![Australian Government - Australian Research Council]

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Australian Laureate Fellowships for funding commencing 2024 (FL24)

Version 1.1   **Release Date: 21 September 2023**

- All participants should read the Discovery Program Grant Guidelines - Fellowships (2023 edition) (Grant Guidelines) available on GrantConnect and specific *Instructions to Applicants* documents available on Grant Connect as they contain important information for Research Office staff and individual participants preparing applications.

- The Australian Research Council (ARC) does not respond to queries from individual participants. Individual participants should direct all queries regarding ARC grant opportunities to their Administering Organisation's Research Office (or equivalent). If further information regarding the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) is required, the Research Office should contact the NCGP at arc-ncgp@arc.gov.au

- Information regarding the Research Management System (RMS) is available at the ARC website, or by contacting arc-systems@arc.gov.au for assistance.

This Frequently Asked Questions document will be updated as required.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Timing of Grant Opportunities

1.1 Where are the key dates for upcoming ARC Grant Opportunities advised?

Dates of all upcoming ARC Grant Opportunities are published on the NCGP scheme timelines on the ARC Grants Calendar.

1.2 When will the Funding Outcomes be announced?

The ARC now publishes anticipated Funding Announcement dates. Please refer to the Scheme Calendar PDF on the ARC Grants Calendar.

2. Application information

2.1 Can I include requests for domestic and international travel in my application?

Yes. You can include requests for domestic and international travel in accordance with the requirements set out in the relevant Grant Guidelines, noting that researchers should include a realistic plan of how their research will be undertaken. Where an application is successful, any changes to the proposed travel plans due to the impact of environmental factors (e.g., natural disasters, pandemics, etc.) will be managed as a post award issue.

2.2 What font size can I use for figures, tables, or pictures in my application to comply with ARC submission requirements?

Applicants should ensure that the text is readable both online and in print as detailed in the Instructions to Applicants. It is recommended that 12pt font is used. Readability needs to also be ensured with regards to text within figures and tables and it is recommended that 10pt font is used.

2.3 Why won't Question A2 'Person Participant Summary' validate?

For Question A2 of the Application Form to validate, three things must be done:

1. The Australian Laureate Fellowships candidate must be entered. If they are not the one creating the applications, they must have accepted the invitation. This will show with the following error message:
   - There must be 1 person on the application with the role of Chief Investigator and the award type Australian Laureate Fellowship
   - An invited participant has not yet accepted the invitation to participate in this application.

2. 2 x Postdoctoral Research Associates (PDRAs) and 2 x Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) must be entered into the Budget Table at Question D1 'What is the proposed budget for your project?', using the dop-down list:

If the required number of PDRAs and PGRs have not been added at Question D1, Question A2 will show the following error message and the Question, and in turn Form Part, will not validate:
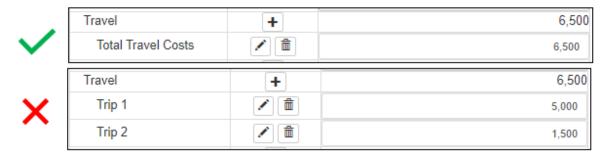
- There must be 2 people on the application with the role of Fellow/Awardee and the award type ALF – Post Research Associate. Go to Budget to resolve.
- There must be 2 people on the application with the role of Fellow/Awardee and the award type ALF – Postgraduate Researcher. Go to Budget to resolve.

Note: While the validation appears in Question A2, the PDRA and PGR cannot be entered into this question; they are entered only in the Budget Table at Question D1.

2.4 How should I complete the Question D1 'What is the proposed budget for your project'?

The ARC strongly recommends entering a simplified budget into the Budget Table at Question D1, meaning that each category (e.g., Travel, Field Research, Equipment) should have a one-line budget figure, instead of listing each item.

For example, if you are requesting two sets of Travel in Year 1, one at a cost of $5000 and another at a cost of $1500, the Budget Table should show only the total amount of funding requested for travel in Year 1: i.e., $6500. The request will need to be justified in Question D2.

Note: You will not be able to enter all 'Personnel' as a one-line budget figure, as the Australian Laureate Fellowship Salary, Postdoctoral Research Associates (PDRAs), Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) and Katheen Fitzpatrick/Georgina Sweet Additional Award (if answered 'Yes' to Question B12) are automatically entered into the Budget Table and will require their own budget line.

3. Career Interruptions

3.1 COVID-19 has affected my academic record. Is this considered a career interruption as part of Question B6 'Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) – Career Interruptions'?

Yes. The Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) assessment criterion allows inclusion and consideration of any significant career interruption, which has affected a participant's ability to undertake and contribute to research.

Career interruptions arising from COVID-19 can be included under ROPE.

3.2 How do I enter my career interruptions in the Application Form? Will assessors be able to see the details of my interruptions?

Information on how to enter the candidate's career interruptions can be found in Question B6 'Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) – Career Interruptions' of the Instructions to Applicants (ITAs). Examples of how career interruptions can be entered can be found in the Appendix of the ITAs.

Assessors will not be able to see the details of the entered career interruptions, nor will they be made visible in the PDF.

Assessors will only see the total period which RMS will automatically calculate using the entered career interruptions. The following question and answers from Question B6 will be viewable:

Question:	Has the Australian Laureate Fellowship candidate experienced a significant interruption that has impacted on research opportunity?
Answer:	'Yes' or 'No'

If answered 'Yes' and career interruptions are entered:

Question:	Total Period of Career Interruptions
Answer (auto-fill):	'Researcher [Participant Name] has reported a career interruption of [duration] since [Year of earliest interruption].

4. Time Commitments

4.1 How much time must I commit to research activities relating to the project?

As per the Grant Agreement, it is a requirement for the Australian Laureate Fellow candidate to commit a minimum of 80% (0.8 FTE) of their time to research and research capacity-building activities related to the Australian Laureate Fellowship. Research capacity-building

activities could include research leadership in teams and centres (ARC Centres) and supervision of HDR students but does not include a major role in administration.

4.2   How much time can I spend on activities not related to the Australian Laureate Fellowship such as teaching?

As per the Grant Agreement, the Australian Laureate Fellow candidate may not spend more than 20% (0.2 FTE) of their time on activities not related to the Australian Laureate Fellowship such as teaching. The Australian Laureate Fellowship will not be extended to accommodate any periods of teaching.

5.   Logistics support for Antarctic research

5.1   What logistics advice should I seek if my proposed research project included Antarctic research?

If your proposed research project includes Antarctic research that will require logistical support, please contact the [Australian Antarctic Division](#) for advice about available logistical support prior to submitting your application.

6.   Assessment of applications

6.1   Requests Not to Assess process

A Request Not to Assess (RNTA) form is now submitted in RMS as detailed on [GrantConnect](#) and the [ARC website.](#)

6.2   What is the maximum character limit for justification for RNTA?

If a request includes the name of a current ARC College of Experts member, as listed on the [ARC website](#), or in RMS at the time of submitting the RNTA form, the request must be accompanied by a justification (the maximum character count for the justification has been increased to 2500).

7.   The National Interest Test (NIT)

7.1   What is the NIT statement and how is it assessed?

Information regarding the requirements of the National Interest Test, including examples and detailed FAQs, can be found on the [ARC website](#).

8.   Budget

8.1   What are the expectations for non-mandated contributions in applications submitted for upcoming Grant Opportunities?

For those schemes where Grant Guidelines do not require minimum co-contributions by participating organisations the ARC understands that the level of cash and/or in-kind contributions pledged by Administering Organisations to show support for a proposed research project may be reduced in future applications due to financial impacts. Noting that Administering Organisations still need to take into account the feasibility of the proposed research project if there are reduced contributions.

ARC assessors will be instructed that they should not make assumptions about an Administering Organisation's level of commitment and support of an application solely based on lower levels of pledged additional cash and/or in-kind support than historically provided.

8.2   What salary and stipend figures will appear in the Australian Laureate Fellowships 2024 (FL24) application form?

The salary and stipend figures for FL24 have been updated to 2023$ in RMS and are displayed in the table below.

Salary and Stipend rates 2023$

Personnel	Amount
Australian Laureate Fellowship	$179,840
Postdoctoral Research Associate	$110,418
Postgraduate Researcher	$29,880
Australian Laureate Fellowship - Additional Award	up to $20,000

The salary and stipend figures will be indexed again once the fellowships are awarded so they will be paid at the appropriate rates.

Updated salary and stipend rates are available on the ARC website.

8.3 How does the salary for Australian Laureate Fellows work?

In accordance with subsection A2.4 of the Grant Guidelines, Administering Organisations must provide an Australian Laureate Fellow with a Level E professorial appointment (or equivalent) and salary in line with the Administering Organisation's normal arrangements for the duration of the Australian Laureate Fellowship. The salary provided by the ARC contributes to that salary.

The ARC currently provides a salary for the Australian Laureate Fellow of $179,840 (2023$), including 30 per cent on-costs, towards a Professorial Level E (or equivalent) salary provided by the Administering Organisation.

The budget in the application form will automatically populate with the ARC salary amount once an Australian Laureate Fellowship candidate is added to the application. The salary contributes to the Professorial Level E salary already provided by the Administering Organisation and is not intended to be additional funds on top of the salary.

For example, if an Australian Laureate Fellow is currently receiving a salary of $200,000 per year (including on-costs), the Administering Organisation would use the ARC salary to contribute to the Fellow's salary and provide an additional $20,160 per year in-kind in the Administering Organisation Letter of Support in Question C2 of the application form to meet the salary level.

The guidance in the Grant Guidelines does not specify a limit on the salary that an Australian Laureate Fellow can receive. Should the Administering Organisation wish to provide the Fellow with additional salary funding beyond the Administering Organisation's normal Professorial Level E amount it can also be shown as an in-kind contribution to the salary of the Fellow via the Administering Organisation Letter of Support in Question C2 of the application form.

9. What has changed from last round? Summary of changes to the FL24 Application Form and FL24 Instructions to Applicants (ITAs)

9.1 The Form Parts in the FL24 Application Form have been re-ordered.

The Form Parts in the Application Form have been changed to the following order to assist assessors in finding the information most crucial to their assessments:

- Part A – Administrative Summary
- Part B – Participant Details including ROPE (previously Part F)
- Part C – Project Description (previously Part D)
- Part D – Project Cost (previously Part E)
- Part E – Classification and Other Statistical Information (previously Part B)
- Part F – Project Eligibility (previously Part C)

9.2 Part A – Administrative Summary

- Question A2 - Person Participant Summary has a new validation linked to the Budget Table in Question D1 where an applicant needs to enter 2 Postdoctoral Research Assistants (PDRAs) and 2 Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) as required under the Grant Guidelines. As such, Question A2 will not be validated until the 2 PDRAs and 2 PGRs are entered in Question D1.
- Question A5 - The National Interest Test Statement has been made visible to assessors as it now provides an input to the peer review assessment of the application.

9.3 Part B - Participant Details including ROPE

- Question B2 - Current country of residence will no longer be viewable by the assessors.
- Question B6 'Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Career Interruptions' has been rebuilt so that participants can enter all periods of career interruption and RMS will automatically calculate their total interruptions. Additionally, the question has been updated so that the assessors will not see the specific dates, full time equivalent and category of each interruption, nor will this information be populated into the application PDF. Assessors will only be able to see the total period of interruptions to help determine research opportunity.
- Question B7 - Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Career Highlights is *a new question* intended to promote equity, recognising that applicants may have varied research opportunities and focusing the evaluation on the quality rather than quantity of an applicant's research activities. An applicant can list up to 10 career highlights, such as prizes, awards, industry engagement, keynote and speaker addresses, research income, discipline specific accolades, intellectual property, supervision, non-traditional research outputs or any other career or research opportunity highlight.
- Question B8 - Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Details of the Australian Laureate Fellowship candidate's career, evidence of research impact and contributions to the field, including those most relevant to this application and evidence of leadership, mentoring as well as research training or supervision. – This is *a new question* linked to the 'Investigator/Capability' assessment criteria and intended to demonstrate an applicant's capability, mentoring and capacity building skills and achievements.
- Question B9 - Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - How many PhDs, Masters and Honours students that the Australian Laureate Fellowship candidate has supervised have completed their degree? - – This is *a new question* linked to 'Investigator/Capability' selection criteria intended to demonstrate an applicant's capability, mentoring and capacity building skills and achievements in supervision.
- Question B10 - Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Research Outputs Context has now increased the character limit to 7,500 characters, or approximately 1000 words. This increased limit will allow an applicant to explain the relative importance of research outputs in the context of the Australian Laureate candidate's discipline/s (up to 500 words), in addition to the annotation of the research impact of their 10 best publications (approximately 50 words per publication, up to 500 words).
- Question B11 - Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) – 10 Career-Best Research Outputs now has a validation so that applicants can only list up to 10 outputs.
- Question B12 – Does the Australian Laureate Fellowship candidate wish to be considered for a Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate Fellowship or a Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellowship? – This question has a new validation linked to the Budget Table in Question D1 whereby answering 'Yes' will automatically add the 'Additional Award' line into the Budget Table. The applicant must enter between a minimum of $1 and a maximum of $20,000 per annum to validate Question D1.
- Question B14: Project Relinquishment and Application Withdrawal will no longer be viewable by the assessors.

9.4 Part C – Project Description

- Question C1 - Project Description has had the page limit reduced from 10 to 7 pages. The selection criteria covered elsewhere in the Application Form have been removed from the Project Description question. That is why the C1 questions addressing the assessment criteria have also been reduced.

9.5 Part D – Project Cost

- Question D1 - What is the proposed budget for the project? In the Budget Table at Question D1, individual items are to be entered only in the Personnel sections. All other categories (Travel, Field Research etc.) should have a one-line budget figure giving the total funding request and contributions for that section. Details regarding the items making up this total amount should be provided in Question D2 (Justification of funding required from the ARC) and Question D3 (Details of non-ARC contributions) as appropriate.
- Question D2 - Justification of funding requested from the ARC has had the page limit reduced from 5 to 3 pages.

9.6 Changes to FL24 Application Form

The Application Form and Instructions to Applicants have been streamlined to reduce duplication and to eliminate collection of the information that is no longer required.

9.6.1 The below questions were removed. Note the question numbers relate to their position in the last scheme round (FL23). Some of the questions have been removed where requirements are met through certification, where they duplicate information provided elsewhere in the application, or where they do not align with scheme objectives or assessment criteria.

- Question B6 - What is the nature of the proposed international collaboration activities?
- Question C3 - Current Funding
- Question C4 - Other applications(s) for funding
- Question F3 - Fields of Research (FoR-2020) for the candidate
- Question F4 - Expertise Text
- Question F7 - What will the Australian Laureate Fellowship candidate's time commitment be to research activities related to this project?
- Question F8 - What will the Australian Laureate Fellowship candidate's time commitment be to the Administering Organisation?
- Question F10 - Eligibility - Does the Australian Laureate Fellowship candidate hold a position with significant administrative duties (such as Centre Director, Head of School, Head of Department)?
- Question F11 - Eligibility - Current Research Fellowship or Award funded by other Australian Government agencies
- Question F15 - Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Details of the Australian Laureate Fellowship candidate's career and opportunities for research, evidence of research impact and contributions to the field, including those most relevant to this application

9.6.2 The ROPE questions have been updated:

- Question B6 'Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Career Interruptions' has been rebuilt so that participants can enter all periods of career interruption and RMS will automatically calculate their total interruptions. Additionally, the question has been updated so that the assessors will not see the specific dates, full time equivalent and category of each interruption, nor will this information be populated into the application PDF. Assessors will only be able to see the total period of interruptions to help determine research opportunity.
- Question B7: Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Career Highlights.
- Question B8: Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - Details of the Australian Laureate Fellowship candidate's career, evidence of research impact and contributions to the field, including those most relevant to this application and evidence of leadership, mentoring as well as research training or supervision.
- Question B9: Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) - How many PhDs, Masters and Honours students that the Australian Laureate Fellowship candidate has supervised have completed their degree?
Question B10: Research Outputs Context has now increased the character limit to 7,500 characters, or approximately 1000 words. This increased limit will allow an applicant to explain the relative importance of research outputs in the context of the Australian Laureate candidate's discipline/s (up to 500 words), in addition to the annotation of the research impact of their 10 best publications (approximately 50 words per publication, up to 500 words).

- Question B11: The Research Outputs listing has been reduced to a maximum of 10 career-best outputs.

9.6.3   Question C1: Project Description has had the page limit reduced from 10 to 7 pages and the questions to address the assessment criteria have also been updated and reduced.

9.6.4   Question D2: Justification of funding requested from the ARC has had the page limit reduced from 5 to 3 pages.

10.   Discovery Program Information Session for FL24 Questions and Answers

10.1   Will the page limit of the application form be reduced for Fellowships?

Yes, the application page limit for the Project Description section will be reduced for Laureates, Future Fellows and DECRA from 10 to 7 pages.

10.2   Is there an alignment between the Laureate scheme objectives and the assessment criteria, and where is the question in the project description about a Laureate creating an enduring legacy?

Yes, the objectives of the scheme and the assessment criteria for Laureate Fellowships have been aligned. On the topic of an enduring legacy, the candidate can address this under question 7 of the project description:

How will the Laureate project build new teams and create world class research capacity in an environment suitable for postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers?

This question seeks specific information about team capability building skills of the FL, as well as the research capacity building involved in the project design. The legacy building features of the project can also be addressed in the Benefit section in terms of potential benefits of the research for Australia.

10.3   Question about supervision records for a Laureate fellow

There is a new question in the application form asking how many primary supervisions the Laureate candidate has undertaken. This has been included because one of the objectives of the Laureate scheme is focused on capacity building of future generations of researchers. Assessors need to know the extent of Laureate candidate's track record in supervision to achieve this objective. We ask candidates to list how many students, PhD masters and honours they have completed as primary supervisor.

10.4   Should the answer to this supervision question include Masters by Coursework?

No, unless there was a significant supervised research component involved. Research Masters degrees do have a significant research component so those supervisions may be included.

10.5   What about associate supervisions – can this be mentioned?

If a candidate is concerned that their associate supervisions are not able to be included is this question, they could mention their associate supervisions in their career highlights statement. They can also mention this aspect of their supervision record elsewhere in the application. However, given the significant load that a primary supervisor carries and the seniority of this scheme, the focus of ARC assessors will be on the FL candidate's record of completed primary supervisions.

10.6   There is a change in the FL form so that assessors now only see the amount of time of a candidate's Research Opportunity to assess their Performance Evidence in the ROPE statement. Will this ROPE statement be calculated and automatically included by the ARC? And will this potentially tie into automatically calculating eligibility with Future Fellowships and DECRA?

Research Opportunity is automatically calculated in RMS based on applicant provided information and included by the ARC. However, the tie in to determine eligibility for Futures and DECRA schemes relates to time since PhD award subject to research opportunity. This will require a separate calculation, and the ARC is looking at ways to automate that calculation in future rounds.

10.7 **Is the streamlined section on ROPE sufficient information for assessors to make a judgement on research opportunities?**

Research opportunity is a calculation, with periods of career interruption deducted, of the amount of time available to do research since the award of PhD. Assessors will evaluate the performance evidence in relation to that specified time of research opportunity. The streamlined form focuses attention on the time available to do research, and the quality of the research that was produced within that specific amount of time.

There is now a one-page ROPE statement. The emphasis in this statement is on performance evidence. Candidates may, if they wish, choose to disclose the nature of their career interruption in this narrative section if they believe it to be relevant to the quality of their track record.

10.8 **Are there any changes to the administering organisation Letter of Support for Laureate Fellows and is it still 2 pages? Will the length of Letters of Support change for other Discovery Fellowship schemes?**

The administering organisational Letter of Support (LoS) for Laureates remains at 2 pages. Future Fellowships and DECRAs will have their LoS reduced from 3 to 2 pages.

10.9 **Will the way we calculate the research experience for Discovery Fellowships change in line with how we calculate it for the Linkage Industry fellowships?**

The calculation of post PhD award eligibility for Discovery Fellowships will remain the same, and not align with Industry Fellowships. In the Industry Fellowship Program (IFP) the definition of research experience for the fellowship levels is less strict due to the IFP objective of increasing industry collaboration and ensuring industry-based researchers are able to apply.

10.10 **Will the ARC align the mechanics for measuring time since PhD between Discovery Program fellowships and Linkage Industry Fellowships?**

There is no plan to align the eligibility function of post PhD measurement in Discovery Program fellowships with the Industry Fellowship Program.

10.11 **Does the ARC still want the heading "Aims and Background" in the Fellow's project description?**

If Fellows wish to include "Aims and Background" to the Project description content, they may do so if they believe that it is essential context for their discipline or it helps clarify the nature of the project that is being proposed. But they do need to ensure the content is clear for ARC assessors, and that they use mandated headings.

10.12 **Do the questions to address in the application form replace the Project's mandatory headings?**

The ten questions are supplementary to the assessment criteria and don't replace the mandatory headings. The questions fit underneath the mandatory headings. The headings are project title, project quality and innovation (PQI), benefit, mentoring and capacity building, communication of results, and references. The ARC has grouped the questions to address under the headings that align with the assessment criteria in the ITAs.

10.13 **Will the ARC monitor the impact of the shorter ROPE section on the outcomes for Fellowships?**

The ARC monitors and reviews changes made over time and will also monitor this reform closely.

There has been historical feedback from the sector that the Fellowship application required the applicant to disclose far too much personal information.

10.14 **Are the creation or performance of works of art eligible budget items? And is there an inconsistency here with the principles of HERDC that allows non-traditional research outputs to be included?**

The ARC expects creative works to meet the definition of research, and if they do meet that definition they can be included in HERDC. Similarly, the Grant Guidelines list creation or performance of works of art as ineligible activities under clause 5.5c, but also note that such activities can be deemed an eligible budget item request if the works are directly related to the project activities and demonstrably research based.

Changes to document

9   Added section on what has changed from last round – 21 September 2023

10   Added section of Questions and Answers from the Discovery Program information session for FL24 – 21 September 2023