

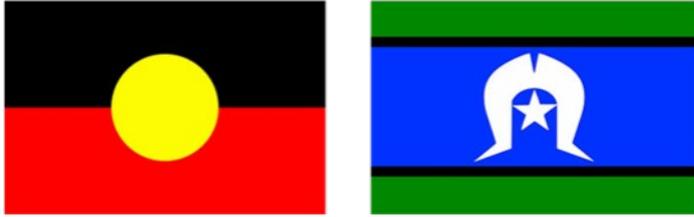
**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

Vice-Chancellor's Research and Impact Fellowship Scheme 2026

Applicant Guidelines

Updated March 2026

Acknowledgement of Country



Victoria University acknowledges, recognises and respects the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are the traditional owners of University land in Victoria, the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation who are the traditional owners of University land in Sydney, and the Yulara/Yugarapul people and Turrbal people living in Meanjin (Brisbane).

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Key dates

The **VCRIF Round 2 process** will take place between March and July 2026, with fellowships expected to commence in Quarter 1 2027.

Date	Step
Fri March 27 2026	Expression of Interest (EOI) open via SmartyGrants. Guidelines released
Wed April 29 2026	EOIs close. (3pm Melbourne time, AEST)
End of May 2026	Shortlisted applicants invited to submit a full application
Wed June 10 2026	Full applications due (3pm Melbourne time, AEST)
Mon July 13 – Fri July 24 2026	Interviews for shortlisted candidates (2 interviews)
End of July 2026	Notification of Outcomes
	Fellowships commence in Quarter 1 2027

Introduction

Established in 2025 by Vice-Chancellor Professor Adam Shoemaker, Victoria University's Vice-Chancellor's Research and Impact Fellowship (VCRIF) scheme advances our strategic goal to maximise research with impact by attracting and supporting high-performing research fellows through a competitive process.

Victoria University (VU) is a dual-sector institution with campuses in the heart of the city, and across Melbourne's western suburbs.

International students can also choose to study at VU Sydney, VU Brisbane or partner institutions overseas

For over a century, VU has championed inclusive education, offering pathways from vocational training to higher education and research. Today, we are proud to be a globally connected university committed to equity, excellence, and impact.

VU's vision, as outlined in our strategic plan **2022-2030 "Start Well Finish Brilliantly"**, is to be one of the leading impact-driven universities by 2030. Our strategic research purpose is to create life-changing and world-shaping knowledge that advances the wellbeing of our people, our place and our planet – grounded in Melbourne's west, connected to the world, and guided by a deep commitment to Protecting Country.

We are seeking high-performing researchers who will contribute to leading VU's strategic ambition to be a global leader in research and innovation, aligning their work with one or more of VU's research thematic areas.

Research Thematic Areas

Our bold research direction is outlined in the [VU Research and Impact Plan 2023-28](#). In 2024, the Plan was strengthened by an external Strategic Review of Research that identified six thematic research areas, and the horizon extended to 2030. These areas reflect VU's research strengths and offer significant opportunities for multidisciplinary engagement. VU's six research thematic areas are:

1. Innovating Education & Future-Proofing Australia's Workforce

Research that enhances education delivery, improves student outcomes, and aligns learning systems with future workforce needs. Indicative research topics include:

- Innovative pedagogies and Block Model® teaching and learning models, including approaches that improve access, participation and success for diverse learners
- Future skills, micro-credentials and lifelong learning systems that support evolving workforce needs
- Dual-sector (Higher Education–VET) education models and workforce pathways
- Artificial intelligence (AI), education technologies, learning analytics, including the international student experience and equity considerations.
- Labour market forecasting, skills policy and education-to-employment pathways

2. Sport that Inspires Elite Performance, Community Participation & Healthy Living

Research that advances elite sports performance, sports technology, and the role of sport in improving community health, participation, and wellbeing. Indicative research topics include:

- Athlete health, biomechanics and performance analytics, including injury prevention and human–surface interactions in sport
- Sports analytics, wearable technologies and AI-enabled performance modelling
- Sport participation, safety and inclusion, including accessible sport through urban design and community programs
- Sport, health and urban environments, examining the role of sport and physical activity in population health
- Sport as a driver of social, cultural and economic outcomes, including participation, policy and community engagement

3. Health & Wellbeing Solutions

Research that develops strategies to improve population health, enhance preventative health, and strengthen equitable and integrated health systems. Indicative research topics include:

- Preventative health and chronic disease management
- Allied health, nursing, exercise science and rehabilitation
- AI and data-enabled care, including clinical decision support and predictive health analytics

4. Transforming Communities through Policy, Practice & Governance

Research that informs public policy, governance systems, and community-led solutions to address complex social challenges. Indicative research topics include:

- AI, digital governance and data-driven public sector transformation
- Social policy reform and program evaluation
- Governance, regulation, justice and equity
- Community-led research and place-based interventions

5. Smart, Sustainable & Liveable Cities

Research that supports sustainable infrastructure, resilient built environments, and technology-enabled systems for future cities. Indicative research topics include:

- Urban analytics, digital twins and smart infrastructure systems
- Climate and disaster resilience, energy security and circular economy
- Sustainable infrastructure and resilient built environments
- Advanced transport systems, optimised logistics and supply chains

6. 'By Community, For Community' First Nations Knowledge

Research that is led by, or undertaken in partnership with, First Nations communities, ensuring knowledge sovereignty and meaningful cultural and social impact. Indicative research topics include:

- Community-led, strengths-based research
- Treaty, truth-telling and self-determination
- Aboriginal women's leadership and activism
- Indigenous knowledges informing policy, health, education and sustainability
- Indigenous data sovereignty and the ethical use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, including protecting Country, culture and community knowledge in data systems

Objectives

The VCRIF Scheme aims to:

- Attract, support, develop, and retain high-performing researchers who will contribute to VU's strategic ambition to be one of the leading impact-driven universities by 2030.
- Drive impactful research on critical challenges through collaboration, ethical inquiry, and strong engagement—aligned with VU's six research thematic areas listed above.

To achieve these aims, the VCRIF Scheme will:

- Provide dedicated research time and funding to enable Vice-Chancellor's Research and Impact Fellows to deliver high-quality, high-impact research outcomes.
- Foster interdisciplinary and industry-engaged research by embedding Fellows within a supportive and collaborative research ecosystem.
- Support research leadership development, including mentoring of early career academics, and contribution to research capacity building at VU.
- Advance equity and inclusion in research, particularly by encouraging applications from underrepresented groups and promoting First Nations-led research.

Fellowship Levels

The VCRIF fellowship is structured across Academic Levels **B–E**, supporting researchers from early career through to internationally recognised research leaders.

- Vice-Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Research and Impact Fellow (Level B)
- Vice-Chancellor’s Senior Research and Impact Fellow (Level C)
- Vice-Chancellor’s Principal Research and Impact Fellow (Level D)
- Vice-Chancellor’s Professorial Research and Impact Fellow (Level E)

Fellowship Level	Indicative Post-PhD Research Experience	Research Career Stage	Description
(Level B) Postdoctoral Research and Impact Fellow	Up to 5 years (or longer if adjusted for career interruptions)	Early Career Researcher (ECR)	Suited to researchers in the early stages of an independent career, demonstrating potential for high-quality outputs and impact.
(Level C) Senior Research and Impact Fellow	5–10 years (or equivalent considering career interruptions)	Mid-Career Researcher (MCR)	Aimed at mid-career researchers with a growing national profile and a track record of collaborative, interdisciplinary, and impactful research.
(Level D) Principal Research and Impact Fellow	10–15 years (or equivalent considering career interruptions)	Established Researcher	For established researchers with leadership experience leading collaborative, multi-disciplinary research teams, strong external funding success, and evidence of significant research translation and impact.
(Level E) Professorial Research and Impact Fellow	15+ years (or equivalent considering career interruptions)	Senior/Leading Researcher	For internationally recognised researchers with a distinguished record of research impact and leadership in shaping research agendas.

Appointment duration and funding

1. **College/Institute/Centre:** Dependent on the successful applicant’s research focus
2. **Campus Location:** The position will be primarily located at one of VU’s metropolitan or suburban Melbourne campuses, with travel to other campuses as required. Hybrid work arrangements are available.
3. **Appointment level:** Academic Level B–E
4. **Employment Type:** Fixed-Term
 - 3 years for Levels B & C
 - Up to 5 years for Levels D & E

- Fellows will have a significant research time allocation for the duration of the fellowship. Fellows will also undertake other academic activities, including teaching and leadership, higher degree by research (HDR) supervision, and administrative duties directly related to their research activity.
5. **Time Fraction:** 1.0 FTE
 6. **Salary & Benefits:** Competitive salary package based on appointment level.
 7. **Research Allowance:** An annual research allowance will be included in the package.
 8. **Research Allocation:** Research-focused

General Eligibility

To be eligible for the VCRIF, applicants must meet the following eligibility criteria commensurate to the academic level they are applying for:

1. A PhD in a relevant discipline. You must have been awarded a PhD by the EOI closing date.
2. A demonstrated strong research track record of high-quality research outputs (Q1/D1 journal publications, reports, patents, or equivalent).
3. Proven track record in research leadership, including the ability to mentor staff to achieve quality outcomes, lead and foster collaborative research teams in proportion to their academic level.
4. Proven track record to secure significant and sustained competitive external funding to support ongoing research activity, and manage funded projects, including oversight of budgets and reporting obligations in proportion to their academic level.
5. Significant experience in supervising higher degree by research candidates, with a strong focus on enhancing research quality and performance in proportion to their academic level.
6. Proven experience conducting multi-disciplinary research.
7. Research experience that aligns with one or more of the six research thematic areas.
8. Applicants must be available to begin their fellowship by Q1 2027.
9. Applications are welcomed from both domestic and international candidates. Visa sponsorship and relocation support may be considered for successful applicants in accordance with Victoria University policies.

Current VU academic staff who meet general eligibility requirements may apply if their current appointment at the time of application is sessional or fixed-term. VU staff on ongoing continuing appointments are not eligible.

An academic is eligible to receive one VCRIF award; however, those unsuccessful in earlier rounds may reapply in future rounds.

Eligible career interruptions and achievements relative to opportunity will be taken into consideration upon application. (See [Appendix 1](#))

Our Commitment to Protecting Country

VU values its diverse community and honours First Nations perspectives. We are committed to respectful engagement, Indigenous voice, and sustainable practices that support the health and wellbeing of people and the planet.

Our Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion at VU

We welcome applications from women, gender-diverse individuals, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and others from under-represented groups.

Expectations of VCRIF Fellows (Levels B–E)

VCRIF Fellows are expected to deliver on the research program and impact agenda outlined in their submitted research project plan, with expectations scaled to their academic level and aligned with their career stage.

At VU, research impact is defined as the demonstrable direct or indirect contribution that research processes or outputs make to advancing knowledge or creating positive change. This may include:

- a) advancing academic understanding by developing new methods, theories or knowledge within or across disciplines (academic impact), and/or
- b) contributing to cultural, economic, industrial, ecological or social change that improves the wellbeing of people, communities and the planet, now and into the future (societal impact).

VCRIF Fellows are expected to:

- Conduct research of national and international standing, demonstrating a commitment to research excellence and advancing knowledge with meaningful societal benefit.
- Produce high-quality research outputs that reflect research excellence, such as Q1/D1 journal publications, commissioned reports, patents, and/or other significant scholarly, community or industry-relevant contributions.
- Pursue and secure competitive external research funding, appropriate to their discipline and level of experience.
- Supervise and/or mentor HDR candidates, supporting the development of emerging researchers.
- Engage meaningfully with external stakeholders, including industry, government, and community partners, to enhance research relevance, translation, and impact.
- Contribute to research leadership and research capability building through the VCRIF Program and the EMCR Academy, particularly in advancing research impact (and the pathway to impact), collaboration, and engagement across the University.
- Foster interdisciplinary research collaboration, strengthening cross-disciplinary networks within and beyond VU's research community.

Application Process

The VCRIF application process involves three stages.

Stage 1 – Expression of Interest (EOI)

Applicants must submit an **EOI** through the VCRIF SmartyGrants portal.

The EOI submission will include:

- Short Academic CV (maximum 2 pages)
- Summary of proposed research program at VU
- Brief statement describing alignment with one of VU's six research thematic areas and the potential fit with VU's research environment
- ORCID ID

A panel of senior VU academics from diverse disciplines undertakes a competitive assessment of all eligible and complete EOIs. The Committee is chaired by the VU Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Impact (DVCRI) or a nominee appointed by the DVCRI. The Committee is responsible for recommending shortlisted applicants to progress to the full application stage. Due to the anticipated high volume of EOI applications, we will not be able to provide detailed feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Stage 2- Full Application

Applicants shortlisted from the EOI stage will be invited to submit a full application with instructions provided. The full application builds on the information provided in the EOI and requires applicants to address the selection criteria below as well as submit a recorded research pitch.

The full application will include the following components (described in more detail below):

- CV and referee details
- Selection criteria response
- A recorded research pitch

Selection Criteria

Applicants invited to submit a full application will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. Research track record (50%)

Evidence of research excellence relative to career stage and opportunity, outlining up to 10 key research outputs with a brief description of each output's significance and their role, as well as up to 10 major or representative grants detailing the funder, project title, role, funding amount, duration, and partners. Other indicators of research performance, such as HDR supervision, leadership roles, awards, non-traditional research outputs research impact, and engagement with academic, industry, government, and community stakeholders.

2. Proposed research program at VU (25%)

Applicants should provide a concise summary of their research aims, including the novelty and proposed approach, and demonstrate the feasibility of delivering the program within the fellowship with appropriate institutional support. They should outline the anticipated academic and non-academic impacts, along with a strategy for funding, engagement, and

research translation. Applicants may also optionally identify potential VU academic collaborators or research units.

3. Contribution to research culture and collaboration (25%)

Demonstrated potential to contribute to interdisciplinary collaboration, mentoring, and the broader research environment at VU, and alignment of the proposed research program with VU's mission and dual-sector model.

Stage 3- Interviews

Applicants who have completed a full application may be invited to attend interviews during the period specified in the Key Dates. Interviews will be conducted either in person or online, depending on the location of the candidate.

The interview panel will be chaired by the DVCRI, or a nominee appointed by the DVCRI and will include senior academic and executive leaders from across the University.

The interview process provides an opportunity for candidates to further discuss their proposed research program, demonstrate the potential impact of their work, and outline how they would contribute to VU's research culture, collaboration, and strategic priorities.

Following the interviews, the panel will make recommendations for appointment to the Vice-Chancellor for final approval.

Selection Panel

Full applications will be reviewed by a Selection Panel chaired by the DVCRI, or a nominee appointed by the DVCRI. The Selection Panel will comprise senior Victoria University academics from diverse disciplines and executive nominees. The Selection Panel will review both the written application and recorded pitch prior to determining candidates to progress to Stage 3 – Final Interviews. Interviews will be conducted either face-to-face or online during the interview period specified in the Key Dates.

Due to the anticipated high volume of applications, we will not be able to provide detailed feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Conditions of Fellowship

Employment conditions

The Letter of Offer will include a Position Description outlining the duties VCRIF Fellows are expected to perform.

Fellowships are offered as full-time research roles (1.0 FTE) for a period of three to five years, depending on the academic level of appointment.

Visa sponsorship and relocation assistance may be provided to successful applicants in line with [VU policy](#) related to Victoria University hiring policies and procedures.

Funding conditions

A research allowance, negotiated with each VCRIF Fellow, will be transferred annually to the responsible College, Institute or Centre where the Fellow is placed (inclusive of project budget).

This allowance can be used to support research-related costs such as:

- research assistance
- travel and fieldwork
- conference attendance
- consumables and equipment
- engagement and collaboration activities
- knowledge translation and publication costs

VCRIF Fellows are expected to apply for external funding during their fellowship. If a Fellow secures an external grant or fellowship that includes a salary component, the VCRIF will cease from the commencement date of the external award. The VCRIF will not be paused or extended although contract extensions will be considered at the end of their external grant or external fellowship funding. Any research allowance provided through the VCRIF will remain available alongside the external award.

Fellowship structure and contract variations

VCRIF Fellows will participate in the annual performance review process under the supervision of their Head of College, Institute or Centre or nominee.

Contract variation requests will be assessed against the scheme's objectives and in accordance with the University's workplace policies and entitlements under the VU Enterprise Agreement.

Fellowship reporting

VCRIF Fellows will submit yearly progress reports and a final report detailing the research achievements and impact to the Office of the DVCRF or delegated authority.

Contact

All enquiries for the VCRIF scheme should be directed to the program team via email to vcrif@vu.edu.au.

For more information on the scheme please see our webpage - <https://www.vu.edu.au/research/vice-chancellors-research-impact-fellowship-scheme>.

Appendix 1 – Career Interruptions and Eligibility Context Template

This optional statement, submitted at the EOI stage via the VCRIF SmartyGrants portal (maximum one page), provides context on career interruptions or non-traditional research pathways and forms part of the application process.

At VU, we understand that you may experience a range of professional and personal circumstances that may affect your career. As such, you may decide to provide an optional statement to provide context on career interruptions or non-traditional research pathways.

Please include a response in two parts:

Part A:

- Circumstance type, period from and to, brief description
- Whether you worked part-time or outside academia
- Career shifts (e.g., industry, government, policy, clinical roles)

Part A: Claim Summary			
Circumstance Type	Period From	Period To	Brief Description

Part B:

- Impacts on your capacity to conduct or disseminate research

Example:

Between February 2018 and July 2019, I was on 12 months' maternity leave, followed by a 6-month phased return at 0.5 FTE to a research-focused role with a 40% per cent research allocation. During this period, I was unable to lead grant applications or complete major publications. This significantly impacted my research output and ability to supervise HDR candidates. Since 2019, I have since resumed full-time work in a research-focused role (80 percent research-focused) and regained research momentum.