



Charles Sturt
University

Early Career Research (ECR)

Guidelines

2025

For further information please contact the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (Performance and Governance)

Email: pvcric@csu.edu.au

Charles Sturt University - TEQSA Provider Identification:

PRV12018 (Australian University). CRICOS Provider: 00005F.

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Definition

A Faculty Early Career Researcher (ECR) is a Charles Sturt faculty staff member who is within 5 years post research higher degree completion based on date of conferral. Allowances will be made for career interruptions of greater than one month.

Objective

The Faculty Early Career Researcher (ECR) Scheme is supported by the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (Performance and Governance) (OPVCR), funded by Research Investment Funds (RIF), and is open to all faculty ECRs.

Faculty ECRs can apply for funding to conduct a research project that will help develop their track record and enhance their research competitiveness. The scheme aims to provide ECRs with experience and mentorship in applying for research funding and in undertaking and managing a research project.

Applicants should bear in mind when applying that the scheme is a support scheme for researchers. Consequently, successfully receiving an ECR award is not considered a research outcome, either for inclusion in calculating a researcher's RPI score or as an outcome achieved when making a case for promotion. Rather, it is the outcomes that the scheme will help to facilitate, such as quality publications and other outputs, external grants, and impact and engagement that determine a researcher's RPI score.

The objectives of the Faculty ECR Scheme are to:

- Support and provide mentorship to early career researchers within the faculties, who demonstrate clear evidence of high research potential to progress their research careers.
- Encourage establishment of an early career researcher's research pathway.
- Provide competitive continuation funding for high quality projects and / or pilot research projects that will lead to external grant applications.
- Provide early career researchers with experience in preparing a grant application for peer review.
- Build early career researchers' track record in producing 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 FOR priority areas.

Research and Activities Supported

The scheme funds applications that support excellence in pure and applied or translational research undertaken across all research fields. Pure research involves 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. Translational research takes pure or applied knowledge and translates that to a particular use or population. This scheme will fund all of the above. It will not fund scholarship of teaching or professional activities.

Applications must demonstrate how their proposal meets the definition of research as part of the proposal.

Eligibility

ECR funding will be provided only once per applicant. **Previously successful applicants should not apply.**

A Faculty Early Career Researcher (**ECR**) is a Charles Sturt faculty staff member who is within 5 years post research higher degree completion based on date of conferral. Allowances will be made for career interruptions of greater than one month.

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 the project aligns with their career progression, including their plans for building on the proposed pilot research to obtain external grant funding.

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

- hold a salaried (fixed term or continuing) Faculty (non-Research Institute) academic appointment at Charles Sturt University of at least 0.5 FTE at Level A, B or C, that continues 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 1 December 2019; or equivalent professional qualification, or,
- have received a Masters by Research or Doctoral degree, or equivalent professional qualification, conferred on or before 1 December 2019, 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 1 December 2019. Career interruptions of less than one month will not be considered.

The following types of interruption will be considered:

- carer responsibilities
 - 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 to apply.

Funding

Funding for successful applicants commences 1 February for the year awarded and must be expended by 1 December of the same year. The maximum funding available for each award is **\$25,000 (excl GST)**.

Funding will be considered for projects that align with the University Priority Fields of Research (FoR). Applicants should refer to the table of University Priority FoR codes and discuss their project proposal with their Head of School to ensure alignment.

ELIGIBLE BUDGET ITEMS.

- Staff/research assistance
- Travel
- Consumables

INELIGIBLE BUDGET ITEMS.

- ECR (chief investigator) salary.
- Teaching buy out.
- Salaries of research collaborators.
- Honours and Postgraduate research projects currently funded by RPT or other scholarship arrangements.
- Publication costs (noting that recipients are eligible to apply to the Tri-Faculty Open Access Publication Fund).
- 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.

EXPENDITURE

Any invoices submitted for items or costs not approved at time of application will be declined.

All funds must be fully expended by 1 December of the year awarded.

CARRY FORWARD OF UNSPENT FUNDS

No requests for carry forward will be considered.

Assessment

Endorsed applications will be assessed by the Faculty ECR Scheme Selection Panel and ranked on a competitive basis. Panel members include the Associate Dean of Research from each faculty and the Pro Vice-Chancellor Research (Performance and Governance).

Applications will be assessed with consideration of the following criteria:

a) The Quality of the Project (35%)

Significance of the project, including alignment with priority FoRs, and the extent to which the project is soundly conceived and planned with appropriate methodological approach and outcomes.

b) Researcher Development (35%)

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 ECR and any collaborator(s).

d) Resources (15%)

The extent to which the budget is justified, appropriate and value for money.

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

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

- A contribution of economic or social benefit to Australia.
- The development of an external grant application as part of the project deliverables.
- Ongoing research collaboration with an external government organisation or industry.

- An important discovery, innovation, or solution to an important practical problem.

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 if this occurs.

The Panel reserves the right to adjust the level of financial support provided to successful applicants as required to deliver the outcomes of the funding scheme. Justification for a reduction in budget will be provided and feasibility discussed with the applicant prior to final award in these cases.

Reporting

A condition of award is the provision of reporting.

- a) A progress report at after 4 months; and
- b) A final report on the outcomes, no later than two months after the completion of the project funding.

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

It is also expected the ECR will present a faculty seminar or similar to showcase their work following or near completion of their research. A financial acquittal must be attached to the final report.

Application

Complete applications are to be submitted to the OPVCR via email, pvcric@csu.edu.au by the closing date.

Refer to the [webpage](#) for dates, Application Form, and the Project Description template.

Late applications will not be accepted.

Collate all application documents into [a single pdf file](#) by the closing date and submit to pvcric@csu.edu.au.


- Faculty ECR Scheme Application Form
- Academic CV (no more than 5 pages in length)
- Project Description Template (no more than 1200 words)

Tips to complete your application.

PROJECT PLAN

Where applicable, link each targeted output/outcome to a 4 digit FoR code. Refer to the table of [University Priority FoR codes](#).

If your research project will require ethics approval, include the timing of the ethics application and outcome as an activity. [Refer to applicable ethics committee schedule](#).

 *Submit your ethics application at least 1 meeting prior to when you require an outcome. This allows time for you to respond should the ethics committee require further information before determining the outcome of your application.*

Example Project Plan

Activity/Action	Timeline	Outputs and/or Outcomes	FoR Code (if applicable)
Submit ethics application	Jan 2025	Apply for HREC ethics approval to conduct interviews.	
Ethics application outcome	Mar 2025	HREC approval required to commence interviews.	
Conduct interviews	Apr 2025	Interviews to be conducted by research team	
Data analysis	May – Jun 2025	Data analysis and coding to be completed.	
Socialise research results	Sep 2025	Short video for use in professional learning programs	
Communicate research results	Oct 2025	Present at X Conference	0000
Publish research results	Nov 2025	Q1 journal article submission to X journal	0000

BUDGET

Refer to FUNDING for details of eligible and ineligible budget items.

- If requesting salary for a research assistant, refer to the [Staff Costs Calculator](#) provided by the Division of Finance.
- If requesting funding for travel, refer to [CSU Travel](#) for resources to help prepare your budget. Note that a formal CSU Travel Quote is not required.

Example Budget

Budget item	Detail	Cost (excl. GST)
Salaries	Research Assistant (Level 6.1) @ 20% FTE for 28 weeks	\$XXXX.XX
Consumables	Nil	
Travel	Travel between Wagga and Wollongong for participant interviews. 8 trips (2 x xxxkm) x \$58/100km car hire.	\$XXXX.XX
Other	Transcription of interviews @\$0.95 per minute x 8 interviews (90 min each)	\$XXXX.XX
TOTAL		\$XXXX.XX

Enquiries

All enquiries should be emailed to pvcric@csu.edu.au with the subject line 'ECR - Your Name'.