

Australian Research Council (ARC) VARIATIONS – Tip Sheet for Researchers

During a research project, changes may occur which require a grantee variation request to be submitted to The Australian Research Council (ARC). Variations must be requested through the Research Office of the Administering Organisation that manages/administers the grant and the variation is submitted via the ARC system ARCRMS.

Requesting a variation

Steps/Notes for Researcher(s):

- Advise the Research Contracts and Funding Team (RCFT) of the change(s) to your research project. Notify the RCFT at least four weeks prior to the effective date of change. This will allow time for the request to be submitted and approval of the variation.
- The Lead Chief Investigator may contact the RCFT directly or through another ECU delegated contact nominated by the Lead Chief Investigator.
- Researchers should **not** contact the ARC directly. All ARC related queries should be directed through RCFT.
- Review your ARC Research Funding/Grant Agreement before seeking to lodge a variation via RCFT.
- Provide a statement of up to 500 words detailing the reason for the request. This should be the **'WHY'** for the request.
- A variation should only be created in the ARC Research Management System (RMS) when there is certainty that one is required.
- Once a variation has been submitted to the ARC:
 - no further edits can be included until the variation has been de-submitted by the ARC.
 - can only be withdrawn prior to the ARC delegate's assessment.
 - once assessed by the ARC delegate, no further edits may be made, and a new variation will need to be submitted for any additional changes.
- ECU will not be able to submit a Variation of Funding Agreement (VFA) if it is not the Administering Organisation of the grant. All VFAs must be submitted by the Administering Organisation only. The ARC will not accept VFA's submitted from another organisation or the researcher.

RCFT can:

- Advise if a variation will be required based on ARC requirements.
- Provide information to you on any supporting documentation requirements and will enter and submit via the ARC system ARCRMS.
- Provide advice to researcher(s) regarding compliance with the Funding/Grant Agreement
- Liaise with the ARC regarding variation queries
- Liaise with other University Research Offices (e.g., provide a letter of support for the variation where required)
- Notify the researcher of the outcome
- Notify relevant areas within ECU
- Notify relevant other University Research Office(s) of the outcome and organise updated agreement where required
- Progress any variations to the project/multi-institutional agreement, if required, once the ARC has approved the variation.

The ARC will:

- Review the variation request.

- Notify RCFT of the decision from the ARC.
- If a variation has been rejected, or if the ARC requires further information, the ARC will notify RCFT. ARC may provide feedback and a reason for declining the variation request.
- If a variation has been assessed and approved by the ARC, it may have been approved with a 'Special Condition'. This means that the approval has been given based on certain conditions being met and should be adhered to by the Administering Organisation as well as the researchers.

Variation types and required documentation

The ARC requires that all variations are submitted with supporting documentation. Although all document types and sizes are accepted in RMS, only one file can be attached to the request in RMS (although the file can be zipped). N.B. where agreement to a variation is required by other CI's and their organisations this can be provided by letter or email, and collated into the attachment to the variation. Please refer to funding agreement for clarity of the various organisations/personnel categories which would be applicable to the grant and variation requirements.

Variation Type	Attachments required by ARC	Special conditions / Additional Information
Organisation changes		
Organisation to be Added, Updated or Withdrawn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Agreement from Organisation that is being added/removed/updateRevised Partner/Participating Organisation Agreed Contribution Report (POACR (as required) – information completed by RCFT)	
Personnel – Add person		
New Chief Investigator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">CV of new personnel (up to 2 pages)	If a new Investigator is being added to the Project, the Research Office will need to ensure that the profile is set up and updated in RMS by the Investigator, prior to entering the Variation of Funding Agreement (VFA). ARC RMS profiles must be updated by Investigators to ensure all their details are correct as and when their details change
New Partner Investigator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Agreement from PI’s organisation (if named on the Project)	
New Centre/Hub Director New Chief Operating Officer/Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none">CV of new personnel (up to 2 pages)Agreement from all parties (<i>for Directors only</i>)	ARC RMS details should be updated by Investigators to ensure all their details are correct. A variation to add a new personnel to a project cannot commence until the personnel has created an account in ECURMS and created a profile .
Postdoctoral Research Award (PDRA) or Postgraduate Research (PGR) appointment	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	
Person – Remove person		
Person – Withdraw	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Agreement from personnel to be removed	Justification statement should outline the reason for removing the person and any additional changes
Role change (CI to PI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Agreement from relevant personnelAgreement from Partner Organisation (<i>if named on the Project</i>)	

Personnel changes Affiliated Organisation (with no additional Organisation changes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement from person changing organisations 	
Additional Appointment Notification	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	
Person – Defer Commencement	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	
Person – Suspension	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	
FTE change	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	
Maternity/Parental Leave	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HR Certification from Administering Organisation Confirmation from Project Leader (if not taking the leave) 	For selected scheme rounds, ARC funding for periods of up to 14 weeks of paid maternity leave or 2 weeks of parental leave is available. Please refer to Funding Agreement and/or Funding Rules for scheme provisions.
Project changes		
Asset Relocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation from all named Organisations (exc. The Administering Organisation) regarding the new arrangements 	
Budget Change Notification	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	<p>Examples of generally acceptable budget changes would be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> moving some funding between personnel, travel, maintenance, equipment, other, workshops from domestic to international travel
Project – Defer Commencement	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	A request to defer commencement of a project must occur before the final date of commencement allowed for the Project as per the relevant Funding Agreement (this is usually within 6-12 months of the project's Grant Offer being executed by the ARC in RMS).
End Date	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	*Please refer to Project changes – End Date conditions note below.
Full Relinquishment	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	Full relinquishments should only be requested where the Project is returning all remaining funds to the ARC and the Project will end.
Partial Relinquishment	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	Partial relinquishments should only be requested where the Project is returning some remaining funds to the ARC and the Project will continue to be active. e.g. returning unused International Collaboration Award (ICA) and/or salary funds.
Salary Conversion	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	"Salary Conversions" should be used when the salary on a Project is being requested to be converted to Project Funds.
Salary Relinquishment	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	Only possible for participants who hold Fellowship(s) or Award(s).
Scope	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	To be used if there is significant change in the Projects scope, e.g., the direction of the Project is changing significantly from the original Proposal.
Project – Suspension	*No attachment – Details submitted within the Variation	Funding cannot be spent on a Project while a Project is suspended. If funding is planned to be spent while a Fellowship is suspended (e.g., a student hired on the Project intends to continue to work while a DECRA Recipient is on parental leave), this must be stated in the variation,

		including how the student will be supervised whilst the DECRA Recipient is on leave.
Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement from receiving Administering Organisation • Agreement from all named Organisations (exc. Host Organisations) 	For a Project to be transferred, the new organization it must be an Eligible Organisation as specified in the relevant scheme Funding Rules.
Transfer – Fellowships only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement from receiving Administering Organisation • Agreement from all named Organisations (exc. Host Organisations) • Justification and research environment statement from receiving Administering Organisation DVCR 	
Changes requested by Research Offices via email only (cannot be processed in RMS by a Research Office)		
Project Title Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justification as to why the title should be changed 	A project may change its title if the scope has changed dramatically or there was error in the original Proposal. Project titles will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and/or invited to do so by the ARC.
EOYR corrections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Details of the correct amount for each year to be corrected • Justification as to why the information was reported incorrectly 	
Transfer Correction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreement from both old and new Administering Organisation • Details of the correct amount to be transferred • Justification as to why the information was reported incorrectly 	

Project changes – End Date conditions

Project end dates are normally revised via the End of Year Reporting (EOYR) process as noted in your Commonwealth Grant Agreement (March each year.) However, if an end date is required to be changed before or after this time, it may be requested if it meets the conditions listed below:

- The request directly relates to a change e.g., parental leave, suspension, part-time conversion, deferred commencement or to meet an eligibility requirement (if allowed, in the relevant ARC Agreement).
- If the end date needs to be changed to be eligible for a grant application, the ARC will only approve the change of the condition that no additional extensions or carryovers will be approved in the future.

- If the end date needs to be changed for the purposes of submitting a Final Report, written confirmation must be provided, confirming that the project has ended.

Further information on ARC list of variation requirements is located at <https://www.arc.gov.au/grants/grant-administration>.

Partner/Participating Organisation Agreed Contribution Report (POACR)

All Administering Organisations are required to enter agreed Cash and In-Kind Contribution in ARC RMS after it has signed a written agreement with all named Organisations listed on the Project. This report is organised by RCFT in consultation with other areas of ECU, where required.

- This information is obtained from the Distribution Table in the executed Multi-Institutional Agreement/Collaboration Agreement entered into between the Administering Organisation and Partner/Participating Organisations by RCFT prior to the project commencing (only if any of the awarded funds are to be distributed).
- When a participating organisation change or removal variation is completed, a new POACR must be provided in RMS with any revisions within three months of the variation being approved in RMS. Note – this is only mandatory for Linkage schemes, however POACRs must be submitted to update the Final Report form.
- A new POACR is not to be created for a new organisations contribution until the ARC has approved the variation request. The POACR online form will only populate with the approved organisations on the Project, that are listed on the Project tab.

Further information on ARC list of variation requirements is located at <https://www.arc.gov.au/grants/grant-administration>.

Contact

For further assistance: Please contact the Research Contracts and Funding Team at research-grants@ecu.edu.au