

Discovery Program Grant Guidelines Changes

Consultation

Feedback from stakeholders was considered in the drafting of these grant guidelines. Key stakeholders have been engaged, including members of the Australasian Research Management Society (ARMS).

GENERAL

Discovery Projects is not covered under these Grant Guidelines and will be issued separately.

ASSESSMENT

1. Due Diligence Updates

There are several updates in the grant guidelines to clearly outline the due diligence activities undertaken through the assessment process, and the responsibilities of the applicant in ensuring appropriate due diligence has been undertaken ahead of submitting an application. Changes include: **Processes** – Inclusion of any advice on national security risks in ‘We make grant recommendations’ and ‘Grant decisions are made’

7.2d How to apply clause amended to reference having regard to the *Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector*.

7.4 How to apply clause amended to note revisions to the application prior to approval may be invited by the ARC as this may occur to ameliorate national security risk concerns.

8.3-8.4 The grant selection process added new clauses:

We may seek advice on national security or other matters from Commonwealth agencies in relation to the application.

We may seek information from You regarding due diligence activities in relation to the application.

8.27 Who will approve grants clause amended to specify that: The CEO may seek advice on national security or other matters from Commonwealth agencies before making recommendations. The CEO will make recommendations for funding to the Minister based on any number of assessments and may take into account any advice received on national security or other matters from Commonwealth agencies.

12.15 Grant agreement variations amended clause to reflecting due diligence occurring in relation to changes that may occur following approval of a grant.

2. Grant amount terminology - *Australian Laureate Fellowships*

Removed the term ‘supplement’ from ‘salary supplement’ to reflect the intention of the funding; that the ARC salary may contribute to the Fellow’s university salary or be additional, as long as the Fellow receives a “Level E professorial appointment (or equivalent) and salary”. This is intended to clarify requirements for Administering Organisations around the minimum amount that must be provided to the fellow and leave flexibility around the maximum amount, so that they are able to comply with their institutional salary levels.

Guidelines reference: 3.2, A1 and A2

3. Assessment Criteria

The wording of the ARC's standard Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities' section of the assessment criteria has been updated to more accurately reflect the criteria's intention in line with clarifications provided in past grant opportunity Frequently Asked Questions.

Guidelines reference: A4, B5, C5 and D5

ELIGIBILITY

4. Eligible Organisation

Avondale University has been added as an Eligible Organisation to apply for and receive ARC funding. Following an assessment by the Tertiary Education, Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Avondale University has been registered as an Australian University in line with the new Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 which came to effect on 1 July 2021.

Guidelines reference: 4.4

5. General

There is a new clause, which reflects the existing process whereby the ARC may refuse applications involving researchers who have breached the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)*. Researchers and their organisation's Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research) (DVCR) or equivalent will be aware if they have been excluded from submitting an ARC grant application.

Guidelines reference: 4.10

6. Discovery Indigenous

- The Project Leader must be employed by the Administering Organisation for at least 20% of Full Time Equivalent (0.2 FTE). This change has been introduced to enable capacity building in the research sector. Researchers who hold an honorary academic appointment can participate as Chief Investigators or Partner Investigators if they meet the other eligibility criteria.

Guidelines reference: D3.5

- Based on feedback identifying that the definition of an 'honorary academic appointment' was unclear and being inconsistently applied across the sector, it has been moved from the glossary into the body of the Guidelines and changed to note that a researcher is not eligible to be a Chief Investigator using their honorary academic appointment if they are employed by an organisation other than an eligible organisation for more than 0.2 FTE.

Guidelines reference: D3.6b

- Greater clarity has been provided about timing of named participants meeting eligibility criteria. Named participants must meet eligibility requirements at the grant commencement date, unless otherwise specified. If the application is successful, eligibility criteria must continue to be met for the project activity period and any changes, including those relating to employment, must be submitted as a post-award variation request.

Guidelines reference: D3.5-6 and D3.10

- To reflect Whole of Government requirements, no named organisation may be included on the National Redress Scheme’s website on the list of ‘Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme’ (nationalredress.gov.au).

Guidelines reference: D3.12

7. Future Fellowships and Discovery Early Career Researcher Awards (DECRA)

- The allowable career interruptions and the period allowed for each have been updated in line with the ARC’s [Eligibility and Career Interruptions Statement](#). Changes include:
 - o there is no longer a minimum of one month period required for each interruption,
 - o the interruption must have occurred after the conferral of a researcher’s PhD or equivalent to be considered, and
 - o new interruption types of “disaster management and recovery” and “limited or no access to facilities and resources—such as through workplace interruptions” have been included.

Guidelines reference: B3.10-11 and C3.10-11

- The requirement that the Statement of support be “signed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or equivalent” separately has been removed to reduce administrative burden. The Statement of support from the Administering Organisation is still required, but no longer requires a separate DVCR (or equivalent) signature noting that the DVCR (or equivalent) is required to certify the entire application (and has visibility of all parts) at the point of submission.

Guidelines reference: B6.1 and C6.1

8. Project and application limits

There are no changes to project and application limits. Greater clarity on implementation has been included to ensure it is clear that Specified Personnel may hold onto all applications until all application announcements are made.

For example: if a researcher has submitted one *Australian Laureate Fellowships* application and two *Discovery Projects* applications, and the researcher is awarded the Australian Laureate Fellowship, the two *Discovery Projects* applications may continue to be assessed and if both *Discovery Projects* applications are successful then the researcher must relinquish either a project or their role on a project.

Guidelines reference: 4.15

OTHER

9. Timeframes

- The timeframe to execute a Grant Agreement and the timeframe to make an appeal have both been changed from 28 days to 30 days, reflecting Whole of Government practice.

Guidelines reference: 10.3 and 13.4