

EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Strategic APA: Interdisciplinary PhD Top-Up Scholarships in Neuroscience and Related Disciplines - Commencing 2017

(3 awards available)

Up to three Strategic Australian Postgraduate Awards (STRAPA's) are available to eligible students to support **cross-disciplinary graduate research in the Neurosciences and related disciplines**. The Melbourne Neuroscience Institute (MNI) is seeking **Expressions of Interest** from eligible candidates for these scholarships, which will be available for commencement in 2017.

Recipients of a Melbourne Neuroscience Institute STRAPA will receive a support package additional to the Australian Post-graduate Award (APA) for their research of \$5,000 per annum from the MNI for 3 years. This is comprised of \$3,000 per annum stipend top-up and \$2,000 per annum to be held by the supervising laboratory to be used for direct research costs for the student's project.

About MNI

The Melbourne Neuroscience Institute (MNI) is one of five University of Melbourne Research Institutes that bring together researchers from across the University to tackle society's complex problems in innovative ways. These Institutes work with industry, government and not-for profit organisations in Australia and overseas to challenge current thinking and offer new solutions that change our world.

The MNI supports focused interdisciplinary research across fields as broad as Medicine, Mental Health, Engineering, Optometry and Vision Sciences, Ophthalmology, Law, Economics and Social Sciences. Basic and clinically focused neuroscience research is undertaken in multiple departments of the University of Melbourne, with an overarching strategic focus provided by the University's Melbourne Neuroscience Institute.





Research areas for Interdisciplinary PhD projects include:

1. **Translational and clinical neuroscience/psychiatry:** Focus on early detection, prevention and pathogenesis. Key areas of research include:
 - Epilepsy
 - Alzheimer's Disease/Dementia
 - Stroke
 - Multiple Sclerosis
 - Brain tumours
 - Psychosis (including youth mental health)
 - Posttraumatic mental health
 - HIV and cognitive impairment

2. **Sensory and Integrative Neurosciences/biomedical engineering:**
 - Hearing (including cochlear implant oriented research)
 - Vision
 - Autonomic and sensory neuroscience
 - Homeostasis

3. **Molecular and cellular neuroscience - encompassing both fundamental research and its application to neurological disease:**
 - Neural stem cells and neuro/gliogenesis
 - Neural connectivity in development and regeneration
 - Neural cell migration
 - Neurophysiology and neuropharmacology
 - Neural plasticity

4. **Psychological sciences:**
 - Cognitive psychology of attention, visual cognition, decision making, and executive functions
 - Social psychology of intergroup, cultural, and social network processes
 - Clinical and health psychology and psychotic and personality disorders.

5. **Other research areas:**
 - Neurogenetics/Pharmacogenomics/Precision Medicine
 - Prediction of neurodegenerative disease
 - Psychological research on broader societal issues with policy implications
 - Traumatic Brain Injury

STRAPA ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the scholarship, the recipients must:

- Be an Australian or New Zealand citizen or Australian permanent resident **who meets the University of Melbourne's requirements for Research Higher Degree (RHD) candidature and the award of an Australian Postgraduate Award.**
- Be **outstanding** graduates who have demonstrated excellence in neuroscience, science, biomedical science, chemistry or other related disciplines.
- Have obtained overall marks in the highest grade band (e.g. H1 or HD) in a relevant Honours or Masters degree (H1 – 80 to 100%).
- Have not completed a PhD or held a graduate research scholarship previously.
- Commence or have commenced their PhD in the calendar year of the offer (2017). If the recipient has commenced their PhD, they must have at least 12 months of 3 years of candidature remaining at January 2017. For STRAPA recipients who do not commence their candidature prior to June 2017, the scholarship shall be withdrawn and returned to Chancellery (Research) for re-allocation.

OVERVIEW OF THE APPLICATION PROCESS:

The following process applies includes finding a supervisor, applying for PhD candidature at the University of Melbourne, applying for an APA and then for a STRAPA. This is provided for the sake of completion **but does not replace advice provided by your Department, supervisor or prospective supervisor, the RHD Admissions Office or the Melbourne Scholarships office.**

1. IDENTIFY PROJECT AND SUPERVISOR

Prospective APA applicants should discuss potential projects with research supervisors at the University of Melbourne across multidisciplinary areas in the Neurosciences and related disciplines. To be eligible, the PhD project must utilize a multidisciplinary approach as evidenced (in most cases) by the formal involvement of two PhD supervisors.

You may identify potential supervisors in two ways:

- Through the [Faculty or Graduate School](#) that best meets your research interest
- Through the '[Find an expert](#)' website (not all researchers listed are available for supervision)

2. APPLY FOR AN AUSTRALIAN POSTGRADUATE AWARD (APA)

Prospective (APA) applicants are required to submit a completed University of Melbourne Graduate Research application (online) at the latest by **28th October 2016**. Information on the APA application process is described here: <http://futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/admissions/applications/research>.

The [online application process](#) may be accessed here (University of Melbourne Application for Admission to Graduate Research Candidature and Scholarship):

<http://futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/admissions/applications/online-application-info>.



Please ensure that you have selected:

- ‘Admission to Graduate Research Degree Candidature and Scholarship’
- The appropriate Faculty (*e.g.*) Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, Engineering, Science, *etc.* Also indicate the appropriate Department or School within that Faculty.
- ‘Australian Postgraduate Awards (APA)’
- ‘STRAPA (MNI)’
- any other scholarships for which you wish to be considered.

NOTE: If you are a *current* University of Melbourne graduate research student and you wish to apply for a scholarship, please do so online via the **Student Portal: my.unimelb.edu.au**

3. SUBMIT AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR AN MNI STRAPA

Submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) for an MNI STRAPA to the Melbourne Neuroscience Institute between **24th August 2016** and **28th October 2016**. Early submissions of EOI are welcome.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please keep in mind that your submission is an EXPRESSION OF INTEREST only. Therefore, if you are still deciding on a PhD project and/or PhD supervisor(s), please indicate your **‘proposed’/most likely PhD project title and supervisor(s)** in your EOI form. We will contact you and/or liaise with the RHD Admissions Office to confirm your details.

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

All Expressions of Interest must be submitted to the Melbourne Neuroscience Institute using the EOI Form.

The completed form together with your CV, certified copies of academic transcripts and the contact details of two academic referees is to be emailed as a single file (pdf) with filename format:

{Applicant’s SURNAME}-MNI STRAPA 2017 to: research-mni@unimelb.edu.au no later than **5:00PM on Friday 28 October 2016**. For enquiries, please contact Vikki Marshall, MNI Operations Manager via the above email address or by phone on (03) 834 48692.

ASSESSMENT OF MNI STRAPA EOI SUBMISSIONS

An assessment panel of experts in the neurosciences from the UoM shall meet around mid-November to generate a preliminary list of successful applicants based on scholarly merit, the degree of interdisciplinarity of the proposed PhD project in the Neurosciences, along with consideration of the student’s stated “Career Objectives and Vision for the next 5 years” (per EOI form). A final decision on offers of MNI STRAPAs is only possible after final Honours/Masters grades are known and until the Admissions Office finalises PhD offers. At this stage the MNI STRAPA assessment panel shall reconvene to finalise the ranking of STRAPA EOI submissions, and informally offer an MNI STRAPA to the top 3 ranking students.

First-round STRAPA offers may be declined for various reasons (*e.g.*) if another scholarship is awarded, in which case the next highest ranked student shall be offered the MNI STRAPA. The process shall be completed at latest by December 23rd, 2016.

NOTIFICATION OF OUTCOME OF EOI FOR STRAPA

Applicants shall be notified of outcome up to eight (8) weeks following the EOI deadline (no later than 23rd December 2016). Formal notice of outcome shall be sent to you via email from the Melbourne Scholarships Office and may be temporally aligned with offer of a PhD from the RHD Office. Informal advice on the STRAPA may be provided by MNI prior to this.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A STRAPA?

The STRAPA funds will be allocated as follows, as a ‘top-up’/additional to the Australian Post-graduate Award (APA):

- \$3,000 per annum stipend (paid fortnightly to student’s bank account according to bank details provided). To avoid issues with payment, please ensure that your bank details are up to date via the student portal **my.unimelb.edu.au**. MNI is responsible for advising the Melbourne Scholarship Office of successful MNI STRAPA applicants, however ongoing stipend payments are administered via the Melbourne Scholarships Office.
- \$2,000 per annum to be held by the supervising laboratory and used for direct research costs for the student’s project and attendance at conferences (this payment is administered by MNI and paid once per year for 3 years).

INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

Item	Link
Melbourne Neuroscience Institute	http://www.neuroscience.unimelb.edu.au/
General information on undertaking a Research Higher Degree (RHD) at the University of Melbourne:	http://futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/info/research
For Faculty-specific information, refer to:	http://futurestudents.unimelb.edu.au/info/research#contacts
RHD admissions	GR-admissions@unimelb.edu.au
Scholarships (APA) & administration of the \$3,000 STRAPA stipend	http://services.unimelb.edu.au/scholarships
Submission of EOI for MNI STRAPA and for enquiries on MNI STRAPAs or on the \$2,000 “Direct Research Costs” payment to host laboratory	research-mni@unimelb.edu.au vikki.marshall@unimelb.edu.au ¹ PH: (03) 834 48692



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