Australian Government

Australian Research Council

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Future Fellowships for funding commencing 2021 (FT21)

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- The ARC understands that it is a challenging time for researchers and research administrators preparing grant applications.
- The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and responses are designed to provide advice to assist researchers planning applications for ARC National Competitive Grant Program (NCGP) Grant Opportunities for the Discovery Program and include FAQs relevant to general effects of COVID-19.
- While these FAQs relate to addressing some of the general impacts of COVID-19, please also visit the ARC Grant Calendar for key dates and links to GrantConnect documentation specific to each new Grant Opportunity. *Please note, while the Grant Guidelines are available to view on GrantConnect, you will need to register with GrantConnect to access all documentation.*
- All participants should read the Grant Guidelines for the Discovery Program (2019 edition) (grant guidelines) available on GrantConnect.
- The Instructions to Applicants (ITAs), which are available on GrantConnect, also contain important information for Research Office staff and individual participants preparing applications.
- The ARC does not respond to queries from individual participants. Individual participants should direct all queries regarding ARC funding schemes to their Administering Organisation's Research Office (or equivalent).
- Please ensure that your application is eligible in accordance with these guidelines, which may differ from Funding Rules/Grant Guidelines applying to previous years.
- The ARC will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and will update our advice as required.
- If further information regarding any of the NCGP schemes is required, the Research Office should contact the ARC at ARC-NCGP@arc.gov.au or 02 6287 6600.
- Information regarding the Research Management System (RMS) is available at the ARC website, or by contacting ARC-Systems@arc.gov.au for assistance.

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 Grant Calendar.

1.2 Will future grant opportunities be delayed, cancelled or extended due to the COVID-19 crisis?

The ARC is continuing to progress NCGP grant application and peer review processes because an important role of the ARC is to ensure we continue to deliver funding outcomes that will support researchers in the recovery period and beyond.

The ARC is not anticipating any changes to the currently published NCGP scheme timelines on the ARC Grant Calendar, as we are aiming to minimise the cumulative impact of COVID-19 on future rounds of funding

Noting that all Grant Calendar dates published on the ARC website are indicative, should any changes arise the ARC will issue a Network Message to the sector.

2. Developing an application

2.1 Do I need to include a COVID-19 continuity plan, with information about potential impacts of COVID-19 on my proposed research, within my application?

The ARC acknowledges that the future impacts of COVID-19 are difficult for anyone to determine while the pandemic continues to evolve. In completing ARC grant applications, the application should be accurate as at the time of submitting the application. Researchers should include a realistic plan of how their research will be undertaken. If applicable, known project specific impacts of COVID-19 can be addressed under the feasibility heading of the Project Description. However, a COVID-19 continuity plan is not required as part of the application. Where an application is successful, any changes in circumstances that affect the proposed research project will be managed as a post award issue.

2.2 Can I include requests for travel both domestically and internationally in my application?

Yes. You can still include requests for travel both domestically and international in accordance with the requirements set out in the relevant grant guidelines, noting the above advice 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 COVID-19 will be managed as a post award issue.

3. Career Interruptions

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

Yes. The Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) assessment criterion allows inclusion and consideration of any 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 for consideration by assessors. The Instructions to Applicants provide specific advice on how to enter this in the application.

3.2 I am in my last year of eligibility to apply for a FT21 and COVID-19 is affecting my ability to submit an application in 2020. What are my options?

The ARC has implemented measures to support mid-career researchers and has introduced a one-year, automatic eligibility extension, for all researchers currently in their final year of eligibility for the FT21 scheme.

Researchers in their final year of eligibility for FT21 may choose to apply in 2020 (for FT21) within the existing eligibility timeframes or in 2021 (for FT22) utilising the automatic one-year extension.

Note that final year applicants in either scheme cannot apply in the current round (2020) and then apply again in the next round (2021).

3.3 If I have had a significant career interruption, how much information should I include in question F19 of the application form?

All applications submitted to the ARC must be certified by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (DVCR) in the Administering Organisation, and the DVCR does not need to provide any additional certification for this question.

All personal or confidential information relevant to the career interruptions should be excluded in the application form. For example, detailed medical information should not be provided if the interruption was due to a medical condition.

This certification requirement differs to question F12 of the application form, where the DVCR is required to certify each allowable career interruption, to ensure that sufficient evidence has been provided to the Administering Organisation and the eligibility requirements are met in accordance with subsections B3.7 b and B3.10 of the Grant Guidelines for the Discovery Program (2019 edition).

4. Eligibility

4.1 If I am concurrently applying for funding from the Australian Government (ARC or elsewhere) for similar or linked research, what information should I provide in question C4 of the application form?

Question C4 asks you to briefly explain how funding this project would not duplicate Australian Government funding or overlap with existing projects.

You should briefly explain why you are applying for funding for similar or linked research from the Australian Government and describe how any duplication, overlap or other involvement in applications would be managed if these applications are funded (including any withdrawal of application(s), intention of relinquishing current grants, withdrawal of investigators, or amendment of current project end date).

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 How will my application be assessed in relation to COVID-19 impacts on the proposed research project?

Assessment of applications will continue in accordance with ARC's peer review processes. ARC assessors will be instructed to assess all applications based on the content of the application only and not make assumptions about the viability of a proposed research project due to the potential impacts of COVID-19. Where an application is successful, any changes in circumstances that affect the proposed research project will be managed as a post award issue.

7. Budget

7.1 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 also understands that the level of cash and/or in-kind contributions pledged by Administering Organisations and other Participating Organisations to show support for a proposed research project are likely to be reduced in future applications due to the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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.