

AIRS

Advanced Information Research Skills

AIRS Module 12

Fund 



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\$ Module 12: Fund

STRATEGIES FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS

This module introduces options for research funding available at QUT. You will learn how to identify suitable grants including:

- non-profit
- competitive
- commercial
- philanthropic

This module provides tips and tricks for writing successful grant applications, including tips for writing and incorporating evidence of your research impact into your grant applications. You will:

- Use QUT resources to identify and apply for suitable grants

12.1 Avenues for funding

At QUT, grant funding is organised into non-profit, competitive, commercial and philanthropic. This section will look at each of these in turn and the [Pivot database](#).

Non-profit

There are many ways for you to gain external funding through non-profit organisations including academic institutions (e.g. centres for research), professional societies or associations (e.g. academic journal) and government bodies (e.g. [Commonwealth research centres](#)). These groups offer a range of funding opportunities such as:

- research grants
- visiting research fellowships
- doctoral scholarships
- essay or media prizes
- travel fellowships
- mini-grants for conferences, lectures, radio and video productions, exhibits, teacher training and development of curricular materials, interpretive programs for festivals, book discussions and planning for future projects.

Your grant application may require an essay justifying why you ought to receive the grant, letters of recommendation, professional and private experiences of relevance, membership of a particular society, birthplace or place of residence, your stated career goals plus any publications and presentations to date.



Search in [Pivot](#) under your discipline or subject area to find non-profit funding opportunities.

Competitive funding

Competitive funding schemes require individuals or research groups to compete for research grants that are available to fund particular areas of research. They are usually administered by large funding bodies such as the [Australian Research Council \(ARC\)](#), the [National Health & Medical Research Council \(NHMRC\)](#) and the [Business and Industry Portal](#). Information about these and other competitive funding schemes is available on the [QUT Office of Research website](#).

Competitive funding schemes usually support discovery-style and collaborative research, and the amounts involved can be very large. They are traditionally difficult to win and they often go to established researchers with strong track records so it's a good idea to undertake a few smaller grants to build your research track record before applying for a competitive grant scheme.

To build your track record:

- collaborate with other researchers with proven track records in the granting environment
- publish strategically across several streams or topic areas
- apply for small research grants
- publish in open access journals where possible, e.g. [BioMed Central](#), [Public Library of Science \(PLoS\)](#), and [Hindawi Press](#) – research shows that open access can increase your citation rate (ask your [Liaison Librarian](#) about these resources)
- take a sabbatical with a top laboratory or research centre.

At QUT, you may also hear competitive grants referred to as *Category 1* grants. For advice and support with competitive grant round applications, contact the [Research Development Team](#) in the Office of Research.

Commercial research funding

Commercial grants typically fund activities that support research and include monies for the activities and training of higher degree research students funded by corporations and businesses.

Commercially funded research projects have two components:

1. they meet the [HERDC definition of research](#)
2. they are not on the competitive grants register.

For advice and support with commercial research funding applications, contact the [Office of Commercial Services](#).

Philanthropic funding

Philanthropic organisations worldwide offer funding for research projects and are a good avenue for new researchers as several schemes have high success rates. Types of philanthropic funding can include:

- corporate and family foundations
- philanthropic intermediaries
- private ancillary funds
- overseas foundations
- other corporate and community support.

[QUT Library](#) provides public access to grantmaker directories, books on fundraising and non-profit management, and to the Center's electronic databases via the [QUT Community Collection for Grantseekers, Fundraisers and Philanthropists](#). For advice and support in developing philanthropic grant applications, contact the [Alumni and Development Office](#).

Pivot



[Pivot](#) is a database of available local, national and international opportunities for grants, fellowships, prizes and other type of funding from both the public and private sectors. Each database record includes:

- abstract
- information on deadlines
- the amount of the award
- eligibility criteria
- contact information.

Non-profit, competitive, commercial and philanthropic grants are listed in Pivot. When starting out in your research career, it is an excellent idea to apply for small grants where appropriate as the success rates can be higher and number of applicants can be lower, increasing your chances of success. Smaller successes also help to familiarise you with the grant application process and strengthen your track record, thus contributing towards future success with traditionally more difficult funding avenues such as competitive grant rounds.

For advice and support in the use of Pivot, contact your [Liaison Librarian](#).

Activity – search Pivot

Search Pivot for possible grants available in your research field. When searching, consider some of the following points and alter your search accordingly:

- Where would you like to conduct the research (country location)?
- The amount of funding you are seeking
- Citizenship requirements
- The research output

Summary

Consider non-profit, competitive, commercial and philanthropic avenues for research funding. As you commence your research career, apply for smaller grants to build your experience and research credibility. To build your track record further, take opportunities to collaborate with other researchers on projects, publish strategically across several streams or topic areas and publish in open access journals.

12.2 Writing a grant application

Introduction

In this section you will learn how to prepare materials for a successful grant application including features of a good grant application and writing tips.

Features of a good grant application

There are some general characteristics of good grant applications to consider (QUT Office of Research, 2012; Gallagher, 2005):

- carefully adhere to the guidelines, rules, format and strategic priorities of the fund scheme
- be accurate and comply with the word/page count
- include a good research question and explain why answering it will contribute to and advance the field of knowledge
- highlight outcomes of interest to the fund
- demonstrate that your research adopts innovative, cutting-edge approaches
- articulate a clear description of any problems/issues and their significance in the field, then outline clear methods for dealing with these
- provide a specific timetable and milestones
- provide an appropriate and justified budget
- indicate availability of appropriate research infrastructure (equipment and facilities)

- showcase strong track records of your research team and demonstrate the team's ability to deliver project outcomes.

Writing tips

The tone of your grant application should be positive, conveying excitement and enthusiasm for the research project. Ask at least one expert and one non-expert to review your application and expect to re-write it before final submission.

Language

Write clearly and carefully to help the reader keep track of your ideas. Be concise, structure paragraphs and sections and use words such as *determine*, *develop*, *design*, *establish* rather than more passive words such as: *attain*, *evaluate*, *obtain*, or *assess*. Include an introduction, conclusion and linking phrases (Gallagher, 2005).

Content

Include strategic summaries of key aspects of your research pertinent to the funding body and the specific award. Additionally you should demonstrate wider interest in your work, e.g. "my work has been cited in several fields, not just biochemistry, such as...", and only include peer-reviewed, published material in your list of publications (e.g. do not list non-peer reviewed book chapters or book reviews). List submitted (but not yet accepted) papers in your project's progress reports as "manuscript submitted" or "manuscript in preparation" (Gallagher, 2005).

Style

Incorporate elements from both formal academic writing and persuasive journalism. Be objective and realistic about the possible impact of your research and include non-technical analogies to clarify difficult concepts to non-expert readers (see this example of [explaining neuroscientific concepts to a wider audience](#)). Use techniques from narrative writing to convey tension, drama and excitement about your project (Gallagher, 2005). Read the work of successful science journalists such as [Carl Zimmer](#) to adapt formal academic writing to a wider audience.

Summary

Your writing should be clear, objective and persuasive. Summarise key aspects of your research and demonstrate wider interest in your work and your contribution to your field of research. Before submitting your application, seek input from colleagues and experienced researchers on whether your grant proposal is convincing and achievable.

12.3 Seeking funds from philanthropic trusts and foundations

Introduction

In this section you will learn about applying for philanthropic grants and the opportunities that these can bring new researchers.

What is philanthropic funding?

Philanthropic sponsors include:

- corporate and family foundations
- philanthropic intermediaries – organisations that re-grant money from foundations and apply investment cultures to philanthropy
- private ancillary funds
- collaborations with other not-for-profit organisations
- other corporate and community support.

While it can be difficult for individuals to source funding from philanthropic foundations in Australia (as most of them are limited by law to funding organisations and cannot legally make grants to individuals), most of the philanthropic funding available for individuals from foundations is in the form of scholarships, fellowships, research grants or travel grants (Philanthropy Australia, 2012).

Philanthropic grants are a useful way to start building your research track record. As amounts involved can be small and success rates can be high, your chances of securing a philanthropic fund are increased.

Examples of philanthropic grant schemes

Some of the philanthropic grant schemes currently available include:



[Telstra Foundation](#) (Australia) focuses on children and young people in remote and regional Australia, and supports projects in technology, education, sports and recreation, arts and culture, environment, social issues, disability.



[Myer Foundation](#) (Australia) aims to enrich individual and civic life; to improve the lives of people impoverished from personal, environmental, social or cultural disadvantage; to protect and strengthen democratic values and participation.



[Ian Potter Foundation](#) (Australia) supports research into arts, community wellbeing, education, environment and conservation, health, medical research and science.



[James N. Kirby Foundation](#) (Australia) supports research into health, education, technology and science, art, and literature,



[Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation](#) (international) supports research into global health, poverty and development, education and information.



[The Christensen Fund](#) (international) supports research into bicultural diversity working in partnerships with Indigenous peoples and others.



[The Michael J Fox Foundation for Parkinson's Research](#) (international) supports research into Parkinson's disease.



[auDA Foundation](#) (Australia) encourages education and research initiatives that will enhance the utility of the Internet for the benefit of the Australian community.

Preparing philanthropic grants

Here are some extra considerations when preparing philanthropic grant applications:

- Use very clear language and avoid confusing technical terms because philanthropic applications may be decided by a board that may not be able to provide expert advice or feedback.
- There will likely be different selection criteria (particularly with regards to track record) and the emphasis will be on community benefit and partnerships.
- Personal contacts and negotiation can be important in gaining philanthropic grants so foster these relationships when possible.

For assistance with developing projects, editing applications, supporting documents, application submission and review of grant contracts, contact the [Alumni and Development Office](#).

QUT Community Collection for Grantseekers, Fundraisers and Philanthropists

QUT is home to the [Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies](#) and the [QUT Community Collection for Grantseekers, Fundraisers and Philanthropists](#). This collection is

available at Gardens Point Library (on Level 7 near the Researchers Centre) and provides public access to grant maker directories and literature on fundraising and nonprofit management. Public access is also available to the electronic databases of the [U.S. Foundation Center](#), of which QUT Library is a member. These databases include:



[Foundation Directory Online](#) includes details on more than 98,000 funders and over 1.7 million recent grants.



[Foundation Grants to Individuals Online](#) contains detailed descriptions of more than 8,300 foundation programs that fund students, artists, researchers, and other individual grant seekers.



[Australian Directory of Philanthropy Online](#) contains over 300 entries from grant making organisations and corporate funders, as well as instructions on applying for grants and grant seeking tips and tricks

These fully searchable databases can be accessed within Gardens Point Library. An online subject guide in [Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies](#) has also been created to assist those seeking resources on philanthropy, non-profit studies, philanthropic organisations and research bodies.

Activity – visit the QUT Community Collection for Grantseekers, Fundraisers and Philanthropists

Visit the QUT Community Collection for Grantseekers, Fundraisers and Philanthropists on Level 7 of Gardens Point Library and search some of the available databases (listed above) for philanthropic grant opportunities in your research area.

Summary

Philanthropic and community grants are a useful way to start building your research track record. Use directories and professional networks to identify community and philanthropic funding opportunities. As these grants focus on partnerships and outcomes for communities, demonstrate that your research will have a positive, sustainable impact on the welfare of the wider public.

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