



Melbourne Disability Institute

SEED FUNDING

Information Pack
2023



www.disability.unimelb.edu.au



Melbourne Disability Institute Seed Funding

Established in 2018, the Melbourne Disability Institute is focused on building the evidence base to address the complex problems and systemic barriers facing people with disability in this country. MDI works to bring together people with disability, families, and representative organisations with researchers to co-produce research to improve social and economic outcomes, inclusion and well-being of people with disability. Our focus is on research that has real world impact, transforming disability policy, programs and practice.

Each year we run a seed funding round open to researchers from across the University of Melbourne. The funding is aimed at small to medium sized projects at the discovery or pilot end of research. We are looking for interdisciplinary projects that are:

- driven by the priorities of people with disability,
- have practical outcomes,
- involve strong partnerships,
- have a pathway to further research and funding.

Up to \$30,000 is available to projects that meet these criteria. Funding above this amount will be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Our priority is to fund and facilitate projects that are driven by and with people with disability and their families. Projects must address a topic of importance to people with disability and/or their families and applications must demonstrate how people with disability and/or their families will be involved in the research.

In 2023, additional priority will be given to projects with a focus on working with Indigenous or culturally and linguistically diverse people with disability, or people with an intellectual disability.

Projects must commence before the end of the 2023 calendar year and be complete by December 2024.

We are looking for projects that:

- Are driven by the priorities of people with disability and/or their families
- Have impact on the lives people with disability and/or their families
- Include people with disability throughout the research process, including identifying questions and conducting the research
- Address a clear gap in policy or practice
- Are collaborative and build interdisciplinary research capacity
- Have a clear and effective knowledge translation strategy
- Have a rigorous method
- Have a feasible scope and budget

- Are able to scale and likely to obtain future funding
- Align with the priorities outlined in the [National Disability Research Partnership or Australia's Disability Strategy](#). This includes work which examines the impact or operation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme or the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Framework.

We understand that building genuine collaborations and partnerships takes time and resources. That is why we will fund the very early stages of project design and implementation – including genuine co-design of research questions and the building of partnerships and research teams that include people with disability, their families and representative organisations.

The outcome of a seed funding project does not have to be a finished piece of research – it can be the creation of a collaboration or partnership which will carry out a research project in the future. However, applications should clearly outline the future pathway for the collaborative research team, including feasible funding opportunities.

For example: in a previous seed funding round, MDI funded a project which consisted of a series of roundtables where researchers worked with people with disability, their families and representative organisations to identify what research was needed, how it could be best conducted and to build the partnerships necessary to carry it out successfully. This project has led to an ARC Linkage grant application that was strengthened through the relationships and insights gained during the seed funding project.

Selection criteria

- 1. Clear evidence that the project is driven by the priorities of people with disability and/or families and addresses an evidence, policy or practice gap**
- 2. Genuine involvement of people with disability and/or families in all aspects of the project**
We are looking for projects that are led by people with disability and/or conducted by and with people with disability. This will include shared decision-making power, appropriate support to facilitate full participation, and appropriate payment.
- 3. Policy or practice outcomes**
We want to know how the knowledge generated by the project will have a positive impact on policy in practice. We want to know how the findings of the project will be used and how they will be made available and accessible.
- 4. Robust methods**
We are looking for projects that use methods appropriate to the question, are feasible with the resources available, and can be completed within a reasonable timeframe. We are also looking for evidence of a plan for how the next stage of the work will be funded.
- 5. Collaborative and interdisciplinary**
We are looking for projects that involve genuine partnerships and reach across traditional disciplines.

Application Process

You can apply for seed funding using the application form. The form can be [accessed via our website](#).

We have tried to make the application process as simple and accessible as possible. If you find any part of the process difficult, please contact MDI's Program and Projects Manager Courtney Yam at yam.c@unimelb.edu.au. We appreciate any and all feedback.

Key Dates

This year's round will be open for six weeks. We will hold a small number of drop-in sessions on Zoom to answer questions or discuss research proposals. The MDI team can help facilitate relevant introductions, make suggestions or help with brainstorming.

Important dates:

- Applications open **Monday 12 June 2023**
- Drop-in sessions **3-6 July 2023** Book here: <https://go.unimelb.edu.au/7m8s>
- Applications close **Friday 21 July 2023**
- **Applicants will be informed of outcome in early August**

Application summary

Below is a summary of the questions you will find on our application form. Please note there is a limit of 4,000 characters (approximately 500 – 600 words) for each question. The application form can be found at the following link <https://go.unimelb.edu.au/3r8s>

1. Project title
2. Lead researcher – title, qualifications and expertise relevant to this project
3. Other team members – titles, qualifications and expertise relevant to this project
4. Brief description of the project
5. How does this project address the priorities of people with disability and their families?
6. What is the policy, research or practice gap being addressed by this project?
7. How will people with disability and their families be involved in this project?
8. How will the knowledge gained from this project be used?
9. What is the methodology for this project?
10. How will this project bring together researchers from different disciplines and/or external partners?
11. Please provide an outline your project budget.
12. When this project is finished, what is the next step? For example, leading into future research etc.
13. Is there anything else you would like MDI to know about this project?

Seed Funding Terms and Conditions

1. Melbourne Disability Institute

- 1.1. The Melbourne Disability Institute (MDI) is an interdisciplinary research institute at the University of Melbourne.
- 1.2. MDI facilitates and funds innovative interdisciplinary research designed to address the complex problems facing people with disability in Australia. It aims to ensure the University of Melbourne is a national and international leader in disability-focused research.
- 1.3. MDI receives funding through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).
- 1.4. To further research and support interdisciplinary collaborations across the University, MDI provides seed funding for projects at the discovery or pilot phase of research.
- 1.5. The seed funding is administered by MDI in accordance with these terms and conditions.
- 1.6. MDI staff will provide appropriate guidance, support and assistance to researchers to facilitate the successful completion of projects.

2. Project Selection

- 2.1. To be eligible for consideration, researchers must submit an application form.
- 2.2. The application forms will be evaluated by MDI's review panel. The review panel will consist of MDI staff, researchers from across the University of Melbourne as well as at least one external party.
- 2.3. There will be five equally weighted selection criteria. We are looking for projects that:
 - 2.3.1. Provide clear evidence that the project is driven by the priorities of people with disability and/or families and addresses an evidence, policy or practice gap
 - 2.3.2. Involve people with disability and/or families in all aspects of the project
 - 2.3.3. Have clear outcomes and an impact on policy or practice
 - 2.3.4. Have robust and appropriate research design and methods, are feasible with the available resources and have a plan for future sustainability
 - 2.3.5. Are collaborative and build interdisciplinary research capacity
- 2.4. Following the evaluation, the MDI selection committee will:
 1. Approve the proposal;
 2. Reject the proposal;
 3. Seek additional information; or
 4. Request resubmission of an application.
- 2.5 The decisions of the selection committee are final.
- 2.6 MDI may consider an out of round application in exceptional circumstances.

3. Funding

- 3.1. Funding amounts are at the discretion of MDI.
- 3.2. Funding can be used for:
 - 3.2.1. researchers
 - 3.2.2. accessibility and inclusion costs - such as Auslan interpreters or captioning
 - 3.2.3. costs associated with external collaborators – particularly community-based partners or payments to people with disability participating in research
 - 3.2.4. equipment or consumables
 - 3.2.5. Access to data
 - 3.2.6. Data

3.2.7. Research translation costs – such as the production of Auslan videos or Easy English materials

3.3. Any questions regarding use of the funding, including what can be purchased, should be directed to MDI.

3.4. Any assets purchased and unused funds remaining at project completion will be returned to MDI.

4. Researchers

4.1. Researchers are University of Melbourne staff working on the project.

4.2. All projects must nominate a Coordinating Investigator who has a salaried academic position of at least 0.4FTE at the University of Melbourne.

4.3. Researchers associated with funded seed projects are regarded as an important part of MDI's research community. They are:

(a) Invited to participate in research activities associated with MDI

(b) Encouraged to join the MDI Community of Practice to link with other researchers across the University of Melbourne

(b) Entitled to refer to themselves as an MDI researcher while they are active on their funded project.

4.4. All researchers must disclose any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.

4.5. All researchers must provide timely responses to requests from MDI staff.

4.6. Researchers are encouraged to actively participate in the MDI's activities, such as events, lectures, seminars and workshops.

4.7. In submitting an application, it is assumed that all researchers have consulted with their Head of Department and have the capacity to undertake the project.

4.8. Intellectual property is governed in accordance with University of Melbourne's policies and procedures.

5. External Collaborators

5.1. Staff working on the project who are not affiliated with the University of Melbourne are regarded as external collaborators.

5.2. All external collaborators must disclose any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in relation to the project.

5.3. Governance of external relationships and intellectual property is in accordance with University of Melbourne's policies and procedures.

6. Reporting

6.1. Researchers must provide two reports to MDI – one at the completion of the project and one a year after the project is complete. The reports must be completed on the MDI template.

6.2. Any delays to the project completion must be reported to MDI.

6.3. Researchers will also be asked to provide a plain language summary of their project and its outcomes. This summary will be:

6.3.1. Made available to members of the disability community on request

6.3.2. Published on the MDI website

6.3.3. Published in university publications such as newsletters

6.3.4. Published in the MDI Annual Report

6.4. Researchers may also be asked to provide an update on project progress on request.

6.5. Researchers must also agree to publish findings in an open and accessible manner in a format agreed to by MDI. Contributions to The Conversation and opinion pieces are encouraged to disseminate the findings widely.

6.6. Researchers must also provide MDI with details of any publications, conference papers and seminars, media coverage or additional grants arising from the project and for three years following the completion of the project.

7. Communication

7.1. Researchers may be asked to present their work at MDI events and forums.

7.2. Researchers may be asked to provide project updates and outcomes as part of MDI's communication and engagement activities.

7.3. Researchers are asked to reference MDI funding on all academic, general and media publications and work relating to or arising from the project.

8. Revocation

8.1. Seed funding can be revoked for:

(a) Failure to adhere to any of these terms and conditions.

(b) Failure to commence within 6-months of receipt of funding.

(c) Provision of false or misleading information in the Seed Funding Application.