



The University of Sydney

School of Mathematics and Statistics

Postgraduate Research Support Scheme (PRSS)

Information Sheet 2006

The School has been allocated \$12,431 to distribute amongst (currently about 40) postgraduates in 2006. The rules and conditions are complicated, so I will summarize the main points on this sheet and make some comments which seem relevant to us.

- Any currently enrolled PhD or MSc student may apply for PRSS funds, provided that their candidature does not exceed the equivalent of eight full-time semesters for PhD and four full-time semesters for MSc, and the applicant has demonstrated satisfactory progress.
- PhD students may apply up to three times in separate years, and MSc students just once during their candidature.
- The application must provide sufficient detail and a justification of expenses, which fall in one or more of the following categories:
 - conference expenses
 - use of specialist services or facilities
 - field expenses
 - books, periodicals or software
 - computers or other equipment
 - thesis production expenses, up to \$600 for PhD and \$300 for MSc
- **It is a rule that to claim conference expenses you must give a talk or present a paper or poster.** Most conference organisers are sympathetic to the needs of research students and will provide you with an opportunity for this purpose. If you feel nervous about giving a talk, then try for the poster option.
- A talk at a conference does not need to be about your own original results. It is perfectly fine to talk about the work of other people (with their permission, if the work is unpublished), or to talk generally about an interesting open problem. There is a risk that someone in the audience might solve your problem, but the risk may be outweighed by the benefit of getting others interested in your topic and from the flow of ideas and suggestions in subsequent discussions.

- There may be a case that some kinds of workshop participation fall within the ambit of field work or use of specialist services. Also you may consider including a visit to a specialist facility as part of a travel proposal (this possibility is noted in the School Review documents from 2003).
- If you wish to include in your application attendance in a conference or workshop early in 2007, I cannot see that the rules disallow it, provided that you incur and claim the expense (e.g. an airfare) in 2006.
- Expenses cannot be claimed for items or services which are normally provided by the School or University. However the purchase of books held by the Library is justified if you need them for your research on a routine basis or for ease of reference.
- The **minimum** amount that you can apply for is **\$200**. The **maximum** amount that you can apply for is **\$1200**, unless you are participating in an overseas conference, in which case the **maximum** is **\$2000**.
- If you are allocated PRSS funds, payments are made by cheque in your name, posted to the address listed on your application, and you claim the funds, through the Finance Officer, Julie Small (Room 708), in one of the following ways:
 - present original receipts
 - present original invoices, purchase orders, quotations, order forms, conference registration forms – original receipts must be submitted later
 - request cash advance for travel in or outside Australia – original receipts must be submitted within 7 days of completion of travel
- **You should fill out the application form and return it to me by Friday 5 May.** Applications may be made or altered at any time, but will only be considered if funds are available or likely to become available. There is no limit to the number of alterations or additions you make to this one application in the course of 2006.
- The School expects to make an initial commitment of PRSS funds by the middle of May. You will be notified about the success of your application, and you should claim your allocation as soon as practicable. **Unclaimed funds after 31 October may be reallocated without notice.** Unused funds by the end of the year revert to the University and are lost to the School.
- If your circumstances alter from the information provided in your application, please inform me immediately so that I can, if necessary, plan to reallocate funds.

David Easdown
 Postgraduate Director
 12 April 2006