ARC/NHMRC APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATIONS IN 2016 FOR FUNDING COMMENCING IN 2017 & 2018

OVERVIEW

The Office for Research (OfR) has prepared this document to outline a new application process for all Australian Research Council (ARC) and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) schemes. The purpose of this new process is to improve the quality, competitiveness and support to applicants when submitting applications to the ARC and NHMRC. This new application process will also provide potential applicants with feedback to better understand the requirements of an ARC or NHMRC scheme and the standards required to be competitive. The OfR will oversee this new application process. Whilst not directly involved in the management of this new process, support will be sought from relevant College Research Directors’ (CRD) throughout.

The application process is applicable to the following ARC and NHMRC schemes:

- ARC DECRA
- ARC Discovery
- ARC Discovery Indigenous
- ARC LIEF
- ARC Future Fellowships
- NHMRC Project Grants
- NHMRC Research Fellowships
- NHMRC Career Development Fellowships
- NHMRC Early Career Fellowships

Note: Schemes that do not share March-April submission dates will be guided by the process outlined in this document, however the exact timing of events may vary.

The process is divided into four stages with a critical decision point at the end of each stage where a panel will determine the suitability of the applications to proceed to the next stage. Unsuccessful applicants will meet with the OfR and their CRD to discuss alternative sources of funding.

STAGES

STAGE 1 - INTENT TO APPLY (23RD AUGUST 2016 – 07 OCTOBER 2016)

All applicants’ are required to complete and submit an Intent to Apply application to the OfR, by close of business 19th September 2016. Late or Incomplete Intent to Apply applications will not be accepted. The Intent to Apply will be sent to a Discipline Group Panel (DGP) organised by the OfR.

DGPs will be asked to critically assess the Intent to Apply against the standards outlined in this document in accordance with the relevant scheme criteria and then advise the OfR, who will notify applicants as to whether they are to proceed to the next stage.

It is expected that there will be a significant number of applications not proceeding to full application.

KEY DATES:

Intent to Apply applications close with OfR – 19 September, 2016

Notification of outcome of the Intent to Apply - 7 October, 2016

STAGE 2 – FULL PROJECT PROPOSAL (10 OCTOBER, 2016 – 16 DECEMBER 2016)
Applicants draft and submit the full Project proposal to the OfR, no later than Friday, 25 November 2016. The OfR will forward the full Project proposal to the appropriate DGP to review and provide constructive feedback.

The DGP will provide critical peer-review of the full Project proposal and determine whether the full Project proposal is ready to proceed to the next stage of the process. OfR will forward the constructive feedback provided from DGP to the applicant.

At this stage, it is expected that there will be a further reduction on the number of applications proceeding.

**KEY DATES:**

- Full Project Proposal close with OfR – 25 November, 2016
- Notification of outcome of the full Project Proposal - 16 December, 2016

**STAGE 3 – FULL APPLICATIONS (19 DECEMBER, 2016 – 10 FEBRUARY 2017)**

The applicant will revise the Project proposal, incorporating the feedback that the DGP has provided and prepare a full application. Applicant must submit an full application, no later than 27 January 2017 to the OfR. The OfR forwards the final application to and convenes the Final Review Panel (FRP). The FRP will meet with the applicant during the week commencing 6 February, 2017, to discuss the full application and provide the applicant with feedback. The FRP's will determine whether or not the application is to be submitted to the ARC or NHMRC.

**For LIEF applicants only:** Stage 3 applicants will also be required to draft an EOI via the VicLIEF Portal for the Victorian Group process.

**KEY DATE:**

- Full applications for FRP close with OfR – 27 January, 2017
- Applicant to meet with FRP – Week 6th February to 10 February, 2017

**STAGE 4 - FINAL SUBMISSION -13 FEBRUARY, 2017 onwards**

The applicants incorporate the final feedback and finalise the application in RMS/RGMS. Applicants must submit the final application together with supporting documentation to the OfR for submission to the ARC/NHMRC two weeks prior to final ARC/NHMRC deadline. The OfR will check the final application against the eligibility, compliance and formatting of the scheme the applicant is applying to. The Applicant may be required to fine tune the final application in accordance to the final instructions provided by the OfR.

Applications must gain the final approval of the Director of the OfR. The Director of the OfR will submit the approved application, to the Funding Body on behalf of the applicant, based on the signed coversheet and certification page approved by the College Dean or Nominee. The applicant will be notified that the application has been submitted. **Applications that are not recommended for submission by the Director of the OfR will be notified immediately prior to the ARC or NHMRC closing date.**

**KEY DATE:**
ASSESSMENT PANELS

DISCIPLINE GROUP PANELS (DGP)

MEMBERSHIP (3 MEMBERS)

- A relevant College Research Director or Centre/Institute Director (Chair).
- Two appropriate internal or external discipline experts.

ROLE OF DGP & OFR

- Critical review of the Intent to Apply and feedback;
- Determine whether the applicant meets the minimum standard criteria (Panel Review Checklist);
- Provide applicant with the outcome (constructive feedback) of the Intent to Apply via the OfR; and
- The OfR will be responsible for convening these panels that will review each Intent to Apply application using the relevant funding scheme checklist provided in this document.

FINAL REVIEW PANEL (FRP – 5 MEMBERS)

MEMBERSHIP

- The Chair (PVC (R&RT) or nominee).
- DGP Chair
- The applicant’s CRD (or nominee).
- An ARC/NHMRC expert (internal or external).
- Appropriate internal or external discipline expert.

ROLE OF FRP & ORP

- Determine whether the applicant meets the minimum standard criteria (Panel Review Checklist).
- FRP will meet with the applicant to discuss the final application and provide final feedback to be incorporated in the final application.
- Determine whether the final application is competitive to be submitted to the ARC or NHMRC.
- The OfR will convene the FRP and forward constructive feedback, provided by the Panels, to the applicant to finalise the application.

EXEMPTIONS

All ARC/NHMRC applicants, irrespective of ARC/NHMRC experience and Academic level must adhere to the above process. Failure to do so will result in their application not being submitted by the OfR.

The only exceptions are:
1. Applicants who are part of an application lead by another eligible organisation will not require participate in this process; however the applicant must inform the OfR and the appropriate College Research Director of their inclusion in a submission lead by another institution.

The Certification Page is provided to the applicant by another eligible organisation must be signed by the College Dean or Nominee and the Director – Office for Research before the application is submitted via another eligible organisation.

2. The applicant must also provide the OfR with a copy of the final application, VU signed Certification Page and Coversheet.

3. Applicants that have been awarded an ARC Discovery - Project, ARC- Linkage Project or an NHMRC Project Grant in the last 3 years as a lead Chief Investigator will be exempt from the 1st stage of this process and will be required to enter the process in Stage 2, they will also be required to complete an Intent to Apply primarily for the purpose of the OfR and College Research Directors’ (CRD) communicating with them throughout the process.

UNSUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS AND ALTERNATIVE FUNDING

1. Applicants whose applications are declined at any stage of the process will meet with their CRD to discuss future opportunities and ways to improve their track record and potential future applications to the ARC or NHMRC.

2. The relevant OfR Senior Funding Officer will also meet with the applicant to discuss potential funding and how to effective use Research Professional (i.e. finding the most appropriate grant scheme to apply for).
**EXAMPLE - PANEL REVIEW CHECKLIST**

**ARC - DECRA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Scheme (criteria)</th>
<th>Standard Required</th>
<th>Decision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DECRA Candidate 35%</strong></td>
<td>The candidate must have an <strong>outstanding track record</strong> of achievement for their level of experience relative to opportunity</td>
<td>□ Yes □ Improve □ No</td>
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<td><strong>Does the candidate meet the Research opportunity and performance evidence (ROPE) criteria; and</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td><strong>Demonstrate the time and capacity to up</strong></td>
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<td><strong>take the proposed research?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Quality and Innovation 40%</strong></td>
<td>The project must clearly be of national or international significance</td>
<td>□ Yes □ Improve □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Does the research address a significant problem?</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Will the aims, concepts, methods and results advance knowledge?</strong></td>
<td>The conceptual/theoretical framework must be genuinely innovative, taking the discipline forward</td>
<td>□ Yes □ Improve □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is the conceptual/theoretical framework innovative and original?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Is there potential for the research to contribute to the Science and Research Priorities (Department of Innovation and Science Australia)?</strong></td>
<td>The research has the potential to contribute to the national Science and Research Priorities</td>
<td>□ Yes □ Improve □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong><a href="http://www.arc.gov.au/science-research-priorities">http://www.arc.gov.au/science-research-priorities</a></strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>High-impact research publications will result from the project</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Feasibility and Benefit 10%</strong></td>
<td>The project must be feasible given:</td>
<td>□ Yes □ Improve □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do the project design, participants and requested budget create confidence in the timely and successful completion of the Project?</strong></td>
<td>• The researchers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Completed project produce innovative economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefit to the Australian and International community?</strong></td>
<td>• Proposed activities timeframes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Will the proposed research be cost-effective and value for money?</strong></td>
<td>Budge represents value of money relative overall project and timeframe and aims can be delivered in the specified timeframe</td>
<td>□ Yes □ Improve □ No</td>
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<td><strong>The project must be highly likely to generate the outcomes it promises</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Project Research Environment 15%</strong></td>
<td>The home College/Centre/ Institute has an international reputation in this area</td>
<td>□ Yes □ Improve □ No</td>
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<td><strong>Are there strategies for enabling</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
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<td>collaboration with Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders communities where appropriate (e.g., dialogue/collaboration with an indigenous cultural mentor)?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Is there evidence of a developing, supportive and high quality research environment for the project and for HDR students where appropriate?</td>
<td>Improve</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Are the necessary facilities available to complete the project?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Are there adequate strategies to encourage dissemination, commercialisation, if appropriate, and promotion of research outcomes?</td>
<td>Improve</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Team has clear track record of collaborating together.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The necessary facilities are available and of a high quality</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>There is evidence of adequate strategies to encourage dissemination, commercialisation, if appropriate, and promotion of research outcomes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The team has a strong track record of collaboration</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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