

ARC DECRA - STRATEGIC INFORMATION SESSION

APRIL 2022

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WHAT WE WILL COVER TODAY:

- DECRA Selection criteria
- Your Project
- Your track record – are you competitive?
- Collaborators and Mentors
- NIT & Government priorities
- Success factors and positioning your research for success

What is an ARC DECRA?

- **DECRA = ARC Discovery Early Career Award = Fellowship**
- Funds 3 years salary on a fulltime basis = 100% research only position
- Project costs \$50k pa
- **Apply only TWICE**
- Eligibility to apply - up to 5 years from PhD (2024 = on or after 1 March 2018)
 - Career interruptions are taken into account
- Only 200 DECRAAs awarded in total!
- Average 1000 applications per round – Success rate 20%
- 70% awarded in the Science and Research Priorities
- 2024 round - Submission deadline – 15 December 2022

The DECRA scheme objectives are to:

- support excellent basic and applied research by early career researchers;
- support national and international research collaboration;
- enhance the scale and focus of research in **Australian Government priority areas**;
- advance promising early career researchers and promote enhanced opportunities for diverse career pathways; and
- enable research and research training in high quality and supportive environments.

DECRA SELECTION CRITERIA

- **Project Quality and Innovation 25%**
- **Investigator/Capability 50%**
- **Benefit 15%**
- **Feasibility/Strategic Alignment 10%**
- **(NIT = NATIONAL INTEREST TEST)**
- **It is an integrated grant application – no section stands alone**

Project Quality and Innovation 25% (part 1)

1. A clearly defined research problem

2. Is the problem important? **SO WHAT!**

3. Is it really urgent – or can it be solved next year/next decade/next century...?

- **OR is it a solution looking for a problem to solve (i.e. problem does not exist!)**
- *Or - It has not been done before - reminder: A project is not important just because it has not been done before – maybe it is not just worth doing!*

Project Quality and Innovation 25% (part 2)

4. How are YOU going to solve it? Why can you solve it and no-one else = WHAT'S NEW?

5. Do you have the expertise to complete the project? (project management skills) = Feasibility!

6. What is the planned budget? = resources needed to fund the project to success!! are they realistic?

7. The research problem/question must be relevant to the broader AUSTRALIAN sector/community (NIT) – its taxpayers \$\$\$

Summary = what makes you uniquely positioned to solve the research problem?

Investigator/Capability (50%) - Profile of successful DECRA's

1. Serious about an academic career (40/40/20)

- Contribution to academic service (teaching / course coordinator...)
- Research contributions – conference organization / committees
- Engagement with activities outside academia - industry engagement, community, media....
- Won awards for excellence – teaching / papers / medals

2. Research leadership - Evidence of independent thinking

- have you left the nest?
- have you established your own group /program of research?

3. Publications – **Quality not quantity!** top ranked journals in your respective discipline and /or high impact and **your own work** – *ceased publishing with your PhD supervisor!*

Bibliometric analysis - relevant to your discipline

4. Your Project is a logical extension of your research to date

Benefit 15%

- “new or advanced knowledge resulting from outcomes of the research (project);
- economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for Australia and international communities; and
- potential contribution to capacity in the Australian Government priority areas.”
- **Hint: this feeds into the National Interest Test (NIT)**

Feasibility/Strategic Alignment 10%

Project Management skills:

- **Expertise to complete the Project on time and to budget!**

Indicator:

- **successfully applied for and completed multiple small grants &/or contract research as lead CI**

(also leads to publications...& preliminary data)

Resources needed to undertake the project?

How will your university support you as an ECR?

Are you seen as a future research leader?

Does your project align with its research priorities?

Collaborators! Mentors! A double-edged sword!

- Collaborators are usually *external* to your university.
- Are an indirect referee and need to be on board for a reason & not a shopping list!
- You must have their agreement to mention their name in your grant (email confirming is sufficient)
- **International – why?**
- Mentors – senior academics within your university – *not your supervisor!* & can be outside your immediate discipline area
- *Be wary of perceptions - often seen as a ‘back door funding’ for a senior academic to obtain post doc funding*

NIT & Government priorities

= justify the investment of taxpayers \$ in your project

“the National Interest Test statement should address, in terms that are easily understood by the general community, **the potential of the project to serve Australia’s national interest.**

The statement should clearly articulate the extent to which the applicant’s research might provide **specific economic, commercial, environmental, social or cultural benefits to the Australian community over the short, medium or longer terms, how the research might be used to deliver those benefits, and outline what translation and adoption pathways** might be used to achieve the outcomes.”

Hint: check out your Benefit section!

OVERALL SUCCESS FACTORS

- 1. Track Record = serious about an academic career (vs I need a job)**
- 2. Stunning (wow) project – innovative, highly relevant and will deliver impact**
- 3. Project management skills!**
- 4. What difference will a 3-year full time research fellowship make to your career!**
- 5. University support and its future research directions**

CSU Library

Useful Library Resources

- Manage and fund - <https://library.csu.edu.au/for-researchers/manage-fund>
- Researcher Profiles guide - <https://libguides.csu.edu.au/researcher-profile>
- Research Metrics, Impact and Engagement guide - <https://libguides.csu.edu.au/impact>
- How to use metrics in promotion and grants: a self-help guide - https://libguides.csu.edu.au/Metrics_promotions_grants

Questions?

Next Steps

- Contact your Faculty Librarian to arrange an individualised metrics report.
- Begin developing your ROPE and National Interest Test statement.
- The Intent to Submit process for DECRA applications will open 2nd May 2022 and close end of June 2022.