



# Pathfinder Fund

Guidelines for Pathfinder  
Fund applications

## Pathfinder Fund Guidelines

Pathfinder is a proof-of-concept fund for developing technologies created at UWA.

### Objectives

- To develop early-stage projects with clear commercial potential.
- To demonstrate proof-of-concept / utility of new innovations with a view to becoming investor ready.
- To leverage other commercialisation funds, such as Accelerating Commercialisation funding.

Pathfinder is not research funding, “gap funding” for research programs, for the acquisition of major capital equipment, conference travel or IP protection.

### Funding

Up to \$100,000 can be applied for in two stages:

**Stage 1** - Maximum \$25,000 approved by Research Development and Innovation.

**Stage 2** - Maximum \$75,000 approved by the Pathfinder panel (external advisors).

You can apply for the two stages separately or together. However, the successful completion of Stage 1 and approval by the Pathfinder panel are required to access Stage 2 funds.

### Application Process

A guide to the application process:

1. Discuss the potential and eligibility of the project with a Research Development and Innovation (RDI) project manager.
2. Complete a Pathfinder application form and submit to RDI.
3. Stage 1 applications will be reviewed by RDI and Stage 2 applications will be reviewed by the Pathfinder panel.
4. Applicants will be advised of the outcome of their application within 28 days.

If Stage 1 and Stage 2 are applied for at the same time the application will be evaluated by the Pathfinder panel.

## Funding Rules

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A maximum of \$100,000 is available per project.

### Eligible projects must:

- build on some preliminary research that has established or suggested an IP position with commercial potential.
- aim to demonstrate proof-of-concept / the utility of the IP and support the commercialisation strategy.
- be outcome oriented with deliverables expected within 12 months.
- be managed by an RDI project manager, with appropriate records kept for auditing the use of funds.

Pathfinder funds are to be repaid from any future commercialisation income.

## Eligibility Rules

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- The intellectual property being developed must belong to UWA.
- Applicants can be UWA staff, in permanent positions (or joint appointments) or on contracts that have at least 12 months remaining, or postgraduate students willing to assign their IP to UWA.
- Applicants must guarantee that there are sufficient resources available to ensure the project can be completed on time, without adversely affecting the operation of the school.
- The IP is expected to be able to be protected, e.g. by patenting, as a trade secret, as copyrighted software etc.
- The applicant/s must agree not to disclose any information during the project that could jeopardise any future patent application.

## Expenditure

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Pathfinder will fund a broad range of activities.

### These can include:

- Costs of performing “proof of concept” experiment(s) e.g. to demonstrate that a particular experimental outcome is repeatable or applicable to more than one use.
- Independent consultants or service providers to undertake:
  - development of a brief, commercially-focussed business case; or
  - market research / market scoping.
- Project-specific activities that help to build a case to show the concept will be commercially attractive.
- Externally conducted trials, product testing or field trials.
- PhD research students / technical officers contributing specific skills to a Pathfinder project on a short-term “casual” basis. *Note that the research*

*student must agree to assign any IP generated via their work on a Pathfinder-funded project to UWA.*

- Component parts for the development of a prototype (for example, to build a demonstrator / prove the concept / develop a working prototype).
- Capital equipment rental costs or usage charges for the duration of the Pathfinder project.
- Marketing materials (such as website and promotional literature), where the technology will be commercialised directly out of a UWA centre / school.
- Purchase of external services (for example, software development, printed circuit board design, rapid prototyping, laboratory analytical services, e-commerce services).
- Economy travel in support of direct partnering / commercialisation activities, e.g. attending an industry conference.

This list is not designed to be exhaustive. Researchers should contact us for guidance on whether a proposed activity would be considered an allowable cost. Research Development and Innovation’s decision is final.

## Ineligible expenditure

The following costs are all ineligible for Pathfinder funding:

- UWA academic staff time that is expended on the Pathfinder project. *The Pathfinder fund is not intended to underpin academic staff costs.*
- Capital equipment purchases above \$5,000 per item.
- Travel to academic conferences, seminars and the like.
- External or internal consulting by UWA staff.
- General advertising or promotional expenses.

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