

2026 STUDENT HANDBOOK



FEIT PhD Lab to Launch

Faculty of
Engineering
and
Information
Technology



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

TABLE OF CONTENTS



WELCOME	01
What is Lab to Launch Why Participate	
KEY DATES	03
EOI Stage 1: Capability Building Stage 2: Application and Digital Submission Stage 3: Final Pitch Competition	
PROGRAM SNAPSHOT	05
A Three-Stage Competition Journey Participant Pipeline Eligibility Criteria	
INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM ACCESS	08
PRIZES AND OPPORTUNITIES	09
Cash funding Mentorship Priority entry into advanced entrepreneurship programs	
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP)	10
IP Safe Participation Checklist Before You Submit or Present Disclosure & Approvals What NOT to Share What You CAN Safely Share Pitch Framing Tips (IP-Safe) Final Check Before Submission	
KEY CONTACTS	11

WELCOME

DEPUTY DEAN, ENGAGEMENT & ASSOCIATE DEAN, INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Welcome to the **FEIT PhD Lab to Launch program**.

It is our pleasure to have you join this exciting initiative designed to help our PhD researchers explore how their ideas, research and expertise can create meaningful impact beyond the laboratory.

At FEIT, we believe some of the world's most important challenges will be solved through the translation of research into real-world outcomes. This program has been created to support the next generation of researchers and innovators to think differently about how their work can contribute to industry, society and the global innovation ecosystem.

Throughout this journey, you will have the opportunity to build entrepreneurial capability, strengthen your communication and pitching skills, connect with mentors and industry leaders, and explore pathways to commercialisation and venture creation in a supportive, IP-safe environment.

Importantly, this program is not only about startups or business ideas, but also about developing the confidence, mindset and networks to recognise the value and potential of your research and to engage more deeply with impact-driven innovation.

We encourage you to approach the program with curiosity, openness and ambition. The most successful participants are often those willing to ask questions, test ideas, collaborate with others and step outside their comfort zone.

We are excited to support you throughout the program and look forward to seeing the ideas, partnerships and opportunities that emerge from this cohort.

On behalf of the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology, welcome to FEIT PhD Lab to Launch.

Professor Stan Skafidas, PhD. FTSE

Deputy Dean Engagement
Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology
The University of Melbourne

Associate Professor Ranjith Unnithan

Associate Dean, Industry Partnerships
Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology
The University of Melbourne



WELCOME

WELCOME TO FEIT PHD LAB TO LAUNCH

You are part of a new generation of researchers shaping the future.

This program is designed to help you explore how your research can move beyond academia into industry, innovation, and real-world impact.

Whether you're curious about commercialisation or ready to take your idea further, this competition is your launchpad.

What is Lab to Launch?

FEIT PhD Lab to Launch is a faculty-wide initiative that:

- Translates research into real-world applications
- Builds commercialisation and innovation capability
- Connects you to the University of Melbourne innovation ecosystem
- Creates pathways into advanced programs and funding for venture creation

Why Participate?

What you'll gain

- Build your innovation and commercialisation mindset
- Learn how to communicate your research beyond academia
- Develop real-world skills
- Connect with industry and innovation leaders
- Access pathways to funding, mentorship, and programs

KEY DATES

Activity	Presenter	Event Date	Time	Registration Open
Stage 1: Capability Building				
Launch Event	Various	Jun 9, 2026	12:00pm - 02:00pm	May 20, 2026
Workshop: Pitch & Story telling	Nick Kirkwood & Katrina Gaskin, Melbourne Entrepreneurial Centre (MEC)	Jun 18, 2026	11:30am - 01:00pm	Jun 9, 2026
Mentor Drop-in session	Brian Pang, UoM Genesis Pre-Seed Fund	Jun 23, 2026	11:00am - 12:30pm	Jun 9, 2026
Workshop: Understanding the problem	Nick Kirkwood & Katrina Gaskin, Melbourne Entrepreneurial Centre (MEC)	Jun 25, 2026	11:30am - 01:00pm	Jun 9, 2026
Workshop: Establish a company entity	Yehuda Orelowitz, Research, Innovation and Commercialisation Directorate & Triston Forbes, Melbourne Entrepreneurial Centre (MEC)	Jul 1, 2026	12:00pm - 01:30pm	Jun 9, 2026
Workshop: IP Knowledge & Transfer	Luke Restorick, Research, Innovation and Commercialisation Directorate	Jul 9, 2026	12:00pm - 01:30pm	Jun 9, 2026
Mentor Drop-in session	Tim Kay, Tin Alley Ventures	Jul 16, 2026	11:30am - 01:00pm	Jun 9, 2026

KEY DATES

Activity	Date	Registration Open	Application Closed
Stage 2: Application & Digital Submission			
Application & Submission Deadline	Jul 24, 2026	Jun 29, 2026	Jul 24, 2026
Seven finalists announced Monday 10th August 2026			
Stage 3: Final Pitch Event			
FEIT Graduate Research Showcase	Aug 26, 2026	Aug 17, 2026	Aug 24, 2026

[Register here for Kickoff Event](#)

[Register here for Stage 1 Series](#)

Please note after the Kickoff event on Tuesday 9 June, all communications, activity and assessment will be conducted through Canvas LMS. Participants will be required to create a student log in if a pre-existing account doesn't exist.

Participants will be enrolled into Canvas LMS, if consented, concluding the Kickoff event.



PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

A Three-Stage Competition Journey

The **FEIT PhD Lab to Launch Kickoff Event** officially marks the beginning of the FEIT PhD Lab to Launch program and brings together participants, mentors, industry representatives, researchers and Faculty leaders to kick off the competition journey.

Designed to inspire and connect participants from the outset, the event will provide an overview of the program, introduce key themes and expectations, and create opportunities for networking and collaboration across the cohort.

During the event, participants will:

- Hear from Faculty and industry leaders on innovation, entrepreneurship and research impact
- Meet fellow participants, mentors and members of the innovation ecosystem
- Gain an understanding of the program structure, key milestones and support available throughout the competition
- Hear from an Alumni keynote speaker
- Learn more about the opportunities and pathways available through the program
- Begin thinking about how their research, expertise or ideas could translate into real-world outcomes

The Kickoff Event is also an opportunity to build momentum, foster new connections and encourage participants to approach the program with curiosity, creativity and an entrepreneurial mindset.

Event Details

Date: Tuesday 9 June 2026

Time: 12:00pm – 2:00pm

Location: The Studio, Melbourne Connect

THE THREE STAGES

Stage 1: Capability Building

What happens:

A series of 90-minute workshops on:

- Storytelling & pitching
- Understanding the problem
- Commercialisation pathways
- Establish a company
- Mentor drop in sessions

You will also have access to **Melbourne Entrepreneurial Centre (MEC) Define**: A self-paced online course providing a structured approach to develop an idea for a new venture.

What you do:

Enroll

Outcome:

Professional training in venture creation, IP Disclosure and licensing.

Build confidence + prepare your idea

Get ready to submit your pitch for Stage 2

Time commitment: ~9–10 hours across two months

Stage 2: Application & Digital Submission

What happens:

If you choose to continue in the competition, you will proceed with the development of a short application, compelling video pitch and IP disclosure form. You can apply either as an individual or as a team with your supervisor/s, other students or in collaboration with industries.

What you do:

Submit an application, a video pitch, and an IP disclosure form.

Refer to the University's online IP policy for details.

Judging focuses on:

- Innovation & research significance
- Commercial potential
- Clarity and structure
- Engagement and delivery
- Accessibility to a non-specialist audience

Outcome:

- Seven top applicants will be selected for venture creation and progress to Stage 3.
- Participants progressing to Stage 3 will be required to form a company or engage in relevant commercialisation activities, including policy translation, after Stage 3. Support and practical guidance will be provided throughout the process.

Time commitment: ~3–4 hours

Stage 3: Final Pitch Competition

What happens:

Live pitch event (~ 5 mins per participant) as part of the FEIT Graduate Research Showcase
Judged by industry + university leaders

Seven winners announced on the day and will be awarded:

- Cash funding FEIT POC Innovation-to-Market Fund
- Mentorship
- Entry into advanced entrepreneurship programs

Outcome:

Recognition, prizes and next-stage opportunities

Time commitment: ~2 hours

PARTICIPANT PIPELINE



Who Can Apply?

You are eligible if you are:

- A FEIT PhD or MPhil candidate
- Interested in research translation, innovation, or impact

Team participation

- Individual or team entries including supervisor/s, other students or in collaboration with industries.

Important requirements

- You must notify your principal supervisor and have their support to participate
- You must complete the stage 1 workshops (mandatory for students)
- Any IP must be disclosed to the University at Stage 2
- Participants progressing to Stage Three will be required to establish a company entity to participate in this phase of the program. Comprehensive support will be provided to guide participants through the company formation process, including practical assistance to establish the required structure.

INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM ACCESS

One of the unique benefits of participating in FEIT PhD Lab to Launch is access to the broader innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem connected to the University of Melbourne and Melbourne's thriving startup and industry community.

Throughout the program, participants will have opportunities to engage with founders, industry partners, investors, mentors, researchers, startup advisors and commercialisation specialists who bring real-world experience in translating ideas into impact.

This ecosystem access is designed to help participants:

- Build meaningful professional networks beyond academia
- Gain exposure to startup, innovation and commercialisation pathways
- Learn directly from entrepreneurs and industry leaders
- Explore opportunities for collaboration, mentorship and partnership
- Better understand market, customer and industry perspectives
- Develop confidence engaging with external stakeholders and innovation communities

Participants may also be introduced to innovation hubs, incubators, accelerator programs, investment networks and university-supported entrepreneurship initiatives that can support future development beyond the competition.

We encourage all participants to actively engage with the ecosystem opportunities provided throughout the program. Many of the most valuable outcomes from innovation programs come from the relationships, conversations and collaborations formed along the way.





PRIZES & OPPORTUNITIES

Prizes are designed as “packages”, combining:

Cash funding: FEIT POC Innovation-to-Market Fund

Fund for company formation and related commercialisation activities

- First Prize: \$15K
- Second Prize: \$13K
- Third Prize: \$12K
- Fourth Prize: \$10K
- Fifth Prize: \$10K
- Sixth Prize: \$10K
- Seventh Prize: \$10K

Mentorship

Entry into advanced entrepreneurship programs

You may gain:

- Priority access to MEC programs
- Connections to investors and industry
- Support to progress your idea further

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY (IP) CHECKLIST

UOM Intellectual Property Policy

IP Safe Participation Checklist

Purpose:

This checklist supports participants to confidently engage in the Program while protecting intellectual property (IP) and avoiding premature disclosure.

Before You Submit or Present

IP Awareness

- I understand that public disclosure can impact patentability
- I have reviewed relevant University of Melbourne IP policies
- I have considered whether my idea contains:
 - Novel methods/processes
 - Unpublished results
 - Patentable concepts

Disclosure & Approvals

- I have notified my supervisor of my participation
- I have discussed my idea with:
 - Supervisor
 - Research, Innovation and Commercialisation (RIC) (if applicable)
- Any required IP disclosures have been submitted
 - [Disclosing your IP](#) | [Protecting your idea](#) | [Research](#)

What NOT to Share

Do NOT include the following in your pitch (Stage 1–2, and Stage 3 unless approved):

- Detailed technical methods or proprietary processes
- Unpublished experimental data
- Patentable inventions not yet protected
- Confidential industry or partner information
- Source code, algorithms, or designs not in the public domain

What You CAN Safely Share

Focus on high-level, non-confidential content:

- Problem statement and significance
- Real-world impact and application
- Target users or beneficiaries
- Market or societal need
- Conceptual solution (non-technical level)
- Your motivation and research journey

Pitch Framing Tips (IP-Safe)

- “We are exploring a novel approach to...” (avoid “we have developed a proprietary method that...”)
- Focus on WHY it matters, not HOW it works in detail
- Use analogies instead of technical specifics
- Keep explanations accessible to a non-specialist audience

Final Check Before Submission

- Would I be comfortable sharing this publicly?
 - Could someone replicate my idea from this information?
 - Have I removed sensitive slides or details?
- If unsure → pause and seek advice from your supervisor or RIC

Support for IP guidance:

Research, Innovation and Commercialisation Directorate (RIC)

The Commercialisation Group

[Intellectual Property Policy \(MPF1320\)](#)

KEY CONTACTS



Program Lead

Alyssa Pullar
Projects Coordinator, FEIT Engagement
alyssa.pullar@unimelb.edu.au



Academic Lead

Associate Professor Ranjith Unnithan
Associate Dean, Industry Partnerships
r.ranjith@unimelb.edu.au



Sponsor

Prof Stan Skafidas
Deputy Dean, Engagement
FEIT-DDE@unimelb.edu.au

Supported by

FEIT Engagement
[FEIT Graduate Research](#)
[Melbourne Entrepreneurial Centre](#)
[Research, Innovation and Commercialisation Directorate](#)
FEIT Business Development Team
The Commercialisation Group
FEIT Academic Leadership



LET'S GET STARTED



FEIT PhD Lab to Launch

Faculty of
Engineering
and
Information
Technology



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE