

ECU RESEARCH IMPACT EVIDENCE SCHEME GUIDELINES

FOR FUNDING COMMENCING 1 JANUARY 2023

CLOSING DATE: 14 NOVEMBER 2022

Please read these Guidelines and the FAQs before completing the Application Form.

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Key Dates

Activity	Date
Scheme Opens	Week beginning 17 October 2022
Closing Date	14 November 2022
Applications to Assessment Panel	17 November 2022
Panel Meeting	Week beginning 12 December 2022
Outcomes Announced	Week beginning 19 December 2022
Funds Available	1 January 2023
Progress Report Due	Week beginning 10 April 2023
Final Reports Due	31 July 2023

About

The ECU Research Impact Evidence Scheme aims to assist researchers with collating formal evidence to document the real-world impact of their research. As stated in the University's [2022-2026 Strategic Plan](#) and the aligned supporting Research Plan, one of ECU's major goals is to undertake impactful world-class research that provides innovative real-world solutions of significance and benefit to society. This scheme provides an opportunity to gather qualitative and/or quantitative data about the verifiable, real-world impacts of research from across the institution, and to utilise this information for subsequent internal and external reporting and a range of other promotional purposes.

Scheme Objectives

The objectives of the ECU Research Impact Evidence Scheme are to:

- Support ECU's researchers to demonstrate the real-world impact of their research.
- Identify, document and validate the beneficial, *external to academia*, impacts of ECU research on issues of significant and contemporary concern.
- Nurture ongoing engagement with existing external research end-users to validate how ECU research has been applied in the real-world and subsequently resulted in beneficial impact.
- Gather data and information about ECU's impactful research outcomes which may be utilised for reporting purposes, including to the Federal Government for the Engagement and Impact Assessment (EI)¹.
- Gather exceptional research impact case studies for potential external showcasing and promotion.
- Contribute to the development of researchers' professional profiles to expand career achievement recognition and attract and/or increase industry and other collaborator engagement.
- Raise awareness with ECU researchers on definitions and frameworks for research impact, and to encourage consideration of the non-academic impacts from their research.

Scheme Scope

- Funding under the scheme will be restricted to research undertaken in one or more of the ECU priority Field of Research (FoR) code areas (see [Appendix 1](#)), being those most likely to be reportable for ECU in EI-2024.

¹ The next round of EI is currently expected to be undertaken in 2024 (see <https://www.arc.gov.au/evaluating-research/ei-assessment/ei-2024>), although this may be subject to change – further details are awaited from the Australian Research Council.

- Up to three (3) applications will be funded per two-digit FoR code, with the minimum amount awarded under the scheme being no less than \$5,000 for the purposes of gathering data to validate real-world impact claims.
- Funding is only available for research where it is believed/understood that a real-world impact will have occurred by the end of 2022 – the scheme is not available for research with future, prospective impacts which are as yet unrealised. The impact(s) must have occurred from 1 January 2017 onwards.
- The underlying research associated with the impact may have been undertaken as far back as 2008 – although the original research may not have been undertaken at ECU, the role undertaken by researchers to facilitate the delivery of the real-world impact must have occurred whilst employed by the University.
- Grants are awarded for a six-month period only, being 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023, and no extension of funds duration or increase to the requested amount will be possible. Impact evidence needs to be collectable within that period, with a final report of outcomes submitted to Research Services by 31 July 2023.

Definitions

In the context of this scheme, the following definitions apply²:

Term	Definition
Academic impact	Academic impact is normally a result of research being disseminated to academic audiences, usually through publications and conference presentations. It is often measured using quantitative measures such as publication citation counts and journal level metrics e.g. Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) and Journal Impact Factors (JIF). Such impacts are excluded from this scheme which is focussed on impacts <i>external to academia</i> .
Beneficiaries	The individuals, groups or organisations <i>external to academia</i> , whether targeted or not, that benefit directly or indirectly from the research.
End-user	The individuals, groups or organisations <i>external to academia</i> that will directly use or directly benefit from the outcome, product or service arising from the research. Examples include governments, businesses and community organisations. Entities such as other higher education providers (HEPs) or organisations that are affiliates, controlled entities or subsidiaries of HEPs, such as Medical Research Institutes, are excluded.
Engagement	The interaction between researchers and research end-users, <i>external to academia</i> , and their larger communities/industries for the mutually beneficial transfer of knowledge, understanding, technologies, methods or resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.
Evidence (for impact)	The available body of facts or information verifying that impact has occurred. Evidence of research impact could include, for example, formal documentation that demonstrates the extent to which research outcomes have been taken up and used by policy makers or practitioners or have led to improvements in services, business and/or community engagement and well-being.
Impact (research)	The demonstrable contribution that research makes to the economy, society, culture, national security, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, <i>beyond contributions to academia</i> .
Impact Pathway	An analysis or plan which identifies causal links by which research achieves or will achieve its impact. Researchers and research planners use it to formally document the route from research-specific activities, through to uptake and adoption of research outcomes, and the realisation of subsequent future intended impact(s). This includes defining the changes and linking processes and indicators to measure progress towards intended impact(s).

² As adapted from the Australian Research Council's [Research Impact Principles and Framework](#) Glossary, and the [2018 Engagement and Impact Assessment](#) Submission Guidelines.

Term	Definition
Outcomes (research)	The findings, effects and/or manifestations of research and research outputs.
Research	The creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include the synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative. This definition is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development (R&D) as comprising creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humankind, culture and society, and to devise new applications of available knowledge.
Uptake and adoption	The application of research outcomes by end-users. This may involve complex processes over time, where research outputs (e.g. knowledge, technologies, intellectual property) are adapted, built upon and operationally applied e.g. incorporation into policies or standards, use of tools or processes, professional practices, etc.

Eligibility

- The scheme is open to all research-active academic staff employed by ECU on or before 31 March 2022.
- Applications are accepted from individuals or teams – for team applications, a Lead Chief Investigator must be identified who will take the role of project leader with overall responsibility for all aspects of the grant.
- More than one application can be received by the same individual or team for different research projects where it is believed/understood that other distinct real-world research impact(s) have occurred.

Application Process

Applications must be submitted to Research Services by **COB, Monday 14 November 2022** and no applications will be accepted after this date. Completed Application Forms should be emailed to researchimpact@ecu.edu.au.

Prior to submission, please discuss the application with your School Associate Dean, Research (ADR). You will be required to confirm that your ADR has read your application and is support of its submission.

You may need to also consider whether ethics approval will be required for your project. Go to the [ECU Research Ethics Management System](#) and complete the Proportional Review Checklist (PRC) to ascertain whether ethics approval is necessary. By answering some brief questions about your planned activity, the PRC will determine whether the activity requires review and the most appropriate review pathway. If your application under this scheme is successful, you will be required to provide confirmation of ethics status prior to funds being released.

Funding

Applications must specify the total amount being requested (round to the nearest \$1,000) and detail how you intend to use the funds to compile information to evidence the breadth and depth of the impact of your research.

Items eligible for cash funding to support the collection of research impact evidence include, but are not limited to:

- Salary costs for the employment of temporary personnel, including for teaching support/buyout.
- Engagement of external service providers/consultants.
- Events and meetings for end-user engagement, such as roundtables or facilitated stakeholder workshops.

Examples of various types of research impact evidence are available in the *Collecting Research Impact Evidence: Best Practice Guidance for the Research Community* report (Vertigo Ventures and Digital Science, June 2016)³.

Please note that the University Services Charge (USC) is not applicable for this scheme.

If you require assistance, your School Finance Officer can provide input on costings, especially for salary-related items.

Application Assessment

Applications will be assessed on a competitive basis by an Assessment Panel comprising the following members:

- Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research (DVCR) (Panel Chair)
- Director, Research Services
- Manager, Research Strategy and Policy, Office of the DVCR
- Senior Manager, Research Analytics, Systems and Performance, Research Services
- Engagement and Impact Project Officer, Research Analytics, Systems and Performance, Research Services
- 2 x Associate Deans, Research

Please note that assessment outcomes are final and appeals are not permitted.

Assessment Criteria

Applications will be assessed against the following criteria:

1. The underlying research associated with the impact is completed and results have been published (10%).
2. The types/nature of the impact, whether social, economic, cultural and/or environmental, and the anticipated extent (breadth/depth) of the impact (40%).
3. The research end-users and/or beneficiaries are clearly identified (10%).
4. The role ECU researchers have undertaken in the research impact pathway(10%).
5. Intended use of the funds to identify and document the real-world impacts of research are robust (30%).

Support Offered by Research Services

All applicants, irrespective of the success of their application, will receive in-kind support from Research Services.

Successful applicants will receive ongoing support throughout the duration of the project. Awardees will meet with Research Services at project commencement and again at the halfway point to provide a progress report. Additional meetings will be available upon request, as necessary.

Additional in-kind support will be available to all applicants, including:

- Tailored feedback on your research impact pathway.
- Advice on capture and ongoing tracking of research impact evidence.
- Assistance with developing and refining a research impact case study narrative.

Research Services will support awardees, in liaison with Brand and Marketing as per key objectives in the University's Research Plan, to develop a communications plan and produce materials to showcase the outcomes of this project.

Please contact researchimpact@ecu.edu.au to discuss any aspect of the scheme or the application process.

³ Available at https://www.research-strategy.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/collecting_research_impact_evidence_best_practice_guidance.pdf.

Appendix 1: ECU Priority Field of Research (FoR) Codes

FoR	Descriptor
30	Agricultural, Veterinary and Food Sciences
31	Biological Sciences
32	Biomedical and Clinical Sciences
34	Chemical Sciences
35	Commerce, Management, Tourism and Services
36	Creative Arts and Writing
37	Earth Sciences
39	Education
40	Engineering
41	Environmental Sciences
42	Health Sciences
44	Human Society
45	Indigenous Studies
46	Information and Computing Sciences
47	Language, Communication and Culture
48	Law and Legal Studies
52	Psychology