

Australian Synchrotron Collaborative Access Program (CAP):
Frequently Asked Questions.

1. Q: Why should I join a CAP?
A: All crystallography labs are expected to join or form CAPs. CAP access will become the normal mode of access for the MX beamlines. Any lab that needs regular access to synchrotron beamtime should join a CAP.
2. Q: What if I don't join a CAP?
A: You will only be able to get beamtime via rapid access. The time available for rapid access will only be a small proportion of available beamtime and will be contested by all labs needing urgent beamtime including local and overseas labs. There is no guarantee that any lab will succeed in getting rapid access beamtime.
3. Q: How much beamtime will I get if I join a CAP?
A: The initial allocation of beamtime to CAP members will be largely based on historical use of beamtime. After the first year the MX PAC will adjust the allocation of individual CAP time based on the usage, the needs of all CAPs and the *relevant funding agreements*.
4. Q: How big does a CAP need to be?
A: As a rule of thumb the minimum size for a CAP is two or more PIs where the combined samples and staff of the CAP are able to efficiently use six shifts (2 days) of beamtime on each MX beamline per cycle. This is a total of 6 days on MX1 and 6 days on MX2 per 12 month period.
5. Q: What if my lab is large enough to use 12 days per year already, can I form a single-lab CAP?
A: While it is expected that most CAPs are formed from a minimum of two PIs there may be some exceptions where large labs are able to form a single-lab CAP. If there are other crystallography labs at the same institution it is preferable for them to band together to form a single CAP where possible.
6. Q: I don't wish to participate in a CAP with others from my organisation. What can I do?
A: If your lab is large enough you might be able to form a single-lab CAP (see 5). If it is not large enough you have two choices, join a CAP with the people you are most able to work with or rely on rapid access time. Please note that only approved CAPs will be assured of beamtime. Labs relying on rapid access as their only source of beamtime may potentially go for long periods of time without access to beamtime.
7. Q: Once I have been allocated CAP time is it guaranteed?
A: While no beamtime allocation is 100% guaranteed a CAP should expect to receive its allocation of beamtime. If there is a serious problem with an MX beamline and this leads to reduction in available beamtime for the cycle the AS may decide, at its discretion, to reduce all CAP allocations. The AS reserves the right to modify beamtime allocations as needed.
8. Q: How extensive is a CAP application?
A: A template CAP application is available to give applicants a feel for the amount of detail required.
9. Q: What happens if my CAP application is not successful? Will I have to rely on rapid access for the next 12 months?
A: It is expected that all labs in Australasia will be able to find a home in a CAP. Should a lab have their CAP application not accepted due to being too small, poor quality science or application or failing to apply by the CAP deadline they may be declined CAP access. In this case they have two options, join a successfully established CAP midway in the cycle (see 10) or rely on rapid access beamtime.

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10. Q: What happens if I join a CAP during the year?
A: If your CAP application is not successful and you are allowed to join a successful CAP that CAP will not be allocated more beamtime. As part of normal CAP access the CAP coordinator works with the PIs to decide which staff and samples will be sent for a given experiment. If you are accepted into a CAP then it is up to the PIs of the CAP to decide on time allocation as usual. When the CAP applies for renewal it may be able to justify a need for increased time allocation based on output, usage and new projects/Pis.
11. Q: What is the role of the CAP coordinator?
A: This is a critical role and can define the success of the CAP. The CAP coordinator is the “air-traffic-controller” of the CAP whose job it is to keep the supply of staff and samples coming for each experiment. They need to be able to get information from the staff in the labs that make up the CAP about the samples they want to bring so that the EA documentation can be submitted via the user portal. They are the main point of contact between the CAP and the User Office. They must submit accommodation documentation, EAs etc in a timely manner.
12. Q: If I am a CAP member how do I know the other PIs will let me share the beamtime i.e. can they “hog” all of the beamtime?
A: It is up to the CAP members to work together to make the CAP function. A CAP member can leave or the CAP can be dissolved by a majority of PIs or one in the case of a 2 PI CAP.
13. Q: What happens if I leave a CAP?
A: The CAP loses the beamtime that was allocated to it for your projects. You do not get the beamtime to take away with you and use but you are able to apply for rapid access.
14. Q: Who can see my data?
A: All members of your CAP have access to your data.
15. Q: What happens if we spend all of our travel money?
A: The AS will not pay for travel costs above the CAP budget allocated for the year. The PIs can choose to pay for travel themselves or cancel the beamtime.
16. Q: Will CAPs increase the PIs workloads in terms of beamtime requests and reports?
A: No. The CAP proposal replaces all beamtime requests for one year (3 cycles).
17. Q: What can I do if I want to form a CAP but it will not be big enough?
A: CAP applications where the CAP falls below the minimum size (able to use 6 days on each MX beamline per year) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. There need to be valid reasons why a larger CAP cannot be formed.
18. Q: Can I put staff from another CAP on my Experimental Authorisation?
A: Yes. If you decide to share beamtime with staff who are not CAP members this is permitted.