

Guidelines and Principles for *Ad Hoc* Research Funding Support

Last updated 2021.04.08

Ad Hoc Research Funding Support includes requests for assistance such as:

- **Matching Funds:** to support applications to external funding sources requiring evidence of financial support from other sources, which might include the host institution
- **Emergency Equipment Repair:** to mitigate the impact on a program of research when sudden, unexpected break-down or malfunction of equipment occurs
- **Emergency/Temporary Bridge Funding:** to mitigate the impact on a successful program of research when funding is unexpectedly or temporarily interrupted
- **Strategic Opportunities:** on rare occasion, an opportunity to seed or invest in an activity that has significant potential and probability of stimulating a major initiative within a program of research or the broader strategic research initiatives of the Faculty

The common elements of these types of requests is that they do not readily lend themselves to an open call with an adjudicated competition; are often for a one-off need or opportunity; and are normally for larger amounts of support. Therefore, these requests are best evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Historically, the FRM has attempted to support these types of requests and will continue to do so as they directly support the Research Goal of our Strategic Plan. The purpose of this document is to provide **Guidelines** describing how such requests are to be made and to provide information about the **Principles** that will be applied in reaching decisions on such requests.

Guidelines for Making a Request

- All requests should initially be made through the Vice Dean, Research (VDR).
- The initial enquiry can take several forms including a face-to-face scheduled meeting or email.
- The purpose of the initial enquiry is to a) provide guidance as to the likelihood the request will be considered further, and b) understand what information will be required to accompany the request, before excessive time and energy are expended developing the request.
- Requests for Matching Funds or Strategic Opportunities should be made with sufficient advanced notice of deadlines so that reasonable consultation and discussion can occur and allow for informed and strategic decisions to be made. Rushed, hurried and “last minute” requests will normally be viewed less favourably or not at all. The time required to make decisions will depend in part on the size of the request and the other elements required as part of the request (e.g. any space modifications that might be required, temporary use of other equipment). Therefore, a standard policy on timelines cannot be established. However, good practice is to ensure that all required elements of the grant application (e.g. matching funds) are in place well before the time and energy of writing the proposal occurs.
- If so indicated following the initial enquiry, all requests shall be submitted in writing to the VDR in the form of an abstract and proposed budget. When making a request consider the following:
 - What is the purpose of the request?
 - What is the benefit to your research program?

- What is the benefit to the Faculty's research priorities?
- What is required from the Faculty?
- Who will benefit from the request?
- What other sources of support have you considered as part of the solution (e.g. can other partners contribute?)?
- Are there corollary requirements that will need to be met? (e.g. space, space modifications, reconsiderations of workload distribution, safety approvals, IT supports etc.)
- Any other information the VDR specifically requested following the initial enquiry.

Next Steps:

When the VDR is satisfied that sufficient information has been provided to understand the request, the VDR may:

- a) deny the request,
- b) bring the request forward to the Dean for further consideration,
- c) approve the request in principle.

In case (a), the requester has the opportunity to appeal the VDR's decision to the Dean.

- Appeals to the Dean are to be made in writing and must be submitted within 10 business days of receiving the VDR's decision

In case (b), the VDR and the Dean will discuss the request and may:

- i. deny the request (this decision will be final),
- ii. request further information, which might include meeting with the requester,
- iii. partially approve the request (e.g. approve a lower amount),
- iv. approve the request.

In case (c), the Dean shall have final authority to support or deny the request, with budgetary considerations being fundamental to all final approvals.

Final Approval:

- Once approved, it is often the case that the request will need to be modified (e.g. quotes come in differently than anticipated, partners provided less or more matching than expected). Most minor amendments will be approved, however all amendments must be vetted by the VDR. Any amendments of a more substantive nature may require further justification and may require revisiting the full request.
- Any amendments that have not been approved will not be honored, no matter how minor.

Funding Decision Principles

1. Budget availability

The Faculty budget does not include a set annual allocation for *ad hoc* research related requests. Therefore, **ALL** requests are limited by the financial constraints of the Faculty at the time of the request. The availability of funds to support such requests will vary throughout the year and will vary from year to year. Previous funding availability and decisions should not be considered precedent setting for future decisions.

2. Track record/productivity of the requester's program of research

Requesters with a strong record of research productivity, relative to their career stage, will be considered more favourably. In other words, researchers who have demonstrated that past research funding has been used productively will be viewed more favourably.

3. Impact of the funding on the program of research

Urgency of need in the case of equipment repairs, or significant stimulus to a program of research in the case of matching funds, are critical criteria.

For example, a research program that will be substantially impaired by a malfunctioning piece of equipment must make this case and must demonstrate that alternative solutions are not available (e.g. comparable equipment elsewhere in the Faculty or across campus). Similarly, when matching funds are requested, successful funding that is likely to stimulate long-term, sustainable growth to a research program or research infrastructure will be viewed favourably, whereas funding that targets a project limited in scope will be viewed less favourably.

4. Impact of funding on the training of Highly Qualified Personnel (HQP)

Funding requests that will directly impact the quality and quantity of training of HQP will be viewed more favourably.

5. Benefit to the Faculty

Generally, funding requests that will benefit multiple FRM Faculty members will be viewed more favourably. Funding that is likely to leave a lasting legacy, either in terms of infrastructure, enhancement of Faculty profile, or establishment of novel areas of expertise will be viewed more favourably. Particular emphasis will be placed on requests that enhance or grow the FRM's Strategic Research Priorities.

6. Financial risk

Requests for funding that include several funding partners to lessen the burden on the Faculty's resources will be viewed favourably.

For example, if a matching grant program requires a 50% match then a request made to the FRM for only 25% will be viewed more favourably than a request for the full 50% required. Similarly, if a researcher requires equipment repairs and proposes a cost sharing in the request,

the request will be considered more favourably.

7. Sustainability

Requests for funding that include consideration for the long-term sustainability of the investment will be viewed more favourably.

For example, equipment repair requests that include a maintenance and renewal plan will be viewed more favourably. Matching requests that include plans for subsequent ongoing external support after the initial investment will be viewed more favourably. In contrast, requests that are likely to require continued reinvestment by the FRM, or similar requests that have been funded in the past, will be viewed less favourably.