



# Industry Research Foundations

Program guidelines

1 July 2024



Queensland  
Government



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#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation acknowledges the Country and people of Queensland's First Nations. We pay our respect to Elders, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the continuous living culture of First Nations Queenslanders—their diverse languages, customs and traditions, knowledges and systems. We acknowledge the deep relationship, connection and responsibility to land, sea and sky Country as an integral element of First Nations identity and culture. This Country is sacred. Everything on the land has meaning and all people are one with it. We acknowledge First Nations peoples' sacred connection as central to culture and being. First Nations people speak to Country, listen to Country, sing up Country, dance up Country, understand Country and long for Country. We acknowledge and thank First Nations people for the enduring relationship connecting people, Country and ancestors—an unbreakable bond that safely stewarded and protected the land, waters and sky for thousands of generations.

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## About Industry Research Foundations

The Queensland Government's *Advance Queensland - Innovation for a Future Economy: 2022-2032* Roadmap sets out the direction, key priority outcomes and initiatives for the next phase in Queensland's journey toward becoming a leading and sustainable world-class innovation economy.

The Roadmap identifies a priority for Queensland to achieve this through strengthened research business collaborations focussed on the translation of high-quality research into innovative products and services and commercialisation opportunities.

The objectives of the Industry Research Foundations program are to:

- increase employment opportunities in industry for Queensland graduates within Queensland small to medium sized businesses
- drive translation of innovative ideas into products, services and processes for future commercialisation
- support the creation of knowledge-based jobs in Queensland
- encourage the retention of research talent and skills in Queensland.

## What we are looking for

The Advance Queensland Industry Research Foundations program aims to contribute to the Roadmap priority by supporting the employment of Queensland-based Honours, Masters or PhD level university graduates to progress short-term, industry-led innovative projects, for a period of between 6 to 12 months. Participating university partners will provide support and mentorship for the graduate during the term of the project.

Projects are required to:

- a) focus on the development of an innovative product, service or process within the business where there is a significant opportunity to progress the development of the project along the translation and commercialisation pathway through the graduate's knowledge and expertise;
- b) engage the skills and expertise of a Queensland-based Honours, Masters or PhD level university graduate for the duration of the project; and
- c) provide an opportunity for the graduate to gain practical work experience in an industry workplace and apply their knowledge and expertise to a business-led innovative project.

The applicant business will be required to employ the graduate for the duration of the project, in accordance with standard Australian employment laws, including alignment with industry salary rates.

The university partner will be responsible for facilitating the selection of the graduate, in conjunction with the applicant business, supporting the scoping of the proposed project, if required and providing mentoring and guidance to support the graduate for the duration of the project.

## Priority Investment Areas

Applications for innovative projects focussed on developing a product, service or process in one or more of the *Advance Queensland Priority Investment Areas* will be highly regarded:

- AgTech
- Autonomous systems
- Robotics and artificial intelligence
- Nanotechnology
- Quantum technologies
- Cybertechnology
- Defence technology

- Space industry/technology
- Sports-tech
- Tourism
- Decarbonisation technology
- Technology to support natural resource management
- New ways to manage Queensland’s waste and pollution including through the establishment of the circular economy
- New ways to manage climate change impacts
- Sustainable energy and energy storage solutions and renewable energy systems
- New ways to manage natural disaster preparedness and resilience.

## Available funding

### Applicant Businesses

Grant funding of up to \$90,000 (excluding GST) is available for Queensland businesses to undertake the 6 to 12 month project, through the employment of a Queensland-based Honours, Masters or PhD level university graduate.

Applicant businesses will be required to provide a minimum funding contribution as outlined below. However, the applicant business can contribute greater than the minimum requirement to support the graduate’s salary to align to industry salary rates.

<b>Tier 1</b>	For applicant businesses headquartered in <b>South East Queensland</b> , a minimum 20 per cent cash contribution is required.
<b>Tier 2</b>	For <b>Indigenous businesses*</b> and/or applicant businesses headquartered in a <b>Queensland region#</b> , a minimum 10 per cent cash contribution is required.

\*For the purpose of this program an indigenous business is an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander owned business that:

- is at least 50 per cent owned by an Aboriginal person(s) and/or a Torres Strait Islander person(s); and
- is either a sole trader, partnership, incorporated entity or trading through a trust; and
- has a current Australian Business Number (ABN).

#A Queensland region is any location in Queensland excluding the following South East Queensland regions: Brisbane City Council, Redland City Council, Ipswich City Council, Lockyer Valley Regional Council, Logan City Council, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Noosa Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council, Somerset Regional Council, Sunshine Coast Council and the Gold Coast City Council.

**Note:** The funding contribution cannot include any other Queensland Government grant funding. In-kind and non-cash contributions are not eligible as funding contributions.

The program will not support applications from businesses that are currently receiving Queensland Government funding for the activities in the proposed project.

### Participating University Partners

The program will provide funding for the university’s coordination and mentoring role (minimum of four hours per month). Funding to the university partner will not exceed \$10,000 (excluding GST) for each

project with a duration of between 6 to 12 months and will be based on the provision of documentation on the number of hours provided to support the graduate. This funding is in addition to the program funding allocation to the applicant business and is paid by the department directly to the university partner.

## University Graduate

The graduate will become a direct employee of the applicant business and receive a salary that is commensurate with the duration of the project and within industry salary rates. Program funding can be used to meet this salary cost.

## Eligibility

### Applicant Business

Applicant businesses and their related corporate entities are limited to **one** application per funding round.

To be eligible to apply for this program, the applicant must, at the time of application:

- be a business headquartered in Queensland and operational over the previous 12 months (from time of application)
- have an ABN
- be registered for GST
- have less than 200 full-time equivalent staff (FTEs)
- not be a subsidiary of a group of companies that has 200 or more FTEs
- commit a cash contribution that is at least equal to 20 per cent of the value of funding sought (for Tier 1 applicants) excluding GST or 10 per cent of the value of funding sought (for Tier 2 applicants) excluding GST
- not have any outstanding reporting or acquittals for grants awarded by Advance Queensland.

Universities, research organisations, industry associations, government owned corporations, and government departments and agencies are not eligible to apply.

### Eligible Graduates

To be eligible for the program, a graduate must:

- be a recent graduate with Honours, or a Masters or a PhD graduate from any Queensland based university
- have achieved the above qualification within the last 12 months
- have capacity to be employed by the applicant business for a 6 to 12 month period on a full time or part time basis, commensurate with the project activities
- be assessed by the university partner and applicant business to have the necessary skills that match the requirements of the project
- permanently reside in Queensland.

**Note:** Current PhD or MPhil candidates who have submitted their thesis but who have not yet graduated can be considered for the program.

Existing or previous employees of the business (within the last 12 months from the date of application), and international students are not eligible to be employed as the graduate.

Graduates that have undertaken an internship or scholarship with the applicant business are eligible for the program.

## Participating University Partners

Participating Queensland universities will be responsible for facilitating the selection of the graduate, in conjunction with the applicant business to ensure the graduate has the appropriate skills and expertise to support the project and for providing support to scope the proposed project, if required.

The university partner will provide mentoring and guidance to support the graduate for the duration of the project.

For the purposes of the initial round of this program, the following participating university partners are available to facilitate applications with applicant businesses:

- **Griffith University**

Contact: Ms Tara Horner

Email: [phdpartnerships@griffith.edu.au](mailto:phdpartnerships@griffith.edu.au)

- **James Cook University**

Contact: Professor Stephan Riek

Email: [deangrs@jcu.edu.au](mailto:deangrs@jcu.edu.au)

**Note:** Graduates are recent graduate with Honours, or a Masters or a PhD level graduate from **any** Queensland based university and are not required to have graduated from a participating university partner.

## Project

For the purpose of this program the project must relate to developing an innovative product, service or process in one, or more, of the following contexts:

- innovative solutions to existing problems
- new to world innovation
- innovation diffusion (a unique application of a technology that is significantly different to any previous innovation in the market)
- innovation in the Indigenous context – identified by the applicant business as being innovative and in keeping with cultural and community practices. For example: innovative products, services or processes that lead to increased economic development in community, by community.

The project must:

- commence within 90 days of being advised of application approval
- have a distinct set of activities, with aims and outcomes achievable within the projects duration as agreed by the applicant business, the graduate and the university partner.

## Project Intellectual Property

Any Intellectual Property (IP) created during the project is owned by the applicant business. Any IP created or owned prior to the project remains the property of the party that created/owns it.

Under the program, the applicant business engages the graduate as an employee. The graduate would be subject to the employment policies of the applicant business including policies on treatment of any IP created in the course of employment and be bound by any employment contract signed between the graduate and the applicant business (subject to Australian workplace laws).

If the applicant business and graduate wish to enter into a special arrangement regarding IP created out of the project, nothing prohibits them from doing so. It is recommended that this in the form of a written legal agreement signed by the parties and adequately referencing the project. It is also recommended that in this situation each party obtain appropriate independent legal advice.

## Using the funding

The program funding and the applicant business contribution may be used for the following **eligible** project costs:

- the graduate's salary and on-costs as per industry rates
- a one-off travel supplement for travel distances over 300km from the graduate's current place of residence to commence the project position. A maximum of \$1,500 (excluding GST) in grant funding can be allocated to this cost; all other accommodation and travel costs must be covered by the applicant business contribution.

**Note:** As the employer of the graduate, it is the responsibility of the business to ensure that the graduate is receiving their lawful entitlements including salary. For further information contact the Fair Work Ombudsmen (<http://www.fairwork.gov.au/>).

Only eligible expenditure incurred on or after the project commencement date (specified in the executed Funding Agreement) can be claimed by the successful applicant business.

It is expected that program funding will be expended in Queensland, unless it can be demonstrated that expenditure outside Queensland is essential to ensure successful delivery of the project.

Payment of grants will be made based on agreed periodic project milestones. A final milestone payment will be made on provision of documentary evidence that all project requirements have been satisfied, including evidence that total project expenditure has been incurred and project contributions have been made.

Costs **not eligible** to be paid from program funding or the applicant business contribution include:

- project or training costs not directly associated with the graduate's work on the project
- project consumables
- licensing and compliance fees
- conference attendance for the graduate
- organisational overheads
- small plant and equipment including laptops
- capital works and/or physical infrastructure including any buildings, plant and equipment, telecommunications, and IT networks, land acquisition costs or leases
- first class or business class travel and incidental travel costs (e.g., meals, taxi fares)

## Assessment criteria

Applications will be assessed in accordance with the following assessment criteria.

The application form contains questions which support the applicant business to address the assessment criteria.

All criteria are equally weighted.

### Criteria 1: **Significance of the innovative project**

**The application must demonstrate:**

- how the project is innovative and will lead to the translation of innovative ideas into products, services or processes
- how the project and the resulting innovative product, service or process will result in significant outcomes for the business.

### Criteria 2: **Strength of the collaboration**

**The application must demonstrate:**

- the benefits to the business in employing a graduate through the program (include details of the knowledge, skills and technical expertise of the graduate, and how these will contribute to the progression of the innovative project)
- the benefits to the graduate in engaging in the innovative project with the business.

**Supporting material:** The following documentation is required to support your application and be uploaded in the application form in SmartyGrants:

- letters of support from the university partner
- letter of commitment from the graduate
- CV of the graduate.

### Criteria 3: **Value and viability**

**The application must demonstrate:**

- the project activities undertaken by the graduate are commensurate with the level of funding support
- a distinct set of activities, with aims and outcomes that are achievable within the project's duration and budget as agreed by the applicant business and the graduate
- the organisation has adequate risk management strategies to ensure successful delivery of the project.

**Supporting material:** The following documentation is required to support your application and be uploaded in the application form in SmartyGrants:

- one year (12 months) of accountant prepared financial statements or a letter from the applicant business board (or chief executive officer or equivalent if there is no board) that confirms the project is supported and the applicant business is a going concern and is financially viable to deliver the project as detailed in the application.

### Criteria 4: **Sustainability and resilience**

**The application must demonstrate:**

- the project will build the capacity of the applicant business to strengthen business competitiveness through the development of innovative products, services or processes
- the graduate will develop knowledge based skills through the employment opportunity and become a future contributor to knowledge based industries.



## Application and assessment process

### Submit an application

An application can be submitted online via SmartyGrants. Refer to the Advance Queensland program website for the application link.

#### **A Full Application will include:**

- a completed online application form including detailed responses to each of the assessment criteria and;
  - CV of the graduate including evidence of attainment of qualifications
  - letter of support from the university partner
  - letter of commitment from the graduate
  - one year (12 months) of accountant prepared financial statements or a letter from the applicant business board (or chief executive officer or equivalent if there is no board) that confirms the project is supported and the applicant business is a going concern and is financially viable to deliver the project as detailed in the application.

### Assessment

All applications will be assessed against the eligibility requirements.

Only eligible applications will be considered for funding support.

Eligible applications will be assessed in a competitive, merit-based approach by a panel of independent assessors against the assessment criteria.

Applicant businesses may be contacted at any stage of the assessment process to provide further information to enable a due diligence and probity assessment. There is no implicit guarantee of approval at any stage in the process, and applicant businesses will be notified via email of the assessment outcome.

The Queensland Government reserves the right to administer the program and conduct the assessment and approval processes as it sees fit. This may include, at its discretion, considering current government priorities and the need to balance the investment to support a diversity of activities across Queensland.

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation has established processes for dealing with complaints - if an applicant business has any concern in relation to the application or assessment process, a formal complaint may be submitted to the department through the website at <https://www.des.qld.gov.au/>.

### Key dates

Activity	Date
Applications open	1 July 2024
Applications close	29 July 2024

All applications must be submitted by 9.00 am AEST on the closing date. Any further round dates will be published on the Advance Queensland website.

## Funding agreement

Successful applicant businesses will be required to enter into a legally binding Funding Agreement with the State of Queensland through the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation.

Payment of grants will be made based on agreed periodic project milestones to reflect payment of the graduate's salary and on-costs. A final milestone payment will be made upon the provision of documentary evidence that all project activities have been completed, including evidence that total project expenditure has been incurred and project contributions have been made by all relevant parties.

The agreement will provide details on general and specific conditions associated with delivery of the approved initiative or project, including:

- the scope of the approved program of activities
- milestone deliverables and dates
- funding amount and payment terms
- eligible and ineligible costs
- applicant business's obligation to acknowledge Queensland Government support
- record-keeping requirements
- reporting requirements.

## Promotion of Supported Projects

Funding recipients will be expected to actively promote their projects, and to provide information and attend media/promotion events if requested. The Queensland Government funding should be acknowledged by recipients in all relevant published material, media releases and public statements relating to the proposed project.

## Privacy

The Department of Environment, Science and Innovation (the department) is collecting personal information from you such as your name, address, contact details of yourself and your business (including employees and partners), resume, employment and directorship, corporate officer history, payslips, asset and financial information and other information relevant to your application or provided by you.

This information is collected for the purpose of assessing and evaluating your application for funded projects, milestone reports, and otherwise the department's function of supporting businesses and industry through innovation programs and grants.

Personal information may also be disclosed where required for purposes associated with undertaking assessment of the application, including due diligence enquiries. The email address you provide will be used to communicate with you about your application or program participation (if successful). For example, you may be contacted via email about participating in a survey, interview or focus group. Dependent upon the email service provider you have chosen, this may result in your personal information being transferred overseas.

The personal information provided may be provided to other relevant Queensland government departments and Ministers, to publicly announce or publish as identified in the guidelines and promote those projects that have been funded. This may include the recipient's name and the amount of funding awarded, project details, agreed outcomes, and progress.

De-identified aggregated data may also be used for the purpose of managing and evaluating the program and initiative and inform government.

Your personal information will also be used to provide the services outlined in the guidelines and application help guide, and for the purposes of research, evaluation, promotion, and monitoring of such services, and to improve and design services and programs.

Your personal information will not be otherwise used or disclosed unless authorised or required by law and will be managed in accordance with the *Information Privacy Act 2009*.

The provisions of the *Right to Information Act 2009* apply to documents in the possession of the Queensland Government.

The Queensland government privacy policy can be found at: [www.qld.gov.au/legal/privacy](http://www.qld.gov.au/legal/privacy).

## Further information

**Web:** [advance.qld.gov.au](http://advance.qld.gov.au)

**Email:** [sciencefunding@dtis.qld.gov.au](mailto:sciencefunding@dtis.qld.gov.au)

**Facebook:** Advance Queensland

**X:** @AdvanceQld