Discovery Early Career Researcher Award
Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2012

Australian Research Council Act 2001

I, KIM CARR, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, having satisfied myself of the matters set out in section 59 of the Australian Research Council Act 2001, approve these Funding Rules under section 60 of that Act.

Dated 09 February 2011

Kim Carr
Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
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Key Dates

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<tr>
<td>Closing time for submission of Proposals</td>
<td>5:00pm (AEST) Wednesday 18 May 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for Request not to Assess</td>
<td>Wednesday 18 May 2011</td>
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PhD award date to be eligible for a DECRA, without career interruption | On or after 18 May 2006

PhD award date to be eligible for a DECRA, with career interruption | On or between 18 May 2003 and 18 May 2006 commensurate with period of interruption

Contacts

Researchers should direct requests for information to the Research Office within their organisation.

ARC Contacts:
by mail to: DECRA Coordinator
Australian Research Council
GPO Box 2702
CANBERRA ACT 2601

by courier to: DECRA Coordinator
Australian Research Council
Level 2, 11 Lancaster Place, Majura Park
CANBERRA ACT 2609

Email: decra@arc.gov.au
Phone: 02 6287 6600
Fax: 02 6287 6638
Web: www.arc.gov.au

Appeals must be addressed and sent:

by mail to: The Appeals Officer
Australian Research Council
GPO Box 2702
CANBERRA ACT 2601

or by courier to: The Appeals Officer
Australian Research Council
Level 2, 11 Lancaster Place, Majura Park
CANBERRA ACT 2609

Other:
RMS User IDs:
Email: rms@arc.gov.au
1. **Name of Funding Rules**

These Funding Rules are the Australian Research Council *Discovery Early Career Researcher Award* Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2012.

2. **Commencement**

These Funding Rules shall take effect upon registration on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments.

3. **Definitions**

In these Funding Rules, unless the contrary intention appears:

- **Administering Organisation** means an Eligible Organisation which submits a Proposal for funding and which will be responsible for the administration of the funding if the Project is approved for funding.

- **ARC** means the Australian Research Council, as established under the ARC Act.

- **ARC Act** means the *Australian Research Council Act 2001*.

- **ARC Fellowship** means a named Fellowship position within any ARC scheme where the salary is funded wholly or partly by the ARC.

- **ARC Research Centres Program** encompasses any research centre wholly or partly funded by the ARC and includes Centres of Excellence, Special Research Centres, Co-funded Centres and Special Research Initiatives.

- **Award of PhD Date** means the date of conferral of a PhD, not the date of submission of the thesis, nor the date the thesis was accepted by the examination board.

- **Centre Personnel** means the Centre Director, Research Director, Chief Operations Officer, Chief Investigators or Specified Personnel in the ARC Research Centres Program.

- **Commonwealth** means the Commonwealth of Australia.

- **Commonwealth-funded Research Centre** means a research centre established under a competitive Commonwealth scheme and includes Cooperative Research Centres and National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Centres of Clinical Research Excellence.

- **Conflict of Interest** means an actual or perceived conflict between a person’s public duty and their private or personal interest.

- **DECRA Candidate** means a researcher nominated in a Proposal for a Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA).

- **DECRA Recipient** means a researcher awarded funding under the *Discovery Early Career Researcher Award* scheme.
Eligible Organisation means an organisation which is eligible to apply for and receive funding under these Funding Rules.

Funding Agreement means the agreement entered into by the ARC and an Administering Organisation that sets out the terms and conditions for the administration of Commonwealth funding and the conduct of the Award.

GST has the meaning as given in section 195-1 of the A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999.

Medical and Dental Research means research and/or training which, in the opinion of the ARC, has a significant focus on near-term clinical medical (including dental) outcomes.

Minister means the Minister from time to time responsible for the administration of the ARC Act, or the Minister’s delegate.

Project means a project approved by the Minister to receive funding from the ARC.

Proposal means a request to the ARC for the provision of funding which is submitted in accordance with the Funding Rules.

Research Office means a business unit within an Eligible Organisation that is responsible for administrative contact with the ARC.

4. Introduction

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 These Funding Rules are current as at February 2011 and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the ARC Act in force then.

4.1.2 The Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA) scheme provides funding to Eligible Organisations to support research by individual researchers.

4.1.3 For the purposes of these Funding Rules, research is defined as the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

This definition of research is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development (R&D) as comprising creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of humanity, culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise [innovative] applications¹.

4.2 Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA)

4.2.1 The objectives of the DECRA scheme are to:

a. support and advance promising early career researchers;

b. promote enhanced opportunities for diverse career pathways;

c. focus research effort in the National Research Priority areas to improve research capacity and policy outcomes; and
d. enable research and research training in high quality and supportive environments.

4.2.2 It is expected that up to 200 DECRAs may be awarded for funding commencing in 2012.

4.3 Selection Criteria
Proposals will be assessed and ranked using the following selection criteria:

a. DECRA Candidate 30%
   i. research opportunity and performance evidence (ROPE); and
   ii. capacity to undertake the proposed research;

b. Project Quality 50%
   i. does the research address a significant problem?
   ii. is the conceptual/theoretical framework innovative and original?
   iii. will the aims, concepts, methods and results advance knowledge?
   iv. are the project design and methods appropriate?
   v. will the proposed research provide economic, environmental, cultural and/or social benefit to Australia?
   vi. does the project address a National Research Priority area?

c. Institutional Support 20%
   i. is there an existing, or developing, supportive and high quality research environment?
   ii. are the necessary facilities available to complete the project?
   iii. are there adequate strategies to encourage dissemination, commercialisation, if appropriate, and promotion of research outcomes?

4.4 Strategic Statement
The Administering Organisation must provide a strategic statement, approved by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), Chief Executive Officer or equivalent, within the Proposal outlining:

a. the existing and/or emerging research strengths of the Administering Organisation;

b. the positioning of the DECRA Recipient within a high quality research environment; and

c. the research only and/or research and teaching pathways available at the Administering Organisation during and after completion of the Project.

5. Funding

5.1 Level and Period of Funding

5.1.1 All amounts referred to in these Funding Rules are to be read as exclusive of GST (if any), unless expressly stated otherwise.
5.1.2 A DECRA must be applied for at $125,000 and may be awarded ARC funding of up to $125,000. The per annum salary contribution from the ARC is fixed at $85,000, including 28 per cent on costs, and up to $40,000 project costs. Salary and/or project costs will not be awarded independently.

5.1.3 A DECRA may be applied for and awarded ARC funding for three consecutive years on a full-time basis. Subject to the conditions in section 6.2.5, a DECRA may, after commencement, be undertaken on a part time basis not exceeding six consecutive years.

5.1.4 Funding for a DECRA will commence with effect 1 January 2012, unless other arrangements are approved by the Minister.

5.2 Budget Items Supported

5.2.1 Budget items which directly support the research Project may be funded from the project costs, including:

a. access to national and international research and infrastructure facilities, including archives, collections and databases;

b. access to workshop services linked to and justified explicitly against the Project (eg. Machine tools and qualified technicians);

c. equipment;

d. personnel: for example, research associates and assistants, technicians and laboratory attendants. Salary support must be requested at an appropriate salary level for the Administering Organisation, including 28 per cent oncosts;

e. PhD stipends, at a minimum of $22,860 (2011$) per annum (up to one per Proposal) for students enrolled at Eligible Organisations;

f. maintenance;

g. teaching and/or teaching relief; and

h. travel, economy domestic and/or international costs.

5.2.2 Publication and dissemination of Project outputs and outreach activity costs may be supported at up to two per cent of total project costs only. The ARC strongly encourages publication in publicly accessible outlets and the depositing of data and any publications arising from a DECRA in an appropriate subject and/or institutional repository.

5.3 Budget Items Not Supported

5.3.1 Budget items which will not be supported by ARC funding include:

a. capital works and general infrastructure costs;

b. fees for international students or the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) and Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) liabilities for students; and

c. costs not directly related to research, for example visas, relocation costs, insurance, and mobile phones (purchase or call charges).

5.3.2 The following basic facilities must be provided and funded by the Administering Organisation:

a. accommodation (e.g. laboratory and office, suitably equipped and furnished);
b. access to film or music editing facilities;
c. access to a basic library collection;
d. standard reference materials;
e. provision of office computers and basic computing facilities such as printers, word processing and other standard software; and
f. use of photocopiers, telephones, mail, fax, email and internet services.

5.4 Research/Activities Not Supported

5.4.1 Except where such activities meet the definition of research in section 4.1.3, the DECRA scheme does not support production of:

a. descriptive data compilations, catalogues or bibliographies;
b. teaching materials; or
c. compilation of data, computer programs, research aids and tools.

5.4.2 The DECRA scheme does not support Medical and Dental Research, defined as research and/or training which, in the opinion of the ARC, has a significant focus on near-term clinical medical (including dental) outcomes. This includes but is not limited to projects that deal substantially with any of the following areas of research:

a. using human subjects to test the clinical efficacy of a diagnostic or therapeutic agent or medically applicable device or material;
b. using material collected from human subjects for the purpose of studying disease prevalence, epidemiology or mode of inheritance;
c. observation or treatment of human patients for clinical medical or dental purposes; or
d. prevention of disease by medical and/or dental intervention in human subjects.

6. Organisational Types, Roles and Eligibility

6.1 Eligible Organisations

A Proposal may only be submitted by an Eligible Organisation listed at Appendix A.

6.2 Discovery Early Career Researcher Award

6.2.1 A DECRA Candidate must at the closing time of submission of Proposals:

a. have been awarded a PhD on or after 18 May 2006; or
b. commensurate with a period of significant career interruption for maternity or parental leave; carer’s responsibility; illness; international post doctoral studies; or non-research employment (not exceeding three years), have been awarded a PhD on or after 18 May 2003.

6.2.2 A DECRA Recipient must hold an appointment at the Administering Organisation for the duration of the Award.

6.2.3 A DECRA Recipient must legally, reside predominantly in Australia for the duration of the Award.
6.2.4 A DECRA Recipient must take significant intellectual responsibility for the conduct of the Project and for any strategic decisions called for in its pursuit and communication of results.

6.2.5 A DECRA may, after commencement, be undertaken on a part time basis not exceeding six consecutive years, subject to the approval of the Administering Organisation, and depending on individual circumstances appropriate to the career trajectory of the individual. A DECRA Recipient cannot commence another ARC Fellowship until the entire DECRA salary component has been expended.

6.2.6 Funding for the DECRA salary component may be used for other purposes to support the Project in exceptional or changed personal circumstances with the approval of the Administering Organisation without extension to the life of the Project.

6.2.7 At the closing time of submission of Proposals, all obligations regarding previously funded ARC projects involving the DECRA Candidate must have been fulfilled.

6.2.8 The Administering Organisation must ensure a DECRA Recipient has access to periods of up to 14 weeks paid maternity leave during the course of the Award. The ARC will provide up to 14 weeks additional funding for this purpose. The Administering Organisation must seek ARC approval for any extension to the duration of the DECRA exceeding the 14 weeks paid maternity leave.

6.2.9 A DECRA Recipient cannot spend more than one third of the duration of the Award overseas or engaged in international travel.

7. **Number of Proposals, Funded Projects and Cross-Scheme Eligibility**

7.1 **Number of Proposals and Funded Projects**

7.1.1 A DECRA Candidate may be nominated on no more than one DECRA Proposal in this funding round, evaluated as at the closing time of submission of Proposals, regardless of any subsequent change in, or withdrawal of, Proposals. Submitting Proposals that exceed this limit will result in all Proposals not being recommended for funding.

7.1.2 A researcher may only apply for up to two DECRAs over the period in which they are eligible, unless otherwise approved by the ARC.

7.1.3 A DECRA Recipient may receive funding concurrently for a maximum of one Discovery Project, which can be as sole Chief Investigator, or as Centre Personnel under the ARC Research Centres Program.

7.1.4 A researcher holding an ARC Fellowship may apply for a DECRA in the final year of Fellowship funding, including periods of salary carry-over funding, but, cannot hold an ARC Fellowship and a DECRA concurrently.

7.1.5 Proposals may be submitted only to the extent that, if successful, a DECRA Candidate nominated on the Proposal would not be involved in more than the maximum number of projects permitted in 2012 evaluated as at the closing time of submission of Proposals. A Project is considered to be funded for the years set out in the Funding Agreement.

7.1.6 A researcher will not be permitted to relinquish existing roles held at 1 January 2011, to circumvent these limits.
7.2 Proposal Eligibility
7.2.1 The ARC will not duplicate funding for research, including infrastructure, funded as at 1 January 2012 by the Commonwealth.

7.2.2 The Proposal must list all current funding and requested funding for the DECRA Candidate under any ARC scheme or any other Commonwealth funding scheme.

7.2.3 The ARC will assess whether a Proposal meets the eligibility requirements in these Funding Rules and may recommend that a Proposal that does not meet the requirements be deemed ineligible.

8. Submission of Proposals

8.1 Proposals
8.1.1 The Proposal must contain all the information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation, or reference to additional documentation, unless requested by the ARC.

8.1.2 All details in the Proposal must be current at the time of submission.

8.2 Submission of Proposals in the RMS
8.2.1 Administering Organisations must submit Proposals through the RMS unless otherwise advised by the ARC.

8.2.2 All Proposals must meet the format and content requirements, including certification, as set out in the RMS form and the Instructions to Applicants.

8.3 Closing Time for Proposals
8.3.1 The online form completed within the RMS must be submitted by 5.00pm (AEST) 18 May 2011.

8.3.2 Additions, deletions and modifications will not be accepted after submission, unless invited by the ARC.

8.3.3 Proposals may be withdrawn up until 5.00pm (AEST) Monday 27 July 2011 by the Administering Organisation by notice in writing to the ARC.

8.4 Certification in the RMS
8.4.1 The Administering Organisation must certify a Proposal online in the RMS. Research Offices should ensure that the Research Office delegate role is authorised in the RMS to certify and submit Proposals.

8.4.2 The ARC reserves the right at any point in the process to seek evidence from the Administering Organisation to support the certification of Proposals.

8.5 Conflict of Interest
8.5.1 Each party involved in a Proposal must declare at the date of submission any Conflict of Interest that exists or is likely to arise in relation to any aspect of the Proposal.

8.5.2 If a Conflict of Interest exists or arises, the Administering Organisation must have documented processes in place for managing the Conflict of Interest for the duration of the project. Such processes must comply with the NHMRC/ARC/UA Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007) and any relevant successor document.
9. **Selection and Approval Process**

9.1 **Assessment and Selection Process**

9.1.1 Assessment of Proposals is undertaken by the ARC, which has the right to make recommendations for funding to the Minister, based on any number of assessments or solely on the basis of its expertise.

9.1.2 All Proposals may be:

a. considered against eligibility criteria and compliance with the Funding Rules;

b. assigned to independent assessors, from a range of organisations, who will assess and report, which may include written comments, on the Proposal against the selection criteria;

c. ranked relative to other Proposals, by a Selection Advisory Committee, on the basis of the Proposal, and all available assessors’ reports.

9.1.3 Unsuccessful applicants may be provided with feedback on their Proposal, where available. The names of assessors will not be provided.

9.1.4 The ARC has procedures in place for managing organisational and personal Conflicts of Interest for assessors, members of a Selection Advisory Committee, members of other ARC Committees and ARC staff.

9.2 **Request Not to Assess**

Administering Organisations may name any person or persons whom they do not wish to assess a Proposal using a Request not to Assess form. The notification must be sent to the email address advised under Contacts at the beginning of these Funding Rules and received by the ARC by the closing time for Proposals, **5:00 pm (AEST), Wednesday 18 May 2011**. The ARC will consider the justification put forward to exclude any person as an assessor, but may choose not to give effect to such a request.

9.3 **Recommendations and Offer of Funding**

9.3.1 In accordance with the ARC Act, the CEO will submit funding recommendations to the Minister for consideration. The Minister will determine which Proposals will be approved and the amount and timing of funding to be paid to Administering Organisations for approved Proposals.

9.3.2 Under the ARC Act, the Minister must not approve for funding any Proposal that fails to meet the eligibility criteria set out in these Funding Rules.

9.3.3 Administering Organisations whose Proposals are approved will be notified in a letter of offer that will indicate the funding to be offered and provided with a copy of a Funding Agreement for signing.

9.3.4 The Minister may vary the funding approval if the ARC recommends that the particular circumstances of the Project warrant variation. Any variation or change will accord with the Funding Rules and Funding Agreement.

10. **Appeals Process**

10.1.1 Appeals will be considered only against administrative process issues and not against the assessment outcome.

10.1.2 Appeals must be submitted by the Administering Organisation on the ARC Appeals Form, authorised by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Chief
Executive Officer or equivalent. Appeals must be received within 28 days of the date of the notification to the Administering Organisation of the outcome of Proposals.

10.1.3 Appeals must be addressed and sent to the address advised under Contacts at the beginning of these Funding Rules.

11. Reporting Requirements

11.1 Progress Reports

11.1.1 Years 1 and 2: Report by Exception. A report must only be submitted if significant issues are affecting the progress of the Project. The report must specify the actions being taken to address the issues.

11.1.2 If the ARC is not satisfied with the progress of any Project, further payment of Funds will not be made until satisfactory progress has been made on the Project. If satisfactory progress is still not achieved within a reasonable period of time, the Funding may be terminated and all outstanding monies will be recovered by the ARC.

11.1.3 When required, Progress Reports must be submitted by 31 January in the year following each full calendar year for which the funding was awarded as directed by the ARC.

11.2 End of Year Reports

The Administering Organisation must submit an End of Year Report by 31 March in the year following each full calendar year for which the funding was awarded in accordance with the instructions to be provided by the ARC each year.

11.3 Final Report

11.3.1 A Final Report must be submitted for the Project within 12 months of the final payment or within 12 months of the final approved carryover of Funds as directed by the ARC.

11.3.2 The Final Report must justify why any publications from the Project have not been deposited in appropriate repositories within 12 months of publication. The Final Report must outline how data arising from the Project has been made publicly accessible where appropriate.

11.3.3 If any reports are not submitted or are not satisfactory to the ARC this will be noted against future Proposals submitted by the DECRA Recipient.

11.3.4 The ARC may also seek additional information about subsequent publications after submission of the Final Report.

11.4 Audited Financial Statement

11.4.1 In accordance with section 58 of the ARC Act, the Administering Organisation must submit an Audited Financial Statement by 30 June for each year following each calendar year for which the Funding was awarded.

11.4.2 In completing the Audited Financial Statement, the Administering Organisation must ensure that the amount shown in that statement as ‘approved carry forward funds’ is the same as the amount (if any) for which approval was given by the ARC to carry over in the End of Year Report.
12. **Fundamental Principles of Conducting Research**

12.1 **Ethics and Research Practices**

12.1.1 All Proposals and ARC-funded research projects must conform to the principles outlined in the following and their successor documents:

a. NHMRC/ARC/UA Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007);

b. as applicable, the NHMRC/ARC/AVCC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007); and

c. as applicable, codes on animal research promulgated by the NHMRC.

12.1.2 If there is any conflict between a successor document and its predecessor, then the successor document prevails to the extent of any inconsistency.

12.2 **Applicable Law**

The ARC is required to comply with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1982*.

12.3 **Confidentiality**

12.3.1 The ARC gives no undertaking to keep confidential any information provided in the Proposal except where required by law. The ARC may restrict access to the Proposal from parties not directly related to the Proposal.

12.3.2 The ARC will publicise and report offers or awards of funding, including information about the proposed research; the DECRA Recipient; the name of the Administering Organisation and any other parties involved in or associated with the Project; the title and summary descriptions of the Project and its intended outcomes (including the national/community benefits that are expected to arise from the research); and the level and nature of funding from the ARC. In making public information about a Proposal which has been approved for funding, the ARC may use a project description, including title and summary, which may differ from that provided in the Proposal.

12.4 **Intellectual Property**

12.4.1 The ARC does not claim ownership of any intellectual property in a Proposal.

12.4.2 The Administering Organisation must adhere to an Intellectual Property policy, approved by the Administering Organisation’s governing body, which has as one of its aims the maximisation of benefits arising from research. Unless otherwise approved by the Commonwealth, the Administering Organisation’s Intellectual Property policy must comply with the *National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research* as amended from time to time.

12.5 **Incomplete or Misleading Information**

12.5.1 It is a serious offence to provide false or misleading information to the Commonwealth.

12.5.2 If the ARC considers that a Proposal is incomplete, inaccurate or contains false or misleading information, the ARC may in its absolute discretion decide to recommend that the Proposal not be approved for funding.
Examples of misleading information and misconduct include:

a. providing fictitious research opportunity and performance evidence;

b. plagiarism;

c. making false claims in publications records (such as describing a paper as accepted for publication when it has only been submitted);

d. making false claims in relation to qualifications and/or appointments;

e. making false certifications in the RMS certification; or

f. failing to disclose to the ARC the existence, and nature, of actual or potential Conflicts of Interest of any of the parties involved in the Proposal/Project (such as any affiliations or financial interest in any organisation that has a direct interest in the matter or outputs of the Project).
Appendix A

Eligible Organisations

A1.1 Higher Education Organisations

New South Wales
Charles Sturt University
Macquarie University
Southern Cross University
The University of New England
The University of New South Wales
The University of Newcastle
The University of Sydney
University of Technology, Sydney
University of Western Sydney
University of Wollongong

Victoria
Deakin University
La Trobe University
Melbourne College of Divinity
Monash University
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University)
Swinburne University of Technology
The University of Melbourne
University of Ballarat
Victoria University

Queensland
Bond University
Central Queensland University
Griffith University
James Cook University
Queensland University of Technology
The University of Queensland
The University of the Sunshine Coast
University of Southern Queensland

Western Australia
Curtin University of Technology
Edith Cowan University
Murdoch University
The University of Notre Dame Australia
The University of Western Australia

South Australia
The Flinders University of South Australia
The University of Adelaide
University of South Australia

Tasmania
University of Tasmania
Northern Territory
Charles Darwin University
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education

Australian Capital Territory
The Australian National University
University of Canberra

Multi-State
Australian Catholic University

A1.2 Other Eligible Organisations
Australian Astronomical Observatory (AAO)
Australian Antarctic Division (AAD)
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)
Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)
Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO)
Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO)
Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO)
Geoscience Australia (GA)
Museums and herbaria which are Australian publicly funded organisations not directly funded to carry out research, but with research-related purposes and objectives.