

## Some advice for strong applications for FAJS research grants

*It is very important that you read the full Guidelines before you make an application.*

*Please keep in mind that the program is competitive and we are only able to give a small number of grants. We receive a large number of good proposals, so following the suggestions below will increase your chance of success but is not a guarantee. Do not be discouraged if you are not successful. By making an application your research comes to the attention of the Foundation and we may be able to make other suggestions about how to find support.*

The following points were all features of the projects that were selected for funding and you are recommended to pay careful attention to them in your application.

### 1 Address the selection criteria clearly and explicitly

The Guidelines contain clear selection criteria. The strongest applications addressed these explicitly and fully. Sometimes this was done as bullet points or as headings of sections in the application. In all successful cases the selection panel could see clearly that the application had carefully considered how the project aligned with the Foundation's objectives as expressed in the criteria. If you don't understand the meaning of any of the selection criteria please ask us. Some unsuccessful projects did not address the criterion about diversity (which includes, among other things, gender balance). If your research team is not currently very diverse please explain what strategies you will use to address the issue.

### 2 Explain the contribution of your project in an easy-to-understand way.

Tell the story about why the project is important and what contribution it makes in an engaging way, keeping in mind that the selection panel may not be expert in your field. Avoid jargon and don't assume too much familiarity with the existing state of research in your field. This doesn't mean dumb it down - we do want to see that this is high-quality academic work - but we rely on you to explain why this is exciting and new. This requires a careful balance between explaining the current state of research in the field (where are the gaps and next frontiers), what specifically your research will contribute and what would be the impact if the project succeeds.

### 3 Explain the practical relevance of your research to solving some concrete problem or making some innovation in a field relevant to the Foundation's mission.

One of the selection criteria is salience to the Australia-Japan bilateral relationship and to commercial, trade or investment interests. To make a strong case it helps to explain the problem you are addressing. For example, one of the successful projects stated " This proposal addresses a significant problem affecting world agriculture with emphasis on profitable crops in Australia (wheat) and Japan (rice). Food and fibre production is constrained by abiotic (cold, heat) and biotic (weeds, pests, etc.) stresses. The cost of a major abiotic stress to Australian crops is estimated to be \$300 million dollar / year as the yield reduction due to spring frost. Similarly, the evolution of herbicide resistant agricultural weeds is a problem in Japan (mainly in the monoculture of rice crops) and in Australia (monoculture of wheat). In Australia weeds cost three billion dollars per year."

### 4 Explain clearly your link with industry or policy outside the academic sector and how far advanced your joint research is and what you expect from the collaboration during the course of the grant period.

Spell out the type of links you have between industry and academia. Please give the names of industry partners if the lead applicant is a university. If you have a clear plan for combined work with a partner explain the complementary skills that each party contributes. For example, one successful project stated: “By harnessing our combined expertise ... we have the potential to produce preclinical validation of [technique] patented by [University X] with an associated sample preparation kit and dedicated [company name] [specific use] instrument with an analysis software algorithm for use in diagnostic laboratories”

If you are at an early stage of discussion with a partner, explain where you are and what kind of partnership you hope to build. This applies equally to projects that involve public policy entities, charities or any other non-academic partner. The Foundation is willing to support the early stages of engagement between industry and universities that are not as well-developed as the example above, if we can see the potential in the relationship.

5 Give enough detail in your budget to be plausible but don't worry about every detail at this stage.

We are looking for a realistic budget that explains how the Foundation grant would be allocated to broad categories of expenditure. If you will receive support in kind from your institution or your partner include that in the budget. If you have other sources of income for the project show them, so we can see how a Foundation grant forms part of your plan. Evidence of planning ahead to look for ongoing funding will also be an advantage if the project requires longer than the 12-month time frame of FAJS grants. We do not expect full details at this stage but we want an indication of the type and scale of support you need. If you are invited to the second round of application you will have the chance to give more exact detail. We are also flexible and realistic about the occasional need to move money between uses within the project as the research develops. We are mainly looking for a realistic plan about how the research will be achieved with the resources available.

6 Focus on outcomes, timeframes and milestones.

Explain clearly what you can realistically achieve in the 12-month timeframe. If the project forms part of a longer project make clear what identifiable outcomes will be achieved with the Foundation grant.