

UNSW COVID-19 Rapid Response Research Initiative GUIDELINES

The pandemic currently sweeping the globe not only poses a major public health crisis but will have profound and lasting effects on just about every element of society as we know it. Things look likely to get worse before they get better, and we are well placed to make a major contribution. UNSW has been doing its bit, in the media, in advising government, and in focussing early research effort on tackling this biosecurity emergency. Despite the trying environment and our constrained finances, we feel we can and should do more to contribute to the national and international effort.

UNSW is committed to high quality potentially life-changing research in the national interest and will thus invest strategic resource at this time in COVID-19. Studies can cover any aspect of the pandemic, ranging from the immediate diagnostic, therapeutic and containment approaches through to health and service provision aspects, and/or studies addressing the myriad social, economic and societal implications.

Call for proposals

This is a rapid turn-around call for high end proposals which can be implemented within the next month. Sums awarded will range from \$100-500k/grant, although larger sums may be considered by exception if leverage or the potential for leverage can be demonstrated.

Without setting constraints, proposals are encouraged from high performing teams, which can span disciplines and UNSW schools and institutes, and which ideally address a pivotal aspect of the pandemic, for instance with cutting edge biological, clinical or big data tools. But the research should be able to be actioned with current staff.

This is not a seed grant call - assessors will be looking for rigorous research with the potential for transformative impact. We thus encourage you to discuss the suitability of your project with your Associate/Deputy Dean Research in the first instance.

Who is eligible to apply?

All UNSW academic staff. Applications from conjoint academics are welcome but should include a UNSW staff member among the chief investigators. Collaboration with other institutions is welcome as is co-contribution; however, the amount awarded through this grant should be spent at UNSW.

What funding is available?

Grant sizes will range from \$100k and can go up to \$500k for major laboratory efforts. The total dispersed will depend on the quality of proposals received, as well as additional funds UNSW raises from external sources.

What is the project duration?

6-12 months, aiming to commence in April 2020.

How rapid is rapid?

Proposals must be received by 0900 on Monday 6 April, with awards announced on Tuesday 14 April.

What is the scope?

The call is deliberately broad and may cover any one or more of a range of non-exclusive areas including:

- acute diagnostic, preventative or therapeutic approaches, both for SARS-COV-2 and the related disease COVID-19, its immunology and pathology etc.
- containment strategies, modelling & tracking, their effectiveness, population impact and sequelae
- health system capacity, responsiveness, delivery modes, equity, critical services and utilities
- supply chain challenges: health, staples, global trade, transport, panic buying
- social consequences: isolation, support, aged care, social distancing/networking, virtual working, education, human rights
- mental health, suicide, prevention and treatment, service delivery
- economic consequences: insolvency, un/employment, stocks and liquidity, housing, fiscal strategy, gig economy, business transformation
- sustainability, environment

How will applications be assessed?

Applications will be assessed intramurally by a small group of senior research leaders uninvolved in the proposals, and evaluated based broadly on the following:

1. likely national and/or international impact
2. rigour, quality and achievability of the proposed research
3. novelty and timeliness
4. strength of the project team / collaborating groups
5. ability to be implemented rapidly, with existing staff, and in the current environment
6. appropriateness of the budget

Consideration may also be given to:

- potential for short term leverage with philanthropy, government etc.
- potential impact on multisector strategies for future pandemic prevention/containment and/or a transitioning to a more sustainable and resilient society

Application requirements

a) Application Form Part 1

- Project title
- A brief summary outlining the aims and expected outcomes
- Details of project leads (applicants, relevant research or activities)
- Duration of project and sum sought

b) Application Form Part 2:

A two-page attachment (PDF only) in 10pt Arial font, that includes the following:

- Project title
- Aims and background
- Approach and methods
- Expected outcomes
- Contribution of team members and possible collaborators
- References (a maximum of 10)

c) A one-page project budget using the template provided.

d) Please submit the PDF application (4 pages max) and project budget template via email to research.services@unsw.edu.au by 9am 6th April.

Professor Nicholas Fisk
Deputy Vice Chancellor Research