

## ARC DECRA – Tip Sheet

The **Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA)** scheme is a 3-year fellowship for Early Career Researchers up to 5 years post PhD (or longer with eligible career interruption)

**Read** the [ARC DECRA Guidelines, 'Instructions to Applicants', and FAQs](#) (each section has specific instructions).  
**Register** with Grant Connect to log in and receive updates and see DECRA Grant Opportunity View – GO6506).

Start writing early and engage with your research mentor.

### ARC RMS user account

- Create an account for the ARC Research Management System (RMS) and complete your profile.
- All new accounts are to be approved by the Administering Organisation (select ECU), so complete this early.
- If you already have an ARC RMS account, update your profile.
- Sections of the application are pre-populated from your RMS profile, including personal details, qualifications and research outputs.

### **ORCID ID**

Link your ORCID ID to RMS. See the [User Guide for Maintaining Research Outputs in your RMS Profile](#) and the [RMS User Guide V3](#) for guidance on importing your outputs to your profile.

### **Application Essentials**

- **Formatting:** Refer to **Instructions to Applicants**, section **2.4 - PDF Application** and **Part C – Project Description** for font and formatting requirements. Several templates are available on the [ECU research intranet](#). These comply with the formatting requirements. Please do not alter the formatting of these.
- **Character Count:** Character count may not directly translate if working from a word document. We recommend you insert text into the sections of the online ARC RMS application form early to ensure you are within limits and have time to amend, if needed.
- **Weblinks:** Weblink addresses /URLs and hyperlinks can be used for publications that are only available online. Do not include them throughout the application for any other reason.
- **Save your online application regularly!**

**National Interest Statement (NIT):** The intent of the NIT is to provide a statement in plain English to enable the community to understand the value of the Government's investment in research. The statement will be included in the application for assessors, and then assessed by the ARC CEO to be used to provide advice to the Minister (who may use the statement in making their decision). RAOs will arrange for draft NITs to be reviewed by ECU's Corporate Communications.

**Administering Organisation Letter of Support (C2):** Letters are prepared by the CI on behalf of the DVCR. Draft letters are to be submitted at the same time as the internal RAO review deadline, along with full draft application. Research Services will review the letters prior to sending to DVCR for input and signing. The letter should highlight the feasibility of the research area, outline the core or emerging research strength, describe the level of resources to be provided to support the applicant (cash and in-kind) and the detail opportunities for the applicant at ECU during and after the project.

**Budget: see Project Cost and Budget Justification examples.**

- Contact your School Finance Coordinator for assistance.

- Budget items can be grouped by type of expenditure, see templates for additional tips.
- Your budget should be realistic, value for money and needs to match the methodology.
- Do not aim for the maximum amount, keep it feasible. The ARC will assess for value for money.
- Do not enter in-kind contributions in the budget table.
- DECRA Salary – ARC will fund \$112,897 per annum (including 30% on-costs). This amount does not cover the full cost of your salary. The ‘salary shortfall’ will be funded by ECU (see [Strategic Research Fund \(SRF\) Guidelines](#)). The shortfall is entered as an ECU cash contribution in the budget table.
- Personnel Salary costs – are entered by role rather than individual position, e.g., you plan to hire 2 Research Assistants then enter ‘Research Assistant’ as a single line item with further detail in the budget justification.
- HDR Stipends – ARC funded stipends are at the [RTP rate](#). ECU funded stipends are covered by SRF and listed as in the application cash contributions.
- Travel – For each conference trip, include cost of airfares, accommodation and per diems in a single budget entry. Additional details will need to be provided in the budget justification.
- Field Research – travel costs for field work, e.g., data collection essential to the project. Costs include travel, accommodation, per diems. Costs must be listed by site visit, and then fully justified in budget justification.

### Budget Justification – see Project Cost and Budget Justification examples

- ARC funding requested – ensure you have checked what grant money can be used for (page 29 of Guidelines) and you have justified all of the requested funding items. For travel costs ensure you provide a breakdown of flights, accommodation, per diems, conference registration, car hire, taxi fares, etc as appropriate.
- Separate conference travel and field research travel.
- Administering Organisation – explain what cash contributions ECU will make to support the DECRA candidate if successful.
- Ensure you use the same heading as the columns in the budget table.

### Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) – see B5 – B11 ROPE sections in application form

- Career Interruptions – For eligibility purposes the DVCR is required to approve career interruptions – please note this needs to be approved prior to commencement of grant application.
- Within ROPE you need to explain how the interruption has limited your research activity. ‘Interruption Category’ to be included - no further specific details should be provided.
- Outputs – remember to update your ARC RMS profile to ensure outputs are up to date.
- Need help with your publication metrics? [Library Research Services](#) provide workshops and one-on-one consultations to guide you through publication metrics relevant to your discipline.

### Submitting the Application

After the RAO review and the application is ready to be submitted, you must click ‘submit to research office’ via ARC RMS online and ECU Research Services will then submit to the ARC.

### Contact

**For further assistance:** Please contact your school Research Administration Officer (RAO) or Coordinator Research Administration: Email: [research-preaward@ecu.edu.au](mailto:research-preaward@ecu.edu.au)

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