POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH SUPPORT SCHEME (PRSS)

Economics, SLAM, SOPHI & SSPS Information Session April 2015

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The PRSS scheme was introduced in 2001 to provide direct support for postgraduate research students.

In 2015, the total available fund is $1.5 million for the university.

Funds are allocated to Schools based on their higher degree enrolment figures from the previous year.

In 2015, the funds available in FASS are allocated as follows:

- Economics $ 7,651
- SLAM $77,209
- SLC $35,068
- SOPHI $71,760
- SSPS $59,066
WHY APPLY?

› To advance your research
› To advance your prospects
› To learn the funding application genre
NATURE OF THE FUND

Funds are awarded by Schools to **eligible** applicants on a **competitive** basis according to the University’s **general guidelines**.

The general guidelines are accessible at


Refer to your School website for relevant specific details and advice.

In making their decisions the School selection committee will consider:

1. Quality of the applicant’s proposal as an application for research funding
2. Quality of the applicant’s track record relative to opportunity and stage of candidature
3. Demonstrated need for funding
4. School priorities, if any, placed on the different expenditure categories in any year
Demonstrated need for funding

In this context need refers not to financial need but the degree to which the proposed expenditure is essential to or will expedite the completion of the research project.

Include a brief statement justifying the need for and proposed use of funds.

Make explicit the benefits that will flow from the expenditure (how it will advance the progress of your research or assist your development as a researcher).

Specify the projected outcomes from the proposed funding (discovery elements, analytical advance, plans for publication, etc).

You should also include evidence of outcomes from previous funding through PRSS and other grant schemes if applicable.

Please note that due to the competitive nature of this program, successful applicants may be awarded partial funding rather than the full amount they request in their application.
What to include in your application?

Your application should include a clear and concise statement of the proposed use of funds and their benefit to your candidature. That is, how the funded activities may contribute to any of the following:

- the quality and originality of your research
- the potential impact of your research
- the acceleration of your research (timely submission)
- your research skills base and/or professionalism

Attach a detailed budget with supporting evidence, such as:

- copies of receipts for costs already paid for
- quotations for travel and accommodation
- if presenting at a conference include evidence that your paper has been accepted
  (if not available yet indicate when it may be)

Include details on any other funding you have already obtained (or have applied for) for the activity that is the focus of the application.

Include evidence of ethics approval, if applicable.
Achievement relative to opportunity

Include any achievement related to your research such as:

- publications (in press or submitted),
- conference presentations,
- internal reports or other scholarly activities that have resulted from your research to date
- list details of scholarships you hold, or any other indications of research excellence

Note: A track record of achievement relative to opportunity and stage of candidature provides some indication of satisfactory progress during your candidature, however it is not a pre-requisite for a successful PRSS application.
Section 5: Current PRSS Funding Sought

Please tick (you may indicate more than one category):

› Presenting at conferences
› Use of specialist services, visit to use specialist facilities or to learn specialist technique/s
› Field expenses
› Purchase of specialist books, software
› Computers or other equipment
› Thesis production expenses
Justification (no more than 400 words)

Attach a separate sheet containing

Title of thesis

Description of conference or research trip or whatever is being requested

Statement of how the funds requested fit into the thesis and are needed to assist in its completion.

Outcomes of previous PRSS funding

Details on any other funding you have already obtained (or are likely to obtain) for the activity that is the focus of this application.

Statement outlining status of ethics approval for fieldwork expense claims, if applicable.

Copy of expenses incurred to date or quotes regarding the funds being requested

Indicate how the proposed project fits within your overall doctoral research project and timeline
JUSTIFICATION

Indicate how the proposed project contributes to some or all of the following:

- the quality of your research
- the originality of your research
- the potential impact of your research
- the acceleration of your research (timely submission)
- your research skill base
- your professionalization
Evidence of acceptance of papers at conferences should be included. If this is not available at the time of submission you should indicate when it will be forthcoming.

Include the abstract you have or intend to submit, plus any relevant correspondence with organizers.

Indicate the standing of the conference (be clear about whether or not it is a postgraduate conference, whether it is selective, etc.)
Section 5 includes a simple budget table but including a more detailed breakdown of projected expenses (conference registration fees, travel, accommodation) may strengthen your application

Discursive strengthening:

“My paper has been accepted through a competitive process of blind peer-review … ”

“I will be the only postgraduate presenter on a panel featuring established researchers from …”

“Selection for this conference was based on the submission of a full written paper. The expert reviewers commented that …”
A statement from your supervisor is **compulsory**.

Send a copy of your completed application to your supervisor to assist them with their statement.

A template for the supervisor’s statement can be found on your School’s scholarship/funding opportunities website

If you are requesting funding for specialist services, a visit to use specialist facilities or to learn specialist technique/s (category b) your supervisor must include a statement explicitly supporting this request.
1. Candidate’s rate of progress in the degree

2. Link between the candidate's doctoral research and the project proposed in this application (including any proposed professional development activity)

3. Appropriateness of any conference presentation proposed in this application to the candidate's doctoral research and the standing of the conference itself

4. Research outcomes from any previous funding the candidate has received through this or any other grant

5. Appropriateness of the budget

6. Confirmation of human ethics approval if required

7. Research equipment justification (if equipment is claimed by applicant) i.e. why this need was unforeseen at the commencement of candidature and why the equipment cannot be provided by the department

Please use official letterhead for your statement of support.
“X is making excellent progress on her thesis and will be able to submit … She has presented at three British conferences in the last two years (Sheffield, Bristol and Northampton). All these conferences have been forums for specialists, not graduate student-only conferences: her reception at these conferences attests to the quality of her research.”
“X is not supported by a scholarship; she has modest travel funding from the University’s grant-in-aid scheme and a Departmental fund. She is currently in the UK completing her final research trip and presenting at conferences. The funding requested would reimburse her for the cost of this trip and enable her to extend it to be able to undertake further archival research that would make a significant contribution to the quality of the thesis. X has planned her trip efficiently and budgeted well: the sum requested is entirely appropriate.”

“This time in Britain is necessary because at the core of X’s research is detailed scrutiny of archival documents – especially family correspondence. Much of this material is held in local or country record offices, not major London institutions such as the British Library and the National Archives at Kew. Many of the documents she is consulting are fragile and not available for copying.”
Preparing your application

Writing and editing: plan your time between now and the submission deadline, allow for critique and redrafting

Consider making a meeting with your supervisor to discuss your application draft

Ask them if they can provide a supporting statement and discuss what it might cover

Arrange how you will obtain a copy of their letter of recommendation to attach to the application.
What makes a strong application?

A brief but clear statement about the significance of the research that is understandable to a non-specialist academic reader.

A clear outline of what the fundable research is, how it contributes to the larger project, and how it will be achieved: what, where, when, how.

An indication of how this application for funding knits with other funding applications you may have in train with other granting agencies.

A brief statement on prior research achieved via PRSS funding if relevant.

Establishing how the project is relative to your progress in the degree.

There are no gray areas in the application (questions about Ethics approval, mystery items or obscure amounts in the budget etc).

Evidence-based claims to research excellence (the significance of the conference, peer-esteem and ranking of journals).
Things to Avoid

Typos and spelling mistakes
Sloppy formatting
Silly email addresses
Unrealistic research ambitions or schedules
Over-promising in relation to outcomes and impact
Undocumented claims to excellence
WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

› All currently enrolled research students, including international students, who are considered in-time at the closing date for applications and have demonstrated satisfactory progress

› Research doctorate students: candidature must not exceed 8 full-time semesters or part-time equivalent

› Masters by research students: candidature must not exceed 4 full-time semesters or part-time equivalent

› Applicants will not be considered if they have not demonstrated satisfactory progress in the relevant timeframe
WHAT WON’T BE FUNDED

Exclusions

› expenses that have not or will not be incurred in the current calendar year
› attendance at conferences where the student is not presenting a paper or poster they have authored
› specialist services or training otherwise available through the School or anticipated at the point of enrolment
› expenses and consumables normally covered by the School’s infrastructure (such as stationery, questionnaires, photocopying)
› books, periodicals and software obtainable within the University
› non-essential computers and equipment, or computers and equipment otherwise accessible through the School
› thesis production expenses if these are already provided for by a student’s scholarship, or the student is not submitting in the current semester or calendar year
WHAT WILL BE FUNDED

Essential costs that are integral to the research and justified within the application will be funded to the relevant limits. Examples of fundable items include: archival visit and fieldwork, data gathering

Conference attendance to present original papers or posters

Specialist services or training not available through the School that was not anticipated at the point of enrolment

Field expenses not normally provided by the School

Specialist books, periodicals or software unobtainable through the University

Equipment or computers not available through the School

Theses production expenses not otherwise provided for
SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION

› Formatting and Submission
  - Be sure to use the current form appropriate to your School
  - Make sure you use a legible font in all supporting statements
  - You must submit 7 hard copies of the entire application to the relevant School by the posted deadline (address to the School’s Research Support Officer)
  - If you are using internal mail allow at least three days for deliver

› Application Checklist
  - Application form completed
  - Justification of funding attached (section 5)
  - Details of achievements (optional, section 6)
  - Funding claims supported with evidence
  - Signed by supervisor
  - Signed by applicant
The funds must be expended within the calendar year

A student cannot lodge a second application for the remainder of expenditure incurred under a previous successful PRSS application

- For example: if you have previously claimed $1,000 towards the purchase of a laptop computer awarded under a successful PRSS application, you cannot apply again for another $1,000 for the same computer
HOW MUCH?

› Minimum you can apply for in each application round: $200

› Maximum you can apply for in each application round: $1,200

› If you are applying for conference attendance the relevant limits are:
  - $3,000 for presentations at conferences in Europe, Africa, North and South America
  - $2,000 for presentations at conferences held in other overseas countries

› Thesis production expenses:
  - Research Doctorate thesis: $600
  - Masters by Research thesis: $300
HOW OFTEN AND WHEN?

You can only lodge one application in any PRSS round

Research Doctoral Students are only permitted three successful PRSS awards across the duration of their in-time candidature

Masters by Research Students are only permitted one successful PRSS award during their in-time candidature

If a Masters by Research student converts to a Research Doctorate the total number of successful PRSS awards they are permitted extends to three, including any award they received as a Masters student

Schools hold at least one PRSS round per year

In 2015, all Schools in FASS have a deadline of **Monday 18 May**

Late applications will not be accepted (submit 7 sets of the completed application)
WHEN WILL YOU KNOW THE OUTCOME

› The School selection committees will meet around three weeks after the round closes on 18 May 2015 and letters to applicants go out on 12 June 2015.
LETTERS OF AWARD

› Postgraduate Research Support Scheme (PRSS) – 2015

› The School PRSS Selection Committee has now considered applications for funding support under this scheme. I am pleased to advise you have been awarded $<amount> to <purpose of funds>.

› To receive payment, you must submit a claim for items that have been approved to the School Finance team as soon as expenditures are committed. Claims must include:
  - A Payment Request form (enclosed)
  - A Vendor EFT form (enclosed)
  - Original receipts for all claims (certified copies cannot be accepted)
  - Proof of identity (sighting of student card)
  - Conference travel claims supported with evidence of presentation of a paper
  - Thesis production expenses supported with a copy of the thesis lodgement form

› Enquiries relating to claims for funds should be directed to <name>, School Finance Officer, on 9351 xxxx or at <name>@sydney.edu.au. Claims can be submitted to <name> at room xxx YYY Building (Axx).

› Please note that the last date to lodge a PRSS claim for 2015 is <weekday>, <date> <month>. This is a University-wide deadline and there are no provisions to carry forward any unused funds or to lodge late claims beyond this date. If you have not spent the full amount awarded by the end of the year, you should lodge a partial claim by the due date for the expenditure already incurred.
HOW ARE THE FUNDS PAID?

› You will need to submit a claim to your School Financial for items that have been approved as soon as expenditure is committed. The funds can be paid in one of the following ways:

- Reimbursement to you on presentation of original receipts

- Payment to the supplier on presentation of original invoices, purchase orders, quotations, order forms, conference registration forms – receipts form the suppliers for the value of payment/s received must be submitted buy the student in a timely manner

- Payment using the School’s or Supervisor’s University Corporate Card for purchase of goods and services as per the University’s procedures on the use and responsibilities for University Corporate Cards
FOR ASSISTANCE

› Supervisors
› Departmental PG Research Coordinators
› School Research Support Officers
I am in the final year of my PhD, ‘Devoting the pen to her service’: Family, War and Duty in Britain and Ireland, 1740-1820’, and plan to submit in March 2011. My thesis explores the wartime experiences of navy and army families during this period. My examination of personal correspondence has enabled me to gain insight into the way in which war affected individuals and family life. My research has uncovered the importance of family as a means of understanding and organising the world in this period. Furthermore it has demonstrated the complex, at times conflicting nature of duty, and how individuals struggled to reconcile the demands of family, country and the armed forces. The focus on naval and military families that my thesis is taking will add greatly to the rich scholarship of the period, as there has been little work done specifically on these types of families. The close focus on private correspondence brings a unique element to the thesis and allows it to move from the personal experiences of war and duty, to consider their broader social and cultural implications.
I am seeking funding under PRSS to present at conferences. Being advanced in my thesis, it is important at this stage that I am able to present my work to my peers and other scholars who are working in similar or related fields. I do not have the opportunity do to this in Australia as there are no dedicated or specific conferences relating to my area of study. I have been accepted to present two papers whilst on this trip. The first, “Historical Perspectives on the Family” at the University of Sheffield, and the second, “Writing the Empire: Scribblings from Below” an international and interdisciplinary conference at the University of Bristol. These conferences provide me with the opportunity to have my work heard as well as learn from others. The feedback on the papers I deliver at these conferences will help develop and strengthen my thesis as a whole. Furthermore the conferences will allow me to form important academic networks and to keep in touch with the current areas of interest, approaches and methodologies.
As well as having the opportunity to present at conferences, this trip will also allow me to consolidate and finalise my research. I have undertaken two previous research trips 2007 and 2008 and from these trips I located and obtained the bulk of my primary research. As my thesis is now coming to fruition, it is important that I am able to complement and support my initial research through further work in the archives. It is also important to fill any gaps that have emerged as my argument has developed throughout the writing process. The archival material I need to use is in manuscript form and is not digitised. The catalogues are insufficient to order material and the expense is prohibitive. As my previous research trips have confirmed, research at the archives in person is essential to achieve successful results. I will mainly be using the National Archives at Kew and the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich for my research, though I may also need to visit at some regional archives for further research. These archives are rich in military and naval material and hold both official and personal material, both of which are essential to my project.
DISCOURSE JUSTIFICATION OF NEED & PURPOSE cont

› **Budget 8/4/2010 - 18/8/2010**

› Flight to England: ________________________________ $2026.34

› Conference Registration Fee: __________________________ $50.00

› Travel to Conferences: ________________________________ $200.00

› Conference Accommodation: ___________________________ $100.00

› Accommodation: ________________________________ $800.00

› Travel Expenses: ________________________________ $1000.00

› Cost of Living: ________________________________ $1600.00

› Reproduction Costs: ________________________________ $300

› **Total:** $6076.34

› Funding Obtained: History Department GIA $4450