutions.
 - **Budget** - a breakdown of the cost of the activity e.g. travel, hotels etc.
 - **Project Team** - a list of the project teams.
- **Supporting documents:**

- **Melbourne/Manchester/Toronto** each PI will need to attach an abbreviated version of their Curriculum Vitae, with a selected list of publications. CVs for all members of the project teams are not needed.
- **Melbourne** collaborators will need to complete a brief SmartyGants application that attaches a PDF of their completed SmartSurvey application as well as a Faculty Certification Form that confirms their Head of Department/School approval. Additionally, if the applicant is an eligible honorary employee, they must attach their Honorary Declaration form to their application. The Faculty Certification form, Honorary Declaration form and application form link can be found on the University of Melbourne’s MMT webpage under ‘Supporting Documents’.
- **Manchester** collaborators will need to include a letter of support from their Head of 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	Wednesday 26 March 2025 (9am UK time - GMT)
Deadline for submission	Monday 2 June 2025 (5pm UK time - BST)
Communication of results	Mid-August 2025
Start date of awards	Early September 2025

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 Fund 2025. 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 2025, 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

The University of Melbourne:

Researcher Development Schemes team

E: res-devschemes@unimelb.edu.au

The University of Toronto

Rikki Zhao, Director, China Partnership

E: rikki.zhao@utoronto.ca