



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Skills and Employment

Strategic University Reform Fund

2021 Application Form



Contents

Declaration	1
1. Outline	1
2. Eligibility	1
3. Application Process	2
4. Selection Criteria and Application Documents	3
4.1 Project Description	3
4.2 Program Objectives	4
4.3 Detailed Budget	10
4.4 Detailed Timeline	12
4.5 Outcomes and Benefits	14
4.6 Business Plan	16
4.7 Previous funding	18
4.8 Supporting documents	19



Please note:

This form performs best when using Adobe Acrobat Reader. [Click here](#) for the free download of the latest version.

Declaration

I,
hereby declare that this application is, to the best of my knowledge and given my authority within my institution, a true and accurate statement.

Signed

Position

Dated

Contact number

Email address

1. Outline

The Strategic University Reform Fund (SURF) will encourage universities to undertake novel reform in areas of Government priority and enable universities to develop targeted and innovative solutions that are focused on local communities.

Administered by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, projects to be supported will enhance collaboration between universities and local employers and improve commercialisation of applied research.

This Application Form should be read alongside the SURF Guidelines available at www.dese.gov.au/strategic-university-reform-fund.

2. Eligibility

Institutions listed in Table A and Table B of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) will be eligible to apply for funding through this program.

Each response to the [Selection Criteria](#) (4.1-4.5) must be completed in order for your application to be deemed eligible.

3. Application Process

Applications for the first round of SURF funding will open on Tuesday 12 January 2021, with applications closing at 11.59pm AEDT on Tuesday 9 February 2021. The department expects to notify applicants of outcomes in March 2021 with approved projects to commence from April 2021. Second and subsequent annual rounds will open in later years, and as such the 2021 round will balance current needs while also reserving capacity for future allocations.

Applications for SURF funding will be a one-step process. The Fund will support new pilot projects with an estimated initial first-tranche investment of \$2 million.

SURF will also support a second tranche of funding for pilot projects that have been able to demonstrate success against the program criteria and secure matched funding from other parties (including 'Pilot Programs to Enhance Collaboration between Universities and Industry' funded through the 2019-2020 MYEFO). Applications for second-tranche SURF funding will take place alongside the first-tranche application process, with additional submission requirements. The combined total of the initial and subsequent SURF funding will be a maximum of \$10 million.

Applications will be assessed by a panel made up of departmental officers which may include external representatives. The department will make recommendations to the Minister for Education and Youth on which SURF projects should receive funding, with successful projects to be determined and announced by the Minister. The lead institution will be notified in writing prior to any announcement.

Late submission applications will be considered only in exceptional circumstances beyond the lead institution's control. The department will accept late applications only if there is sufficient time to adequately assess such applications. The department's decision with respect to the consideration of late applications will be final. The lead institution will be informed in writing of the department's decision. No other correspondence in relation to the decision will be entered into.

Your application must contain a letter of support signed by the university's (Lead Institution) Vice Chancellor. Where an application is for a consortium, all members of the consortium must provide a letter of support to the Lead Institution identifying their commitment to the project.

This Application Form should be submitted to the department as a PDF document (along with your letter or letters of support and any additional documents) and sent to the SURF mailbox: SURF@dese.gov.au.

Any questions on the application should be sent to the SURF mailbox: SURF@dese.gov.au.

4. Selection Criteria and Application Documents

No weighting will be applied to the selection criteria and applications will be considered in their entirety.

Please note: all section word limits are approximate, with section response length limited by number of characters.

4.1 Project Description

(500-word/3500-character limit)

Please provide a description of your project (which may have more than one element). If you are seeking funding for multiple projects please submit a separate Application Form for each project.

4.2 Program Objectives

(1000-word/7000-character limit per section)

Your application must demonstrate:

- how the proposed research/innovation is focussed on supporting jobs;
- how the proposal is locally relevant and engages with relevant local industry and/or government;
- the potential for projects to be scaled up and adopted by other universities over time; and
- the extent to which the project supports the Government's wider strategic and structural reform objectives for the higher education and innovation systems.

Criteria your application must demonstrate - continued:



Additional criteria that will be assessed include demonstration of:

- system improvements that will enable greater collaboration and commercialisation outcomes within the university context, targeted to the local community;
- furthering research collaborations with small to medium enterprises (SMEs) or key local labour markets;
- alignment with areas of identified national research priority; and/or
- pilot/test ideas that might be taken up by other universities, especially in ways to cooperate with industry.

Additional criteria - continued:



Other criteria that may be assessed include:

- the capacity of participating institutions to deliver the proposed outcomes;
- the support, both cash and in-kind, to be provided by the participating institutions; and/or
- value for money.

Other criteria - continued:



4.3 Detailed Budget

(1000-word/7000-character limit)

Please include a detailed budget. This should include, where appropriate, any claim for facilitation payments, in-kind contributions, industry co-investment and any other resources committed to the project.

Please note: the SURF program will not duplicate funding for research, including infrastructure, already funded by the Commonwealth. The department reserves the right to determine if a SURF project duplicates or is likely to duplicate research being funded by another Commonwealth source.



4.4 Detailed Timeline

(1000-word/7000-character limit)

Please provide a detailed timeline of your proposed project, including key milestones.



4.5 Outcomes and Benefits

(1000-word/7000-character limit)

Please provide the expected outcomes and benefits that could arise from the project and key performance indicators.

Outcomes and Benefits - continued:



4.6 Business Plan

(1000-word/7000-character limit)

Please include a business plan that sets out governance arrangements (including partnership or other agreements covering the SURF project) and a risk management plan.

Business Plan - continued:

4.7 Previous funding

(1000-word/7000-character limit)

For 2021, only complete this section if you are seeking second-tranche funding for one of the 'Pilot Programs to Enhance Collaboration between Universities and Industry' from the 2019-2020 Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook.

These applications should demonstrate:

- successful outcomes from initial pilot funding which evidence delivery of the above criteria;
- how the provision of additional SURF funding will support the above criteria into the future and support successful completion of the pilot project; and
- funding commitments from other parties (i.e. industry partners or state and territory governments) which match the amount of Commonwealth funding being sought.

Previous funding - continued:

4.8 Supporting documents

Please attach to your application any documents which may support your application. These should be sent in PDF format.