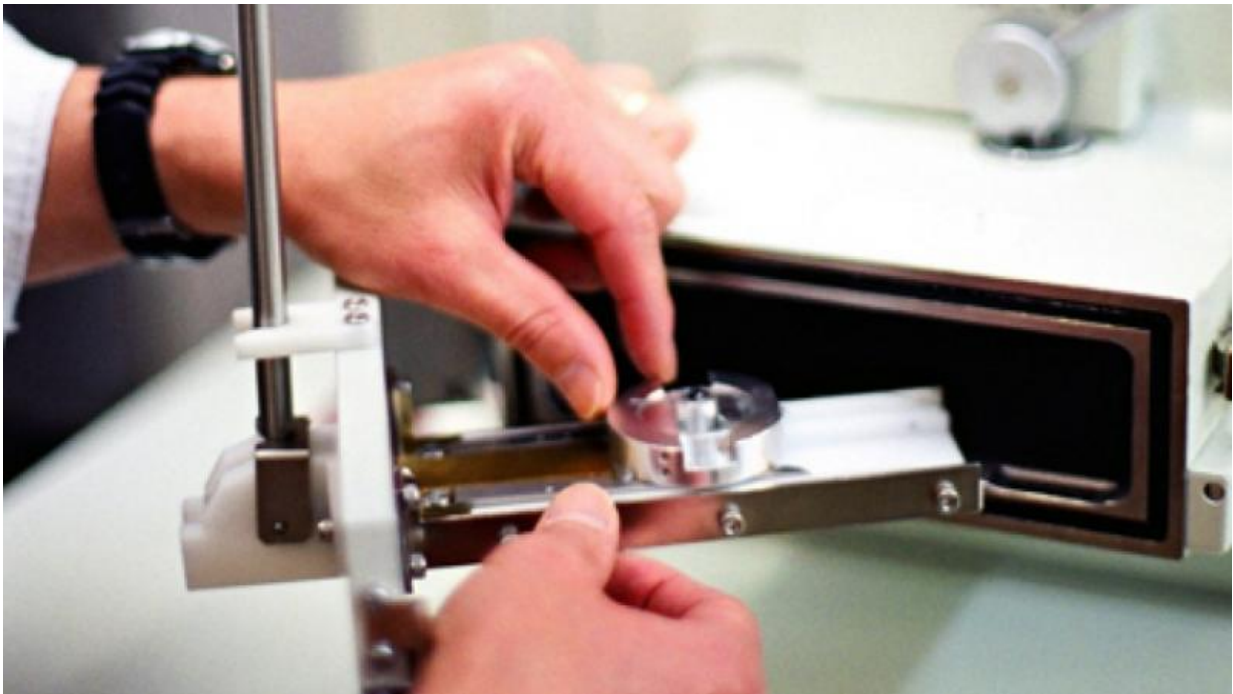


# Despite advantages, cross-discipline research has a lower chance of receiving funding

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Credit: Stuart Hay

Bringing together researchers from a range of fields can help solve complex problems, but research from The Australian National University (ANU) has found interdisciplinary research is consistently short changed.

Lead researcher Professor Lindell Bromham said the study shows while

the growing emphasis on research across disciplines might help solve important problems, it has lower chances of being funded than more narrowly focussed research.

"One of the biggest advantages of interdisciplinary research is that it can generate new ways of looking at existing problems," said Professor Bromham, from the ANU Research School of Biology.

"You might find that researchers in one field have developed a way of solving problems that might help in another field, or that a combination of perspectives brings a new way of looking at the problem."

The findings have important implications for the way authorities allocate research funding, and prove the commonly-held view that although interdisciplinary research is often encouraged, it is not well funded.

In an illuminating example of the value of interdisciplinary research, the study applied techniques originally developed to measure biodiversity in living systems to an array of research proposals.

"In itself, this is a nice example of the benefits of interdisciplinary research - using techniques developed in one field to solve a problem in a completely different field," Professor Bromham said.

"This study is one of the first to provide evidence that interdisciplinary research has lower [funding](#) success rates, and this pattern holds across different research fields and across institutions.

"So now we have evidence there really is a problem, the next step would be to investigate why."

**More information:** Lindell Bromham et al. Interdisciplinary research has consistently lower funding success, *Nature* (2016). [DOI:](#)

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Provided by Australian National University

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