



Charles Sturt
University

CSU

EARLY CAREER RESEARCHER
GRANT SCHEME GUIDELINES
for funding commencing 1 April 2021

CLOSING DATE

Friday 12 February 2021

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1. Definition

An Early Career Researcher (**ECR**) is a Charles Sturt University (**CSU**) staff member who is currently within their first five years of academic employment, allowing for career interruptions, following completion of a postgraduate research program, based on date of conferral.

2. Introduction

The ECR Grant Scheme supports promising CSU early career researchers to progress their research careers. Researchers can apply for funding to conduct a 9 month research project that will help develop their track record and enhance their research competitiveness. The scheme aims to provide CSU researchers with experience in applying for research funding and in undertaking and managing a research project.

3. Research and Activities Supported

The Scheme funds applications that support excellence in pure and applied research projects undertaken by researchers across all research fields. *Pure research* is experimental, exploratory or theoretical work undertaken to acquire new knowledge without necessarily looking for long-term application and impact other than the advancement of knowledge. *Applied research* is original work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge with the objective of a specific application.

The Scheme supports the creation or performance of a work of art when it is/has:

- Accompanied by exegesis or other form of critical analysis;
- An enduring form;
- Open to peer review.

Applications must demonstrate their proposal meets the definition of research.

4. Scheme Objectives

The objectives of the ECR Grant Scheme are to:

- Support early career researchers who demonstrate clear evidence of high research potential to progress their research careers;
- Encourage establishment of an early career researcher's research program;
- Provide competitive funding for high quality research projects and pilot research projects;
- Provide early career researchers with experience in preparing a grant application for peer review;
- Build early career researchers' track record in high quality/high impact outputs in order to enhance competitiveness in bidding for external research funds;
- Provide research funding for projects that are strategically aligned with the University's priorities

5. Funding

Funding for successful applicants commences 1 April 2021 and must be expended by 31 December 2021. The maximum funding available for each award is **\$25,000**.

Funding will be allocated as follows:

- Each Faculty will allocate up to 3 grants in accordance with selection criteria after ranking all eligible applications
- The DVC Research and Engagement will allocate up to a further 5 grants to include consideration of
 - Interdisciplinary research;
 - Industry or community driven research;
 - Indigenous research; and
 - Equity and diversity

Budget items that will be support by the grant are:

- Staff/research assistance
- Travel
- Consumables
- Minor equipment

Budget items **not** supported by the grant are:

- ECR (chief investigator) salary;
- Teaching buy out;
- Salaries of research collaborators;
- Honours and Postgraduate research projects;
- Publication costs (noting ECR Grant recipients are eligible to apply to the standard Charles Sturt publication scheme)
- Basic facilities, resources and infrastructure (e.g. laboratory and office accommodation, IT, photocopying and printing, etc.) except where there is a clearly demonstrated, project-specific requirement (e.g. specialised IT requirements, printing and mailing of questionnaires, etc.);
- Student stipends and fees;
- Duplication of research costs for ongoing projects

All funding must be fully expended within the 9 months, no extensions to carry forward unspent funds will be granted. Any unspent funds by 31 December 2021 will be recovered by the University. ECR funding will be provided only once per applicant.

6. Applicant Eligibility

The ECR must take intellectual, administrative and ethical responsibility for a research project, from its conception to its finalisation and the communication of its outcomes. It should be clear how this project aligns with career progression.

To qualify, at the closing date of applications, the ECR must:

- hold a salaried (fixed term or continuing) Faculty academic appointment at Charles Sturt University of at least 0.5 FTE at Level A, B or C, and for the duration of the grant;
- have a work function of teaching and research;
- have received a Masters by Research or Doctoral degree on or after 11 February 2016; or,

- have received a Masters by Research or Doctoral degree conferred on or before 11 February 2016, together with periods of significant career interruption (between initial employment date and the closing time of submission of Proposals) which if taken into account would be commensurate with conferral on or after 11 February 2016. Career interruptions of less than one month will not be considered. The following types of interruption will be considered:
 - carer responsibilities
 - disruption due to international relocation for post-doctoral studies or other research employment. A career interruption of not more than three months will be considered for each relocation
 - illness
 - maternity or parental leave; and/or
 - non-research employment.
- The applicant must demonstrate they have the time and basic infrastructure available to pursue their project within the constraints of existing teaching, research and HDR supervision responsibilities
- Researchers currently enrolled in a Masters by Research or a Doctoral Degree are not eligible.

7. Application Eligibility

A maximum of **one** application per ECR can be submitted in any one round of the ECR Grant Scheme.

Applications must be submitted via research_strategy@csu.edu.au. **Late applications will not be accepted.**

Applications must adhere to page and word limits. Applications exceeding page or word limits will not be considered.

Applications **must** include a CSU mentor. It is expected the mentor will be an active researcher at Level C or above, with expertise relevant to the project, and hold a CSU academic appointment of 0.5FTE or greater. Consideration may be given for appropriate CSU Adjunct staff as mentors.

The application should justify their choice of mentor(s).

Mentors should provide guidance to the project, and advice and support to assist the ECR in the development or advancement of their research career. It is not a requirement for the Mentor to have a role in the project.

8. Selection Criteria

All applications will be assessed by a Faculty Committee and the ECR Grant Scheme Central Committee using the following selection criteria:

a) The Quality of the Project (40%)

Significance of the project (including some consideration of the alignment with the University Research Narrative), and the extent to which the project is soundly conceived and planned.

b) Researcher Development (30%)

How the project will contribute to the researcher's career development and enhance their competitiveness in securing external funding in the future to support their research program. This includes a statement on applicant's plans to secure funding in the future.

c) Feasibility (15%)

The extent to which the project is feasible given the timelines and budget, and the skills, experience and time commitment of the Chief Investigator and any collaborator(s).

d) Resources (15%)

The extent to which the budget is justified and appropriate.

Consideration will also be given to the likelihood that the research proposed will lead to:

- A contribution of economic or social benefit to Australia;
- A development of an external grant application;
- Ongoing research collaboration with an external government organisation or industry;
- A real conceptual advance;
- An important discovery, innovation or solution of an important practical problem

9. Application Assessment

Applications will be assessed and ranked on a competitive basis by a committee of Faculty.

The applications and ranking will then be considered by a panel chaired by the DVC Research and Engagement or their delegate, with membership including the Executive Deans (or their delegate) from each Faculty.

Additional membership may be sourced as appropriate. On occasion, the Panel may decide that applications would benefit from assessment by an independent specialist in the field. In such cases, the application may be sent for external assessment. Applicants will be informed of this.

Consideration will be given as to whether an applicant previously, or is currently, in receipt of significant University funds for other, or similar, projects.

The Panel reserves the right to adjust the level of financial support provided to successful applicants.

10. Reporting

The ECR is required to provide

- a) A four month progress report; and
- b) A final report on the outcomes, no later than two months after the completion of the project funding scheme.

It is expected that outputs will be eligible for inclusion in future ERA assessments and should be associated with high quality journals or demonstrable impact.

A financial acquittal must be attached to the final report.