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** (register with Grant Connect to log in and receive updates). DECRA Grant Opportunity View – G07423.

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 from Part F of the application are pre-populated from your RMS profile, including research outputs.

Application Essentials
- Several templates are available on the ECU research intranet. These comply with the ARC formatting requirements. Please use these and do not alter.
- Career Interruption Calculator – download from intranet and complete if required. Contact **research-preaward@ecu.edu.au** for further assistance.
- 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.
- Only use webpage addresses/URLS and hyperlinks in limited circumstances such where research outputs are <u>only</u> available online. Do not include them throughout the application for any other reason.
- RMS does not autosave - save regularly!

Experimental Development

The *Australian Research Council Act 2001* (amended 2024) **excludes the use of ARC funding for activities classified as 'experimental development'**. The updated advice clarifies that experimental development research may be included in an application, where these activities are to be funded from non-ARC sources. The application must make clear this differentiation. Please see examples on Instructions to Applicants document.
The ARC Experimental Development Policy is located on the ARC website.

National Interest Statement (NIT): Write a description, of up to 1,500 characters (approximately 200 words), of the project's national interest addressing the three considerations as a single cohesive statement directed towards a member of the public. The description should be simple, clear and use plain English.
What must the NIT address?
The considerations are:
1. What is the project about and what research gap is it addressing for Australia?
2. How could the research benefit Australians (economically, socially, environmentally, commercially, or culturally)?
3. How might you promote your research outcomes beyond academia to maximise understanding, translation, use, and adoption of the research in the future?

The NIT will be provided to assessors as an input to their assessment of the application.
The ARC will include the NIT with other elements of an application recommended for funding for final consideration by the ARC Accountable Authority.
Examples of well written NITs available on ARC Website.

Administering Organisation Letter of Support (C2): Letters are drafted by candidate/ADR/Research Mentor and reviewed by Research Services before submitting to DVCR who reviews and signs. The statement should highlight that the research area is a core or emerging research strength, describe the level of resources to be provided to support the applicant (cash and in-kind) and detail opportunities for applicant at ECU during and after the project.

Budget: see D1 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 (Administering Organisation may include any in-kind contributions in the Letter of Support).
- DECRA Salary – ARC will fund **$126,693.00 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. 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. The ECU funded **RTP stipend rate for 2025** is $35,000pa and is to be listed as cash contribution.
- 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.

Justification of funding requested from the ARC – see D2 example and template

- ARC funding requested – ensure 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) – questions B5-B11

These sections are time consuming! Sections B5-B11 cover Career Interruptions, Career Narrative, Research Impact, Mentoring and Leadership, Research Outputs and 10 Career-Best Research Outputs.

- Explain how the interruption has limited your research activity. Keep the reason for your career interruption brief, no 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 RAC 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 Coordinator (RAC) or Research Administration Team Leader (RATL): Email: research-preaward@ecu.edu.au