Student Q&A Session
Wednesday April 1, 2020
GRS Update from Prof. Joe Luca

Question and Answer Summary

Q. How do I keep track of my research progress and discussions with my supervisors during this period?
A. Students and supervisors are encouraged to set up an online Supervisor TEAMS workspace. Supervisors will need to take the lead with establishing this workspace. Relevant documentation such as MyPlan, Alternate workplan and meeting agendas can be uploaded to the workspace. Students are also able to chat with their supervisors online and have video conferencing with them too. Planner allows key milestones and subtasks to be recorded.

Also speak to the SOAR ambassadors and Coordinators Research Student Support for training/support and candidature advice respectively.

Q. What relief package is available from the University to tide over this difficult period?
A. The following is a list of ECU student support information for your attention. If you have questions, do consider contacting the Coordinators supporting your School for more information:

- Car park permit fee refund – full refund for Semester 1 and Full Year permits if cancelled before 7 April 2020; thereafter, 50% refund for Full Year permits if cancelled before 31 August 2020
- Food vouchers – one-off Coles/Woolworth $50 vouchers available
- ECU support grant – one-off cash payments available for domestic/international students facing financial hardship – amount determined on case-by-case basis – up to $2,000 available
- Reduction in Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) – students will only be charged off-campus rate ($46.20 instead of usual $154) – automatic, no application/action required
- Student Village rent assistance – options available for students struggling to pay rent – contact StuVillage
- Student Village emergency accommodation – free accommodation available for students suddenly/urgently needing somewhere to stay – contact StuVillage
- [Not considered part of COVID relief package but available nevertheless] Tuition fee reimbursement – available to fee paying students on a case-by-case basis (relevant only to small number of HDRs)
- Counselling/mental health support
- Careers – help with CV writing, interview skills, etc.

Full information and applications can be accessed via Student Success page:
https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/student/support/student-success/support-for-students

Additionally, these are supports provided by the Student Guild: https://ecuguild.org.au/student-assist/#1498442577755-87004ed4-9609
- Discretionary grants – help with payment of bills, ECU SSAF, etc.
- Guild pantry – food items/parcels available for students who cannot afford groceries
- Student loans - $500-$1,500 available for domestic student who qualify
ECU Foodbank scheme currently being developed – food parcels will be available for students in need. More information to come.

How do I progress my research currently?
You are strongly encouraged to refer to the advice from the Deputy Vice Chancellor Research (DVCR) on how best to progress your research at this time. Email from the DVCR is appended below:

COVID-19 is having a major impact on every aspect of our lives and our research is no different. I know that many of you have had to adjust or pause your research activity at this time. This is particularly true of researchers in the midst of data collection.

However, doing research, and being a world-class researcher, is about more than just collecting new data and interacting directly with people. This is a time for all enterprising researchers to think a little differently about prioritising their research activity.

As one researcher to another, I thought I’d share some of my top tips on how the most can be made of this time.

1. Write and submit that paper
I have never met a researcher who has not had a draft manuscript (or more) just waiting to be finalised for submission. Perhaps you just need to finalise the discussion and conclusions? Or run a quick update to your background, introduction or literature review? Now is the time to get writing and for senior authors to prioritise editorial feedback to publication drafts written by their HDR students and junior colleagues. There should be no barriers to submitting items for peer-review at this time.

2. Get planning for your next funding application
Preparing a strong application for research funding requires multiple iterations of the plan, rationale and statement of importance. We know teams that develop their research proposals well ahead of time, and both seek and act on critical comment early on, have higher grant success rates. Get your research team together for virtual discussions to brainstorm new research ideas and to start to write your next funding proposal now.
Most external funding schemes are still running with the normal timeframes for applications, however important postponements to submission dates have been made by the NHMRC and ARC. I would encourage you to review these opportunities, take this time to plan your future research and submit grant applications.

   • Australian Research Council (ARC),
   • National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC),
   • Medical Research Future Fund (MRFF)

Make sure you visit the list of current funding opportunities maintained by Research Services, subscribe to their Research Weekly newsletter and keep up to date with our FAQs for researchers.

3. Set-up or enhance your researcher profiles and update your CV
Maintaining a strong external profile is very important to ensure others know about your research and then cite it. Now is a good time to establish and update your own researcher profiles.

   • ECU’s Library provides excellent resources to understand the various external research profiles you should have active and up to date. This link outlines a number of different types of researcher IDs, profiles and online branding.
• Review your ECU RAS profile and make any necessary updates. Utilise Accessing RAS, particularly when you are off-campus, and Reporting Research Outputs.

• The Corporate Relations Team has developed two training guides to assist researchers with setting themselves up on LinkedIn and Twitter. Science Media Savvy is also a very useful resource, run by the Australian Science Media Centre, of which ECU is a member. It provides a lot of media and social media training and advice, tailor-made for researchers (not just in Science).

• HR will be running a workshop on academic CV writing on 8 April via Zoom or Teams. All future workshops will be held online, so keep an eye out for these as well.

4. Research management and training updates

We all know there are important research management and administration tasks that we often find it hard to prioritise within our busy schedules.

• View a list of professional development offerings delivered by Research Services, Graduate Research School, Library-Research Services and Human Resources Service Centre. This list will be continually updated with information on online delivery. Please direct any enquiries to researcher.development@ecu.edu.au.

• The ECU Library provides a range of guides related to you as a researcher. This is a great resource. In particular, A Researchers Companion is a good starting point.

Information for research supervisors

Find out more about the Graduate Research School’s training opportunities for supervisors by searching for GRS on Blackboard.

There are also useful advice and guides on:

• Establishing an online Supervisor Teams Workspace.
• Improving Supervisor Practice: Supervisor Toolkit.
• Respect Now Always Principles for Respectful Supervisory Relationships.
• Review research on the practice of supervision through the Library’s database, searching for terms such as ‘thesis examination’, ‘remote supervision’, ‘supporting candidates’.

I trust that you are as impressed as I am to know that ECU has such a wealth of information, online training options and other materials that can support researchers at times like this.

Depending on how much your research activity is impacted, I would encourage you to use this time to make the most use of these resources. I certainly will!

ECU has also collated many of the Frequently Asked Questions around COVID-19 for our research students, staff and community.

Sincerely,

Professor Caroline Finch AO
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)

Q. Are the planned workshops organized by GRS for the Semester still going ahead on ZOOM or are they all cancelled; or do I look at the online resources that are available?

A. For the most part, all face-to-face workshops are cancelled but there are a few running online. These ones are and will be advertised through the GRS newsletters and the Coordinators will also be able to advise when new ones come up. At present, training will be available online and self-paced and we are working with the SOAR ambassadors if there is a need to offer mentoring or some kind of live Q and A session when you have completed some self-paced online learning. You are also encouraged to contact
our Research Consultants to organize an online discussion through ZOOM or TEAMS if you have any questions. Our Research Advisers are also working on creating new material and workshops and these will be uploaded when done. Research is not static and whatever your needs, GRS will try and accommodate where possible.

Research Services has put out a 2 page document for researchers to consider when their active project is affected, and they do not know how to proceed; i.e., with data collection and how to manage and analysis of data during this time. We are encouraging all researchers to consider amending your research methodologies for the projects that cannot proceed as originally planned. If necessary, submit amendments to ethics for approved projects. Otherwise, you can seek an extension to the ethics approval period for your research project. Do also complete a data management plan where the template is now available online. You are also encouraged to enroll in a new online course on Research Integrity.

**Q. What other training workshops / resources are available?**

**A.** A list of workshops and training available through the [Research Intranet](#). There is also training available from the Library through ZOOM and webinars, and HDR students can enroll for the workshops organized by the Library. As for some of the HR staff workshops, HDR students may also enroll. In the future when Research Services are able to deliver research training relevant to HDR students, these will be promoted and made available to them in the future.