VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

CONFERENCE/ TRAVEL FUNDS ALLOCATION GUIDELINES

Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities

27/03/2024

Version 1.0

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).

Introduction

The Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities (ISILC) recognizes the importance of supporting professional development and scholarly activities for academic staff who are affiliated with the institute. To facilitate this, ISILC allocates funds for conference and travel expenses through a transparent and equitable process. These guidelines outlines the guidelines and procedures for the allocation of conference/travel funds to eligible staff members within ISILC. Funds allocated for each round will also include invitations for external scholars to lead research workshops or research training programs.

Application Rounds

There are three application rounds per year for conference/travel funds allocation. Specific deadlines and application periods will be communicated to all eligible staff members via email. The provisional dates for each round are outlined in the table below. Application dates may vary from one year to the next.

Round	Open	Close
Round 1	1 March	15 June
Round 2	1 July	15 October
Round 3	1 November	15 February

Eligible Applicants

Eligible staff members include:

- Academic staff appointed by ISILC (including project staff)
- Teaching and research academics who have a VU Research Fellowship (VURF) allocation
- Teaching Focused Academics with a VURF allocation
- Honorary and Adjunct academic staff supervising HDR students who are affiliated with ISILC

Note: It is necessary to obtain approval from either the Dean of the College or the Program Head to ensure that all teaching and administrative commitments are accounted for during travel periods. Also, ethics approval or a statement justifying that ethics approval is not required needs to be uploaded as a supporting document.

Funding Allocation

Funding allocation will be prioritized based on the following order:

- Peer-reviewed conference paper and oral presentation leading to a journal or book chapter publication.
- Other scholarly activities (e.g., workshops, seminars) deemed relevant and beneficial to the academic staff member's professional development and research goals.

- Invitation of external scholars to VU to run workshops or training programs which will benefit ISILC members.

NOTE 1: Some disciplines may have conference (e.g. IEEE) proceedings that are considered equivalent to Q1 journal papers. The equivalence of conference proceedings will be assessed by the ISILC Executive Panel.

NOTE 2: Priority will be given to disciplines where obtaining external funding is challenging. However, none of the three designated discipline groups can receive more than 50% allocation in any round.

The maximum allocation for any ISILC travel funds/conference application will be $2,000 for local travel and $4,000 for international travel per staff member per calendar year. This is to provide a greater number of staff members with the opportunity to share their research with the wider community and to enhance their professional networks.

Utilization of Funds

Funds allocated for conference/travel expenses can be utilized for the following purposes:

- Staff members traveling to present their research at a conference.
- Staff members traveling to build networks leading to Category 1 funding. A report will need to be submitted within 3 months of such travel. Failure to do so will disqualify the applicant for future funding allocations. The applicant may also be asked to repay funds that have been allocated by ISILC.
- Inviting visiting scholars to travel to VU for academic collaboration and knowledge exchange.

The costs associated with travel can vary depending on various factors such as the location of the conference, duration of stay, mode of transportation, accommodation preferences and additional expenses. Below are eligible costs typically incurred when traveling for a conference:

- Conference registration fee.
- Transportation Costs including, Airfare, Train, and Bus Fare and the cost of transportation to and from the conference location, as well as local Transportation (e.g., expenses for taxis, or rental cars to travel between the airport, hotel, and conference venue).
- Accommodation costs
- Meals and Incidentals
- Visa Fees and Travel Insurance

It is essential for attendees to budget carefully and plan ahead to ensure they can cover all anticipated expenses associated with conference travel.

Application Procedure

Applicants must submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) through the designated Smarty Grant application platform. The EOI should clearly demonstrate the potential return on investment, including the anticipated outcomes and benefits of attending the conference or hosting the visiting scholar.

Evaluation and Approval Process

All EO will be reviewed and evaluated by the ISILC Executive leadership team. The evaluation process will consider the alignment of the proposed activity with the prioritised funding criteria, the potential impact on the academic staff member's research goals, and the overall merit of the proposed research activity. The evaluation process will also assess the EOI's alignment with VU's strategic research plan.

Notification of Funding

Successful applicants will be notified following the review process. Funding recipients will receive detailed instructions on the utilisation of funds and reporting requirements associated with the awarded grant. A list of successful applicants and corresponding activities will be published (either via newsletter or email) by the Institute. Applicants who are not successful in their application may request feedback from the Executive Committee.

Note: The provision of funding is conditional upon the acceptance of the conference paper or confirmed travel of the visiting scholar. Applicants are required to promptly inform the committee if their paper is declined or the visiting scholars travel is cancelled. In such instances, the funds will be returned to the institute.

Compliance and Reporting

Funding recipients are required to comply with all relevant Victoria University policies and procedures governing the use of allocated funds. Additionally, recipients are required to submit post-conference reports or other documentation to demonstrate the outcomes and impact of the funded activity.

Review and Revision

These guidelines will be subject to periodic review and revision as necessary to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with the evolving needs and priorities of ISILC and Victoria University.