



**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION,
TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS**

**Research Infrastructure
Block Grants Scheme**

Guidelines for Year 1999 Grants

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Acronyms

ADFA	Australian Defence Force Academy
CRC	Cooperative Research Centres
DETYA	Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
HEFA	Higher Education Funding Act
IAS	Institute of Advanced Studies
NCGI	National Competitive Grants Index
RIBG	Research Infrastructure Block Grants Scheme
RIEF	Research Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities Scheme

1. Introduction

The Higher Education Targeted Research Programme provides funding to teams or individuals for worthy and high quality research through several application-based and formula-based grant schemes. These schemes aim to maintain and strengthen Australia's knowledge base and research capabilities by developing an effective research and research training system, focused on the higher education sector.

The purpose of the Research Infrastructure Block Grants (RIBG) Scheme is to enhance the development and maintenance of research infrastructure in higher education institutions for the support of high quality research in all disciplines.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the RIBG Scheme are to:

- meet project-related infrastructure costs associated with National Competitive Grants;
- remedy deficiencies in current research infrastructure;
- enhance support for areas of research strength; and
- ensure that areas of recognised research potential, in which institutions have taken steps to initiate high quality research activity, have access to the support necessary for development.

3. Description

The Commonwealth Government provides funding for research infrastructure in higher education institutions through the Research Quantum component of operating grants, and under the Research Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities (RIEF) Scheme and the RIBG Scheme.

Research infrastructure funding provides institutional resources essential for the mounting of high quality research projects, including associated indirect costs. However, it excludes any direct project costs which should be covered from other sources of funding.

Research infrastructure is not necessarily restricted to institutional boundaries and may include facilities which enhance the research capacity of groups of institutions or of the higher education system as a whole.

For information about the RIEF Scheme, refer to its guidelines. For information on the Research Quantum, contact the Executive Manager, Research Programme Management Group, Higher Education Research Branch, DETYA.

3.1 Budget items not supported

Items **not** regarded as elements of research infrastructure, for the purposes of the RIBG Scheme, and which will not be funded, include:

- capital works (ie. construction of buildings), as institutions receive operating grant funding for capital works;

- rental of accommodation;
- salaries of teaching and research and research-only academic staff (including the cost of "buying time" to free such staff to do more research);
- salaries of staff supporting research at the institutional level (eg. Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Research Grants Officer);
- stipends of postgraduate research students; and
- travel costs directly associated with individual projects (with the exception of travel costs to allow participation in international consortia).

3.2 Funding

The RIBG allocation to institutions is formula-based with allocations reflecting the relative success of each institution in attracting competitive research funds, as calculated by the National Competitive Grants Index (NCGI). Details of the derivation of the NCGI are at Appendix 2.

The amount available for distribution under the RIBG Scheme in 1999 is still to be determined. In 1998 it was \$96.823 million. Institutions will be advised of their share of the total amount in December 1998.

4. Eligibility

4.1 Institution eligibility

A list of eligible higher education institutions is at Appendix 1. The Institute of Advanced Studies (IAS) at the Australian National University is **not** eligible to receive RIBG funding due to its special funding arrangements.

4.2 Project eligibility

The following, to the extent that they support research projects, may be regarded as elements of research infrastructure and funded under the RIBG Scheme:

- non-capital aspects of facilities such as libraries, computing centres, animal houses, herbaria, experimental farms;
- equipment purchase, installation and maintenance; and
- salaries of research support staff (including research assistants and technicians) employed to provide general support for activity in a given area eg. a research assistant providing assistance for a number of research projects but not a research assistant dedicated to a particular project.

5. Application Process

Applications are not required as funding for the RIBG Scheme is allocated to institutions.

6. Selection and Approval Process

6.1 Selection procedure

Institutions are able to establish their own procedures and mechanisms for allocation of the funds internally. However, funds must be distributed in accordance, and be consistent, with:

- the objectives of the RIBG Scheme, as described in these guidelines;
- Commonwealth Government policy on selectivity and concentration whereby funds should be directed towards areas of research strength or areas identified for development of future research strength; and
- the project eligibility of research infrastructure, as described in these guidelines.

6.2 Conditions of grant

Written acceptance by institutions of RIBG funding is **not** required. However, in accepting payment of the grant, an institution is considered to have accepted the conditions of funding which are outlined in these guidelines.

7. Grant Administration

7.1 Reporting requirements

Institutions are required to submit to DETYA:

- an **Annual Report** on the use and expenditure of grant funds by 31 March in the year following the calendar year for which they were granted (see Appendix 3); and
- an **Audited Financial Statement** by 30 June of the year following the year of the grant, in accordance with sub-section 23(5) of the *Higher Education Funding Act 1988* (HEFA).

DETYA reserves the right to suspend payment of further instalments of any current grant until the appropriate reports have been received and assessed as satisfactory.

7.1.1 Failure to provide reports

Where an institution fails to submit satisfactory reports, as required, the Minister may, under section 108 of the HEFA, determine that funds have not been used in accordance with conditions applicable to the grant, and that all or part of the grant must be repaid. In this case, DETYA may withhold the remainder of the institution's payments under the Scheme for the current year or initiate recovery of grant moneys.

7.2 Monitoring and evaluation

Reviews of DETYA schemes are undertaken periodically, as deemed necessary. Persons nominated by DETYA are to be given full access to all accounts, records, documents and premises relevant to the research being funded by DETYA.

7.3 Financial management

7.3.1 Payments

The Scheme operates on a calendar year basis. Subject to appropriations, payment of funds will be made to institutions in regular instalments, in accordance with approved payment arrangements made under section 111 of the HEFA. Funds must only be used for purposes approved under the Scheme otherwise they must be returned.

7.3.2 Carryovers

As grants are made for the specified calendar year, carryovers beyond 31 December of the year in which the grant was made require approval. Carryover requests should be made in the Annual Report.

7.3.3 Recoveries

Any funds which have not been spent, or are not to be carried over, will be recovered by DETYA, following advice provided in the Annual Report, in accordance with section 108 of the HEFA.

8. General Information

8.1 Roles and responsibilities

Broadly, roles and responsibilities under the Higher Education Targeted Research Programme are as follows.

8.1.1 The Minister

The Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs, under the HEFA, has responsibility for approving:

- the mechanism for allocation of funds awarded for research;
- research funding schemes' objectives, guidelines and associated conditions;
- the expenditure, carryover and recovery of Research Programme funds; and
- variations to grants and the reallocation of unused funds.

8.1.2 DETYA staff

Staff of the Higher Education Research Branch, DETYA, on behalf of the Minister's delegates, are responsible for:

- providing advice to the Minister on the allocative mechanisms;
- providing advice to the Minister and institutions on the operation of the schemes; and
- administering the range of research funding schemes and mechanisms.

8.1.3 Higher education institutions and other organisations

Research Offices of higher education institutions and other organisations are the first points of contact for parties interested in grant opportunities and are responsible for:

- maintaining records on the receipt and expenditure of grant funds;
- exercising quality control over grant applications; and
- ensuring compliance with grant conditions.

8.2 Privacy of individuals

Documents containing personal information are handled and protected in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988* which sets standards for the collection, storage, use and disclosure of, and access to, personal information. Personal information is disclosed only with permission of the individual to whom it relates or where the Act allows.

8.3 Freedom of information

All documents are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* unless exempt in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

8.4 Intellectual property

The institution must adhere to an intellectual property policy, approved by the institution's governing body, which has as one of its aims the maximisation of national benefits arising from research.

8.5 Insurance and liabilities

By accepting funds under a DETYA research scheme, institutions agree to indemnify the Commonwealth from any expense arising from any action that may be made or brought against the Commonwealth resulting from activities funded under the Scheme. Institutions are responsible for taking out appropriate insurance.

8.6 Contact points

For further information, the institution's Research Office should be contacted in the first instance.

Enquiries about this Scheme may be addressed to:

Scheme Manager
RIBG Scheme
Research Programme Management Group
Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs
GPO Box 9880
CANBERRA ACT 2601
Fax: (02) 6240 9781
Email: rbquant@detya.gov.au

Web site address: <http://www.detya.gov.au/highered/research/grants/grants.htm>

Appendix 1: Eligible higher education institutions

Higher Education Institutions in Receipt of Commonwealth Funding on a Triennial Basis

New South Wales

Charles Sturt University
Macquarie University
Southern Cross University
The University of New England
The University of New South Wales
The University of Newcastle
The University of Sydney
University of Technology, Sydney
University of Western Sydney
University of Wollongong

Victoria

Deakin University
La Trobe University
Monash University
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology
Swinburne University of Technology
University of Ballarat
The University of Melbourne
Victoria University of Technology

Queensland

Central Queensland University
Griffith University
James Cook University
Queensland University of Technology
The University of Queensland
University of Southern Queensland

Western Australia

Curtin University of Technology
Edith Cowan University
Murdoch University
The University of Western Australia

South Australia

The Flinders University of South Australia
The University of Adelaide
University of South Australia

Tasmania

University of Tasmania
Australian Maritime College

Northern Territory

Northern Territory University

Australian Capital Territory

The Australian National University¹
University of Canberra

Multi-State

Australian Catholic University

¹ Excluding the Institute of Advanced Studies due to its special funding arrangements.

Appendix 2: National Competitive Grants Index (NCGI)

The following criteria are currently used to determine which research grants are included in the NCGI:

- funds must be provided on a nationally competitive basis and clearly be for research only;
- funds for research must be nationally advertised and available for allocation throughout Australia;
- funding schemes must have a well-defined mechanism for competition and selection by a well-qualified panel;
- grants must involve a direct transfer of funds from the granting agency to a higher education institution ;
- grants in-kind such as the use of facilities, equipment, etc. or subsidised travel or accommodation must be excluded;
- schemes used exclusively to fund student scholarships are to be excluded;
- the funding body must agree to provide funding data to DETYA and the data must be up-to-date; and
- the total annual research budget for any non-Commonwealth research funding schemes must be at least \$200,000 for the most recent year.

The criteria for inclusion in the NCGI may change for subsequent years.

Derivation of the NCGI - the Higher Education Financial and Publications Research Data Collection

The NCGI is derived from data collected as part of the *Higher Education Financial and Publications Research Data Collection* which includes information on the value and source of competitive research funding received by institutions for the previous two calendar years.

Income data relating to Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) is excluded from the calculation of RIBG funding as the CRC Programme includes some provision for infrastructure.

Income data relating to the IAS is also excluded from the calculation as the IAS is not eligible for funding under the RIBG Scheme.

The data collection includes the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA). A separate data return is required from the University of New South Wales for ADFA. ADFA data is included for the RIBG calculation.

For further information on the data collection, refer to the latest version of the instruction document "*Higher Education Financial and Publications Research Data Collection - Specifications for Preparing Returns*" on the World Wide Web site at:

<http://www.detya.gov.au/highered/research/grants/grantap2.htm>

List of funding schemes for National Competitive Grants Index (NCGI) for 1998 collection of data applying to 1997

Commonwealth Schemes (by portfolio)

Attorney-General's

Criminology Research Council

Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies

Australian National Training Authority - VET Research Centres

National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd

- Research into Vocational Education and Training Sector

Australian Research Council

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers Development Scheme

- Collaborative Grants Scheme

- Key Centres of Teaching and Research

- Large Research Grants Scheme

- Research Fellowships Scheme

- Small Grants Scheme

- Special Research Centres

Children's Literacy National Projects

Indigenous Higher Education Centres Program

National Youth Affairs Research Scheme

Targeted Institutional Links

Environment

Antarctic Science Advisory Committee Grants Scheme

Australian Biological Resources Study

Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Grants Program

Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Augmentative Reef Research Grant Scheme

Foreign Affairs and Trade

Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)

Health and Family Services

General Practice Evaluation Program

Research into Drug Abuse Advisory Committee

National Health and Medical Research Council

- Health Services Research and Development Grants Advisory Committee

- Medical Research Grants Scheme

- Public Health Research and Development Grants Scheme

Industrial Relations

Worksafe Australia (National Occupational Health and Safety Commission)

Industry, Science and Tourism

Space Industry Development Centres Program

AusIndustry:

- *R&D Start* Program Grants for Collaborative R&D Projects
- *R&D Start* Program Grants for Graduate-based R&D Projects

Primary Industries and Energy

Cotton R&D Corporation

Dairy R&D Corporation

Dried Fruits R&D Corporation

Fisheries R&D Corporation

Forest and Wood Products R&D Corporation

Grains R&D Corporation

Grape and Wine R&D Corporation

Horticultural R&D Corporation

Land and Water Resources R&D Corporation

Meat Research Corporation

Pig R&D Corporation

Rural Industries R&D Corporation

Sugar R&D Corporation

Tobacco R&D Corporation

Veterans' Affairs

Health and Medical Research Grants

Non-Commonwealth Schemes

Australian Brewers Foundation

Australian Coal Research Ltd

Australian Institute of Nuclear Science and Engineering Inc

Australian Kidney Foundation

Australian Rotary Health Research Fund

Clive and Vera Ramaciotti Foundation

IWS International Pty Ltd

Kathleen Cuningham Foundation

National Heart Foundation of Australia

National Multiple Sclerosis Society of Australia

Telstra Corporation Ltd

- Telstra Fund for Social and Policy Research in Telecommunications

The Ophthalmic Research Institute of Australia

WA Estuarine Research Foundation

Wellcome Trust Senior Research Fellowships in Biomedical Science

Appendix 3: Annual Report requirements for RIBG

Institutions are required to provide an Annual Report to DETYA, on the use of the RIBG funding, by **31 March of the year following the grant year.**

Annual reporting is a **condition of grant**. The Annual Report must demonstrate that the funds have been used for infrastructure within the definition in these guidelines, and in a manner which is consistent with the purpose and objective of the RIBG Scheme and with the institution's Research Management Plan. The report must:

- include an outline of the approach taken in the allocation of RIBG funding within the institution;
- provide a brief description of the areas of research to which funding was applied by the institution, the amounts spent by each area (see Note below) and the purpose for which the funding was used;
- provide a brief explanation of how the institution's allocation of the funds is relevant to its Research Management Plan;
- account for the total amount of RIBG funding (including any supplementation, late payments and funds carried forward into the grant year from a previous year); and
- indicate where funds are unspent in a calendar year and incorporate a request for carryover or provide a cross-reference to such a request if it was previously submitted.

Note: It is not sufficient to report the allocation to each research area. The way the funds were spent by each area must be shown. It would normally be necessary for the administrative unit responsible for each relevant research area to provide input into the report.