JMI Policy Challenge Grants

Applicant Guidelines

Contents

The JMI Policy Challenge Grant program is an annual award to support academics and researchers to make a public policy impact.

The James Martin Institute for Public Policy (JMI) will award grants to outstanding academics, at any career stage, interested in undertaking applied public policy research or translating their existing research for a policy context and audience.

The purpose of the JMI Policy Challenge Grant is to:

- Tackle the biggest public policy challenges through the generation and communication of new insights.

- Foster engagement between academics and policymakers.

- Support improved policy outcomes informed by applied public policy research.

The JMI Policy Challenge Grant is unique: the Institute will offer dedicated support to grant recipients to communicate their insights for a policy audience, and to maximise the impact of their research through targeted engagement with policymakers.

Grant guidelines

JMI Policy Challenge Grants can be awarded for:

- new applied research, or
- translation of existing research for a policy audience.

Can you identify a major policy challenge facing NSW?

Grants will be awarded for projects focusing on major policy challenges facing NSW. In 2024, our underpinning goal concerns intergenerational equity and shared prosperity for the people of NSW including in the regions. We are seeking applications relevant to the following themes where the proposed research has strong potential to catalyse policy innovation and generate public value for the benefit of the people of NSW:

1. Improving the availability of appropriate social and affordable housing for the people of NSW

2. Transitioning to a net zero economy: deepening economic inclusion and social license

3. Boosting industrial capacity for a productive and resilient economy

4. Redirecting public investment towards early intervention in education and population health

5. Driving greater equity in the distribution of wealth

Proposed projects may address more than one of these themes.

A First Nations focus

Projects bringing a First Nations focus on any of these themes will be of particular interest.

A focus on under-represented minorities

Projects bringing a focus on under-represented minorities in relation to any of these themes will be of particular interest.

Eligibility

Applications are welcome from academics from JMI's partner universities:

- **The University of Sydney**
- **Western Sydney University**
- **The University of Technology Sydney**
- **The University of New South Wales**
- **Charles Sturt University**
- **The University of Wollongong**

Project teams, where there is collaboration between researchers from across JMI's partner universities, are also actively encouraged to apply.

While the lead researcher must be from a JMI partner university, the project team can consist of experts from beyond JMI's partner universities, including from other universities, community and not-for-profit organisations, industry, and CSIRO.

Who can apply:

- Individual academics or project teams (in the case of a team, the lead researcher must be from a JMI partner university).
- Academics at all career stages, including early career researchers.

Valuing First Nations perspectives

Across all policy areas, the Institute highly values First Nations perspectives and is very interested in the impact of public policies on First Nations Australians. The Institute therefore particularly welcomes applications from First Nations researchers.

The Institute is interested in supporting early career researchers (ECRs) seeking to make an impact on public policy, including in key leadership roles on project teams. In 2024, the Institute will seek to award at least one grant to a team led by an early career researcher.

Early career researchers

ECRs are defined as those who have been awarded their last postgraduate degree within the past five years or have been awarded their last postgraduate degree together with an allowable period of career interruptions (covering caring responsibilities; disability; disaster management and recovery; limited or no access to facilities and resources; medical conditions; non-research positions, not concurrent with research employment; parental leave; unemployment; primary carer of a dependent child (up to two years per child, inclusive of parental leave) and disruption due to international relocation (up to three months)) that would be commensurate with an award of their last postgraduate degree within the past five years.

Funding

In 2024, the overall funding amount for the entire grant program is $600,000.

Each grant application must be between $25,000-$100,000 excluding GST.

Typical grant awards have fallen in the range of $50,000 - $80,000 with only a small number exceeding this range in circumstances where it was clearly justified.

Eligible costs

Grant funding can be used for the direct costs of research. More specifically, eligible project costs that can be covered by the grant funding include:

- personnel such as postdoctoral research associates and research assistants, technicians and laboratory attendants who will be recruited to work on the proposed research
- access to research and infrastructure facilities and technical workshop services;
- essential field research;
- expert third party services;
- equipment and consumables;
- dissemination of project research outputs and outreach activities;
- specialised computer equipment and software;
- travel costs essential to the project;
- web hosting and development;
- workshops, survey costs, focus groups and conferences;
- data science and analysis costs;
- reasonable essential costs for academics who are carers or who themselves require care, where such costs are directly linked to the execution of grant project activities and these direct costs would not be covered by the home institution.

Please note that teaching buy-out is **not covered** by this grant.

Grant recipient requirements

Successful recipients of a JMI Policy Challenge Grant must agree to the following requirements:

1.Publication of a JMI Policy Insights Paper

This is a JMI-branded report, of approximately 10-15 pages, which captures the key insights from your research for a policy-focused audience. It must be accessible to a non-academic audience. The report will signed-off by JMI, published on the JMI website and shared with relevant policymakers and other stakeholders. It will be published under a Creative Commons licence. JMI will provide support to grant recipients to develop, edit and proofread their paper, and ensure it reaches relevant policy audiences.

2.Participation in research communications

As this is an applied policy grant with a focus on generating public value, it is critical that research insights are effectively communicated to policy audiences. All grant recipients must participate in research communications activities, with dedicated support from JMI. JMI will also host an event to announce grant recipients. Depending on the nature of the project, research communications could include:

a. Researchers being profiled on the JMI website and having their work highlighted.

b. Op-eds & other short-form outputs – JMI will support grant recipients to share findings via mainstream platforms.

c. Interviews, videos or podcasts – to showcase key findings and insights.

d. Policymaker roundtables or briefings – JMI will work with grant recipients to organise events that provide them with opportunities to present and discuss their findings and share practical insights with relevant policymakers and stakeholders.

3. Maximum project timeframe

The project must be delivered within two years from the date the grant is awarded (contract signed).

Any academic outputs in addition to the above requirements are at the discretion of the grant recipient(s) and are not a requirement of the JMI grant.

Selection criteria

Grant applications will be assessed against the following selection criteria. All applications must also be relevant to one or more of the themes listed on page 4.

Essential criteria

Relevance to public policy

Research must have a demonstrable relevance to public policy in NSW. It should be clear how the research can be applied by policymakers to either an existing policy priority area, or a potential future policy challenge in NSW.

Innovative approach to a policy challenge

The proposed project must demonstrate an innovative approach to tackling a policy challenge. Such innovation could include, but is not limited to, policy reform, institutional change, human-centric design, new methods of program or service delivery, interdisciplinary approaches to public problems, focusing on neglected issues or opportunities, stakeholder engagement and community empowerment, or propelling new partnerships to address grand challenges or wicked social problems.

Examples of innovation in previously awarded JMI Challenge grants can be found in our tips for submitting a strong application.

Positive impact on a policy challenge

The proposed project must demonstrate strong potential to generate public value through improved public policy.

Approach to engagement with policymakers

Applicants must outline a clear approach to engagement with relevant NSW Government policymakers and practitioners. This must include how the research will be leveraged for public policy impact.

Project feasibility

Applicants must demonstrate a track record of achievement relative to opportunity and the appropriate expertise to (i) deliver the project milestones and (ii) foster collaborative partnerships with NSW Government policymakers to drive policy impact. Applications will be assessed on the robustness of the project design, a clear grounding in peer-reviewed academic research, the outputs and impact of any previous applied public policy research, or any other relevant experience of the project team.

Desirable criteria (non-essential)

Interdisciplinary approach and/or team

The research proposed adopts an interdisciplinary research approach, or comprises an interdisciplinary team that will approach a policy problem from a variety of different disciplinary perspectives.

Potential to build on existing relationships with policymakers

Applicants should provide details of any existing connections with government stakeholders for whom the proposed project could add value.

Additional funding

Academics should indicate if they have secured, or plan to secure, any additional funding to undertake the project. Whilst it is not essential, evidence of any co-funding or the ability to leverage additional funding should be provided as part of the application and will be considered favourably.

Collaboration between JMI partner universities

The project involves collaboration across JMI partner universities.

The desirable criteria will help the Institute better understand your project and assess its potential impact. However, projects do not have to demonstrate they meet any or all of these criteria to secure a grant. Applicants should only address the desirable criteria if they are demonstrably relevant to the proposed project. For example, some teams may be seeking to establish new relationships with policymakers rather than building on existing ones.

How to apply

The Policy Challenge Grant has a three-stage application process, intended to limit the amount of time required from applicants.

This three-stage cumulative process, constitutes your JMI Policy Challenge Grant application. Each stage of the application process builds on the previous stage, giving the Institute a holistic view of your proposed project. The only applicants that will complete all three stages are those that make it to the final shortlist.

By clicking the 'Apply Now' button on JMI website's Policy Challenge Grant page, you will be redirected to our online grant portal, where you can submit your application.

Stage 1: EOIs

7 Mar – 19 Apr 2024

Online web-form questionnaire accessed via the JMI Grant Portal.

Submit your EOI at apply.jmi.org.au

Stage 1: Expressions of Interest (EOI)
7 March–19 April 2024
The first stage in our application process is the EOI. Once you have created an account on our grants portal, you will be asked to complete an EOI questionnaire.

The EOI questions give us an indication of the nature of your proposed grant project. You will be asked a series of questions designed to help make an assessment of the project's suitability against the selection criteria. You will also be asked for details about your team and the funding amount you seek.

All EOIs will be reviewed and assessed against the essential and desirable criteria. Successful EOIs will progress to the second stage and will be notified via email if they have been successful. If you do not hear from JMI within a month of the closing date, please assume you have not been longlisted for interview. JMI will confirm the outcome of your application in August 2024.

For further advice, please refer to our tips for submitting a strong grant application.

EOIs will open on 7 March and close on 19 April 2024.

Stage 2: Interviews

27 May – 7 June 2024

45-minute interviews via MS Teams with JMI Team.

Stage 3: Additional Docs

17 June – 28 June 2024

Submit detailed project documents via JMI grant portal, including project plan and budget.

Stage 2: Interviews
27 May–7 June 2024

Longlisted applicants will be asked to select a preferred interview timeslot via the grant portal, for a 45-minute online interview with JMI staff. Where a research team is applying for a grant, the entire team is encouraged to attend the interview, but this is not mandatory.

During the interview, you will be given the opportunity to share more details on your proposed project. The JMI team will also have the opportunity to ask you questions about the details of your project proposal. These will link primarily to the essential and desirable criteria.

The interview will also provide an opportunity for you to learn more about the aims of the JMI Policy Challenge Grant, and the various forms of support the Institute will provide to grant recipients. Applicants that have successfully progressed through the interview stage will be notified via email.

Interviews will be held over two weeks, in the period between 27 May – 7 June 2024. Please ensure that you are available to participate in an interview during this period.

Stage 3: Supplementary documents
17 June–28 June 2024

Applicants that have successfully passed through the interview stage will then be asked to submit supplementary documents to complete their grant application. They will be provided with an additional two weeks to submit these documents.

Applicants will be asked to submit:

1. **A detailed project plan**
You will need to provide details of the key project stages and milestones and key activities over those project stages, including timelines. JMI will provide a template to support the development of this plan. Applicants are required to use the template provided.

2. **Detailed project budget**
You will be asked to provide a breakdown of project costs, including allocation of key project resources. JMI will provide a template to support the development of this budget. Applicants are required to use the template provided.

Supplementary documents due no later than 28 June 2024

3. Any additional documents requested by JMI

During the interview process, the JMI team might require some additional documentation or further detail on certain aspects of your proposed project. You will be asked to upload any supplementary documentation to the grants portal.

The documents provided to JMI during the supplementary evidence stage will be added to the information submitted during earlier stages and will form part of your overall grant application.

References

JMI reserves the right to seek a reference or independent expert advice for any individual grant application.

Assessment & Award

The JMI Research Advisory Group will review all applications that have progressed through to Stage 3 and will advise JMI's Executive.

The JMI Board will approve the final allocation of grant awards.

Grants will be awarded in August 2024.

Successful applicants will be notified via email.

JMI will then work with the lead researcher to execute a JMI Policy Challenge Grant delivery agreement. Once signed, initial funding will be provided, and the project will commence. We will also expect project teams to draft a research communications plan, typically within a month of the delivery agreement being signed.

Contact us

For further grant-related enquiries, please either refer to the FAQs section on the JMI website or contact us via email.

James Martin Institute for Public Policy

Level 1, 60 Martin Place
Sydney NSW 2000
Australia

E grants@jmi.org.au
W jmi.org.au

jmi.org.au