Discovery Indigenous Grant Guidelines Changes

Consultation

The ARC engaged with stakeholders and sought feedback as part of the development of these guidelines. Stakeholders included researchers, university Research Office Directors and staff, Deputy Vice Chancellors (Research), grant assessors and Indigenous stakeholders. Changes made to the guidelines are based on feedback received.

STREAMLINING

1. Simplification of the Guidelines

- The Discovery Indigenous Guidelines (Guidelines) have been updated to reflect the findings of the ARC's Process Review of the National Competitive Grants Program; recommendations 3, 8 and 9 of *Trusting Australia's Ability: Review of the ARC Act 2001*; and the Minister for Education's Statement of Expectations of 26 August 2022 which emphasised the goal of minimising administrative burden on researchers. The Guidelines have been considerably shortened, reducing redundancy and repetition in order to produce more user-friendly, fit-for-purpose guidelines. Changes to the Guidelines align them with the recently approved streamlined Grant Guidelines for Discovery Fellowships and, where appropriate, Linkage Projects and the Industry Fellowship Program.
- Alongside streamlining, the Guidelines for Discovery Indigenous have been separated from the Guidelines for the Discovery Projects scheme and the Discovery Fellowships— Australian Laureate Fellowships, Australian Future Fellowships and Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA)—schemes.
- Key amendments include:
  - o Removal of references to Discovery Projects and Discovery Fellowships schemes and integration of Discovery Indigenous scheme information into main body of Guidelines.
    Guidelines reference: Flowchart, 2, 3.2, 4.11, 4.19-4.21, 4.25-4.27, 5.3-5.5, 6.2, 7.8, 7.10, 9.16-9.21, Appendix A
  - o Removal of detailed contextual information about the overarching Discovery Program and including a reference to the ARC website for further information.
    Guidelines reference: 1, 2.1
  - o Simplification of the information about eligibility, including moving table of Eligible Organisations to Appendix B.
    Guidelines reference: Appendix B, 4.1-4.28
  - o Simplification of the 'What the grant money can be used for' section to 2 subheadings: 'What grants funds can be used for' and 'What grant funds cannot be used for'.
    Guidelines reference: 5.1-5.4
  - o Simplification of the 'How to apply' section, including updated National Interest Test information, in line with streamlined Linkage Projects grant guidelines.
    Guidelines reference: 7.1-7.14
  - o Removal of 'Notification of application outcomes', 'How We monitor Your grant activity' and 'Consultation' sections and inclusion of relevant information in streamlined and expanded 'Successful grant applications' section, including new subheading 'Responsibilities'.
    Guidelines reference: 9.1-9.26
  - o Streamlining of 'Probity' section with links to ARC website for more information.
    Guidelines reference: 10

ABOUT THE GRANT PROGRAM

2. Discovery Indigenous Objectives

- The objectives and intended outcomes have been integrated and the objectives reworded to reflect the Discovery Indigenous scheme aims more clearly within the broader Discovery Program. Consultations indicated that stronger alignment between objectives, assessment criteria and the application forms would be beneficial and updates to the objectives were in response to this feedback.
- The terminology used in relation to research has also been updated to include 'pure basic', 'strategic basic' and 'applied research' to be consistent with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC) terminology with definitions for each term added to the Glossary along with a link to the ABS website.
- Addition of 'across all disciplines excluding clinical and other medical research' to objectives to highlight the ARC's broad funding areas.
  Guidelines reference: 2.5, Appendix A

GRANT AMOUNT AND GRANT PERIOD

3. Updated and streamlined information on grant amounts and Discovery Australian and Torres Strait Island Awards (DAATSIA) salaries

- Additional information provided in 'Table 1: Discovery Indigenous funding and grant duration' on the inclusions within project funding and removal of the detailed information about salaries for DAATSIA candidates with direct links provided to the ARC's Salaries and Stipends webpage. Salaries funded by the ARC are indexed annually and so would be incorrect in subsequent years if the 2023 rates were provided in the Guidelines. Applicants may access the most accurate and up-to-date information on the ARC website.
  Guidelines reference: 3.2

ASSESSMENT

4. Assessment Criteria and Weightings
- Following consultation with stakeholders, the assessment criteria have been amended to be more fit-for-purpose and to bring the assessment criteria into alignment with the updated objectives for the scheme.
- Key amendments include:
  - o Updated Investigator(s)/Capability criterion in line with similar changes to other Discovery Program schemes.
    Guidelines reference: 6.2
  - o Removal of references to DAATSIA candidates in Project quality and innovation, and Feasibility criteria (as recommendations regarding DAATSIAs are made separately from assessment of the overall application).
    Guidelines reference: 6.2
  - o Updated wording on additional assessment criterion for projects involving Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander research to bring the criterion into alignment with recent developments around cultural, governance and ethical requirements, specifically in relation to the 2020 AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and the 2018 Australian Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles and move of additional assessment criteria from 'd. Feasibility' to 'b. Project quality and innovation'.

5. **Information about assessment of DAATSIAs**

   - Additional information added to the Guidelines to clearly articulate the assessment processes and criteria for DAATSIA applicants.
   Guidelines reference: 6.3, 6.4

6. **Clarification of wording on use of Detailed Assessors**

   - The Flowchart has been updated to provide greater clarity on the use of Detailed Assessors, stating that an application may be assigned to Detailed Assessors and that the applicant will have the opportunity to respond to any Detailed Assessors' written comments.

   Guidelines reference: Flowchart; 8.15

ELIGIBILITY

7. **Eligible Organisations**

   - The Eligible Organisations table has been moved to an appendix.
   Guidelines reference: Appendix B.

8. **Updated clauses about additional certification requirements**
   - New clause added about ensuring provision of additional certification requirements at EOI stage (replacing deleted clause about applications involving particular named participants) to more accurately represent the ARC's research integrity processes, and to make eligibility requirements clear to researchers and Administering Organisations.
   Guidelines reference: 4.6, 4.12

9. **Medical Research as an eligibility clause**
   - New clause added stating that applications must not include medical research, as detailed in the ARC Medical Research Policy, to more accurately represent the ARC's eligibility processes and to make eligibility requirements clear to researchers and Administering Organisations.
   Guidelines reference: 4.8

10. **Update to references to participants, personnel and organisational participants**
    - Where possible, the use of the term 'participants' or 'personnel' has been updated to specify 'named participants' or 'participating organisation' to ensure clarity and consistency of terminology.
    Guidelines reference: 4.14, 9.14

11. **Edited wording to project limit clauses**
    - An additional sub-clause has been added to clause outlining that Discovery Projects applications (both Expressions of Interest and full applications) will be counted at the Discovery Indigenous grant opportunity closing date.
    Guidelines reference: 4.25
    - The clause outlining project limits for Australian Laureate Fellowships, Future Fellowships, DECRA, ARC Centres of Excellence or Special Research Initiatives has been lightly edited to make it clear that, if required, the relinquishment of projects or withdrawal of applications does not need to occur until all outcomes are announced.
    Guidelines reference: 4.26

OTHER

12. Additional information provided about Ministerial decision making
- Additional information provided in the Flowchart under 'Grant decisions are made' outlining that, should the Minister choose not to fund a project based on national security concerns, the Minister may advise the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security to ensure that Administering Organisations and researchers are aware of this possibility.
  <u>Guidelines reference</u>: Flowchart

13. Withdrawing an application
- Updated clause outlining requirement that Administering Organisations who wish to withdraw an application inform the ARC in writing.
  <u>Guidelines reference</u>: 7.6

14. Optional Letter of Community Support
- Added clause outlining option for applicants to attach a letter from an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community or community organisation outlining the ways in which the proposed project would benefit that community or community organisation, if relevant.
  <u>Guidelines reference</u>: 7.8

15. Updated persistent identifier clause
- The clause, previously encouraging named participants, now 'strongly' encourages named participants to have a persistent identifier such as an Open Researcher and Contributor Identifier (ORCID) in their RMS profile to emphasise the importance of persistent identifiers and reflect ARC open access policy accurately.
  <u>Guidelines reference</u>: 9.27

16. Appeals process
- Sentence referring to 30-day limitation for lodging appeals removed to reflect the ARC's most recent appeals process.
  <u>Guidelines reference</u>: 10.3-10.4

17. Acronyms and definitions
- Acronyms deleted or updated where terms are self-explanatory, are no longer used in the Guidelines, are only used in other definitions or are only relevant to the Discovery Projects and Discovery Fellowships schemes:
  - CEO
  - ORCID
  - PDRA
  - PGR
  - PhD
- New definitions or definitions updated to increase clarity:
  - Application
  - Applied research
  - Australian Government priority areas
  - Consultancy
  - Grant recipient
  - Honorary academic appointment (definition has moved from Eligibility to Appendix A)
  - Participating organisation
  - Pure basic research

- o Strategic basic research
- Definitions deleted where terms are self-explanatory, are no longer used in the Guidelines, are only used in other definitions or are only relevant to the Discovery Projects and Discovery Fellowships schemes:
  - o ARC assessor community
  - o ARC website
  - o Australian researcher
  - o Award of PhD date
  - o Candidate
  - o Chief Executive Officer
  - o Commonwealth
  - o Commonwealth Fellowship
  - o Discovery Program
  - o Fellow
  - o General Assessors
  - o Grant opportunity opening date
  - o Minister
  - o National interest
  - o National Manufacturing Priorities
  - o Officials
  - o PhD
  - o Recipient (replaced with 'grant recipient')
  - o Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)
  - o Science and Research Priorities
  - o Selection criteria
  - o Technical workshop services

Guidelines reference: Appendix A.