



## MEL-BER Partnership: Call for Joint Research Proposals 2020/21

After a successful pilot call for joint research proposals within the MEL-BER Partnership, the University of Melbourne and the Berlin Universities Alliance (BUA), constituted by Freie Universität Berlin, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Technische Universität Berlin and the Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, are pleased to announce a second call for proposals.

The first call for applications helped to seed 12 high quality research collaborations spread across all four BUA members in areas such as neuroscience, migration, navigation and teacher training. This second call seeks to build on this success by introducing additional support for the development of joint PhD training opportunities embedded into new and existing research collaborations. In the long term, the seed funding enables joint supervision and “cotutelle” style jointly awarded PhDs to:

- Establish new thematically oriented International Graduate Schools or structured jointly awarded PhD programs; or
- Establish new International Research Training Groups.

The development of Jointly Awarded Doctoral Research degrees is to be facilitated by an overarching Framework Agreement between the BUA members and the University of Melbourne. Templates for individual agreements will be negotiated between the University of Melbourne and the participating faculty of the respective BUA member for successful proposals, where relevant.

Accordingly, this Second Call for Proposals will provide funding for *new* initiatives where the outcomes will include recruitment and placement of Joint PhD candidates at participating institutions.

Each proposal will seek to:

- contribute to the establishment of structured joint PhD training opportunities,
- provide excellent opportunities to foster high quality international research and research training in Berlin and Melbourne, and
- identify a path to external funding to support research and research training activities over the longer term.

In developing their proposals, applicants are actively encouraged to consider the use of digital formats instead of physical mobility, where possible as a mechanism of fostering productive planning, research and candidate management activities. If successful, recipients of funding in Melbourne and Berlin will be required to abide by the policies and practices of their respective institutions for ethical conduct of research; enrolment, supervision and award of Joint PhDs; and reporting and reconciliation of funding and expenditure. Successful applicants will receive administrative support from Melbourne and the respective BUA institution to facilitate the joint enrolment of their candidates, where applicable.

### General eligibility criteria:

The 2020/21 MEL-BER Call for Proposals is open to researchers from the University of Melbourne (UoM) and all Berlin University Alliance (BUA) partners, from any discipline.

All proposals must include at least one faculty member from each of the University of Melbourne and at least one BUA partner.

For the BUA, lead applicants must be full-time faculty members.

For Melbourne, lead applicants must hold an appointment at the University of Melbourne at Academic Level A (6) or higher and 0.5 FTE or higher at the time of application and for the duration of the award. Honorary employees whose primary academic affiliation is the University of Melbourne are eligible to lead the application if their primary employer has entered into an agreement with the University for the support of the Australian component of the collaborative activity; or may participate at their own expense if they are otherwise unaffiliated (for example, they hold an emeritus position).

Additional external partners (in Australia, Germany or internationally) are welcome to participate but cannot be funded by the MEL-BER Research Partnership.

Adherence to respective equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies is a core feature of the MEL-BER Partnership to ensure that all participants can do their best work, thrive and succeed. This application must demonstrate a commitment to EDI by highlighting meaningful steps taken by the lead applicants 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. The meaningful integration of all members in the proposed project team is required, with concrete measures put in place to support their integration and development, where appropriate. All applications must demonstrate efforts to achieve gender balance and include early and mid career researchers where appropriate.

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

### Funding pool, number of awards, their duration and funding allocation:

The total pool of funding available under the 2020/21 MEL-BER Call is **up to €500,000**.

Awards will be limited to ~ €50,000 in total (i.e. €25,000 from BUA and up to \$40,000 AUD from UoM).

Where other contributions are being made by faculties/units this will be counted as additional to the MEL-BER award.

Proposals must detail how awarded funding will be allocated for the duration of the collaboration, and how it will continue once the funding period is complete.

MEL-BER funding will be available from the end of January 2021 and must be expended according to the awarded budget, and within the proposed timeframe (by December 31, 2021), unless a variation to this award is approved by both the University of Melbourne and participating Berlin partner institutions.

### Eligible costs

- Travel, accommodation and other associated costs for joint workshops, academic and graduate researcher exchanges (including contributions towards academic exchange programs where appropriate);
- Establishing, testing and applying digital activities;
- Costs associated with the preparation of joint grant proposals to respective national funders, agencies, international bodies, philanthropic sponsors or foundations; and
- Material costs of the collaborative research (as contributions towards laboratory or field costs for participating academics and/or graduate researchers).

### Selection Criteria and Evaluation Process

- Project design and rationale: How clearly presented and justified is the design and basis for the collaboration?
- Added value of collaboration: How does the collaboration combine mutual areas of interest and strength and builds research capacity in Berlin and Melbourne?
- Involvement of joint doctoral training opportunities: What are the anticipated benefits of involving PhD researchers and what opportunities are provided to engage in collaboration?
- Capacity for future collaboration/funding: What is the potential for this funding to foster ongoing collaboration that will lead to successful joint grant application(s) involving the Melbourne and Berlin collaborators and structured joint doctoral training (e.g. International Research Training Groups)?
- Reflection of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) priorities in the composition of the research team, including gender balance of named investigators and the involvement of graduate-, early- and mid- career researchers.

The final funding decision will be based on an internal peer review process.

## Requirements of Recipients

- **Project timeline:** All activities should be completed and expenditure reconciled as proposed and/or approved.
- **Progress reports:** Melbourne and BUA recipients must report briefly after six months from the start of the award on the activities to which the grant is being applied, and annually thereafter until project completion. This includes reporting on progress towards obtaining further external support for the project's development.
- **Acknowledgement:** Melbourne and BUA recipients are expected to acknowledge the support of the MEL-BER Partnership in any publication or presentations, which should be listed in the progress reports.
- **Payment of the grant:** The payment and post-award financial management will be administered through the Melbourne and BUA recipients' respective institutions.

## Submission Documents

The completed application must include:

- The financial budget, with amounts specified by category;
- Complete CVs of CIs and a list of prospective recipients on both sides;
- Evidence of approval to submit by their relevant Deans (Berlin) and Heads of Department/School (Melbourne);
- Letters of commitment for any additional financial support from sponsoring Faculty/units including support for any PhD positions/funding allocated to the proposed activity ; and
- A narrative project description of no more than 3 pages, including:
  - An overview of the proposed approach to establish joint doctoral training opportunities between the members of the Berlin University Alliance and University of Melbourne. Please specifically address the benefits of such a collaboration for the participating institutions and indicate whether this approach is based on already existing cooperation forms;
  - A description of the field of study suitable for a non-specialist audience;
  - A plan for the ongoing collaboration including a detailed plan for the project's long-term third-party funding situation beyond the funding obtained through the award;
  - A lay-out of the proposed project's specific objectives as well as its operations and functions;
  - A summary of any additional resources (office or laboratory space, library access etc) required for the project and their availability.

## Key dates for 2020

- Applications open: 31 August 2020
- Applications deadline: 19 October 2020 at 2:00 pm (Berlin local time)
- Outcome notification: End of November 2020
- Funding Activity: End of January 2021 to 31 December 2021

## Submission and Contact Information

A single, jointly prepared application must be submitted in English through the application portal (<https://portal.bihealth.de/portal/>) to the BUA, by **2 pm on 19 October 2020 (Berlin local time)**.

BUA submission and contact details:

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For Melbourne applicants please direct any additional questions to:

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