

MGSE-09 MGSE Funding for Academic and Professional Conference Travel Policy 2019

1. Overview and Purpose

The opportunity to present research findings at conferences is an essential part of the research mission of the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE). As a leader in our sector, MGSE continues to focus on developing a research culture focused on quality, impact and achievement which aligns with University initiatives to focus on assessing research excellence and impact.

The Graduate School endeavours to support the maximum number of MGSE staff in communicating the breadth of our research to the widest possible audience, by making available conference funding support. The MGSE Strategic Plan 2016-2020 highlights MGSE's focus on developing the caliber of our academic staff and ensuring that they are supported in their capacity to produce world-leading research. Accordingly, there will be a focus on providing enhanced opportunities to our talented cohorts of early and mid-career academics to showcase their research. This opportunity will also be available to professional staff (UOM7 and above) who are involved in research projects or specialist administrative support roles.

The process for allocating funding for conference travel will also be driven by academic supervisors and their discussions with academic staff focusing on quality and productivity, capacity building, and recognition in relation to research outputs and research excellence. It is expected that any conference travel and associated publications will form part of a documented publication plan for each individual academic.

This policy outlines the management of conference funding support available from the Graduate School, via the Melbourne Education Research Institute (MERI), acknowledging the need to work within current budget parameters, with a maximum allocation of \$200,000 available for 2019. The Melbourne Graduate School of Education's Strategic Plan 2016-2020 articulates a threefold research challenge – scale, focus and connectedness. The area of focus is critical as MGSE has many areas of expertise and needs to solidify these into a broader articulation enabling the communication of research priorities which distinguish MGSE as a national and international leader in the field of education.

2. Scope

All continuing and fixed term contract academic staff, 0.5FTE and above, and 0.8FTE for professional staff currently employed by MGSE. See Section 3.3 for eligibility.

3. Policy

3.1 Funding Coverage

3.1(a) Research conference paper or keynote

- i) Funding will be made available only to staff presenting their research at a conference. This must take the form of a paper or keynote address (not a poster) or of agreed other significant activity such as running a workshop/forum, provided it is directly related to their program of research. Supporting documentation is required, and any workshop would need to be part of the conference program.
- ii) It is noted that for those invited to deliver a keynote presentation, in most circumstances, these presenters will have airfare and accommodation paid for by the conference organisers. If this is not the case, documentation will need to be provided showing the nature of the costs to be paid by conference organisers.

3.1(b) Authorship

- i) Academic staff attending a conference must have made a major contribution to the paper being presented, for example satisfying NH&MRC guidelines for authorship. Professional staff attending a conference must be giving an oral presentation at a session.
- ii) Where two or more staff from MGSE are co-authors on a paper, only one author may receive MGSE Conference funding to present that particular paper.

3.2 Funding Notification of Interest

- i) All eligible staff who wish to be considered for MGSE conference funding must have a discussion with their supervisor regarding conferences planned for the calendar year prior to submitting an application for MGSE conference funding, with the expectation that this discussion will form part of the annual PDF discussion.
- ii) All eligible staff who wish to be considered for MGSE conference funding will be required to submit to MERI an application via Smartygrants for funding. This will assist MERI in determining the level of conference funding requests. This application must specify one conference only for which MGSE Conference funding is being sought for the calendar year (and estimated costs). All applicants must include a statement of support from their supervisor. Maximum conference reimbursement is \$3,000 for international conferences and \$2,000 for domestic conferences. **MGSE Conference funding for the calendar year will not exceed \$3,000.**
- iii) Submission of an application does not guarantee approval. This will only be determined once all the documentation for the conference and the associated request is submitted to MERI.
- iv) Any requests for MGSE conference funding that do not have an associated application will not normally be approved. However, consideration for approval of funds will be given in some circumstances (specialised conferences that are not predictable on an annual basis)

3.3 Eligibility

3.3(a) Eligible Categories of Employment

- i) This funding is available to **academic staff** in MGSE who are 'teaching and research', 'research focused' and 'teaching specialist, have appointment fractions of at least 0.5 FTE, and who hold a minimum one-year fixed-term appointment. While not excluded from MGSE Conference Funding, Levels D and E academic staff are expected to first seek grants, or to utilise consultancy funds, to assist in conference travel.
- ii) This funding is available to **professional staff** UOM7 and above who are involved in research projects or specialist administrative support roles, have appointment fractions of at least 0.8 FTE and who hold a minimum one-year fixed-term appointment.
- iii) Casual and Honorary academic staff are **not** eligible for this funding.

3.3(b) Establishment Grants

- i) Going forward, staff who apply for establishment and/or other grants that include an allocation for conference attendance for the research, and who are successful in being awarded this funding are not eligible to apply for MGSE conference funding for this piece of research. This condition does not apply retrospectively.

3.3(c) Arrangements for teaching or supervisory responsibilities

- i) Academics must provide assurance that arrangements have been made to ensure that teaching and/or supervisory responsibilities will be met during time away on conference leave. Requests for conferences that fall directly on dates where there are known teaching commitments will require additional approvals, including evidence of subject coordinator endorsement.

Any approval for annual leave surrounding conference leave will be reviewed in terms of known teaching commitments

3.3(d) Contract Staff and Staff who are graduate research students

- i) For 2019, contract staff may only be eligible for funding if the conference is no later than 3 months prior to expiration of contract, unless the academic supervisor and Associate Dean, Staffing confirm contract renewal.
- ii) Staff who are also graduate research students at MGSE cannot apply for both MGSE staff conference funding and MERI Graduate Research reimbursement for the same conference.
- iii) Staff who are also graduate research students will not be considered for MGSE Conference Funding unless they provide evidence that they have satisfactory progress in their graduate research degree, by producing their most recent progress review and a statement of support from their thesis supervisor.

3.4 Criteria for Allocation of MGSE Conference Funding

The following categories of applicants submitting eligible requests will receive priority for MGSE Conference funding:

- i) Early Career Academics (five years out from PhD award).

Other eligible requests for MGSE conference funding will be considered against the following criteria, noting that these are not in priority order:

- ii) Academic staff who are presenting research that is unfunded, or where no alternative funding source is available (**NOTE: Staff who have access to consultancy funds and/or funding from internal UoM or external grants/contracts for conference funding should call upon these funds in the first instance, before applying for any MGSE conference funding**).
- iii) Academic staff who are presenting research that has been awarded funding that specifically excludes the use of funds for conference travel, or where no alternative funding source is available. (Evidence that the use of funds awarded specifically excludes conference travel must be provided).
- iv) Staff who have been unsuccessful in a competitive bid for travel funding from an alternative source
- v) Staff who were have previously been awarded MGSE conference funding with evidence that that they have published from the conference paper for which they were funded
- vi) Staff who have a publication plan, endorsed by their academic supervisor that references conference presentations for which MGSE Conference funding is requested.
- vii) While not excluded from MGSE Conference Funding, Levels D and E academic staff are expected to first seek grants, or to utilise consultancy funds, to assist in conference travel.

3.5 MGSE Conference Funding – Eligible Expenses

The Graduate School provides conference travel funding through MERI for academic and professional staff who do not have access to other sources of funds.

3.5(a) MGSE conference funding overview

- i) As a matter of principle, support will be provided only for travel, accommodation, and conference registration. Minor variable and discretionary expenditure will not be supported, nor will per diems be paid. Specific exclusions include: “local” travel expenses (e.g. buses, trains and taxis) within the city in which the conference or approved event occurs. Meal expenses are not admissible for reimbursement from the MGSE allocation with the exception of the cost of attendance at a designated conference dinner, which is considered to be a part of the staff member’s formal attendance at the conference
- ii) The total amount of funds available via the MGSE Conference Funding scheme to a staff member for the purpose of travel related to a conference presentation will not exceed **A\$3,000** in any one calendar year for international travel and **A\$2,000** in any one calendar year for domestic travel. If there is a combination of both domestic and international travel, total **MGSE Conference funding for the calendar year will not exceed A\$3,000.**
- iii) **Only one request for funding can be submitted in a calendar year, with the condition that the total funding per staff member does not exceed A\$3,000.** Multiple or cumulative requests for funding will not be approved.
- iv) Money allocated for conference funding must be spent in the year in which it was awarded. Funds cannot therefore be accumulated across years i.e. 2019 funds can only be requested for research activity undertaken during 2019. Funding for conferences in the following year may be applied for in the preceding year but will count towards the allowance in the year in which the conference takes place.
- v) Money allocated must be spent only on the travel approved.
- vi) The Associate Dean, Research, will make the final decision to approve or not approve requests for MGSE Conference Funding on a case-by-case basis.

3.6 Conditions of Funding

- i) In order to be eligible to request MGSE conference funding:
 - Evidence that the conference is in alignment with their research strategy,
 - academic staff must publish from the paper presented. Evidence will need to be provided showing submission of a manuscript to an appropriate journal or a statement from their academic supervisor indicating the academic staff member’s agreed publication agenda nationally and internationally. Failure to publish will negatively affect future applications for MGSE Conference funding support.Professional staff must present their presentation to their Centre or Research Hub.
MERI will be requesting this evidence prior to future applications from the same applicant.
- ii) MGSE may request the return of MGSE Conference funding paid if any false statements are found to have been made in relation to the MGSE Conference funding request.

3.7 Compliance with University Policies

- i) Travelers must ensure that they comply with the University's policies and procedures and ensure that any expenditure they incur while travelling is for legitimate University business and that any other requirements contained in the University's Employee Travel Policy (MPF1300) are complied with.
- ii) From the Employee Travel policy (MPF1300):
 - **To assist the University in maintaining its employer duty of care, travellers must ensure that business-related flights and accommodation are booked and managed through the University's endorsed booking system, that is UniTravel.**
 - Private travel is permitted to be undertaken incidental to business-related travel, provided that the **University business component is the *dominant purpose* of the travel**. The intention to incorporate private travel with business related travel must be **indicated in the application form**.

See Appendix One for details on the procedures for MGSE Conference Funding Requests

4. Tools and Reference Information

[Employee Travel Policy](#)

[UniTravel](#)

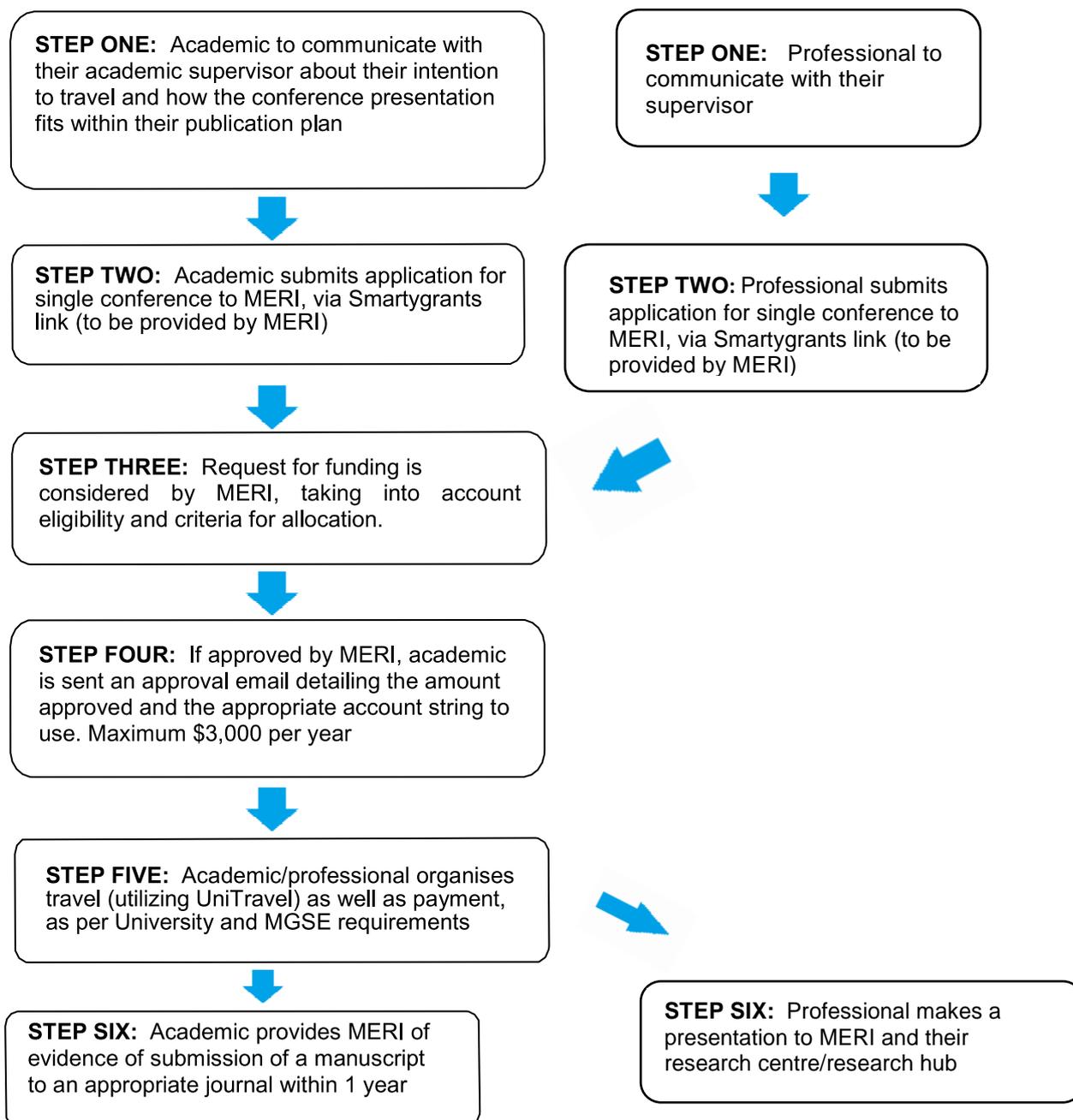
5. Responsibilities

- **Associate Dean (Research)** – will make the final decision to approve or not approve requests for MGSE Conference Funding on a case-by-case basis
- **MERI Manager, Research and Industry** – will oversee coordination of the application and MGSE Conference Funding Request process; policy owner
- **Finance Manager** – will monitor spending from the MGSE Funding Conference allocation on a monthly basis

6. Definitions

Key Term / Acronym	Definition
MERI	Melbourne Education Research Institute
MGSE	Melbourne Graduate School of Education

APPENDIX ONE – PROCEDURE FOR MGSE CONFERENCE FUNDING REQUEST



* Documentation is **additional** to the application details provided and includes:

- Email / Statement of support from supervisor or manager. For academics, a statement to include information regarding how this conference presentation fits within your publication plan and confirmation that any teaching or supervisory duties will be met. For professionals, how this conference will benefit MGSE/research centre or research hub.
- Email / Letter of acceptance from conference convening body
- Details of the availability of any consultancy funds (and/or other research income that is able to provide support for conference travel) or evidence that the research being presented has been awarded funding that specifically excludes the use of funds for conference travel and/or that you have been unsuccessful in a competitive bid for travel funding from an alternative source
- For academic staff who were have previously been awarded MGSE conference funding evidence of submission/published paper related to the conference paper
- For fixed term academic or professional staff applying for a conference that takes place later than 3 months prior to expiration of contract, please provide a statement from the academic supervisor and the Associate Dean, Staffing or your manager that the contract will be extended for at least six months