



Call for joint PhD projects – Grand Challenge Initiative Global Health

The University of Melbourne and the Berlin University Alliance

Deadline: 15 February 2022

Following two rounds of seed funding, the Berlin University Alliance (BUA) and the University of Melbourne (UoM) seek to advance their collaboration through joint research training. BUA is a consortium consisting of the Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin, and Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin. Together, the BUA and the University of Melbourne aim to strengthen their international approach to Global Health challenges by giving joint PhD candidates the opportunity to work on a globally collaborative research project, gain international experience and insights, and become part of an excellent research environment in Berlin and Melbourne.

This call is part of the Berlin University Alliance's second "Grand Challenge Initiative" (GCI) which addresses the field of Global Health as an emerging discipline. Global Health deals with issues of health and disease from a transnational and global perspective. It focuses on the interdependencies between globalization, health, and health determinants with a special focus on and commitment to the reduction of health disparities. The GCI recognizes global needs for new holistic health concepts and aims to find valuable scientific contributions Berlin-based stakeholders can make, especially through international cooperation. Through the MEL-BER partnership, this call focuses on establishing joint doctoral research activities. Participating PhD candidates will have the opportunity to benefit from a wide range of Global Health related activities as part of BUA's Grand Challenge Initiative.

Joint PhD candidates are enrolled at both institutions, perform their research under joint supervision, and are graded according to the academic standards of both institutions. Upon successful completion of the program, each candidate will be eligible to receive a joint PhD, recognised by two testamurs. Both testamurs will state the joint nature of the award and acknowledge the relevant BUA member and the University of Melbourne.

All candidates recruited to the program must meet the minimum eligibility requirements to successfully enrol in the relevant PhD course at UoM and at the participating BUA member.

UoM and BUA are calling for joint PhD proposals focusing on the theme of Global Health. Up to 12 joint PhD projects will be supported across six pairs of Principal Investigators (PIs). Each of these PI pairs will receive funding to support two PhD candidates, including tuition fee waivers, a full living allowance, travel allowance, and health insurance.

Joint PhD project proposals are invited from all disciplines and faculties with a clear focus on Global Health issues. These can include, but are not limited to, the following topics:

- Barriers to health protection, e.g. antimicrobial and vaccine resistance
- Emerging health threats, e.g. pandemic preparedness and response
- Urban physical and mental health, e.g. urbanisation, migration, culture, societal transformation
- Planetary health challenges, e.g. health effects of climate and diversity changes
- Managing Global Health, e.g. governance, economy, health systems, community participation

The Grand Challenge Initiative Global Health is of an interdisciplinary nature. Hence, projects with an interdisciplinary approach are particularly encouraged to apply for funding.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The supervisory team must comprise *at least* two Principal Investigators (PIs), one from UoM and one from a BUA member institution. The PIs must have capacity to serve as primary supervisors for two jointly enrolled PhD candidates. Previous MEL-BER applicants and recipients are eligible to apply.

UoM requirements

UoM academics must be registered to supervise as per the [Supervisor Eligibility and Registration Policy](#). Primary supervisors should be employed at UoM beyond the envisaged submission date of their PhD candidates (2027). If their employment contract does not extend beyond the submission date, then alternative arrangements must be in place, by either having:

- a) A named co-supervisor at Melbourne beyond the envisaged submission date of their PhD candidates (2027); *or*
- b) A letter of support from the respective Head of Department/Head of School detailing the arrangements in place to ensure continuity of supervision.

For more information, including forms for supervisor registration, please consult the [information for supervisors section on the Graduate Research Hub](#).

Honorary employees whose primary academic affiliation is the University of Melbourne are eligible to lead an application as a PI if they are a registered Principal Supervisor at Melbourne, **and** either:

- a) Their primary employer has entered into a written agreement for this call to fund the Melbourne cash component of the collaborative activity; *or*
- b) They participate at their own expense if they are otherwise unaffiliated (for example, they hold an emeritus position).

BUA requirements

BUA academics must meet the criteria of their respective faculty/institution for supervising a PhD candidate. Primary supervisors should be employed at the respective BUA member institution beyond the envisaged submission date of their PhD candidate (2027). If their employment contract does not extend beyond the submission date, then alternative arrangements must be in place, by either having:

- a) A named co-supervisor at the BUA member institution beyond the envisaged submission date of their PhD candidates (2027); *or*
- b) A letter of support from the respective Head of Department/Head of School detailing the arrangements in place to ensure continuity of supervision.

BUA academics who were successful in the BUA call “*Determinants of Global Health: Exploring Biological, Human-made & Environmental Factors*” are eligible to apply.

Additional notes for all applicants

Additional colleagues (including other partners in Australia, from non-BUA members in Germany, or internationally) are not eligible to apply as primary supervisors, although they can participate in the co-supervision of joint PhD candidates.

Adherence to respective equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies are a core feature of this program to ensure that all participants can do their best work, thrive and succeed. Applicant teams

should consider how they can take meaningful steps in their future collaborations to foster an environment that values, supports and respects a diverse range of views, knowledge and experiences. Applicants should consider EDI as it applies to gender, indigenous peoples, disabilities, career stages and sectors.

Applications that do not satisfy these criteria will **not be eligible**.

PROJECT STRUCTURE

Up to **6** proposals will be funded in total, with each proposal supporting **two** joint PhD candidates. In each pair, one candidate will have UoM as their Home Institution, and the other will have a BUA member as their Home Institution. The **Home Institution** is where the candidate spends most of their research time, where they receive their scholarship from, and is likely to commence and conclude their degree. The **Host Institution** is where the candidate spends the remainder of their candidature.

Candidates must submit their thesis within three years of commencement (with the possibility of a one-year extension upon application) and spend **at least 12 months at each institution** (e.g. 12 months at Melbourne and 12 months at the relevant BUA member). Suggested timelines for projects are included below – these can be altered depending on the needs of the project, so long as each candidate spends at least 12 months at each institution and the project is designed to be completed in maximum four years.

UoM Home Candidate

12 months in Melbourne
12- max. 24 months in Berlin
12-18 months in Melbourne

BUA Home Candidate

12 months in Berlin
12- max. 24 months in Melbourne
12-18 months in Berlin

FUNDING

An overall summary of the funding provided per project is included in the table below.

University of Melbourne	Berlin University Alliance
Tax-free scholarship (stipend) for each Melbourne-based candidate. Refer to the Graduate Research Scholarship page for full details.	Tax-free scholarship for each BUA based candidate (1500 €/per month) for three years. It may be possible to apply for a one-year extension of the scholarship.
Tuition fee remission scholarship or waiver for both Melbourne and BUA based candidates.	No tuition fees for Melbourne and BUA based candidates.
Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) single membership for any Melbourne-based international candidate who requires a student visa to study in Australia.	One-time payment of up to 1000 € for the Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) single membership when in Melbourne for BUA-based candidates.
Travel insurance while on Study Away for all candidates.	

Relocation allowance for all Melbourne-based candidates to commence at Melbourne, up to a maximum of \$3,000AUD.	Travel grants for BUA-based candidates when travelling to Melbourne, one-time payment of 6000 €
A \$20,000 lump sum to support Melbourne-based candidates and UoM PIs for relevant activities*, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate travel • PI travel • Workshop costs or virtual collaboration expenses • Graduate recruitment 	10.000 € each year in 2022, 2023 and 2024 to support BUA-based candidates and BUA PIs for relevant activities**, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidate travel • PI travel • Workshop costs or virtual collaboration expenses • Graduate recruitment

**Please note that ineligible costs include: directly incurred staff (e.g. Research Assistants), replacement research/teaching costs, directly allocated costs including applicants' time, indirect costs/estates costs, publication costs, equipment, consumable costs, scholarships, conference attendance, tuition fees, and honoraria.*

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REPORTING AND OTHER CONDITIONS

Melbourne academics

UoM recipients will be required to provide regular updates on project progress during the candidature of their joint PhD candidates. These updates will be requested quarterly by the International Research Training Group (IRTG) Academic Lead. Recipients who fail to participate in regular reporting mechanisms for this IRTG may be found ineligible for participation in future Researcher Development Schemes.

BUA academics

BUA recipients will be required to install appropriate mechanisms to ensure the project progress during the candidature of their joint PhD candidatures. The details of the collaboration mode between the PhD candidate and his/her supervisor shall be specified in written form in the supervision agreement ("Betreuungsvereinbarung") and/or the individual researcher agreement. Updates on the project progress will be requested annually by the BUA office.

PROPOSAL OUTLINE

Before preparing a proposal, please note the following about the structure of the program:

- Each pair of PIs should submit one proposal outlining two PhD projects (preferably with an interdisciplinary approach) intended for two joint PhD candidates. These projects can be on a similar research topic or theme, but the candidates cannot rely on each other's results or completed thesis material to progress in their candidature.
- Joint PhD projects must be designed to be completed within a maximum of four years candidature (3 years + 1 additional year upon extension request)
- One project must be for a Melbourne home candidate and the other for a BUA home candidate. Candidates must spend at least 12 months of their candidature at each institution.

The application form for the proposal requires:

- The details of the PIs involved, including their CVs and links to each PI's website or online profile.
- An overview of the PhD projects:
 - Noting which university will be the home institution for the project.
 - Providing a timeline for where and when the different research components will take place at each institution.
 - Including an abstract, written in plain language, for candidate recruitment if the project is successful.
 - For proposals involving a PI from UoM's Faculty of Arts only: You must also provide a statement addressing how the candidate/s will meet the Faculty's PhD coursework requirements in your application. Please refer to the Faculty's guidelines for additional information and contact the Associate Dean (Graduate Research) for any further guidance.
- A response to the selection criteria outlined under the heading "Evaluation of Proposals."
- Endorsement of UoM applicant (via email or letter) from the relevant UoM Head of School/Department **and** faculty Associate Dean (Graduate Research).
- **Only for applicants affiliated with Humboldt-Universität, Freie Universität, Technische Universität:** "Anzeigebögen" signed by the respective faculty.

It is recommended that applications be written in lay terms for reviewers to better understand the project's potential impact and anticipated outcomes.

KEY DATES

Call for joint PhD project proposals opens	15 October 2021
Call for proposals closes	15 February 2022
Outcome notifications and projects advertised for joint recruitment	End of March 2022
Recruited joint PhD candidates commence	By October 2022 (Berlin-based) and by March 2023 (Melbourne-based) at the latest

PIs must successfully recruit two candidates as per the timelines above. If the PIs do not meet this deadline, the scholarship and mobility funding will be recalled.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

The proposals will be ranked in order of meeting the selection criteria. UoM and BUA will select up to six proposals (equivalent to 12 PhD projects) for funding.

The following selection criteria apply:

- **Project design and rationale** – How clearly presented and justified is the basis for, and design of, the joint PhD project? What are the anticipated benefits of involving joint PhD researchers in the collaboration? What is the benefit of the candidate spending a minimum of 12 months at each institution?
- **Potential impact** – How does the project address (a) question(s) within the area of Global Health as a grand challenge? What is the level of originality and innovation in the research proposal? To what extent does the research proposal plan to address significant challenges

and what is the anticipated benefit to local or international communities?

- **Collaborator complementarity** – What is the evidence of an existing research relationship or added value of a new collaboration? How does the collaboration combine mutual areas of interest and strength?
- **Quality of supervision** – How will the PIs work together effectively in jointly supervising their shared PhD candidates? What are the beneficial learning outcomes and experiences for the joint PhD candidates? Have the PIs accounted for any challenges that may arise when supervising a joint PhD candidate?
- **Capacity for expanded collaboration** – What is the extent of the planned collaboration between the PIs beyond joint supervision? How well does the proposal plan to leverage external funding? To what extent are future collaborations made possible as a result of the proposed activities? How could this project seed the development of a larger network of researchers?

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

The submission deadline is 15 February 2022 at **2PM** (Berlin local time – GMT+2).

A single, jointly prepared application must be submitted in English through the application portal (<https://portal.bihealth.de/portal/>) to the BUA.

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