2018 Psychology Visiting International Collaborator Support (VICS) Scheme

Introduction
The School of Psychology’s Visiting International Collaborator Support (VICS) scheme provides financial support in aid of research visits to Sydney for international collaborators of the School’s academic staff. The VICS scheme can be used to support a visit from a current international collaborator or to establish research with a new international collaborator. The visit should be built around a well-developed research proposal which either develops an existing collaboration or builds a new one. Psychology academic staff at level B or C are prioritized when evaluating VICS applications.

Aim
The goal of the VICS scheme is to expand the School’s research network internationally by facilitating collaboration. Visits must be research-focused, building or enhancing an active research collaboration. It is important that the collaborator’s visit be built around a clearly defined empirical research project. For staff working in areas with long research timeframes, the visit may be used for other purposes, such as writing a collaborative research grant.

Financial support
Successful applicants will be reimbursed for a return economy class airfare up to a maximum of $3,000 and will receive a sum of $1000 to cover incidental expenses. In addition, an accommodation allowance of up to $1,500 per week will be paid on production of a tax invoice for accommodation costs. The allowances for travel, incidentals and accommodation together have a maximum value of $9000. The travel reimbursement will be paid on production of an invoice or receipt from a travel agency once the collaborator has arrived in Sydney. VICS funds are not to be used for research costs. The local ‘host’ researcher may contribute further funds to extend the duration of the visit.

Assessment and Selection
Applications will be assessed by a sub-committee of the School’s Research Committee normally consisting of the Head of School, the Associate Head (Research), and at least one further member drawn from the Research Committee.

In selecting successful applicants, the main criterion will be the potential of the visit to produce a productive research collaboration leading to tangible outcomes benefitting the School (e.g., publications, grants). Applications must demonstrate that all necessary preparation and groundwork has been done to ensure a productive visit, and must outline clear anticipated outcomes. When choosing the visit’s duration, ensure it is long enough to achieve what is planned.

Visits initiating a new international collaboration are especially welcome. Although visits from current international collaborators are accepted, they must demonstrate that the proposed research is new or significantly enhances an existing collaboration. The application will be judged primarily on the benefits to the School arising from the likely research outcomes. Research track records of the host and collaborator are relevant but are not a primary selection criterion. Indeed, preference will be given to strong proposals from early-career staff, and to those from staff without sufficient grant funding to support a collaborative visit.
Eligibility and Conditions
The VICS host will usually hold a level B or C position in the School of Psychology, and the VICS collaborator must hold a current position at any level at an overseas university or institute. Collaborators based in Australia are not eligible for this scheme. Successful applicants are expected to be based full-time in the School of Psychology and to engage in research-related activities that initiate a collaborative project with their host in the School or that enhance a current research collaboration. The focus is explicitly on research and therefore excludes visits for other purposes such as writing manuscripts etc.

Once approved, the VICS visit would normally take place within 6 months. A second award for the same collaboration may be considered if at least 12 months has elapsed since the first award.

Visiting collaborators are expected to make a contribution to the academic life of the School through such things as giving seminars or lectures, or providing training to other staff or postgraduate students in their area of expertise. Visiting collaborators must also acknowledge the School of Psychology and University of Sydney in the by-line on any publications arising in whole or part from their VICS visit.

Final report
After the visit, the collaborator and the host are required to provide a written report to the Head of School within three months of the end of the visit detailing what was achieved during the visit and what ongoing collaboration was set in train for the future. The report is expected to be 2–3 pages in length and will be published in the School of Psychology’s annual report.

Preparing an Application
A formal application involves the following steps:

1. The international collaborator and local host should complete the relevant sections of the application form available at:

2. The international collaborator and local host should jointly develop a description of the collaboration project. The project description should be submitted with the application form and should include:
   a. A synopsis of current research activities as they relate to the proposed project (half a page);
   b. A description of the collaborative work to be conducted at the School of Psychology during the visit, including the aims, significance and suitability of the research collaboration. Applicants with an existing research collaboration with the School must detail how the proposed collaboration is new or different from the existing collaboration. (two pages);
   c. Specific benefits to the School of Psychology arising from the visit including alignment with existing or developing research strengths, training and transfer of skills and expertise, potential for publications and grant applications, and the future path of the collaboration (one page maximum).

   The attachment should be no more than 4 pages, including bibliographic references.

3. The international collaborator should include a curriculum vitae including:
   a. refereed publications in last 5 years;
   b. 5 career-best publications;
   c. awards and invited lectures;
   d. current research grant income (including other funding for the proposed visit);

   This section should be no more than 4 pages.
4. The host researcher should attach a curriculum vitae including:
   a. refereed publications in last 5 years;
   b. 5 career-best publications;
   c. awards and invited lectures;
   d. current research grant income;

This section should be no more than 4 pages.

**Deadline**

The first round of calls for the VICS scheme are made in March/April. A second round may be called in September/October.

In 2018, Round 1 applications must be emailed to sophie.ellwood@sydney.edu.au before midnight on Friday 11th May. We hope to announce Round 1 outcome by the end of May.

**Ethics**

Research may not commence on any funded project until the appropriate Ethics or Biosafety Clearance has been obtained. Where the collaboration is closely aligned with the host’s existing research, a simple ‘modification’ of an existing ethics protocol may suffice. The host researcher should contact the University’s Research Office well in advance of the visit to ensure all ethics requirements are observed.

**Visa information**

Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the visiting collaborator. The University’s Human Resources department can be consulted for information on the necessary visa. Contact: Sylvia Lam psychology.hr@sydney.edu.au.

Note that it is not permitted for the collaborator to arrive on a tourist visa: they must have official permission to work at the University through the relevant visa, which can take up to 3 months to obtain. At present the 408 visa is the relevant one and the University of Sydney is an approved sponsor for this visa: More information from USyd HR or here: [http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa-1/408](http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa-1/408).