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| **Melbourne Disability Institute  disability.unimelb.edu.au** | **T. +61 3 8344 2813**  **E. md-i@unimelb.edu.au** |

## **Seed Funding**

The Melbourne Disability Institute (MDI) is focused on developing much needed evidence, data and research to address the complex problems facing people with disability in this country. To do that, we want to facilitate research that is driven by people with disability and their families and that will make a real difference in their lives.

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

We provide up to $30,000 to projects that meet these criteria. In exceptional cases, we will consider requests for more than $30,000.

Our focus this year is on funding and facilitating projects that are driven by and with people with disability and their families. This means that projects must address a topic of importance to people with disability and their families, and demonstrate how people with disability and/or their families are involved in every aspect of the research.

### What we are looking for

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
* Include people with disability throughout the research process, including identifying questions and conducting research
* Address a clear gap in policy or practice
* Have a clear and effective knowledge translation strategy
* Have a rigorous method
* Are collaborative and build interdisciplinary research capacity
* Have a feasible scope and budget
* Are able to scale and likely to obtain future funding

In particular are looking for projects that align with the [National Disability Strategy](https://www.dss.gov.au/disability-and-carers-a-new-national-disability-strategy/developing-the-new-national-disability-strategy) (including the NDIS) and reflect the Vision and Principles of the [National Disability Research Partnership](https://www.ndrp.org.au/).

Last year our seed funding round focused exclusively on the impact of COVID-19 on people with disability and their families. Given the pandemic continues to have a disproportionate impact on many people with disability, we are also looking to support projects that address this ongoing need.

### Selection criteria

1. **Clear evidence that the project is driven by people with disability and/or families and addresses an evidence, policy or practice gap.**
2. **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. We are looking for genuine partnerships with people with disability. This will include shared decision-making power, appropriate support to facilitate full participation as well as appropriate payment.
3. **Policy or practice outcomes**   
   We want to know how the findings of the project will be used, how they will be made available and accessible and what impact they will have on policy or practice.
4. **Robust methods**  
   We are looking for projects that use methods appropriate to the question, and are feasible in the timeframe and with the resources available. We are also looking for evidence of a plan for future sustainability.
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 [downloaded from our website](https://disability.unimelb.edu.au/research/seed-funding). Applications should be no longer more than 2000 words. Please send your completed application to our General Manager Kirsten Deane - [kirsten.deane@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:md-i@unimelb.edu.au).

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 us. We appreciate any and all feedback.

### Key Dates

Each round will be open for four to 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:

* Round opens 16 September 2021
* Drop-in sessions 7 -11 October 2021
* Applications due 25 October 2021
* Applicants informed of outcome late November with funds received before the end of the calendar year

### Application summary

This is a summary of the questions you will find on our application form. Applications should not be any longer that 2000 words in total (please note that questions 1-3 and 12 are not included in the word count). A copy of the application form can be [downloaded from the MDI website](https://disability.unimelb.edu.au/research/seed-funding).

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. What is the budget for this project? What is the sustainability plan for this project, e.g., future funding and sustainability of research?
12. Is there any other information about this project we should know?

### Seed Funding Terms and Conditions

1. **Melbourne Disability Institute**
   1. The Melbourne Disability Institute (MDI) is an interdisciplinary research institute at the University of Melbourne.
   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.
   3. MDI receives funding through the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).
   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.
   5. The seed funding is administered by MDI in accordance with these terms and conditions.
   6. MDI staff will provide appropriate guidance, support and assistance to researchers to facilitate the successful completion of projects.
2. **Project Selection**
   1. To be eligible for consideration, researchers must submit an application form.
   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.
   3. There will be five equally weighted selection criteria. We are looking for projects that:
      1. Provide clear evidence that the project is driven by people with disability and/or families and addresses an evidence, policy or practice gap
      2. Involve people with disability and/or families in all aspects of the project
      3. Have clear outcomes and an impact on policy or practice
      4. Have robust and appropriate research design and methods, are feasible with the available resources and have a plan for future sustainability
      5. Are collaborative and build interdisciplinary research capacity
   4. Following the evaluation, the MDI selection committee will:
3. Approve the proposal;
4. Reject the proposal;
5. Seek additional information; or
6. Request resubmission of an application.

2.5 The decisions of the selection committee are final.

2.6 The selection committee may consider an out of round application but only in exceptional circumstances.

1. **Funding** 
   1. Funding amounts are at the discretion of MDI.
   2. Funding can be used for:
      1. researchers
      2. accessibility and inclusion costs - such as Auslan interpreters or captioning
      3. costs associated with external collaborators – particularly community based partners or payments to people with disability participating in research
      4. equipment or consumables
      5. Access to data
      6. Data
      7. Research translation costs – such as the production of Auslan videos or Easy English materials
   3. Any questions regarding use of the funding, including what can be purchased, should be directed to MDI.
   4. Any assets purchased and unused funds remaining at project completion will be returned to MDI.
2. **Researchers**
   1. Researchers are University of Melbourne staff working on the project.
   2. All projects must nominate a Coordinating Investigator who has a salaried academic position of at least 0.4FTE at the University of Melbourne.
   3. Researchers associated with funded seed projects are regarded as an important part of MDI’s research community. They are:
3. Invited to participate in research activities associated with MDI
4. 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.

* 1. All researchers must disclose any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest.
  2. All researchers must provide timely responses to requests from MDI staff.
  3. Researchers are encouraged to actively participate in the MDI’s engagement activities, such

as events, lectures, seminars and workshops.

* 1. 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.
  2. Intellectual property is governed in accordance with University of Melbourne’s policies and procedures.

1. **External Collaborators**
   1. Staff working on the project who are not affiliated with the University of Melbourne are regarded as external collaborators.
   2. All external collaborators must disclose any real, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in relation to the project.
   3. Governance of external relationships and intellectual property is in accordance with University of Melbourne’s policies and procedures.
2. **Reporting**
   1. Researchers must provide two reports to MDI – one mid-way through the project, and one at the completion of the project. The reports must be completed on the MDI template.
   2. Researchers will also be asked to provide a plain language summary of their project and its outcomes. This summary will be:
      1. Made available to members of the disability community on request
      2. Published on the MDI website
      3. Published in university publications such as newsletters
      4. Published in the MDI Annual Report
   3. Researchers may also be asked to provide an update on project progress on request.
   4. Researchers must also agree to publish findings in an open and accessible manner in a format agreed to by MDI.
   5. 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.
3. **Communication**
   1. Researchers may be asked to present their work at MDI events and forums.
   2. Researchers may be asked to provide project updates and outcomes as part of MDI’s communication and engagement activities.
   3. Researchers are asked to reference MDI funding on all academic, general and media publications and work relating to or arising from the project.
4. **Revocation**
   1. Seed funding can be revoked for:
5. Failure to adhere to any of these terms and conditions.
6. Failure to commence within 6-months of receipt of funding. Evidence required.
7. Provision of false or misleading information in the Seed Funding Application.