



Strategic Research Initiatives (SRIs) - Guidelines

Office of the DVC and Vice-President (Research and Innovation)

The Office of the DVC and Vice-President (Research and Innovation) is calling for Expressions of Interest for Strategic Research Initiatives (SRIs). Informed by *Securing Success 2017 -2020* and *The Research and Innovation Plan 2018 – 2020*, the University is seeking to develop and build on the success of its research critical mass model currently exemplified by WSU’s Research Centres and Institutes.

The Strategic Research Initiatives, based on this cohort approach, will be required to demonstrate an increased focus on whole of University collaboration and sustained relationships with industry, government and NGO partners where intellectual exchange between those partners and the University comprises an integral part of the research - design, outcomes and its impact. As such the funding targets for SRIs will have an increased focus on categories 2-4 as funding sources for essential growth against the backdrop of the diminishing national cat 1 pool.

Research cohorts interested in leveraging increased capacity and establishing new Initiatives are asked to complete an initial stage EoI that reflects an alignment with WSU’s research strengths, how the SRI addresses a global challenge and how it supports Western’s ambitions articulated in *Securing Success*. EoIs will be assessed by an internal panel which will determine those to proceed to a full application.

SRI Application Timeline



STRATEGIC RESEARCH INITIATIVES

SRI Attributes:

SRI's should reflect cross disciplinary areas of excellence in research and development with major and distinctive programs of research featuring world leading collaborations and a pipeline to strong partnerships with industry, government and communities locally, nationally or internationally. Additionally, SRI's should reflect:

- a recognised/identified national and international reputation for research excellence. SRI's need to benchmark against the overall existing capacity, nationally and internationally, of the area/s of research, identifying who is advancing it and what principles drive this advancement. The proposed SRI will need to differentiate itself from current cohorts in the research field, reflecting how it either leads or complements existing national and international activities and what makes the proposed initiative cutting edge.
- a substantial level of critical mass drawn from across the University with a focus on providing leadership in research performance. SRI's must have a major but distinctive strategic mid-long term research focus aligned to one or more of the 4 Research Themes AND addressing a global challenge.
- embeddedness or affiliation with a School or Institute. The SRI will also demonstrate the relationship between its activities and those of the Schools/Institutes more broadly which will develop and drive internal research collaborations across existing cohorts (Schools, Centres and Institutes). The SRI will draw on the capacity and research track record of members to generate significant external funding from diverse sources (categories 1-4 including contract and commercial research) exceeding disciplinary averages.
- engagement plans that include mechanisms for obtaining expert input from the broader community and develop and drive new external research collaborations and foster further development of established partnerships with external research (national and international), business and government stakeholders.
- a clear articulation of the impact that will be delivered for the discipline. SRI's will also demonstrate a clear translation/knowledge exchange of research impact that will ensure delivery to the broader community and stakeholders. As such, the SRI should reflect a clear pipeline to impact embedded in the SRI's approach to research and partnerships.
- the capacity to generate high quality research outputs commensurate with size.
- the capacity to recruit and train cohorts of HDRs (MRes, PhDs).
- opportunities to offer distinctive postgraduate coursework training and Executive education professional development for related industries/workforce.
- a focus on capacity development of SRI members.
- engagement with the Division of Research in the design, support and delivery of researcher development strategies for provision of mentoring and support for research across the University.

Key qualities of the Strategic Research Initiative to be identified in the EoI include:

Outward focus	Impact	Quality
Industry/Gov't Partners	Critical Mass	National and international benchmarking
Income and Income Diversity	Collaborations across WSU	External Profile

Selection Process

EoI assessment will be based on how each EoI has demonstrated the SRI embodies these attributes and how they reflect the key qualities identified. Assessments will be made by a panel drawn from across the WSU.

EoI Panel

The assessment panel will be comprised of the DVC R&I, the Dean of the School/s and Institute Directors with which the SRI will be most closely affiliated (either formally or intellectually), the Theme Champions, and disciplinary expert.

Second Stage Full Proposals

Successful EoIs will be invited to submit full proposals. The development of full proposals, or second stage bids, will be supported by the Division of Research and Innovation. This support will include assistance from the REDI for development of the SRI’s strategic plan, including the approach to external engagement and risk assessment.

Second Stage Panel

The assessment panel for full applications will include the cohort already identified for the EoI assessment with the addition of an external industry partner/stakeholder identified by the bid lead/s and endorsed by the appropriate Theme Champion.

The full application will call for additional information and more thorough strategic plans including:

Relationship between the new initiatives research activities, and those of the associated Schools.	How participation of people from the broader WSU community canvassed.	Quantitative KPIs/KPTs including target dates for research, partnerships and collaboration.
Key academic staff associated with the initiative and their time commitment.	External funding that supports the initiative.	The administrative arrangements of the initiative (e.g. administrative support).
Space, infrastructure, equipment, facilities and other resources including support in-kind salaries committed by Schools and Institutes as appropriate (including academic and professional staff).	Principal risks associated with the establishment and operation of the initiative.	Arrangements that will be made for research higher degree students.

Additionally the full proposal will incorporate a:

- Strategic plan
- Business plan for partnerships and collaborations
- Organisation chart
- Budget for establishment and three/five year projection

As specified in the current Centres and Institutes policies, final approval for new Initiatives will rest with the Vice Chancellor for five year bids and the DVC (R&I) for three year bids. The VC and DVC (R&I) will be presented with the recommended completed bids and a feasibility report for each proposed venture.

Strategic Research Initiatives will be funded for either three or five years. Both will be reviewed after the first year of operation to ensure progress and provide assistance as needed. They will be reviewed again in year three with those funded for five reviewed again after year four.

Funding for this initial call is limited as such it is anticipated that 2 or 3 SRIs may receive funding in this SRI round. There will be future calls at regular intervals which will allow for well-regarded SRI applications to be further developed with support of the Division of Research and Innovation for resubmission.

For advice and assistance contact Annette McLaren, Senior Policy Advisor and Project Manager, Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) at A.Mclaren@westernsydney.edu.au or on x9981 or 0417789090