

These guidelines consolidate the scheme requirements for the McKenzie, Puzey, and Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowships for Early Career Researcher (ECR) fellowships commencing in 2027 (application and award in 2026)

Contents

1. Introduction.....	1
2. McKenzie Postdoctoral Fellowships: Overview.....	2
3. Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowships: Overview.....	3
4. Puzey Postdoctoral Fellowship: Overview.....	4
5. Eligibility	5
6. Eligibility Exemption Requests	6
7. ECR Fellowships Application Process	7
8. Budget Items	11
9. Evaluation and Assessment.....	12
10. Timetable	13
11. Employment and Funding Conditions	14
12. Scheme contacts and administration	17

1. Introduction

1. These scheme guidelines apply to the McKenzie, Mary Lugton and Puzey Postdoctoral Fellowships. Applicants for these institutional fellowships must refer to these guidelines and apply through the centralised two-stage Early Career Researcher (ECR) Fellowships application process. Applicants are prompted to indicate the fellowships scheme/s they are applying for on the Expression of Interest (EOI) form and/or application form.
2. Each fellowship scheme has a unique historical context, funding and appointment arrangements, and strategic objectives. As such, this document begins with a distinct 'Overview' section for each scheme.
3. Thereafter, all three fellowships scheme are managed by the same application process, evaluation and assessment process and post-award funding conditions.
4. The McKenzie, Puzey and Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowships support the ambitions of the University's [Advancing Melbourne – Strategy 2030](#) and the research portfolio's [Advancing Research 2030: Excellence for Impact](#) by attracting or retaining outstanding ECRs and nurturing their careers as future research leaders.

2. McKenzie Postdoctoral Fellowships: Overview

1. Established by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) in 2010, the McKenzie Postdoctoral Fellowships scheme is the University of Melbourne's flagship postdoctoral development program that contributes to research excellence and builds the capability of high-calibre academics during the pivotal early career stage.
2. The McKenzie Postdoctoral fellowship is a period of concentrated research time that enables outstanding early career researchers to strengthen their research, generate new projects and collaborations, develop research leadership capabilities, and contribute to the broader research objectives of the University.
3. The scheme is named in recognition of the significant contribution made to research and ECR mentoring by Professor John McKenzie FAA, who was the Dean of the Faculty of Science (1998- 2004) and served as Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (DVCR) of the University (2006-2008).

Number of fellowships and disciplines

4. For commencement in 2027 (application and award in 2026), the scheme offers up to 16 postdoctoral fellowships of three-year duration to outstanding postdoctoral researchers working in any research field of interest to the University and its faculties.
5. In alignment with the University's Indigenous Strategy [Murmuk Djerring](#) and our commitment to building the long-term capability and breadth of the Indigenous academy, and where the criteria of this scheme are otherwise met, at least two of the fellowships will be awarded to Indigenous-identified researchers or researchers whose appointment supports the equity, diversity, and inclusivity of our research community.

Scheme objectives

6. The McKenzie Postdoctoral Fellowships scheme aims to attract or retain outstanding postdoctoral researchers who have the highest potential to:
 - advance a distinctive research program of the highest quality and potential impact;
 - strengthen their track record and capacity to attract competitive funding for their future research endeavors;
 - significantly contribute to research quality and capability across the University in alignment with institutional and faculty strategic priorities; and
 - build their own capability for research leadership and supervision.
7. As additional strategic objectives to the above, the McKenzie Postdoctoral Fellowship scheme also aims to:
 - a. attract to the University, or retain after completion of doctoral studies at the University, high-caliber early career researchers from Australia or overseas who identify as Indigenous or First Peoples¹; and
 - b. contribute to the fostering of an increasingly inclusive and equitable research community at the University of Melbourne.

¹ In Australia, Indigenous refers to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (First Nations) peoples. Otherwise, applicants should refer to the following United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues paper on criteria of self-identification drawn from several international human rights documents: https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf

Fellowship funding and appointment

8. The default term of the McKenzie Postdoctoral Fellowships is for three years (at 1.0 FTE) of research-focused activity, however fractional appointments can be negotiated in some circumstances (see Funding Conditions below).
9. Funded by DVCR strategic funding, each fellowship provides salary funding to commence at Academic Level A6 in the University Salary Band (plus oncosts and superannuation), as per the terms and conditions of employment set out in the applicable University of Melbourne enterprise agreement.
10. Funded by the relevant host faculty, each Fellow will receive an additional single allocation of \$25,000 for research project costs (over the full term of the fellowship).

3. Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowships: Overview

1. Established with the generous support of a bequest in 2008, the Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowships scheme is a development program that contributes to research excellence and builds the capability of high-calibre ECRs in targeted disciplines.
2. The Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowship enables outstanding early career researchers to strengthen their research, generate new projects and collaborations, develop research leadership capabilities, and contribute to the broader research objectives of the University.
3. The fellowship is named after its generous donor, Ms. Mary Evelyn Lugton, who was a valued member of the University's alumni and staff communities. She was awarded a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) and was a non-resident member of Janet Clarke Hall. Following her graduation, she went on to have a long association with the Baillieu Library, joining the Reference Department in 1946, rising to Senior Reference Librarian and later becoming the University Bibliographer in 1978, a position she held until her retirement in 1989. She initiated many exhibitions in the Baillieu, was closely involved in the planning of the new building, and wrote two publications, 'Introduction to the Baillieu Library' and 'Books by Women Graduates'.
4. While the Mary Evelyn Lugton Fund also provides financial support for graduate research scholarships, these guidelines only relate to the Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowships, which are administered separately to the scholarships and are awarded annually by the DVCR (or delegate) on advice of the selection committee.

Number of fellowships and disciplines

5. The Mary Lugton Scholarship Fund provides salary funding for one or two Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowship/s per year, contingent on financial capacity in the trust fund.
6. The Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowship rotates across the disciplines of art conservation, medicine, botany, science, engineering and history (in this order). Mary Lugton Fellows may be based in any Faculty at the University and hold one of the above disciplinary fellowships, provided the applicant can demonstrate in their application how their proposed project is within the relevant discipline designated for award in a given year.
7. In 2026, there will be two Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowships open for applications in the disciplines of Science and Engineering.

Scheme objectives

- The Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowships scheme aims to attract or retain an outstanding postdoctoral researcher who has the highest potential to advance a distinctive research program of the highest quality and potential impact in the relevant discipline;

- strengthen their track record and capacity to attract competitive funding for their future research endeavors;
- significantly contribute to research quality and capability across the University in alignment with institutional and faculty strategic priorities; and
- build their own capability for research leadership and supervision.

Fellowship funding and appointment

8. Funded by the Mary Evelyn Lugton Fund, the fellowship will be awarded to commence at Academic Level A6 in the University Salary Band (plus oncosts and superannuation), as per the terms and conditions of employment set out in the applicable University of Melbourne enterprise agreement.
9. Funded by the relevant host faculty, each Fellow will receive an additional single allocation of \$25,000 for research project costs (over the full term of the fellowship).
10. The default term of the Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowships is for two years (at 1.0 FTE) of research-focused activity, however fractional appointments can be negotiated in some circumstances (see Funding Conditions below).

4. Puzey Postdoctoral Fellowship: Overview

1. Established in 1992, the Puzey Postdoctoral Fellowship is available to an outstanding Australian ECR working in one of the fields of medicine, science or engineering. The fellowship is awarded annually and supported by the Elizabeth and Vernon Puzey Foundation, which was established with the aim of enabling Australian researchers to improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians.

Number of fellowships and disciplines

2. There is one Puzey Postdoctoral Fellowship each year.
3. The Fellowship rotates between the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences (MDHS), the Faculty of Science (SCIENCE), and the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology (FEIT).
4. In 2026, the Puzey Postdoctoral Fellowship is available to an applicant to FEIT.

Scheme objectives

5. The Puzey Postdoctoral Fellowships scheme aims to attract or retain an outstanding postdoctoral researcher who has the strongest potential to:
 - advance a distinctive research program of the highest quality and potential impact;
 - strengthen their track record and capacity to attract competitive funding for their future research endeavors;
 - significantly contribute to research quality and capability across the University in alignment with institutional and faculty strategic priorities;
 - build their own capability for research leadership and supervision.

Fellowship funding and appointment

6. Funded by the Elizabeth and Vernon Puzey Foundation Trust, the fellowship provides a salary at

Academic Level A6 in the University Salary Band (plus oncosts and superannuation), as per the terms and conditions of employment set out in the applicable University of Melbourne enterprise agreement.

7. The default term of the Puzey Postdoctoral Fellowships is for three years (at 1.0 FTE) of research-focused activity, however fractional appointments can be negotiated in some circumstances (see Funding Conditions below).
8. Funded by the relevant host faculty, each Fellow will receive an additional single allocation of \$25,000 for research project costs (over the full term of the fellowship).

5. Eligibility

1. Applicants for a McKenzie, Puzey or Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowship must have:

- graduated, or have met the requirements to graduate, with a PhD in a discipline relevant to their fellowship proposal from a university in any country, including Australia and the University of Melbourne.

The award of the PhD is defined as the date of the official notification correspondence, or, for those awarded PhDs where the institution does not supply such correspondence, the date that the applicant was officially advised (including over email) that they had completed all the required steps to be eligible to graduate with a PhD.

It is *not* the date of receiving the official testamur, or the date of the thesis submission.

An EOI will not be accepted if applicants have not met the requirements by the EOI closing date.

- completed the requirements for the award of their PhD degree no earlier than 1 April 2023 (i.e., the applicant has had no more than three years of research opportunity post-PhD prior to the EOI **opening date**).

2. Additionally, applicants for a Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowship must be an active researcher in the discipline/s being awarded a fellowship in the given year.
3. Additionally, due to the terms of the Puzey Trust, applicants for a Puzey Postdoctoral Fellowship must be:
 - An Australian citizen and resident in Australia; and
 - Assured of employment in the relevant faculty (MDHS, FEIT or SCIENCE) if they are awarded the fellowship.
4. Additionally, current academic staff of the University of Melbourne who meet all other eligibility requirements may apply if their appointment is casual, fixed-term or continuing research contingent (CRC).

Applicants should also note the following requirements:

5. Applicants for all postdoctoral fellowships must be able to commence their fellowship appointment by 30 June 2027, unless pre-approved otherwise (also see Funding Conditions).
6. Applicants for all postdoctoral fellowships must not have outstanding Progress Reports or Final Reports from any other University of Melbourne researcher development scheme by the close of the EOI date.
7. Applicants for all postdoctoral fellowships must not have previously held a McKenzie,

Melbourne, Puzey or Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowship.

8. All postdoctoral fellowships awarded under these guidelines must be held by a person who is directly employed by a Department of the University of Melbourne (i.e., fellows may not be an honorary staff member of the University).
9. Fellowships may be held by fellows who are directly employed by a Department of the University but can be based in the following affiliated institutes:
 - The Florey Department of Neuroscience and Mental Health (the Florey)
 - The Sir Peter MacCallum Department of Oncology (Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre)
 - The Department of Medical Biology (WEHI)
 - The Centre for Youth Mental Health (Orygen)
 - The Department of Paediatrics (Murdoch Children's Research Institute) and
 - The Centre for Eye Research Australia (CERA).

6. Eligibility Exemption Requests

1. The University of Melbourne recognises that interruptions to research and career trajectory, or life experiences that reduce research opportunity, can affect a researcher's capacity, productivity, or contribution in a lasting way.
2. Applicants who fall outside of the eligibility criteria above may make an Eligibility Exemption Request (EER) in the relevant section of the EOI form. An EER may be submitted if:
 - a. The applicant's PhD was awarded prior to 1 April 2023 and there have been demonstrable career interruption(s) or disrupted opportunity to undertake research that has limited the applicant's research opportunity post-PhD (*see the next point for clarification*) to be effective for three years or less; or
 - b. the applicant does not meet one of the other eligibility criteria above and can demonstrate exceptional circumstances that justify their eligibility.
3. 'Research opportunity post-PhD' means: holding a salaried appointment after the completion of a PhD degree that enabled the applicant to spend 0.4FTE or more on research (i.e., 2 days per week or more on research).

Applicants whose employment enabled them to spend 2 days per week or more on research for three years or more (calculated cumulatively) will not be considered for an EER unless other exceptional circumstances are present (pursuant to 6.2b).

Part-time appointments do not necessarily count towards an EER application. For instance, if an applicant worked part time (e.g., 0.6FTE) but all those days were research focused on this appointment, the period of this appointment *would not* be relevant to EER calculation as there was sufficient research opportunity within this employment contract (i.e., 0.6FTE). Conversely, if an applicant worked full time with 0.2FTE research allocation, the period of this arrangement *would* be counted towards an EER calculation.

4. Interruptions that can be claimed when calculating the effective years of research opportunity post-PhD include:
 - Disruption due to international relocation (3 months maximum)
 - Parental leave

- Caring responsibilities (with reduced research fraction)
 - Disability
 - Disaster management and recovery
 - Medical or mental health conditions;
 - Limited or no access to facilities and resources – such as due to workplace interruptions
 - Unemployment
 - Employment that offered limited (i.e. less than 0.4FTE research allocation) or no provision for research
 - Community obligations, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and protocols.
5. Where the COVID-19 pandemic compounded the impact of the constraint or interruption, this can be documented as a contributing factor.
 6. If requiring EER on the grounds of career interruption, applicants should use the [Fellowships Career Interruptions Calculator spreadsheet](#) available on the scheme webpage to map out any periods of time when they had less than 0.4FTE (i.e. less than 2 days per week) research opportunity and upload the form to the EOI. In the calculations, the applicant must detail the interruptions to a minimum of 0.4FTE research opportunity. If the claimed interruptions in total bring the applicants' effective years of research opportunity post-PhD to within three years, the EER will be approvable.
 7. Submission of an EER does not guarantee an exemption and is at the determination of the EER sub-committee overseen by the DVCR's delegate.
 8. To assist the EER sub-committee in determining eligibility, applicants must include supporting evidence to substantiate the claimed EER time or explain in the calculation form why it cannot be included. Supporting evidence will remain confidential and will only be available to the EER Committee and scheme administrative staff as needed.
 9. Completion of the table in the EER calculator form is not acceptable as evidence. Supporting evidence can include, but is not limited to:
 - Employment letters of offer or position descriptions indicating the role and responsibilities of the position that excluded or limited research opportunity;
 - Testimonials from employers detailing how a position did not permit research to be conducted;
 - Letters from GPs or medical specialists confirming, in general terms, the existence, timeframe, and significance/severity of a medical or mental health condition experienced by an applicant.

For eligible applications with effectively less than three years of research opportunity, applicants will be able to describe their research track record relative to opportunity in Part E of the EOI and application form.

7. ECR Fellowships Application Process

Application process overview and requirements

1. Applicants may submit only one application each year to the ECR Fellowships application process but may indicate on their application whether they are applying for one or more

postdoctoral fellowships as part of their application.

2. The ECR Fellowships application is a two-stage process:

- First, applicants must complete an EOI, which will be assessed and ranked by the Faculty selection committee to which the applicant applied.
- Thereafter, shortlisted applicants from each Faculty will be invited to submit a Full Application for review by the central ECR Fellowships Central Selection Committee, who will recommend the final award of postdoctoral fellowships under all three schemes to the DVCR for approval.

3. The EOI Form consists of six parts:

- a. Part A: Administrative Summary
- b. Part A-1: Fellowship Selection
- c. Part B: Education and Appointment Details
 - i. Part B-1: Eligibility Exemption Request (where needed)
- d. Part C-1: [Project Summary](#)
Your upload must not exceed two (2) pages, inclusive of all text, figures, images, references, acknowledgements and any other relevant content. Please remove any blank pages. Applicants are required to use the template provided on the [scheme webpage](#) and upload the completed document as a PDF.
- e. Part D-1: Indicative Budget (high level outline of planned expenditure for \$25,000 project funding).
- f. Part E-1: Track Record and Strategic Alignment, including publications record and CV (maximum 2 pages including references and acknowledgements as applicable)
- g. Part F-1: [Academic Contact form](#) (completed and signed by the Academic Contact and uploaded by the applicant)
- h. Part G – Applicant Declaration and Next Steps

4. The [Project Summary](#) is available as a template on the scheme webpages. It must adhere to the below editorial guidelines:

- a. Clear font
- b. 12pt font
- c. For references and figures, minimum 10pt font may be used.
- d. Single (1.0) line spacing
- e. 1.27cm margins (narrow)
- f. Saved and uploaded as a PDF (not Word or another program document).
- g. Maximum two (2) A4 pages for the Project Summary. Your uploaded document must not exceed two (2) pages, inclusive of all text, figures, or images, references, acknowledgements and any other relevant content. Please remove any blank pages.
- h. Applicants are required to use the template provided on the scheme webpage and upload the completed document as a PDF.

5. In [Part E-1] of the EOI [and Part E-2 of the Application Form] (Track Record & Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence), applicants are given an opportunity to accurately describe their research track record relative to opportunity, i.e., relative to the percentage of their workload available for research, or other relevant circumstances or career interruptions.

This is distinct from the description and calculation of interruptions as part of an EER request, which goes to eligibility rather than record.

6. The full Application Form is an expanded version of the EOI and allows for updated text of Application Form parts (*the original Eoi text is presented for applicants' reference for their update but will not be provided to the central selection committee*).
7. The full Application Form consists of:
 - a. Part A: (carried over from Eoi)
 - b. Part C-2: [Project Description](#) (Your uploaded document must not exceed seven (7) pages, inclusive of all text, figures, images, references, acknowledgements and any other relevant content. Please remove any blank pages.)
 - c. Applicants are required to use the template provided on the scheme webpage and upload the completed document as a PDF.)
 - d. Part D-2: Detailed Budget
 - e. Part E-2: Track Record and Strategic Alignment including publications record and uploaded CV of maximum 2 pages (You may update your CV and publication record if needed. However, CVs longer than 2 pages will deem your application ineligible for further processing).
 - f. Part F-2: Reference letters
 - g. Compliance and regulatory approvals (these are system requirements for tracking university research activities)
8. The [Project Description](#) is available as a template on the scheme webpage. It must adhere to the below editorial guidelines:
 - a. Clear font
 - b. 12pt font
 - c. For references and figures, minimum 10pt font may be used.
 - d. Single (1.0) line spacing
 - e. 1.27cm margins (narrow)
 - f. Maximum seven (7) A4 pages (Your uploaded document must not exceed seven (7) pages, inclusive of references and acknowledgements where applicable. Please remove any blank pages.)
 - g. Applicants are required to use the template provided on the scheme webpage and upload the completed document as a PDF.

Compliance requirements

9. Applications must comply with the formatting requirements, page limits and word limit stated in the Application Form and in these guidelines, including in relation to the length of CVs. Please ensure that you meet these requirements: **Failure to meet the specified formatting and application requirements will mean the application is deemed ineligible and will not be passed on to the committee.**
10. The applicant is responsible for ensuring completeness and that eligibility requirements are met prior to final lodgment.
11. Each Part has specific information that needs to be filled out, and it is essential to complete all sections. All questions must be answered or marked 'not applicable'. Ineligible or incomplete applications will be excluded and not considered by the committees.
12. The application must contain all the information necessary for assessment of the project

without the need for explanation or reference to further documentation, including reference to external webpages.

13. As full applications are reviewed by a multi-disciplinary committee, applicants should ensure that their application, including the project description, is written in plain English as far as possible, and is accessible to informed but non-expert readers in other disciplines.
14. Where the applicant identifies as a) an Indigenous researcher or b) a researcher whose project proposal directly engages with Indigenous knowledge or Indigenous academics, organisations or communities (within or outside the University of Melbourne), this should be indicated in the Administrative Summary and/or Project Summary as part of a number of strategic flags that align with University strategic priorities.

Key application steps and responsibilities

15. Applicants should review the '[How to Apply](#)' section of the scheme webpage, the '[Frequently Asked Questions](#)' document on the scheme webpage, and refer to the scheme dates below.
16. At the EOI stage, applicants must establish an Academic Contact at the University of Melbourne. The Academic Contact must be listed in Part F-1 of the EOI Form. Applicants may use the [University's Find an Expert](#) search tool to find academics in their field and, where necessary, may liaise with the relevant School or the Faculty research office for guidance.
17. EOIs and Full Applications are to be completed via the University of Melbourne's SmartyGrants Portal. The link to the EOI form will be published on the scheme webpage. Please refer to the times and dates on the scheme schedule below.

Academic Contact Forms

18. Each EOI must be supported by an Academic Contact as having genuine strategic value, strong fit against the scheme selection criteria and assurance of support as a potential fellow. The [Early Career Researcher Fellowships Academic Contact Form](#) is to be completed and signed by the Academic Contact and attached by the applicant before submitting their application by the EOI closing date.
19. After faculties have formed their shortlists, the relevant Head of School/Department must authorise and endorse shortlisted applications using the [Early Career Researcher Fellowships Faculty Certification form](#) (individually or in bulk) to affirm the strategic value of shortlisted candidates and confirm support of their employment, project funding, mentoring and other accommodations as a fellow.
20. In addition to the EOI application in SmartyGrants, Faculties may conduct additional assessment processes when ranking EOIs. Faculties will contact eligible EOI applicants directly during the Faculty assessment process if they require additional material or meetings.
21. If invited to complete a Full Application, applicants must ask two referees to each complete a reference letter (maximum of two pages) as a written testimonial. Referees are requested to address the following points:
 - a) Relationship with applicant (in what capacity they know the applicant and how long),
 - b) Comment on the quality of their research outputs (within the context of the discipline),
 - c) Comment on the competitiveness of their research track record relative to their opportunities.
22. Comment on their future research leadership potential.
23. The referees must submit the written reference letter via email to:

Email: ECR-Fellowships@unimelb.edu.au

8. Budget Items

Research budget items supported under the fellowship (\$25,000 AUD total for the three-year duration)

1. Items that directly support the research program may be funded, including:
 - a) Personnel, postdoctoral research associates and research assistants, technicians, and laboratory attendants
 - b) Access to research and infrastructure facilities and technical workshop services
 - c) Essential field research
 - d) Expert Third Party Services
 - e) Equipment, maintenance, and consumables
 - f) Publication and dissemination of project research (within the limits of 7.2(g) below)
 - g) Open access fees for publishing:
 - a. An article in a fully open access journal (to a maximum of \$5000). *Note, in their EOI and Full Application budgets, applicants should name the fully open access journal they plan to publish in.*
 - b. An open access chapter or open access book (to a maximum of \$5,000)
 - h) Other publishing fees not related to open access, including page charges, colour charges, and service fees
 - i) Specialised computer equipment or software
 - j) Travel costs essential to the project over the project activity period (for the fellow's outbound travel, or visitors' inbound travel who are named in the research proposal)
 - k) Web hosting and development
 - l) Workshops, focus groups and conferences
 - m) Stipend top-ups or research travel support for Graduate Researchers contributing to the project.

Research budget items not supported under the fellowship

2. Funds will not be provided for the following purposes:
 - a) Fees for international students or Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) or Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) liabilities
 - b) Funding for postgraduate studies for the applicant/fellow
 - c) Costs not directly related to research or the project
 - d) Funds that duplicate or supplement another current internal University grant, external grant, or research contract
 - e) Non-specialist equipment that is readily available to University staff through Faculties, such as desktop computers or laptops
 - f) Salaries for external research collaborator(s). This does not include salaries for research support staff or technical support staff which are allowable above.
 - g) Fees for publishing open access in subscription (hybrid) journals, sometimes called Article Processing Charges (APCs). Please note that the University already covers open access fees for many journals through [open access publishing agreements](#), and free [repository open access pathways](#) are also available. Applicants should contact their

[discipline's liaison librarians](https://library.unimelb.edu.au/openscholarship/open-access-publishing) for further advice or refer to <https://library.unimelb.edu.au/openscholarship/open-access-publishing>.

- h) Society membership fees
- i) Visa or relocation expenses.

9. Evaluation and Assessment

1. A panel of senior academics in each Faculty will review and rank all eligible EOIs submitted to their Faculty. Ranking will be based on the scheme selection criteria (see below), and the panel will provide detailed written comments as recommendations to the ECR Fellowships Central Selection Committee via the RDS team in RIC. Based on the advice of the faculty rankings, a shortlist of EOIs will be invited through SmartyGrants to submit a Full Application.
2. Full Applications are assessed on a competitive basis by the Committee, comprising senior University academics who represent a diverse range of disciplines and were not involved in Faculty ranking. The Committee is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Capability) or other as nominated by the DVCR.
3. Regarding the Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellowship/s, which are disciplinary rather than faculty based, faculty or central committee administrators may choose to seek additional perspectives or advice on applications from disciplinary experts at any stage in a given round.
4. It is a requirement of this scheme that all committee members (at faculty and central level) have recently undertaken or refreshed their training on managing bias and/or unconscious bias.
5. Faculty committee rankings of EOIs are provided as non-determinative advice to the Central Selection Committee, which assesses all Full Applications with reference to scheme objectives, selection criteria/weighting, and strategic considerations across the annual cohort of applicants (such as the balance of discipline groups, ratio of attract/retain objectives, disciplinary versus interdisciplinarity strengths, and equity and inclusion factors).
6. The Central Selection Committee recommends a final ranking of all Full Applications for award by the DVCR.

Selection criteria

7. All EOIs and Full Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:

a. Research Project Quality (40%)

This includes:

- Significance (addressing an important gap)
- Originality (degree of innovation and novelty)
- Feasibility (of the research in terms of methodology, partners, resources, skillset of the applicant and feasibility of the intended impacts)
- Benefits of the anticipated project outcomes (such as scholarly knowledge, broader impact).

Applicants who identify their research project as Indigenous research or propose to engage with Indigenous Knowledge, people or communities are required in the EOI/Full Application to account for how their proposed project aligns with the advice provided by the [AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research](#), which provides relevant guidance on the application of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*

and the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. Applicants should also refer to the University of Melbourne's [Charter for Research with Indigenous Knowledge Holders](#).

b. Competitiveness of Researcher Track Record (40%)

This includes:

- Quality and quantity of research outputs (relative to opportunity)
- Recognition of achievements (relative to opportunity)
- Ability to achieve project aims (research expertise relevant to the topic)
- Research leadership capacity (such as, based on the applicant's track record and vision; potential to build collaborative networks within and outside the University).

Applicants can clearly describe the impact of career opportunities or disruptions to their research track record in the Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) section of the form. This is separate from the EER which (if submitted) is only used to determine eligibility.

c. Strategic alignment with University and faculty research priorities (20%)

This includes:

- Alignment with faculty priorities.
- Benefits to the University of Melbourne (such as strategic alignment with University priorities, potential new partnerships or collaborations).

8. In addition to the above selection criteria for all fellowships, the Committee will recommend applicants for award in view of strategic considerations including the overall equity, composition across faculties and disciplines, and quality of the cohort. Additionally, the Committee will, where available and appropriate, award at least two fellowships per year to Indigenous researchers or researchers whose appointment supports the University's diversity and inclusion strategic objectives.

10. Timetable

Wednesday, 1 April 2026	EOI opens Release of Scheme Guidelines and application portal.
3pm, Thursday 7 May 2026	EOIs (including Eligibility Exemption Requests if relevant) due (must be submitted via SmartyGrants)
Monday, 8 June 2026	All eligible EOIs forwarded to Faculties
Friday, 3 July 2026	Faculties return EOI shortlist to RIC
Wednesday, 22 July 2026	EOI applicants are notified of the outcome. Highly ranked EOIs are invited to submit a Full Application.
Wednesday, 19 August 2026	Completed applications are to be submitted via SmartyGrants Referees are to email completed written testimonials to ECR-Fellowships@unimelb.edu.au

End October 2026	The Selection Committee recommends awards to DVCR
End October 2026	RIC notification of results to Faculties. RIC Outcomes announcement and notification to successful applicants. Successful applicants should discuss their contract, start date, and visa (if applicable) with their respective School/Department or Faculty (contact the relevant Head of School/Department or Faculty Research Manager [FRM]). Awardees are to return the signed acceptance form to ECR-Fellowships@unimelb.edu.au (where needed, coordinate with FRMs for the required Head of Department/School signature).
October – Dec 2026	Schools/Departments to issue formal offer letters and employment contracts
End of January 2027	Funds made available to Faculties
30 June 2027	Latest commencement date for ECR Fellowships

11. Employment and Funding Conditions

Funding expectations

1. ECRs who are awarded an ECR Fellowship cannot apply for any other University of Melbourne institutional researcher development schemes (salary or project funds) while holding the Fellowship appointment.
2. A researcher may only ever be awarded one ECR Fellowship, regardless of whether it is a McKenzie, Melbourne (former scheme), Puzey or Mary Lugton Fellowship.
3. Salary funding will be provided to the host Faculty as an annual transfer. Fellowship salary funding contributed by the DVCR is strictly set at Academic Level A6 in the University Salary Band (plus oncosts and superannuation). Any other contractual employment conditions or contributions by the Faculty will be managed by the relevant Faculty/School/Department.
4. The fellow's salary level amount (committed by DVCR strategic funds) is the adaptive budgeted amount for that year as costed when those figures become available in Q4 of the prior year. Any variance over time is expected to be absorbed by Faculty.
5. ECR Fellows will be employed by the University of Melbourne and be responsible to their host Faculty/School/Department. Any further questions relating to funding opportunities or reimbursement that does not form part of this scheme (beyond the salary funding referred to above) must be directed to the relevant Faculty.
6. Fellows are encouraged to apply for externally funded fellowships (including salaried awards) while employed through an ECR Fellowship. Where an ECR Fellow is successful in gaining external salary funding before the end of the ECR Fellowship, the salary component of the ECR Fellowship will cease, and any unused salary funds will be recouped by Chancellery Research and Enterprise. Faculties (or the relevant contributing unit) will determine any actions relating to unspent project funds.
7. Any salary or project funds remaining at the cessation and or completion of the Fellowship may

be recovered by the relevant contributing unit (Chancellery Research and Enterprise, or Faculty).

Appointment structure and length of fellowship, and variations

8. Fellows must take up the Fellowship appointment no later than 30 June 2027. The Head of Department or School must approve the commencement date.
9. The McKenzie and Puzey Postdoctoral Fellowships are, by default, a three-year research-focused appointment (1.0 FTE). The Mary Lugton Fellowship is, by default, a two-year research focused appointment.
10. The ECR Fellowships provides funding for a full-time or part-time research employee (ordinarily no less than 0.8 FTE) at the University. While employed as an ECR Fellow, Fellows cannot concurrently hold any other University of Melbourne appointments, outside work, or remuneration that imposes commitments that conflict with the Fellowship. Requests for part-time appointments of less than 0.8 FTE will be considered on a case-by-case basis through variation requests via the RDS team in RIC and will be assessed in line with scheme objectives and the University's workplace policies and entitlements under enterprise bargaining.
11. **Regarding teaching while on the Fellowship:**
 - a. Puzey and McKenzie Postdoctoral Fellows may not participate in any teaching activity during their fellowship appointment but may undertake a small amount of graduate research supervision relating to the fellow's research area where agreed with their supervisor and faculty. The prohibition on teaching is due to the University's legal obligations as an employer that arise from the *Secure Jobs, Better Pay Act 2022 (Cth)* relating to fixed-term employment contracts of more than two years.
 - b. Mary Lugton Postdoctoral Fellows, due to their two-year appointment, may discuss with their host faculty whether a small amount of teaching experience and/or graduate research supervision relating to the fellow's research area may be undertaken during their Fellowship, however:
 - i. at least 0.8 of the Fellow's time must be dedicated to their research project; and
 - ii. the requirements of the *Secure Jobs, Better Pay Act 2022 (Cth)* relating to fixed-term employment contracts and permitted activities must be met.
12. Permission from Chancellery Research and Enterprise to vary the commencement date to beyond 30 June 2027 or to vary the fellowship time fraction in any way other than described above is only approved on a case-by-case basis where exceptional circumstances apply and where it would be consistent with the scheme objectives and must be requested in writing to Chancellery Research and Enterprise (via [variation request](#) to the RDS team in RIC).
13. ECR Fellows will report to their Head of School/Department, or nominee as part of their annual performance review process.
14. It is the intent of the scheme that ECR Fellows will actively contribute to collaboration and building research connections in the University. Fellows cannot spend more than six months of the duration of the fellowship overseas and/or away from the University of Melbourne, except where extensive fieldwork is required for the research, or there are other exceptional circumstances, and only with the explicit prior approval of their Head of School/Department and Chancellery Research and Enterprise. Fellows should refer requests to work on their

research away from the University to their Head of School/Department and, where the request is outside these guidelines, seek advice from HR and Chancellery Research and Enterprise on any applicable workplace policies or enterprise agreement conditions relating to the request.

15. ECR Fellows cannot be directly employed by an affiliated medical research institute or non-medical affiliated research institute. ECR Fellows must be employed through a School/Department of the University of Melbourne upon commencement of the fellowship. This includes Fellows who are performing a portion, or all, of their research in an affiliated medical research institute or a non- medical affiliated institute while employed by a Department of the University. In this scenario, the approval of the Head of the employing Department and Director (or equivalent) of the relevant affiliated institute must be provided at the time of application, and the intended research arrangements outlined in the applicant's proposal.

Supports and resources

16. To support their work, ECR Fellows are provided with access to a suite of specific researcher development workshops, seminars, and early career researcher supports offered by the University's Researcher Development Unit.
17. The \$25,000 project funding is intended to support core project costs that are not otherwise provided by Faculties or the University (See Budget Items – Part 7).
18. Academic Contacts nominated in the application are expected to be a regular point of contact at the University of Melbourne. If the Academic Contact is not available to provide mentoring to the ECR Fellow throughout their fellowship, an alternative mentor must be appointed by the Faculty.

Visas and relocation expenses

19. It is the responsibility of awarded and incoming ECR Fellows to apply for and satisfy the requirements for the issue of an appropriate entry visa to Australia, and to maintain their eligibility throughout the appointed period. Fellows and Faculties will be able to access the University's Talent Acquisition team and the University's Human Resources helpdesk for support and guidance on the visa and onboarding process.
20. Where a visa is required, cost associated with obtaining the visa and relocation expenses are the responsibility of the host Faculty. Global Mobility Services will advise on which fees must be covered by the Faculty, and which can be covered by the Fellow.
21. The offer of a fellowship does not guarantee that a visa will be granted, and any offer of funding or employment is conditional upon the Fellow obtaining an appropriate visa. Where there are delays in securing visas, the host Faculty needs to be kept informed of developments by the Fellow and a variation to the commencement date may be requested from Chancellery Research and Enterprise as outlined above. Ordinarily, the offer of an ECR Fellowship and approved variations are valid for one year only and after that time may be rescinded, unless there are exceptional circumstances approved by Chancellery Research and Enterprise on a case-by-case basis.

Leave

22. In the case of parental or extended personal leave (requiring leave of absence from the fellowship) being taken during the fellowship appointment, the completion date of the fellowship will be extended by the length of the leave taken. ECR Fellows should advise both

their Faculty and RIC when the leave is approved. It is the responsibility of the Fellow to liaise with their Head of School/Department and relevant Human Resources business partner to ensure their employment contract is modified accordingly.

23. Any additional costs associated with a variation of the Fellow's employment contract or leave under industrial agreement are the responsibility of the Faculty and/or host School/Department.

Annual progress reports

24. ECR Fellows are required to submit an annual Progress Report ([University of Melbourne Fellowships Progress Report Form](#)) for the first two years of their fellowship (i.e., one report at the end of their first year and one report at the end of their second year). Progress reports should be submitted one month before the anniversary of the Fellow's start date and should demonstrate how Fellows are building their research and their broader research linkages across the University and are seeking to secure further research funding to support their longer-term research ambitions.

12. Scheme contacts and administration

Final report

25. ECR Fellows are required to submit a Final Report within three months of completing their fellowship using the [Final Report template](#) available on the Researcher Development Schemes webpage.

All administrative enquiries for the ECR Fellowships schemes should be directed via email to: [ECR- Fellowships@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:ECR-Fellowships@unimelb.edu.au)