ARC Centre of Excellence in
Optical
Microcombs for
Breakthrough
Science

Centre Policy
Document ID: P010 Title: COMBS Internal Grants Authors: Scott Kolbe Contact Author: Scott Kolbe Contact Author email: scott.kolbe@rmit.edu.au Date Approved by COMBS Exec Committee: XXXX Current Version: 1

Purpose:

This policy establishes minimum requirements for internal grant schemes operated by COMBS Operational Committees and Forums. It aims to ensure that all internal grants:

- Align with Centre strategic objectives and committee operational plans
- Are administered transparently and equitably
- Reflect the Centre's commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion
- Are appropriately governed and reported

Scope:

This policy applies to grant schemes run by COMBS Operational Committees and Forums that distribute funds from approved Strategic Opportunity Fund allocations where the award for an individual grant is over $2000.

This policy does not apply to:

- CI funds (allocated at the discretion of the relevant CI)
- Central Operations funds (allocated at the discretion of the Director and COO)
- Grants of less than $2000

Procedure Description:

Grant design and approval

All internal grants should be included in the relevant Committee's annual operational plan, with associated budget included in the Committee/Forum's opportunity fund request, and both must be approved by the Centre Executive.

All grants must:

- Align with the Centre's Strategic Plan
- Include specific and concrete eligibility and assessment criteria written in plain English that are appropriate to the aims of the grant and a matched scoring matrix for assessors
- Specify the available budget, number and value of awards
- Have an associated implementation plan that has been approved by the relevant Operational Committee which includes details in the following sections.

Promotion

Grant schemes must be promoted to all relevant Centre members and should:

- Use inclusive language in all promotional materials
- Clearly articulate the eligibility and assessment criteria and scoring matrix
- Provide at least a four-week period between application opening and closing dates

NOTE: A grant scheme cannot proceed to assessment if no grants have been submitted that include women (or women identifying) as an individual applicant or member of an applying team. In such cases the committee should review and re-advertise.

Assessment

When assessing grants, Committees and Forums must:

- Apply the published criteria consistently
- When assessing against track record for applicants, do so relative to opportunity based on ARC guidelines
- Convene an assessment panel with appropriate expertise and diverse representation (please consider: gender diversity, nodes and themes represented, ECR/HDR involvement)
- Ensure conflicts of interest between applicants and assessors are managed as described below.

Managing conflicts of interest

Committees and Forums must avoid assessor/proposal matches that meet any of the following criteria:

- Assessor is listed on the proposal
- Assessor supervises or is supervised by any of the listed applicants
- Assessor shares a supervisor with any of the listed applicants
- Assessor has personal relationship with any of the listed applicants (e.g. family, partner, close friend)

Conflicts of interest should be recorded with the assessment materials in case there is a need for subsequent auditing.

Awarding

The Committee must ensure that:

- Successful applicants are notified in writing.
- Unsuccessful applicants are offered feedback upon reasonable request.

Post-award

Grant recipients must:

- Use funds within ARC-allowable expenditure categories (see Grant Guidelines)
- Acknowledge the Centre on associated outputs
- Report on outcomes as specified by the awarding Committee

Awarding Committees/Forums must:

- Maintain records of the grant, including applications, assessments and outcomes (this can be done in coordination with the Central Operations Team)
- Inform the Chief Operating Officer of the grant outcomes so that grant funds can be disbursed. Disbursement of awarded funds to recipients at non-RMIT nodes should follow the Centre's disbursement procedure, managed by the Central Operations team.
- Report on grant outcomes to the Executive Committee as part of their regular reporting cycle.