

## Notes on Funded Research in Philosophy and Ethics

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There are three broad categories of funded research (although the boundaries are somewhat vague) that can be undertaken by philosophers in universities in Australia, either individually or jointly with academics in Australia or based overseas.

(A) *Basic research* undertaken by university-based researchers only, funded by government research schemes and assessed by academic peers, e.g., ARC Discovery Grants, DECRAAs, National Science Foundation (USA), ESRC (UK), Dutch Research Council (NWO), European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grants.

1. Identify intellectually and/or nationally/internationally important, indeed compelling, research topic. Don't waste your time on unimportant topics, however intellectually fashionable, on pain of the research grant becoming the end rather than merely the means.
2. Frame and finesse your research topic from the funder's (e.g., according to ARC, ERC, NSF guidelines to applicants) and the potential academic assessors' perspective; and, especially, in light of your own specific academic expertise.
3. Try to ensure that you or your research team (including overseas colleagues) 'own the intellectual territory' in question or, at the very least, are regarded as among the leading experts in the field. In the case of overseas funding bodies you might only be a partner investigator or external consultant: nevertheless, this can enable the building of academic networks, academic visits, fractional appointments, consultancy funds.
4. Ensure you display your relevant academic expertise in the application to maximum effect, all the while ensuring you don't blind yourself to limitations in your expertise and weaknesses in your cv.
5. Engage in ongoing development of your expertise and construction of your cv in light of your current limitations/weaknesses, e.g., in respect of high-quality refereed journals; and develop academic relationships with external, including overseas, colleagues, with future grant applications *to some extent* in mind, as well as development of your expertise and contribution to important research topics.
6. Refresh, redraft and recycle failed applications to other funding agencies, if you judge the topics in question to continue to be important, comparatively speaking.

(B) *Applied research* undertaken jointly by university-based researchers and industry partner investigators, funded in part by government research schemes and in part by industry, and assessed by peers (possibly jointly with industry partner assessors), e.g., ARC Linkage grants, ERC Synergy grants.

1. Identify intellectually and/or nationally/internationally important, indeed compelling, research topic, but do so jointly with industry partner. Applied research involving philosophers is typically *multi-disciplinary*, e.g., empirical component as well as ethical analysis, and is expected to lead to recommendations regarding industry or government policy. Don't waste your time on unimportant topics, even if industry partner desires research on an unimportant topic from your perspective, e.g., a short-

term research problem able to be undertaken by industry itself, on pain of the research grant becoming the end rather than merely the means.

2. Frame and finesse your research topic from the funder's (e.g., according to ARC, ERC, NSF guidelines to applicants) and the potential academic assessors' perspective; and, especially, *in light of industry partner's needs* and your own specific academic expertise.
3. Ensure that you, your academic colleagues *and your industry partners* collectively have relevant academic and non-academic expertise, including practitioner knowledge and access to relevant key informants, data etc.
4. Set up a research management team that includes representatives from industry partner to ensure industry partner participates in research and in ongoing decision-making.
5. Work with industry partner on a preliminary (possibly small/low cost) project e.g., a *loss leader*, to build trust and develop a working relationship, e.g., a consultancy report on a model code of ethics led to ARC Linkage grant with Professional Standards Institute.
6. Refresh, redraft and recycle failed applications to other funding agencies, if you judge the topics in question to continue to be important, comparatively speaking.

(C) *Applied research* undertaken by university-based researchers on a research project determined by, and wholly funded by, industry, e.g., tenders to conduct research, research consultancies.

1. Determine whether research required by industry is intellectually and/or nationally/internationally important. Applied research involving philosophers is typically *multi-disciplinary*, e.g., empirical component as well as ethical analysis, and is expected to lead to recommendations regarding industry or government policy. Don't waste your time on unimportant research merely because industry is willing to pay for it, on pain of the revenue from the research project becoming the end rather than merely the means.
2. Determine the specifics of the research requirement, e.g., exact nature and quantum of work required, and that it is properly costed.
3. Ensure that you, or your team, have the relevant academic expertise and that you have access to key informants, data etc.
4. Prior to embarking on large research project in the industry in question, work with relevant organisations on one or more preliminary (possibly small/low cost) projects e.g., a *loss leader*, to develop a track record.
5. Refresh, redraft and recycle failed applications to other funding agencies, if you judge the topics in question to continue to be important, comparatively speaking.