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RMIT

Research Translation Fellowships 2026 Guidelines

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Overview – Research Translation Fellowships

Accelerating research commercialisation and translation is at the centre of RMIT's Knowledge with Action Strategy (Direction 2). RMIT is focusing on supporting early-stage research translation opportunities to further drive research translation of excellent research to make an impact in society, beyond academia. To support this, the R&I Portfolio has built a series of connected initiatives to build translation and entrepreneur capability in our research community and accelerate opportunities for investment and translation across the research and innovation ecosystem.

The Research Translation Fellowships program is an initiative to support translation career pathways for researchers who wish to undertake significant translation initiatives. This scheme is intended to drive translation maturity and readiness, enabling diverse impact pathways to achieve commercial and/or non-commercial outcomes and providing preserved time to researchers to accelerate research translation.

Purpose

The Fellowship aims to support researchers with strong commitment to pursue a research translation focused career by providing dedicated time and funding to advance translation projects with commercial and/or non-commercial outcomes.

Funding is intended for projects that have progressed beyond the research discovery/conceptual stage and have demonstrated a defined and validated translation opportunity, with evidence of adoption potential among intended adopter group (beneficiaries/end users/customers/other stakeholders).

This scheme support projects that have reached an appropriate level of translation readiness and are positioned to advance validation activities and move innovations (IP based or social impact based) towards a higher level of technical readiness or business readiness to support uptake and adoption. Project should ideally possess a tangible translation artefact (such as a working prototype, program, tool, formulation, framework, policy product) that is ready for testing, validation, or pilot implementation in a real-world setting.

Eligible activities may include:

- i) advancing technology and market readiness along pathways to market, focusing on adoption and/or commercialisation. Examples may include field demonstration, pilot testing, end-user enablement, market validation and business model/commercial readiness assessment.
- ii) progressing research translational activities to validate a concept or business model; significantly influence public policy or deliver economic/ societal / environmental / health-related impacts. Examples may include activities to assess the sustainability of a social innovation concept, progressing uptake of applied industry educational/training programs, development of complex decision support tools or evaluative models/simulations, application of Indigenous knowledges and knowledge systems.

Note: This Fellowship does not fund basic research and associated activities.

By the conclusion of the Fellowship, the translation initiative is expected to have advanced towards adoptability or able to attract external funding/investment to progress translation. Potential pathways beyond the Fellowship may include securing scale-up investment, establishing a commercial or social venture, licensing the innovation, informing policy or practice or enabling uptake and impact with the broader community.

Eligibility

Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible, applicants must fulfil the following criteria:

- Must be in a role that conducts research and aligned with one of RMIT's higher education [Academic Colleges](#) or [Enabling Impact Platforms](#) (EIPs)
- Must be either:
 - i. a current salaried RMIT academic staff member, in a continuing or fixed term position (fixed term employment contract which expires no earlier than 31 January 2027). **NOTE:** Fixed term staff members will be offered a contract extension that covers the duration of the Fellowship if successful. Current casual staff members are generally not eligible to apply, unless there is evidence that an appointment to a fixed-term or continuing position is imminent. Award of a Fellowship is conditional on the provision of a copy of a fixed-term or continuing employment contract which expires no earlier than 31 January 2027. **or**
 - ii. an RMIT Higher Degree by Research (HDR) student who has recently completed their HDR degree or has submitted their thesis for examination. **NOTE: HDR students who are planning to submit their thesis by the application closing date are eligible to apply.** For all HDR students, a copy of their Statement of Academic Completion is normally required before the Fellowship can commence.
- Must provide evidence of endorsement from their line manager/ HDR supervisor **and** School (Dean) to undertake the Fellowship. **NOTE:** For HDR students, line manager will typically be your senior supervisor.
- Full-time Fellowship appointments are preferred with requests for part-time appointments only considered on a case-by-case basis (minimum appointment to the Fellowship at 0.5FTE).
- Successful candidates should be available to commence the Fellowship from Q1 2027. All Fellowship offers are subjected to funding availability and confirmation that all eligibility criteria have been satisfied.

Proposal Eligibility:

This scheme supports proposals that have progressed beyond the research discovery and opportunity framing stages and are ready to test, validate, refine or pilot a plausible translation proposition in real-world context. For instance, proposals should focus on 'Shape' activities and beyond within the DESA model, which include validation, prototyping, co-designing, refinement and translation readiness evidence-based activities. Please refer to the [DESA model document](#) for detailed information on each functional stages of the research translation activities.

Proposals applying for this scheme should have also achieved an Adoptive Innovation and Impact Readiness Level (AIIRL) of minimum 3 (i.e. AIIRL3 or higher). Proposals should have affirmed the translation opportunity, identified the intended adopter group and demonstrated positive validation from potential adopters on desirability and adoptability of the proposed research offering/innovation. Please refer to the [AIIRL framework document](#) for further information on the AIIRL indicators.

It is expected that those applying for this fund will be able to provide evidence of i) Intellectual Property (IP) development and exploitation/commercialisation potential ii) validation by potential adopters (beneficiaries/end-users/customers/other stakeholders) of the potential of methods/Frameworks/Validated Tools or Scales, and/or iii) industry partners engagement, including partner validation/interest/commitment to participate in the co-development of the innovation. Preference will be given to projects that can demonstrate such evidence. The Research & Innovation Portfolio will verify translation readiness based on the evidence provided.

Any Intellectual Property that an applicant intends to translate must have been assigned to RMIT.

NOTE: Industry co-investment is an option, but not a requirement.

Key Selection Criteria

All eligible applications will be assessed by the Research Translation Fellowships Selection Panel (Panel).

The Panel will assess applications against the key selection criteria (not in order of priority):

- Potential for the Fellowship to positively impact career development and progression. NOTE: Preference will be given to applicants where evidence shows the funding will make a transformative change to career trajectory – demonstrating commitment to pursue a translation-focused research career and contributing to research impact beyond academia.
- Applicant's track record in translation activity/progress and demonstrable quality of research and innovation. Motivation and capability of applicant to drive the project through to impact will also be considered.
- Demonstrate translation maturity or translation readiness of the project and potential for the Fellowship to positively impact momentum (or trajectory/direction) of the translation and adoptability of the project. NOTE: Preference will be given where evidence shows the funding will make a transformative change to research translation trajectory i.e. projects demonstrating a higher level of need and a strong prospect of achieving adoptability will be prioritised
- Impact potential - scale of the opportunity (e.g., potential market size, credible pathway to market, the number of beneficiaries the initiative will reach and benefit; potential for the Fellowship to drive new approaches to translational research at RMIT). NOTE: Preference will be given to projects that demonstrate desirability, scalability and viability, along with strong evidence of knowledge exchange.
- Project Feasibility (includes an assessment of the project translation readiness and pathway to adoption, including planned activities, and implementation strategies; achievability of milestones within the Fellowship timeframe and resources required; any potential to secure new revenue streams).

Funding

Supported Expenditure

Eligible funding items include:

- Applicant salary (full or part-time as appropriate, at an agreed Academic Level) for up to one year in the first instance
- Operating Expenses for up to one year in the first instance. The amount awarded will be based on merit and subject to agreed milestones (normally in the range of \$20k-\$50k). Such expenses could include research assistance, casual staff, contractors, consultants, other third-party service providers, consumables, and travel where appropriate. Applicants will be asked to submit a budget outlining expected cost.

Expenditure *not* supported

- HDR stipends or fees
- Travel as the sole purpose of the request with no translation outcomes
- Capital expenditure exceeding \$5000

All funding must be in accordance with RMIT procurement and expenditure procedures and policies. Any salary requests to provide relief from teaching, administrative duties or other research duties may require an agreement with the School, depending on employment status of the applicant.

Any proposed changes to fund usage require approval, and the Chair of the Selection Panel reserves the right to withdraw funding for unapproved requests.

Application Process

The application for a Research Translation Fellowship is a two-stage process.

1. Submission of Application

Those interested in applying for a Research Translation Fellowship must submit an individual application form using the SmartyGrants portal. The link to the application form can be accessed via [Research Translation Fellowships 2026](#). More information is available on the [Research Portal](#) (*Links to the Research Portal require access to Salesforce, which you can [request here](#)*).

As part of the application process, applicants will be asked to provide:

- Details of their employment or HDR student status at RMIT University
- Statement on motivation to drive the research translation initiative and a CV highlighting research translation experience/track record/achievements
- Summary of research that has been undertaken from which the applicant is proposing to undertake translation activities
- Value proposition – articulate the societal/industry challenge/unmet need the translation initiative addresses; what benefits it will provide (and who the end-users and beneficiaries are); what

differentiates it from existing or competing approaches/solutions; potential scale of the opportunity and/or potential for impact

- Description of the research translation activities to be undertaken during the Fellowship including the planned translation impact pathway and potential barriers, and any intellectual property related to the project
- Budget outline, which demonstrates the proposed items/activities and anticipated milestones
- Confirmation of endorsement received from line manager/ HDR supervisor and School (Dean) to participate in the Fellowship (where relevant)
- Mandatory completion of Researcher Impact & Innovation Persona Survey which designs to capture applicant's experiences in translating research into impact (NOTE: Survey responses will not be shared with Selection Panel and will not be used for decision making).

2. Invitation for Interview and Pitch Session

Once applications are received and reviewed by the Selection Panel, shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview where they will also be asked to pitch their translation proposal. Final outcome notifications will be made available after the interview and pitch session.

The Selection Panel may, on a confidential basis, consult with relevant School Deans or Associate Deans regarding individual applications.

NOTE: Proposals may be triaged to either internal RMIT funding or Breakthrough Victoria pre-seed funding based on translation readiness.

Application Development Clinic

Applicants intending to submit an application are expected to attend the in-person Application Development Clinic. The clinic is designed to support applicants in developing a high-quality Fellowship application by:

- i) assisting applicants in developing a compelling application,
- ii) building applicants' understanding of research translation concepts, including translation readiness, adoptability, feasibility, and value proposition development,
- iii) Providing insights into planning meaningful translation milestones that demonstrate progress towards adoption and impact, as well as practical tips and guidance on preparing a competitive Fellowship application.

The in-person development clinic will be held on 14 Sept 2026. Please visit [Research Capability Development](#) webpage for more information and to register for the session.

NOTE: Applicants who are unable to attend the clinic in person will be required to watch the recorded clinic session and arrange a one-on-one consultation with one of our expert innovation academics to discuss their draft application before submitting their application.

Key dates for 2026

Tuesday 1 Sept 2026	Open for Applications
Friday 4 Sept 2026, 11am (AEST)	Research Translation Fellowship Information Session Click here to join the meeting <i>A recording of the session will be made available.</i>
14 Sept 2026	Application Development Clinic Visit Research Capability Development to register.
Thursday 1 Oct 2026, 12 noon (AEST)	Applications close
Week of 9 Nov 2026	Notify shortlisted applicants invited to interview and pitch session
Week of 23 Nov 2026	Shortlisted applicants to attend interview and pitch session
Week of 30 Nov 2026	Outcome notifications
Mid Dec 2026	Acceptance of offers due

Enquiries and further information

Please direct all enquiries, including queries regarding the application, development clinic and selection process, to researchtranslationschemes@rmit.edu.au.

For those wishing to have a more detailed discussion regarding your commercialisation proposal, please contact the IP and Commercialisation team via email on ip.commercialisation@rmit.edu.au and the team will be in touch to discuss your proposal with you in more detail.