

UQ OFFICE OF SPONSORED RESEARCH

INFORMATION SHEET

AUSINDUSTRY INNOVATION CONNECTIONS SCHEME

Innovation Connections is a grant program that fosters innovation by assisting small and medium businesses with funding to access research capability. Businesses can apply for a grant from the Commonwealth Government (up to \$50,000 exc GST), matched in cash by the business. The grant amount can be provided to either the business or the research organisation (such as UQ) directly and is agreed upon in the application. The distribution of funds is outlined in the project agreement with full project funds normally being paid to the research organisation.

To apply, a business must first request an Innovation Connections Facilitation. A Facilitator will work with the business to identify opportunities and to develop the potential project. If the business accepts the facilitation report, they can then apply for an Innovation Connections Grant. **This granting scheme is open for continuous applications, and if an eligible business applies (after the Facilitation process) then there is currently a 100% success rate.**

This scheme provides a prime opportunity for UQ researchers to develop and deepen their relationship with industry, either by establishing a new partnership, collaboratively identifying pilot data (for example for a future ARC Linkage Projects application), or furthering an existing research relationship. UQ is highly engaged with this granting scheme and has a strong relationship with the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science scheme facilitators.

Eligibility requirements for business include:

- Either operating in, have a commitment to operate in, or provide enabling technologies and services to one or more of the Growth Sectors (e.g. Advanced Manufacturing, Food and Agribusiness, Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals, Mining Equipment, Technology and Services; and Oil, Gas and Energy Resources);
- Annual turnover or operating expenditure within a specific range (\$1.5 million and \$100 million, unless from Remote Australia or the Northern Territory) with solvency, and operation within Australia for at least 3 consecutive years; and
- Not having previously received an Innovation Connections Facilitation (expert guidance provided by the Department to address knowledge or research related issues).

The three potential funding streams are **Researcher Placement**, **Business Researcher Placement** and **Graduate Placement**. The most commonly utilised with UQ is the **Researcher Placement**, in which a UQ researcher or UQ Higher Degree by Research student is placed within a business (or the work is done at UQ on behalf of the business) with either a full time or part time appointment (minimum 0.3FTE) for 2 to 12 months in duration. The grant funds may cover the UQ researcher's salary support (including on-costs), travel and accommodation, research infrastructure costs, and limited administrative overheads. The grant may be extended for an additional year with the Department's approval. Other options include **Business Researcher Placement**, in which the Business's research employee is placed into the University to work collaboratively on a specific Innovation Connections project and access to the University's research infrastructure, and **Graduate Placement**, in which a graduate or postgraduate student is placed in the business to undertake a specific project collaboratively with the University.

Overheads, up to 30% of total project costs, are permitted in this scheme. As the program primarily funds the salary of the researcher, UQ has approved a reduction in cases where the primary researcher's time is fully costed at a minimum 0.3 FTE (30% overheads apply to the salary, but overheads are waived for other project costs). If the researcher's time is being treated as in-kind (in full or in part) 30% overheads will apply to the full budget, consistent with the programs guidelines.

The total grant funding from Innovation Connections cannot exceed \$50,000 (for Researcher Placement and Business Researcher Placement, \$30,000 maximum for the Graduate Placement), which would be paid in arrears following agreed milestones. A business may apply for a maximum of two Researcher or Business Researcher placements. Applications for a second researcher placement must be made after the approval of the final report for the first placement period, and within a 12 weeks of its completion.

CONTACTS

Scheme Web Page: <https://www.business.gov.au/Assistance/Innovation-Connections>

UQ Contact:

Dr Sarah Forbes, Office of Sponsored Research

Email: industrygrants@research.uq.edu.au

Commonwealth Department

David Martin

Scheme Facilitator (Queensland):

Email: david.martin@aigroup.com.au

Mobile: 0408 283 258

UQ is able to arrange for meetings or presentations with the Commonwealth Department scheme facilitator.