



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

Discovery Program Grant Guidelines (2024 edition – Variation 1): Discovery Projects

Opening date:	Available on GrantConnect
Closing date and time:	Available on GrantConnect
Commonwealth policy entity:	Australian Research Council
Enquiries:	Researchers are required to direct requests for information to the Research Office within the Administering Organisation. ARC Contacts are on the ARC website.
Date guidelines released:	
Type of grant opportunity:	Restricted competitive

Australian Research Council Act 2001

I, Jason Clare, Minister for Education, having satisfied myself of the matters set out in section 58 of the *Australian Research Council Act 2001*, approve these grant guidelines under section 59 of that Act.

Dated 19 August 2025

Jason Clare
Minister for Education

Contents

1.	Discovery Program processes	3
2.	About the Discovery Program	5
	About the Discovery Projects grant opportunity.....	5
3.	Grant amount and grant period	5
4.	Eligibility criteria.....	5
5.	What the grant money can be used for.....	8
	What grants funds can be used for	8
	What grants funds cannot be used for.....	9
6.	The assessment criteria	9
7.	How to apply.....	11
	Application process.....	11
	National Interest Test Statement	12
	Timing of the grant opportunities	12
8.	The grant selection process.....	12
9.	Successful grant applications.....	14
10.	Probity.....	17
	Appendix A – Glossary.....	19
	Acronyms.....	19
	Definitions	20
	Appendix B: Eligible Organisations.....	27

1. Discovery Program processes

The Discovery Program supports the Australian Government's objectives for research and innovation.

This grant program contributes to the ARC's Outcome 1, which is to grow knowledge and innovation through managing research grants, measuring research excellence and providing advice.
The *Discovery Projects* scheme is funded within the Discovery Program.



The grant opportunity opens.

We (the ARC) publish the grant guidelines and advertise on GrantConnect.



You (the Administering Organisation) complete and submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) application.

You will complete an EOI application on the ARC's Research Management System (RMS) specifying named participants, participating organisations, and the basic design of the research program.

You may submit a 'Request not to Assess' form two weeks before the closing date for EOI applications.



We manage the assessment of EOI applications.

We will review Your EOI against the eligibility criteria. Your EOI application will be assigned to Assessors from the ARC College of Experts who will independently assess Your application against assessment criteria, providing a score and ranking relative to other EOI applications.

Provided scores and rankings will be used to produce a shortlist of EOI applications.
The recommended shortlist is submitted to the ARC Accountable Authority for decision on invitation to full application.



We notify You of the shortlist result.

You will be advised of whether or not your EOI application has been shortlisted on RMS.

If Your application has been shortlisted, We invite You to submit a full application.



If invited, You complete and submit a full application.

You will complete a full application on RMS. Named participants, participating organisations, and the basic design of the research program specified at the EOI stage cannot be changed in a full application.



We manage the assessment of full applications.

We manage the assessment of full applications against eligibility criteria and assessment criteria. Your full application may be assigned to Detailed Assessors to undertake in-depth assessments. You will have an opportunity to respond to any Detailed Assessors' written comments through a rejoinder.

Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) members will then assess Your full application, consider any Detailed Assessors' ratings and comments and Your rejoinder and assign a final score.



We make grant recommendations.

The SAC considers full applications and recommends those to be funded, including the level and duration of funding for each project, to the ARC Accountable Authority.
The ARC Accountable Authority then makes an assessment, considering the SAC's advice, compliance with the eligibility criteria and grant application process, alignment with Australian Government priorities and any other due diligence matters. The ARC Accountable Authority may consider advice from other Commonwealth agencies and make its own independent enquiries.



Grant decisions are made.

The ARC Accountable Authority decides which applications are approved, and the level of funding and duration of funding for each approved project.
If the Minister decides the ARC Accountable Authority should not fund a project for reasons relevant to security, defence or international relations of Australia, the Minister must notify the ARC Accountable Authority, advise the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security and take other steps required under the ARC Act.



We notify You of the outcome.

We advise You if Your application was successful or not through RMS.



We enter into a grant agreement with You.

We will enter into a grant agreement with You through RMS, if You are successful.



Delivery of the grant.

You undertake the grant activity and report to us as set out in Your grant agreement.
We manage the grant, monitor Your progress and make payments.



Evaluation of the grant opportunity.

We evaluate the specific grant activity and the individual grant opportunity as a whole.
We will use information You provide to Us through Your reports to inform evaluations.

2. About the Discovery Program

- 2.1. The Discovery Program is one of two Programs under the ARC National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP). Information about the Discovery Program is available on the ARC website.
- 2.2. The ARC administers funding of excellent pure basic, strategic basic and applied research in all disciplines under the NCGP, excluding medical research. The ARC does not fund experimental development.

About the Discovery Projects grant opportunity

- 2.3. The Discovery Projects scheme is funded under the Discovery Program.
- 2.4. The Discovery Projects scheme objectives are to:
 - a. support excellent pure basic, strategic basic and applied research, and research training, across all disciplines excluding clinical and other medical research, that addresses a significant problem or gap in knowledge and represents value for money;
 - b. expand research capacity in Australia by supporting excellent researchers and teams;
 - c. foster national and international research collaboration;
 - d. create new knowledge with economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for Australia; and
 - e. enhance the scale and focus of research in Australian Government priority areas.
- 2.5. The Discovery Projects scheme has a two-stage application process, commencing with an Expression of Interest (EOI). Shortlisted applicants will be invited to submit a full application.
- 2.6. The grant commencement date and active project assessment dates for each Discovery Projects grant opportunity will be available on the ARC website.

3. Grant amount and grant period

- 3.1. For each Discovery Projects grant opportunity, applications for the levels and durations of funding listed in Table 1 will be considered.
- 3.2. **Table 1:** Discovery Projects funding and grant duration.

Category	Details
Project funding	Between \$30,000 and \$500,000 per year
Project funding duration	Up to five consecutive years

4. Eligibility criteria

Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

- 4.1. We will only accept applications from Eligible Organisations as identified in Appendix B. The Eligible Organisation that applies will be the 'Administering Organisation' (henceforth 'You').
- 4.2. If

- a. an application was submitted pursuant to these grant guidelines by either the University of Adelaide or the University of South Australia (collectively, 'Previous Universities') during the period that Adelaide University was being established and becoming operational; and
 - b. at the time that We award grants pursuant to these grant guidelines, one or more named participants on the application has transferred from one of the Previous Universities to Adelaide University,
- then We may award the grant to Adelaide University.

What are the eligibility requirements for applications?

- 4.3. Organisation roles available under the Discovery Projects grant opportunity are:
 - a. Administering Organisation;
 - b. Other Eligible Organisation; and
 - c. Other Organisation.
- 4.4. You can only submit one EOI and, if invited, one full application for the same project in any grant opportunity. This includes applications which fundamentally have the same research intent, approach, and outcomes, regardless of any variations in the research, the named participants and/or organisations.
- 4.5. Your application must nominate at least one Chief Investigator (CI).
- 4.6. You must ensure that any additional certification requirements, applied by the ARC as a result of findings of breaches of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (2018), are provided at the EOI grant opportunity closing date for any named participant on an EOI application.
- 4.7. Your application must not include medical research as detailed in the *ARC Medical Research Policy* (2025 version) on the ARC website.

Who is eligible to be an Other Organisation?

- 4.8. Organisations that are not Eligible Organisations but that are named as a participating organisation on an application will be Other Organisations.
- 4.9. An Other Organisation cannot 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' (www.nationalredress.gov.au).

Who is eligible to be a named participant?

- 4.10. Roles that named participants may be nominated for under these guidelines are:
 - a. Chief Investigators (CIs); and
 - b. Partner Investigators (PIs).
- 4.11. A Project cannot commence until all named participants meet the eligibility criteria in these grant guidelines for the selected role they are to perform.
- 4.12. As at the grant commencement date, or if successful, at any time during the project activity period, named participants:
 - a. who meet the eligibility criteria to be a CI, must be a CI and cannot opt to be a PI;

- b. who do not meet the eligibility criteria to be a CI, must be a PI.
- 4.13. All named participants in an application must have met their obligations regarding previously funded projects, including submission of satisfactory final reports to the ARC at the EOI application grant opportunity closing date.

Chief Investigators

- 4.14. CIs must meet at least one of the following criteria as at the grant commencement date, and, if successful, for the project activity period:
 - a. be an employee for at least 0.2 FTE at an Eligible Organisation; or
 - b. be a holder of an honorary academic appointment (as defined in the Glossary) at an Eligible Organisation.
- 4.15. CIs must reside in Australia for more than 50% of the project activity period. Any significant absences including fieldwork or study leave directly related to the project must have approval from You and must not total more than half the project activity period. In extraordinary circumstances, a change may be approved by Us via a formal Variation request.
- 4.16. CIs must not undertake an HDR during the project activity period.
- 4.17. The first named CI on the application will be the Project Leader. The Project Leader must have a demonstrated capacity to manage the project.

What are the limits on the number of applications and projects per named participant?

- 4.18. These limits only apply to CIs.
- 4.19. The limits are designed to ensure that named participants have the capacity to undertake each project.
- 4.20. A named participant can be concurrently funded through the Discovery Program for a maximum of:
 - a. two projects as a CI; or
 - b. one ARC Fellowship and one project as a CI; or
 - c. one ARC Fellowship or project if the individual is also a Director on an active ARC Centre of Excellence and/or a Special Research Initiative project.
- 4.21. At the closing dates for Discovery Projects EOI and full applications, We will count:
 - a. the number of Discovery Program CI roles or ARC Fellowships that the individual will hold on active projects on the grant opportunity's active project assessment date;
 - b. whether the named participant will hold an ARC Centres of Excellence and/or Special Research Initiatives Director role on active projects on the grant opportunity's active project assessment date;
 - c. the number of Discovery Projects EOI or full applications We are currently assessing which include that named participant as a CI; and
 - d. the number of Discovery Indigenous applications We are currently assessing which include that named participant as a CI.

- 4.22. Applications for Australian Laureate Fellowships, Future Fellowships, DECRA, ARC Centres of Excellence or Special Research Initiatives do not need to meet the project limit requirements at the grant opportunity closing date. If an Australian Laureate Fellowships, Future Fellowships, ARC Centres of Excellence or Special Research Initiatives application is successful, named participants must meet the project limits under section 4.19 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 does not need to occur until all outcomes are announced.
- 4.23. If a role or Project must be relinquished to meet the limits at the grant opportunity closing date for a Discovery Projects application (EOI or full), We must approve the Variation before the grant opportunity closing date. Any relinquishment Variation submitted or approved after the grant opportunity closing date will not be taken into account when counting the number of projects under section 4.19.
- 4.24. 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.

5. What the grant money can be used for

What grants funds can be used for

- 5.1 The Discovery Program supports research activities that meet the definition of 'research' in the Glossary.
- 5.2 You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure items that directly support the project and in accordance with any additional special conditions in the grant agreement.
- 5.3 Eligible expenditure items may include:
- a. salary support for other personnel, for example, research associates and assistants, technicians and laboratory attendants at an appropriate salary level, including 30% on-costs, at the employing organisation;
 - b. stipends for HDR at 1.0 full time equivalent (FTE) each at the level indicated on the 'Salaries and Stipends' page of the [ARC website](#);
 - c. teaching relief for CIs up to a total of \$50,000 per CI per year per project;
 - d. equipment (and its maintenance) and consumables, including specialised computer equipment and software essential to the project;
 - e. travel costs essential to the project may be supported up to \$50,000 over the project activity period. The following travel costs are not included in this \$50,000 limit:
 - i. expenditure on field research essential to the project, including technical and logistical support, travel expenses (including accommodation, meals and incidental costs); and
 - ii. reasonable essential costs to allow a participant who is a carer, or who personally requires care or assistance, to undertake travel essential to the project.

What grants funds cannot be used for

5.4 You cannot request or use grant funds for:

- a. research activities, infrastructure or projects previously funded or currently being funded through any other Commonwealth grant;
- b. medical research as detailed in the *ARC Medical Research Policy (2025)* on the ARC website;
- c. experimental development, as defined in the Glossary;
- d. activities leading solely to the creation or performance of a work of art, including visual art, musical compositions, drama, dance, film, broadcasts, designs and literary works, unless those works are directly related to the project activities and demonstrably research based;
- e. contracted research or consultancy arrangements where one or more Organisation(s) is seeking expert external assistance, not available within their own organisation, to develop specific applications or outputs that involve little innovation or are low risk;
- f. production of computer programs, research aids and tools; data warehouses, catalogues or bibliographies; or teaching materials, unless these meet the definition of 'research';
- g. basic facilities that must be provided (where relevant) and funded by You and are not funded by the grant:
 - i. bench fees or similar laboratory access fees;
 - ii. access to a basic library collection;
 - iii. access to film or music editing facilities;
 - iv. work accommodation (for example, laboratory and office space, suitably equipped and furnished);
 - v. basic computer facilities such as desktop computers, portable computer devices, printers, word processing, and other standard software; and
 - vi. standard reference materials or funds for abstracting services;
- h. capital works and general infrastructure costs;
- i. costs not directly related to the project, including but not limited to professional membership fees, professional development courses, fees for patent application and maintenance, equipment for live music or drama performances, equipment for gallery and museum exhibitions, visas, relocation costs, entertainment costs, purchase of alcohol, insurance, mobile phones (purchase or call charges) and other indirect costs;
- j. fees for international students or the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) and Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) liabilities for students;
- k. salaries and/or on-costs, in whole or in part, for CIs or PIs; and
- l. HDR stipends for CIs or PIs, in whole or in part.

6. The assessment criteria

6.1. You must address all of the relevant assessment criteria in Your EOI application. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each criterion.

6.2. The assessment criteria for the Discovery Projects EOI application are:

- a. Investigator(s)/Capability 30%**
- Taking into account research opportunity,
- Record of high-quality research outputs appropriate to the discipline(s)
 - evidence of excellence in research training, mentoring and supervision (where appropriate); and
 - the capability of the investigator or team to build collaborations both within Australia and internationally.
- b. Project quality and innovation 70%**
- Contribution to an important gap in knowledge or a significant problem
 - Novelty/originality and innovation of the proposed research
 - Appropriateness of the proposed research design
 - Potential to create new knowledge and research capacity, and economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for Australia.

6.3. You must address all of the relevant assessment criteria in Your full application, if You are invited to submit one. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each criterion.

6.4. The assessment criteria for the Discovery Projects full application are:

- a. Investigator(s)/Capability 30%**
- Taking into account research opportunity,
- record of high-quality research outputs appropriate to the discipline;
 - evidence of excellence in research training, mentoring and supervision (where appropriate); and
 - the capability of the investigator or team to build collaborations both within Australia and internationally.
- b. Project quality and innovation 45%**
- contribution to an important gap in knowledge or significant problem;
 - novelty/originality and innovation of the proposed research (including any new methods, technologies, theories or ideas that will be developed);
 - clarity of the hypothesis, theories and research questions;
 - cohesiveness of the project design and implementation plan (including the appropriateness of the aim, conceptual framework, method, data and/or analyses); and
 - extent to which the research has the potential to enhance international collaboration.

If the project involves Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander research additional criteria include:

- the project's level of collaboration, engagement, relationship building and benefit sharing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and First Nations Organisations and Communities;
- the project's strategy and mechanisms for Indigenous research capacity building within the project;
- the project's level of internal leadership of Indigenous research;
- The project's adherence to the Australian Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles (2018); and
- The project's understanding of, and proposed strategies to adhere to, the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research (2020) and NHMRC's guidelines on Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities_(2018).

c. Benefit 15%

Describe the potential benefits including the:

- new or advanced knowledge resulting from outcomes of the research;
- economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for Australia; and
- potential contribution to Australian Government priority areas.

d. Feasibility 10%

Describe the:

- cost-effectiveness of the research and its value for money;
- time and capacity of investigator or team to undertake the research;
- suitability of the environment for the research team and their project, and for HDR students where appropriate;
- availability of the necessary facilities to complete the project; and
- extent to which the project's design, named participants and requested budget create confidence in the timely and successful completion of the project.

7. How to apply

Application process

- 7.1. To apply, you must complete the EOI application form and, if invited, a full application form in the format We require as detailed in the **Instructions to Applicants**
- 7.2. **Instructions To Applicants** will be issued on the opening of the EOI grant opportunity and applicants must follow the processes described in those Instructions, including regarding attachments to applications.
- 7.3. A full application may be submitted only if invited by the ARC.
- 7.4. EOI and full applications must be completed in RMS. We will not accept late applications at either stage, other than in exceptional circumstances (such as due to natural disasters) in which case We will discuss this with You, and if We agree, invite You to make a late application.

- 7.5. You cannot change Your EOI application after the EOI closing date and time, unless invited to by the ARC.
- 7.6. You cannot change Your full application after the full application closing date and time, unless invited to by the ARC.
- 7.7. Named participants, participating organisations, and the basic design of the research program must be specified in the EOI application and are fixed upon submission. Changes to these details are not permitted in a full application which has been invited following a shortlisted EOI application.
- 7.8. We reserve the right to seek evidence to support the certification of applications at any point.
- 7.9. Questions during the application periods should be directed to the Administering Organisation's Research Office. Answers to Frequently Asked Questions will be posted on GrantConnect.
- 7.10. If You wish to withdraw Your application, You must inform Us in writing.

National Interest Test Statement

- 7.11. For full applications, applicants must provide a National Interest Test statement: a brief response that articulates the benefits of the proposed research in plain English in general terms beyond the period of the grant.

Timing of the grant opportunities

- 7.12. The Discovery Projects scheme typically accepts one round of EOI and full applications each year.
- 7.13. You must submit your EOI application between the opening and closing dates and times specified on GrantConnect.
- 7.14. If invited by Us, You must submit your full application between the opening and closing dates and times specified on GrantConnect.

8. The grant selection process

Eligibility and Assessment

- 8.1. We will review Your EOI against the eligibility criteria. If ineligible, We must not recommend the EOI application for shortlisting.
- 8.2. We will review Your full application, if invited, against the eligibility criteria. If ineligible, We must not recommend the application for funding.
- 8.3. All applications will be considered through a competitive peer review process, based on:
 - a. how well it meets the weighted assessment criteria;
 - b. how it is ranked against other applications; and
 - c. whether it provides value for money (as defined in the Glossary).
- 8.4. You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (Cth). We will investigate any incomplete, inaccurate, false or misleading information and may recommend to the Accountability Authority that Your application not be considered further.

- a. For the avoidance of doubt, this includes failure to disclose any conflict of interest of any named participant, including but not limited to matters described in clauses 3.1 and 3.3 of the *ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy (2025)* on the ARC website.
- 8.5. We may seek advice on security or other matters from Commonwealth agencies at any time during the process and may seek information from third party sources. We may seek information from You about activities and protections in line with that advice and other information.
- 8.6. During the assessment, We may request additional information, which does not change the nature of Your application.

EOI applications

- 8.7. EOI applications will be assessed by members of the ARC College of Experts.
 - a. Assessors provide assessments to Us with scores against assessment criteria, and a ranking for each EOI application relative to other applications.
 - b. Scores and rankings provided in the assessments are used to produce a shortlist of EOI applications for full application.
 - c. The recommended shortlist of EOIs is submitted to the ARC Accountable Authority for decision.
 - d. If You are shortlisted, We will invite You to submit a full application.

Full applications

- 8.8. Full applications will be assessed and recommendations will be made to the ARC Accountable Authority from a Selection Advisory Committee (SAC).
 - a. Detailed Assessors may provide assessments to Us with scores and written comments against the assessment criteria.
 - b. Applicants are provided with any Detailed Assessors' comments and are invited to submit a rejoinder (see below for further information on rejoinder process).
 - c. Full Applications, and any scores and comments provided in the detailed assessments and the applicant's rejoinder are provided to the SAC. The SAC assign their own scores against the assessment criteria.
 - d. The SAC meets to discuss the ranking of each full application relative to other applications and determines funding recommendations for the ARC Accountable Authority.

Who will approve grants

- 8.9. The ARC Accountable Authority will decide which grants to fund, after considering the advice from peer review, and alignment with Australian Government priorities. The ARC Accountable Authority's decision is final in all matters.
- 8.10. The outcome of all applications will be published in RMS.
- 8.11. The Minister may at any time decide that, for reasons relevant to the security, defence or international relations of Australia, the ARC Accountable Authority should not approve a grant. The ARC Accountable Authority must comply with the Minister's decision.

Requests Not To Assess process

- 8.12. You may name up to three persons whom You do not wish to assess an application by submitting a 'Request Not to Assess' (RNTA) form in RMS as detailed on GrantConnect and on the [ARC website](#).
- 8.13. The RNTA form must be received by Us two weeks prior to the EOI closing date.
- 8.14. Only one request containing the names of up to three individual assessors may be submitted per EOI application.
- 8.15. 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 comprehensive evidence justifying the request for the ARC College of Experts member or members named. If We consider the evidence is not sufficient for the named ARC College of Experts member or members, We will reject part, or all the request.
- 8.16. We have discretion about whether We accept or refuse a RNTA. We will not notify You of the outcome.
- 8.17. An accepted RNTA for an EOI application will be used for any subsequent full application.

Rejoinder process

- 8.18. There is no rejoinder process for EOI applications.
- 8.19. If You are invited to submit a full application, You will be given the opportunity to respond to assessors' written comments through a rejoinder. Names of assessors will not be provided. Further information on the rejoinder process is available on the [ARC website](#).

Notification of application outcomes

- 8.20. We will advise You whether Your EOI application has been shortlisted through RMS. The notification will include information about submitting a full application.
- 8.21. If you have submitted a full application, We will advise You of the outcome of Your application through RMS, following a decision by the ARC Accountable Authority.

9. Successful grant applications

Advice and Announcement

- 9.1. If your grant application is successful, We:
 - a. will give You a copy of the ARC's Accountable Authority's approval no more than 21 days after the ARC's Accountable Authority's decision;
 - b. may give You earlier notice of the ARC Accountable Authority's approval and may impose a short embargo on announcements in order to enable parties to co-ordinate announcements; and
 - c. will list Your grant on GrantConnect no more than 21 calendar days after the date of effect.
- 9.2. We will publicise and report offers and grants awarded, including the following information about the project:
 - a. Your name and any other parties involved in or associated with the project;

- b. named participants and their organisations;
 - c. the project description (the title and summary descriptions);
 - d. Your National Interest Test statement;
 - e. classifications and international collaboration country names; and
 - f. the ARC grant funding amount.
- 9.3. You should ensure information contained in the project title, summary descriptions and National Interest Test statement will not compromise Your requirements for confidentiality (such as protection of Intellectual Property).
- 9.4. We may publish a project description, including title and summary, which differs from that provided in the application.

Grant Agreements

- 9.5. You must enter into a grant agreement with Us to receive a grant.
- 9.6. We use the ARC Discovery Program Discovery Projects grant agreement which contains standard terms and conditions that cannot be changed. A sample grant agreement is available on GrantConnect. Any special conditions will be identified in the grant offer.
- 9.7. You will have 30 calendar days from the date of offer to execute the grant agreement.
- 9.8. We must execute a grant agreement with You before We can make payment. We are not responsible for any of Your project expenditure until a grant agreement is executed.

How we pay the grant

- 9.9. Payments will be made as set out in the grant agreement. Grant funding will typically be paid monthly through Our payment system to You.
- 9.10. The grant offer will specify the approved grant amount. We will not pay more than the approved grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, You must meet them.
- 9.11. Grant funding may be subject to indexation.
- 9.12. All amounts referred to in these grant guidelines are exclusive of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), unless expressly stated otherwise.
- 9.13. Any grant awarded will be subject to sufficient funds being available for the project, the provisions of the ARC Act and the continued satisfactory progress of the project.

Grant Agreement Variation

- 9.14. The Grant Agreement outlines the circumstances in which Variations must be submitted. Variations are subject to the ARC approval and further information can be found in the Grant Agreement.

Responsibilities

- 9.15. All named participants in an application must take responsibility for the authorship and intellectual content of the application, appropriately citing sources and acknowledging all significant contributions, including from third parties.

Chief Investigators

9.16. CIs must:

- a. obtain a legal right to work and reside in Australia, prior to the commencement of the project if the CI is not an Australian citizen; and
- b. meet relinquishment and any other requirements specified in the grant agreement.

Specific research policies and practices

- 9.17. All applications and ARC-funded research projects must comply with the requirements for responsible and ethical research practice specified in the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (2018), and the codes, guidelines, practices and policies on the ARC website, including the *ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy* (2025) and any actions that have been applied under the *ARC Research Integrity Policy* (2023 version).
- 9.18. An ethics plan must be in place before commencement of the project.
- 9.19. Intellectual Property arrangements should be negotiated between You, Other Eligible Organisations and Other Organisations as relevant. We do not claim ownership of any Intellectual Property arising from the project.
- 9.20. All research projects must comply with the *ARC Open Access Policy* (2021 version) on the dissemination of findings on the ARC website.
- 9.21. A data management plan must be in place before the project commences, in line with the grant agreement, and ARC expectations on the ARC website.
- 9.22. All named participants applying for grants are strongly encouraged to have a persistent digital identifier such as an Open Researcher and Contributor Identifier (ORCID) in their RMS Profile.

Monitoring and reporting

9.23. You must inform us of any changes to Your:

- a. name;
- b. addresses;
- c. nominated contact details; or
- d. bank account details.

9.24. You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. Reports must be submitted through RMS, unless otherwise advised by Us. Reporting may include:

- a. End of year reports;
- b. Final reports; and
- c. Post-project reporting.

9.25. We will monitor progress by assessing Your reports and may conduct site visits or request records to confirm details of Your reports if necessary. We may re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

9.26. We may evaluate the project to measure how well the outcomes and objectives were achieved. We may use information from Your application and reports or may contact You after grant completion to assist evaluation.

10. Probity

- 10.1. The Australian Government will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRPs and the ARC Act.

Appeals process

- 10.2. We will only consider appeals against the NCGP administrative process and not against committee decisions, assessor ratings and comments, or the assessment outcome. Appellants must identify the specific guideline/legislative instrument clause, policy or procedure which they believe has been incorrectly applied.
- 10.3. You must submit an appeal using the Form on the ARC website and have it authorised by the Administering Organisation's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or equivalent.
- 10.4. The appeals process is set out on the ARC website.

Conflict of interest

- 10.5. You will be asked to certify as part of Your application that any perceived, potential or existing conflicts of interests have been declared to You or that, to the best of Your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest in Your application. Each named individual or organisation must make this declaration about any aspect of the application or project to You at the date of submission.
- 10.6. If a conflict of interest exists or arises, You must have documented processes in place to manage that conflict for the duration of the project. Processes must comply with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (2018), the *ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy* (2025) and any relevant successor documents.
- 10.7. We will handle any conflicts of interest as set out in Australian Government policies and procedures. Refer to the *ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy* (2025) on the ARC website.

Privacy and protection of personal information

- 10.8. We treat your personal information according to the Australian Privacy Principles and the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*.
- 10.9. You are required, as part of Your application, to certify Your compliance with the *Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)*, including the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on any subcontractors You engage. You must ask for our consent in writing before disclosing confidential information.
- 10.10. Information about privacy and personal information is set out on the ARC website.

Confidential information

- 10.11. The Australian Government may use and disclose confidential information about grant applicants and grant recipients to any other Australian Government business or function.
- 10.12. We will treat the information You give Us as confidential if:
- a. You clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why We should treat it as confidential;

- b. the information is commercial in confidence;
- c. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to You or someone else;
or
- d. You provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

Freedom of information

10.13. All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this program, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth)* (FOI Act).

10.14. The Freedom of Information process is set out on the ARC website.

Appendix A – Glossary

Acronyms

For the purposes of the Discovery Program grant guidelines, acronyms have the meanings defined below.

Acronym	Description
ARC	Australian Research Council
ARC Act	<i>Australian Research Council Act 2001</i>
CGRPs	<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024</i>
CI	Chief Investigator
EOI	Expression of Interest
FOI	Freedom of Information
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GST	Goods and Services Tax
HDR	Higher Degree by Research
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
HELP	Higher Education Loan Program
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NCGP	National Competitive Grants Program
ORCID	Open Researcher and Contributor Identifier
PI	Partner Investigator
RMS	Research Management System
SAC	Selection Advisory Committee

Definitions

For the purposes of the Discovery Program grant guidelines, terms have the meanings defined below.

Term	Definition
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person	a person of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and is accepted as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person by the community in which they live or have lived.
Accountable Authority	Members of the ARC Board are the Accountable Authority of the ARC as defined in section 5 of the ARC Act.
active project	a project that is receiving funding according to the terms of an existing Funding Agreement or grant agreement, or has any carryover funds approved by the ARC, or an approved variation to the project end date.
active project assessment date	the date on which active project eligibility will be considered for project and application limits per named participant.
Administering Organisation	an Eligible Organisation which submits an application for a grant and which will be responsible for the administration of the grant if the application is approved for funding.
applicant	the Administering Organisation.
application	a proposal submitted through RMS by an Administering Organisation seeking grant funding under an ARC grant program. It includes the specifics of a proposed grant activity as well as the administrative information required to determine the eligibility of the application. In this grant opportunity, 'application' is used to refer generically to either an EOI or full application, or the combined process of both stages.
applied research	original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge. It is, however, directed primarily towards a specific, practical aim or objective. https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/australian-and-new-zealand-standard-research-classification-anzsrc/latest-release
ARC Board	The ARC Board is appointed by the Minister and consists of the Chair, Deputy Chair and up to seven other members. The ARC Board's function includes determining priorities, strategies and policies from the ARC. The ARC Board is the Accountable Authority of the Australian Research Council.
ARC College of Experts	the body of experts of international standing appointed to assist the ARC to identify research excellence, moderate external assessments and recommend applications for funding. Its members are specialist and generalist experts in their knowledge fields drawn from the Australian research community.

Term	Definition
	The ARC website provides information on who is a member of the College of Experts.
ARC Fellowship	a named Fellowship position within any ARC grant program where the salary is funded wholly or partly by the ARC.
assessment criteria	the specified principles or standards, against which applications will be considered. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of applications and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings.
Australian Government priority areas	any areas identified by the Australian Government as priorities for research.
bench fees	fees that an organisation charges for an individual to use infrastructure which would normally be provided by the organisation for their employees. This infrastructure may vary and could include, for example, an office or laboratory space with appropriate equipment, or access to non-specialised equipment owned by the organisation.
Chief Investigator	a participant who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a CI under these grant guidelines.
consultancy	the provision of specialist advice, analysis, assistance, services or products to another organisation(s), generally where the consultancy services are for the sole or preferred use of that other organisation(s).
date of effect	the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date.
Detailed Assessors	assessors who are assigned applications to review for their specific expertise in a field of research.
eligibility criteria	the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
Eligible Organisation	an organisation listed in Appendix B of these grant guidelines.
experimental development	<p>experimental development is systematic work, drawing on knowledge gained from research and practical experience and producing additional knowledge, which is directed to producing new products or processes or to improving existing products or processes.</p> <p>https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/australian-and-new-zealand-standard-research-classification-anzsrc/latest-release</p>
Expression of Interest (EOI) application	The first stage in a two-stage application process whereby applicants submit a brief a preliminary request to the ARC for a

Term	Definition
	research Program in accordance with the grant guidelines approved by the Minister.
field research	the collection of information integral to the project outside a laboratory, library or workplace setting and often in a location external to the participant's normal place of employment.
full application	The complete application that invited applicants that are shortlisted from the EOI stage of the process may submit. It addresses all eligibility and assessment criteria.
grant activity	the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake. A project consists of a number of grant activities.
grant agreement	the agreement entered into by the ARC and an Administering Organisation when an application from that organisation is approved for grant funding. This was previously referred to as a 'Funding Agreement'.
grant commencement date	the date on which grant funding may commence.
grant guidelines	grant guidelines, otherwise known as funding rules, are rules approved by the Minister under section 59 (including as varied under section 60) of the ARC Act.
grant offer	the details listed in the ARC's RMS under 'Funding Offers' showing the project details and grant amount.
GrantConnect	the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs.
grantee	the Administering Organisation which has been selected to receive a grant.
grant opportunity	the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant opportunity closing date	the last day on which applications for a grant opportunity will be accepted for consideration for a specific grant opportunity.
grant recipient	an individual or organisation who has received grant funding from the ARC.
GST	the meaning as given in Section 195-1 of the <i>A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999</i> .
Higher Degree by Research (HDR)	a 'Research Doctorate or Research Masters course, for which at least two-thirds of the student load for the course is required as

Term	Definition
	research work’ as defined by the <i>Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2017</i> .
Honorary academic appointment	An honorary academic appointment for eligibility purposes means a position that gives full academic status to the researcher, as certified by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (or equivalent) in the application. The researcher must have access to research support comparable to employees e.g., an emeritus appointment. The 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.
in-kind contributions	A contribution of goods, services, materials and/or time to the project from an individual, business or organisation. Values should be calculated based on the most likely actual cost, for example, current market, preferred provider or internal provider rates/valuations/rentals/charges (that is in the financial year of the date of the application) of the costs of labour, work spaces, equipment and databases. The calculations covering time and costs should be documented by the Administering Organisation. The ARC may require these calculations to be audited.
Instructions to Applicants	a set of instructions prepared by the ARC to assist applicants in completing the application form.
Key Performance Indicators	a set of quantifiable measures that the ARC uses to monitor and report on progress of research outcomes.
legislative instrument	a law on matters of detail made by a person or body authorised to do so by the relevant enabling legislation.
medical research	medical research as defined in the ARC <i>Medical Research Policy</i> (2025 version) available on the ARC website.
named participants	individual researchers nominated for particular roles in an application.
ORCID Identifier	a persistent digital identifier for an individual researcher available on the ORCID website, www.orcid.org .
Other Eligible Organisation	an organisation listed in Section 4 of these grant guidelines which is not the Administering Organisation on an application.
Other Organisation	an organisation that is not an Administering Organisation or Other Eligible Organisation that contributes to the research project.
participants	all named participants on an application (i.e. CIs, PIs); and all unnamed researchers such as postdoctoral research associates and postgraduate researchers working on a project.

Term	Definition
participating organisation	An organisation on an application (i.e., Administering Organisation, Other Eligible Organisations and Other Organisations)
Partner Investigator	a named participant who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a Partner Investigator under these grant guidelines.
Postdoctoral Research Associate	a postdoctoral research associate funded by the Commonwealth through the Administering Organisation, who will be employed on the project.
Postgraduate Researcher	a postgraduate research student funded by the Commonwealth through the Administering Organisation, who will undertake a HDR through the project.
Preprint or comparable resource	A preprint or comparable resource is a scholarly output that is uploaded by the authors to a recognised publicly accessible archive, repository, or pre-print service (such as, but not limited to, arXiv, bioRxiv, medRxiv, ChemRxiv, Peer J Preprints, Zenodo, GitHub, PsyArXiv and publicly available university or government repositories etc.). This will include a range of materials that have been subjected to varying degrees of peer review from none to light and full review. Ideally, a preprint or comparable resource should have a unique identifier or a DOI (digital object identifier). Any citation of a preprint or comparable resource should be explicitly identified as such and listed in the references with a DOI, URL or equivalent, version number and/or date of access, as applicable.
project	an application approved by the ARC Accountable Authority to receive funding from the ARC through an application.
project activity period	the period during which a project is receiving grant funding according to the original grant offer, or has any carryover funds approved by the ARC, or an approved variation to the project's end date. During this period, the project is known as an active project.
project end date	the expected date that the project activity is completed and by which all grant funding will be spent.
Project Leader	the named participant from the Administering Organisation who is the first-named CI on an application.
pure basic research	<p>basic research carried out for the advancement of knowledge, without seeking long-term economic or social benefits or making any effort to apply the results to practical problems or to transfer the results to sectors responsible for their application.</p> <p>https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/australian-and-new-zealand-standard-research-classification-anzsrc/latest-release</p>
research	for the purposes of these grant guidelines, the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and

Term	Definition
	<p>creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.</p> <p>This definition of research is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development comprising “creative and systematic work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge – including knowledge of humankind, culture and society – and to devise new applications of available knowledge” OECD (2015), <i>Frascati Manual 2015: Guidelines for Collecting and Reporting Data on Research and Experimental Development</i> (p.378).</p>
research infrastructure	the assets, facilities, services, and coordinated access to major national and/or international research facilities or consortia which directly support research in higher education organisations and more broadly and which maintain the capacity of researchers to undertake excellent research and deliver innovative outcomes.
Research Office	a business unit within an Eligible Organisation that is responsible for contact with the ARC regarding applications and projects.
research output	all products (including Preprints or comparable resources) of a research project that meet the definition of research.
Selection Advisory Committee (SAC)	a group of experts from academia and industry appointed to assist the ARC to evaluate applications and to provide a recommendation for funding to the ARC Accountable Authority. A SAC may be drawn from the ARC College of Experts.
selection process	the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria.
Special Condition	a condition specified in a grant offer which governs the use of the funding provided by the ARC.
strategic basic research	<p>experimental and theoretical work undertaken to acquire new knowledge directed into specified broad areas in the expectation of practical discoveries. It provides the broad base of knowledge necessary for the solution of recognised practical problems.</p> <p>https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/classifications/australian-and-new-zealand-standard-research-classification-anzsrc/latest-release</p>
travel costs	the domestic and international economy travel costs associated with the project, including to foster and strengthen collaborations between researchers in Australia and overseas.
value for money	‘value for money’ is a judgement based on the grant application representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of

Term	Definition
	public resources determined from a variety of considerations: merit of the proposal, risk, cost and expected contribution to outcome achievement.
Variation of Grant Agreement (Variation)	a request submitted to the ARC in RMS to agree a change in the grant agreement.
We	the Australian Research Council (ARC). 'Us' and 'Our' are also used in this context.
You	the Eligible Organisation that submitted the application. 'Your' is also used in this context.

Appendix B: Eligible Organisations

Organisation Name	Organisation ABN	Organisation Name	Organisation ABN
Adelaide University	41 202 953 738	Swinburne University of Technology	13 628 586 699
Australian Catholic University	15 050 192 660	The Australian National University	52 234 063 906
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	62 020 533 641	The University of Adelaide	61 249 878 937
Avondale University	53 108 186 401	The University of Melbourne	84 002 705 224
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	32 039 179 166	The University of New England	75 792 454 315
Bond University	88 010 694 121	The University of New South Wales	57 195 873 179
Central Queensland University	39 181 103 288	The University of Newcastle	15 736 576 735
Charles Darwin University	54 093 513 649	The University of Notre Dame Australia	69 330 643 210
Charles Sturt University	83 878 708 551	The University of Queensland	63 942 912 684
Curtin University	99 143 842 569	The University of Sydney	15 211 513 464
Deakin University	56 721 584 203	The University of Western Australia	37 882 817 280
Edith Cowan University	54 361 485 361	Torrens University Australia	99 154 937 005
Federation University Australia	51 818 692 256	University of Canberra	81 633 873 422
Flinders University	65 542 596 200	University of Divinity	95 290 912 141
Griffith University	78 106 094 461	University of South Australia	37 191 313 308
James Cook University	46 253 211 955	University of Southern Queensland	40 234 732 081
La Trobe University	64 804 735 113	University of Tasmania	30 764 374 782
Macquarie University	90 952 801 237	University of Technology Sydney	77 257 686 961
Monash University	12 377 614 012	University of the Sunshine Coast	28 441 859 157
Murdoch University	61 616 369 313	University of Wollongong	61 060 567 686
Queensland University of Technology	83 791 724 622	Victoria University	83 776 954 731
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University)	49 781 030 034	Western Sydney University	53 014 069 881
Southern Cross University	41 995 651 524		