

UQ Cyber Transdisciplinary Research Seed Funding Scheme (2022)

Program Objectives

Under the UQ Cyber Security Strategic Funding Initiative, a pool of research seed funding was established, with the purpose of building UQ's trans- and inter-disciplinary cyber security research capability and capacity. The long-term objective of this scheme is to steer UQ towards leadership of a successful ARC Centre of Excellence bid, and other opportunities such as CRCs, to ultimately establish UQ as a global leader in trans-disciplinary cyber security research.

In pursuit of that goal, this scheme has been established as an internal grant process to support the development of transdisciplinary cyber security research for competitive Tier 1 funding and industry engagements.

Approximately \$4M has been allocated across the five years of the initiative, with the majority of funding to flow in 2021-2023. The objectives and guidelines of the seed funding program are expected to develop and be refined over the duration.

The general objectives of the grant program are:

- To provide early-stage seed funding as a means of generating pilot data and research outcomes for ARC, CRC/CRC-P, or other large-scale research grant applications;
- To encourage collaborative research between and across the disciplines engaged in the initiative;
- To establish new or enhance existing relationships with Partners or Organisation/s, with a view to future grant and commercial funding opportunities
- To support, on a competitive basis, the early phases of high quality trans-disciplinary research projects.

Research Priority Areas:

The proposed research should address a cyber security challenge which is:

- Not confined to a single FOR code or one UQ School/Discipline/Centre
- An emerging cyber security research problem, expected to be relevant in the 2025-2030 timeframe.
- Addressing a government, society or industry cyber security need, as evidenced by a sector or market report

Research with application in emerging critical infrastructure and national security theme areas such as digital agriculture, energy security and cyber crime are strongly encouraged.

Staff Eligibility

- At the time of application and for the grant period, applicants must hold a University of Queensland (salaried) Teaching & Research or Research Focussed appointment;

- The appointment must be of at least 0.5 full-time equivalent (FTE);
- The appointment must be for a term that will feasibly allow completion of the seed project and any subsequent competitive grant opportunity targeted in the project proposal;
- Please ensure at least one substantial contributor has ongoing/continuous employment to cover the whole duration of the project (this does not have to apply to lead CI);
- Research Fellows must show that the proposal is separate from, or an extension to, the research for which they are being funded;
- An applicant's Head/Director of School/Centre/Institute, or the Chief Investigator of the grant on which they are employed, must demonstrate that the applicant has the time and capacity to undertake the research. Where an applicant is employed on a research grant, the agreement of the Head/Director and Chief Investigator is scrutinised closely. The Chief Investigator must evaluate the applicant's time commitment to the project on which they are employed and decide whether the applicant has the capacity to undertake additional research activities. In some instances, it may be more beneficial to the applicant's career development to concentrate on the project on which they are employed and to build up track record through publication.
- Staff from a Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) who are (a) full time UQ employees, but whose funding derives from a CRC and (b) staff who are on joint appointments funded at least 50% by the University with the balance coming from a CRC must be able to demonstrate that (a) the work to be performed is distinct from the work funded by the CRC, (b) there is adequate time and capacity to perform the research and (c) appropriate intellectual property arrangements are in place. Staff in this category should consult with the Faculty/Institute Research Director before lodging an application.
- There is no restriction on applicants submitting multiple applications in a single round, nor is there any prohibition on previously funded applicants applying again, though the Committee reserves the right to prioritise applications who have not previously received funding.

Early- and mid-career researchers are encouraged to apply.

Applications will not be accepted from:

- Research support staff employed on HEW Levels 1 – 9;
- Lead CIs who are holders of adjunct, affiliated or clinical academic titles;
- Staff who will be on Long Service Leave during the grant period;
- Staff who will be on Special Studies Program during the grant period.

Partner Organisations

Projects with external partner support are preferred. This support may be cash or in-kind, however it must demonstrate meaningful commitment from the partner to the project outcomes, and an intent to jointly pursue future external funding opportunities. Partner organisations must be eligible for whichever future competitive funding path is identified in your proposal.

Funding Requirements and Restrictions

Projects supported under this scheme must

- demonstrate a clear path to future external funding within a two-year horizon, and
- lead to conceptual advances or discoveries, or to novel practical outcomes or applications.

Development of research aids and tools (including computer programs) will not be supported unless they form an integral part of a project, in which case applicants must provide a statement indicating the research objectives to which these activities would contribute.

Budget Items not supported

- major pieces of equipment – equipment budgets exceeding \$10,000 including GST must contain a compelling justification for why existing UQ resources are not suitable
- teaching relief (buyout)
- the supplementation of projects being funded by other agencies
- entertainment expenses
- hosting of seminars or workshops
- abstracting services
- production costs of teaching materials, even though some research may be involved
- projects which consist primarily or substantially of conference travel or other expenses while the researcher is on a Special Studies Program
- employer contributions to elective superannuation
- student support (including fee support and stipends)
- project costs for Partner Organisations

Your total budget request may not exceed \$75,000. Participating organizational units may contribute additional cash to meet overall project expenditure exceeding this amount.

Selection criteria

Applications will be judged by the advisory panel on the following criteria:

- a) The extent to which the proposed research is innovative and strategically aligned with the Research Priority Areas identified in this document (25%)
- b) The extent to which the project will facilitate new (or emerging) linkages with Partners or Organisations. Proposals with established partners must clearly identify how the project is distinct from existing collaborations (25%)
- c) The extent to which the application develops cross-disciplinary collaborative alliances (25%)
- d) The relevance to the project and the quality of the track records of the Chief Investigators, relative to opportunity (25%)

Deliverables and outcomes

- Within three months of the end date of the grant, successful applicants shall provide a brief acquittal on expenditure of funds, key outcomes, and intended future pathway for the project/research
- Within one year of seed funding award, applications shall provide evidence of applications for at least 1 external funding scheme, either submitted or in an advanced state of development
- Other evidence of project outcomes including publication manuscripts or research reports
- Successful applicants will be expected to participate in UQ Cyber research showcase events as appropriate

Failure to adequately acquit or account for seed project funding outcomes may impact eligibility in future rounds.

Timeframes

Funding rounds for 2022:

Applications Due	Results announced
1 st April 2022	29 TH April 2022
1 ST July 2022	29 TH July 2022
30 th Sept 2022	28 th Oct 2022

Governance

The scheme is overseen and assessed by an advisory panel formed by members of participating schools and centres. Conflicts of interest such as funding applications by panel members must be declared and will be managed appropriately.

Application Process

Please submit a completed application form (PDF format), [Costing & Pricing tool](#) and partner support letter (if relevant) in PDF format to cyberseedfunding@uq.edu.au

Further information

Please contact cyberseedfunding@uq.edu.au for further information.

Winners 2021

13 collaborative projects have been approved for funding in the 2021 UQ Cyber Seed Funding Scheme. A total sum of \$AUD 893,716 will be allocated across these projects. This scheme will be instrumental in supporting the efforts of UQ's researchers and academics to establish new and expanded linkages with strategic partners. Congratulations to the following successful applicants:

<https://itee.uq.edu.au/article/2022/01/uq-cyber-seed-funding-winners-2021>