



**Australian Government**

---

**Australian Research Council**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

**Discovery Early Career Researcher Award for funding commencing 2025  
(DE25)**

**Version 1.0**

**Release Date: 12 October 2023**

- All participants should read the Discovery Program Grant Guidelines - Fellowships (2023 edition) (Grant Guidelines) available on [GrantConnect](#) and specific *Instructions to Applicants* documents available on Grant Connect as they contain important information for Research Office staff and individual participants preparing applications.
- The Australian Research Council (ARC) does not respond to queries from individual participants. Individual participants should direct all queries regarding ARC grant opportunities to their Administering Organisation's Research Office (or equivalent). If further information regarding the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) is required, the Research Office should contact the NCGP at [arc-ncgp@arc.gov.au](mailto:arc-ncgp@arc.gov.au).
- Information regarding the Research Management System ([RMS](#)) is available at the [ARC website](#), or by contacting [arc-systems@arc.gov.au](mailto:arc-systems@arc.gov.au) for assistance.

This Frequently Asked Questions document will be updated as required.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Timing of Grant Opportunities

#### 1.1 Where are the key dates for upcoming ARC Grant Opportunities advised?

Dates of all upcoming ARC Grant Opportunities are published on the NCGP scheme timelines on the [ARC Grants Calendar](#).

#### 1.2 When will the Funding Outcomes be announced?

The ARC now publishes anticipated Funding Announcement dates. Please refer to the Scheme Calendar PDF on the [ARC Grants Calendar](#).

### 2. Application information

#### 2.1 Can I include requests for domestic and international travel in my application?

Yes. You can include requests for domestic and international travel in accordance with the requirements set out in the relevant Grant Guidelines, noting that researchers should include a realistic plan of how their research will be undertaken. Where an application is successful, any changes to the proposed travel plans due to the impact of environmental factors (e.g., natural disasters, pandemics, etc.) will be managed as a post award issue.

#### 2.2 What font size can I use for figures, tables, or pictures in my application to comply with ARC submission requirements?

Applicants should ensure that the text is readable both online and in print as detailed in the Instructions to Applicants. It is recommended that to ensure readability 12pt font is used and it is recommended that for the readability of text within figures and tables 10pt font is used.

#### 2.3 How should I complete the Question D1 'What is the proposed budget for your project'?

The ARC strongly recommends entering a simplified budget into the Budget Table at Question D1. Rather than list every item, each category (e.g., Travel, Field Research, Equipment) should have a one-line budget figure,.

For example, if you are requesting two sets of Travel in Year 1, one at a cost of \$5000 and another at a cost of \$1500, the Budget Table should show only the total amount of funding requested for travel in Year 1: i.e., \$6500. The request will need to be justified in Question D2 'Justification of funding requested from the ARC'.

✓	Travel	+	6,500
	Total Travel Costs	 	6,500
✗	Travel	+	6,500
	Trip 1	 	5,000
	Trip 2	 	1,500

**Note:** You will not be able to enter all 'Personnel' as a one-line budget figure, as the DECRA Salary is automatically entered into the Budget Table and will require its own budget line.

**2.4 Do I have to meet the ARC application and project limits at the time of the grant opportunity closing date, to be eligible to apply?**

No. As per section 4.10 of the Discovery Program Grant Guidelines – Fellowships (2023 edition), DECRA candidates no longer need to meet the project limits requirements at the grant opportunity closing date. If a DECRA application is successful, the DECRA candidate must meet the project limits under section 4.9 of the Grant Guidelines, before the project can start. Project limits can be met by relinquishing existing active project(s), or relinquishing role(s) on existing active projects, or withdrawing application(s) that would exceed the project limits. This may not need to occur until all applications are announced.

It is Your responsibility to determine if applying for, or holding, a project under these Grant Guidelines will affect an individual researcher's eligibility for other ARC grant opportunities as other ARC grant opportunities may have different project limits. We reserve the right to change project and application limits in future grant opportunities.

**3. Career Interruptions**

**3.1 COVID-19 has affected my academic record. Is this considered a career interruption as part of Question B6 'Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) – Career Interruptions'?**

Yes. The Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) assessment criteria allows inclusion and consideration of any significant career interruption, which has affected a participant's ability to undertake and contribute to research.

Career interruptions arising from COVID-19 can be included under ROPE.

**3.2 How do I enter my career interruptions in the Application Form? Will assessors be able to see the details of my interruptions?**

Information on how to enter the candidate's career interruptions can be found in Question B6 'Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) – Career Interruptions' of the Instructions to Applicants (ITAs). Examples of how career interruptions can be entered can be found in the Appendix of the ITAs.

Assessors will not be able to see the details of the entered career interruptions, nor will they be made visible in the PDF.

Assessors will only see the total period which RMS will automatically calculate using the entered career interruptions. The following question and answers from Question B6 will be viewable:

**Question:** Has the DECRA candidate experienced a significant interruption that has impacted on research opportunity?

**Answer:** 'Yes' or 'No'

If answered 'Yes' and career interruptions are entered, the following statement will appear:

**Question:** Total Period of Career Interruptions

**Answer (auto-fill):** 'Researcher [Participant Name] has reported a career interruption of [duration] since [Year of earliest interruption].'

## **4. Time Commitments**

### **4.1 How much time must I commit to the research activities relating the project?**

As per the Grant Agreement, it is a requirement for the DECRA Fellow to commit a minimum of 80% (0.8 FTE) of their time on research and research capacity-building activities related to the DECRA. Research capacity-building activities could include emerging capability for research leadership and supervision of HDR students, but do not include a major role in administration.

### **4.2 How much time can I spend on activities not related to the Discovery Early Career Researcher Award such as teaching?**

As per the Grant Agreement, the DECRA candidate may not spend more than 20% (0.2 FTE) of their time on activities not related to the DECRA such as teaching. The DECRA will not be extended to accommodate any periods of teaching.

## **5. Logistics support for Antarctic research**

### **5.1 What logistics advice should I seek if my proposed research project included Antarctic research?**

If your proposed research project includes Antarctic research that will require logistical support, please contact the [Australian Antarctic Division](#) for advice about available logistical support prior to submitting your application.

## **6. Assessment of applications**

### **6.1 Requests Not to Assess process**

A Request Not to Assess (RNTA) form is now submitted in RMS as detailed on [GrantConnect](#) and the [ARC website](#).

### **6.2 What is the maximum character limit for justification for RNTA?**

If a request includes the name of a current ARC College of Experts member, as listed on the [ARC website](#), or in RMS at the time of submitting the RNTA form, the request must be accompanied by a justification (the maximum character count for the justification has been increased to 2500).

## **7. The National Interest Test (NIT)**

### **7.1 What is the NIT statement and how is it assessed?**

Information regarding the requirements of the National Interest Test, including examples and detailed FAQs, can be found on the [ARC website](#).

## **8. Budget**

### **8.1 What are the expectations for non-mandated contributions in applications submitted for upcoming Grant Opportunities?**

For those schemes where Grant Guidelines do not require minimum co-contributions by participating organisations the ARC understands that the level of cash and/or in-kind contributions pledged by Administering Organisations to show support for a proposed research project may vary. Noting that Administering Organisations still need to take into account the feasibility of the proposed research project if there are reduced contributions. ARC assessors will be instructed that they should not make assumptions about an Administering Organisation's level of commitment and support of an

application solely based on lower levels of pledged additional cash and/or in-kind support than historically provided.

## 8.2 What salary and stipend figures will appear in the Discovery Early Career Researcher Award 2025 (DE25) application form?

The salary and stipend figures for DE25 have been updated to 2023\$ in RMS and are displayed in the table below.

### Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA) candidate Salary and Stipend rates 2023\$:

Discovery Early Career Researcher Award candidate	\$112,897.00
Higher Degree by Research	\$29,880

The salary and stipend figures will be indexed again once the fellowships are awarded so they will be paid at the appropriate rates.

Updated salary and stipend rates are available on the [ARC website](#).

## 9. What has changed from last round? Summary of changes to the DE25 Application Form and DE25 Instructions to Applicants (ITAs)

### 9.1 The Form Parts in the DE25 Application Form have been re-ordered.

The Form Parts in the Application Form have been changed to the following order to assist assessors in finding the information most crucial to their assessments:

- Part A – Administrative Summary
- Part B – Participant Details including ROPE (previously Part F)
- Part C – Project Description (previously Part D)
- Part D – Project Cost (previously Part E)
- Part E – Classification and Other Statistical Information (previously Part B)
- Part F – Project Eligibility (previously Part C)

### 9.2 Part A – Administrative Summary

- Question A5 - The National Interest Test Statement has been made visible to assessors as it now provides an input to the peer review assessment of the application.

### 9.3 Part B - Participant Details including ROPE

- Question B2 - Current country of residence will no longer be viewable by the assessors.
- Question B6 'Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Career Interruptions' has been rebuilt so that participants can enter all periods of career interruption and RMS will automatically calculate their total interruptions. Additionally, the question has been updated so that the assessors will not see the specific dates, full time equivalent and category of each interruption, nor will this information be populated into the application PDF. Assessors will only be able to see the total period of interruptions to help determine research opportunity.
- Question B7 - Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Career Highlights is **a new question** intended to promote equity, recognising that applicants may have varied research opportunities and focusing the evaluation on the quality rather than

quantity of an applicant's research activities. An applicant can list up to 5 career highlights, such as prizes, awards, industry engagement, keynote and speaker addresses, research income, discipline specific accolades, intellectual property, supervision, non-traditional research outputs or any other career or research opportunity highlight.

- Question B8 - Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Details of the DECRA candidate's career, evidence of research impact and contributions to the field, including those most relevant to this application. – This is **a new question** linked to the 'Investigator/Capability' assessment criteria and intended to demonstrate an applicant's capability, mentoring and capacity building skills and achievements.
- Question B9 - Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - How many PhDs, Masters and Honours students that the DECRA candidate has supervised have completed their degree? - This is **a new question** linked to 'Investigator/Capability' selection criteria intended to demonstrate an applicant's mentoring and capacity building skills and achievements in supervision.
- Question B10 - Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Research Outputs Context has now increased the character limit to 3000 characters, or approximately 400 words. 1) There is 200 words or up to 1500 characters in total to provide clear information that explains the relative importance of different research outputs and expectations in the DECRA candidate's discipline. 2) There is up to 200 words or 1500 characters in total to provide clear information in the form of an annotation about the research impact of each of the ten selected career-best outputs. Each annotation can be up to 20 words in length.
- Question B11 - Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) – 10 Career-Best Research Outputs now has a validation so that applicants can only list up to 10 outputs. Please note - applicants will receive an error message in RMS if more than 10 research outputs are added to Question B11. Although research outputs listed for this question that exceed the limit of 10 will appear if the 'generate PDF' option is selected and the error message will not show on the PDF, the application will not be able to be submitted through RMS until the error is resolved and the applicant has listed no more than 10 research outputs.
- Question B17: Project Relinquishment and Application Withdrawal will no longer be viewable by assessors.

#### 9.4 Part C – Project Description

- Question C1 - Project Description has had the page limit reduced from 10 to 7 pages. The selection criteria covered elsewhere in the Application Form have been removed from the Project Description question. That is why the C1 questions addressing the assessment criteria have also been reduced.

For instance, instead of the former heading “Feasibility”, applicants are encouraged to address these selection criteria across the relevant sections of their application: including, ROPE (B7-B11); Project Quality and Innovation (C1 – Project Description); the Administering

Organisation Letter of Support (C2); and the Budget Justification (D2).  
Part D – Project Cost

- Question D1 - What is the proposed budget for the project? In the Budget Table at Question D1, individual items are to be entered only in the Personnel sections. All other categories (Travel, Field Research etc.) should have a one-line budget figure giving the total funding request and contributions for that section. Details regarding the items making up this total amount should be provided in Question D2 (Justification of funding required from the ARC) and Question D3 (Details of non-ARC contributions) as appropriate.
- Question D2 - Justification of funding requested from the ARC has had the page limit reduced from 5 to 3 pages.

## **9.5 Changes to DE25 Application Form**

The Application Form and Instructions to Applicants have been streamlined to reduce duplication and to eliminate collection of the information that is no longer required.

9.5.1 The below questions were removed. Note the question numbers relate to their position in the last scheme round (DE24). Some of the questions have been removed where requirements are met through certification, where they duplicate information provided elsewhere in the application, or where they do not align with scheme objectives or assessment criteria.

- Question B6 - What is the nature of the proposed international collaboration activities?
- Question C3 - Current Funding
- Question C4 - Other applications(s) for funding
- Question D1 - Please confirm that potential risks have been taken into consideration for the proposed project, including the impacts of COVID-19.
- Question F3 - Fields of Research (FoR-2020) for the candidate
- Question F4 - Expertise Text
- Question F7 - What will the DECRA candidate's time commitment be to research activities related to this project?
- Question F13 – Eligibility Current Research Fellowship or Award funded by other Australian Government agencies

9.5.2 The ROPE questions have been updated:

- Question B6 'Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Career Interruptions' has been rebuilt so that participants can enter all periods of career interruption and RMS will automatically calculate their total interruptions. Additionally, the question has been updated so that the assessors will not see the specific dates, full time equivalent and category of each interruption, nor will this information be populated into the application PDF. Assessors will only be able to see the total period of interruptions to help determine research opportunity.
- Question B7: Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Career Highlights.
- Question B8: Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Details of the DECRA candidate's career, evidence of research impact and contributions to the field, including those most relevant to this application.

- Question B9: Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - How many PhDs, Masters and Honours students that the DECRA candidate has supervised have completed their degree?
- Question B10: Research Outputs Context has now increased the character limit to 3000 characters, or approximately 400 words. 1) There is 200 words or up to 1500 characters in total to provide clear information that explains the relative importance of different research outputs and expectations in the DECRA candidate's discipline. 2) There is up to 200 words or 1500 characters in total to provide clear information in the form of an annotation about the research impact of each of the ten selected career-best outputs. Each annotation can be up to 20 words in length.
- Question B11: The Research Outputs listing has been reduced to a maximum of 10 career-best outputs.

9.5.3 Question D2: Justification of funding requested from the ARC has had the page limit reduced from 5 to 3 pages.