

Westmead Research Hub Core Facilities User Access Scheme

Guidelines for applicants

Goals

The Core Research Facilities User Access Scheme supports the Westmead Research Hub Strategy through the provision of small grants to support access to the core research facilities for generation of preliminary data for:

- New and innovative research that pushes the boundaries of current science
- Grant applications by research groups that otherwise do not have funding for this purpose;
- The purpose of creating awareness of research technologies with potential to benefit currently funded research projects

Criteria

Participants will be selected according to research quality and merit. All eligible proposals will be considered against the following criteria:

- Quality and potential impact of the research proposed;
- Transformative potential of the award for creating opportunities for the applicant and facility;
- Extent to which the applicant's proposed activities advance Westmead's strategic research goals.

Preference will be given to:

- o Researchers seeking to achieve results that contribute to the establishment of a research track record in a particular discipline area;
- o Researchers who have not previously used the facility that are seeking to demonstrate research track record in a particular discipline area;
- o A strategic proof-of-concept experiment that will lead to further external funding opportunities and/or collaborations;
- o A peak experiment or study that is needed to complete a major work, achieving leverage of research already undertaken;
- o The usage of underutilised research equipment / core facilities to attract new users and increase facility utilisation.

User Access Scheme streams: Proficient User Project and Service-Based Project

Because facility capacity is limited, for the purposes of this scheme there will be two streams that you can apply for, Proficient User Projects and Service based Projects. Projects will be considered differently under this scheme based on which stream you apply for.

- **Proficient User Stream:** An applicant's current proficiency level within the facility will be considered. For example, if you are currently an autonomous user of the facility, minimal facility staff time will be necessary for you to achieve your result. Projects of this nature should be submitted under the Proficient User Stream.
- **Service-Based Project Stream:** Your project may require staff service time to achieve your results, however, staff availability is limited. These kinds of applications will be judged

differently, weighted more towards project ideas with highest potential of future grant funding, or most achievable within the facility staff's available time. These projects should apply under the Service Based Project Stream.

Eligibility

- Users must be members of a Westmead Research Hub partner institution
- Proposed research projects must not be within the scope of research that has been directly funded – access to funded research is available at the applicable internal access rates
- Additional work outside the scope of funded research projects, but with the potential to further enhance or leverage funded research, will be considered for the Access Scheme
- Research projects supported by the User Access Scheme must outline their expected research impact (e.g. papers to be published, other research or commercialisation metrics)
- Preparatory research projects that are likely to lead to further ARC, NHMRC, or other grant funding, and/or paid commercial projects may be prioritised.
- No more than one User Access Scheme to be granted per person and/or project
- All published work completed under this scheme must acknowledge the facility in the acknowledgement section of the publication
- Recipients must be willing to promote core research facilities in their presentations at local and international events

Application Process

In the first instance, researchers should contact the relevant facility to discuss submission of an application form addressing the basic eligibility and selection criteria, as well as any unique criteria used by individual facilities (e.g. these may be based on the desire to support emerging areas of research within particular fields). Facilities will advise applicants on the strength of their application, and how these may be improved (if applicable).

Applications should be made via the online User Access Scheme application form, available here[ToDo]. The applications will be assessed by the Hub Scientific Advisory Committee, and then be recommended to the Westmead Research Hub Operational Management Committee for approval.

Successful applicants can book access using PPMS, the Facility's management system.

Time limits

Users must redeem their scheme allocation within the 12 months of being awarded.

Consumables

Consumables are not covered under the Scheme. Please discuss your project with the individual Facility manager prior to applying to ensure that the required consumables are affordable.

Equipment Usage

Equipment usage fees will be waived in the scheme

Service Work

Service work fees will be waived in the scheme however each facility will have limitations on service time available. These limitations will form part of the projects eligibility for the scheme e.g. a project requiring less service time will be more achievable by the facility and therefore more highly favoured for selection under this scheme, however this does not preclude projects requiring service from applying.

Training and Assisted Sessions

Training fees will normally be payable under this scheme. Waiving of training and assisted session fees will be assessed on a case by case basis depending on the amount of time it generally takes to be trained to a level of proficiency on the equipment.

Usage caps

If usage caps are employed by certain Core Facilities, these will not apply to Scheme projects, as these caps only apply to paid access. Therefore, researchers should apply for the full value of their access requirements, not for the price cap. Access Scheme projects will also not count towards a user's cap value.

Access

Paying customers of the facility will have priority for the booking and access to the facility over successful projects under this scheme.