



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Discovery Indigenous for funding commencing 2024 (IN24)

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- All participants should read the Grant Guidelines for the Discovery Program (2021 edition) (grant guidelines) available on [GrantConnect](#) and specific *Instructions to Applicants* documents available on Grant Connect as they contain important information for Research Office staff and individual participants preparing applications.
- The Australian Research Council (ARC) does not respond to queries from individual participants. Individual participants should direct all queries regarding ARC grant opportunities to their Administering Organisation's Research Office (or equivalent). If further information regarding the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) is required, the Research Office should contact the NCGP at arc-ncgp@arc.gov.au
- Information regarding the Research Management System ([RMS](#)) is available at the [ARC website](#), or by contacting arc-systems@arc.gov.au for assistance.

This Frequently Asked Questions document will be updated as required.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Timing of Grant Opportunities

1.1 Where are the key dates for upcoming ARC Grant Opportunities advised?

Dates of all upcoming ARC Grant Opportunities are published on the NCGP scheme timelines on the [ARC Grant Calendar](#).

1.2 Will future grant opportunities be delayed, cancelled or extended due to the COVID-19 crisis?

The ARC is continuing to progress NCGP grant application and peer review processes because an important role of the ARC is to ensure we continue to deliver funding outcomes that will support researchers in the recovery period and beyond.

The ARC is aiming to minimise the cumulative impact of COVID-19 on future rounds of funding.

Noting that all [ARC Grant Calendar](#) dates published on the ARC website are indicative, should any changes arise the ARC will issue a Network Message to the sector.

2. Application information

2.1 Do I need to include a research contingency plan, with information about potential impacts of COVID-19 on my proposed research, within my application?

Whilst the pandemic is ongoing and continually evolving, the ARC acknowledges that the future impacts of COVID-19 are difficult for anyone to determine. In completing ARC grant applications, the application should be accurate as at the time of submitting the application. Researchers should include a realistic plan of how their research will be undertaken. If applicable, known project specific impacts of COVID-19 can be addressed under the feasibility heading of the Project Description.

However, a COVID-19 continuity plan is not required as part of the application. Applicants are required to declare in the application that potential risks have been taken into consideration for the proposed project, including the impacts of COVID-19. Where an application is successful, applicants will be required to prepare a risk management plan before commencement and any changes in circumstances that affect the proposed research project will be managed as a post award issue.

2.2 Can I include requests for travel both domestically and internationally in my application?

Yes. You can still include requests for travel both domestically and international in accordance with the requirements set out in the relevant grant guidelines, noting the above advice that researchers should include a realistic plan of how their research will be undertaken. Where an application is successful, any changes to the proposed travel plans due to the impact of COVID-19 will be managed as a post award issue.

2.3 What font size can I use for figures, tables, or pictures in my application to comply with ARC submission requirements?

Applicants should ensure that the text is readable both online and in print as detailed in the Instructions to Applicants. It is recommended that 12pt font is used. Readability needs to also be ensured with regards to text within figures and tables and it is recommended that 10pt font is used.

2.4 Will including a preprint or comparable resource in any part of my application make me ineligible?

No. The inclusion of preprints is not considered an eligibility issue and applications will not be excluded.

2.5 What is a preprint or comparable resource?

A preprint or comparable resource is defined in the Grant Guidelines as a scholarly output that is uploaded by the authors to a recognised publicly accessible archive, repository, or preprint service (such as, but not limited to, arXiv, bioRxiv, medRxiv, ChemRxiv, Peer J Preprints, Zenodo, GitHub, PsyArXiv and publicly available university or government repositories etc.). This will include a range of materials that have been subjected to varying degrees of peer review from none to light and full review. Ideally, a preprint or comparable resource should have a unique identifier or a DOI (digital object identifier).

Comparable resources refers to non-traditional research outputs that are not readily identified as peer-reviewed research outputs. This includes, but is not limited to, datasets, protocols, software, creative works, and documents sourced from or deposited with government and Academy repositories, such as policy papers, historical and herbarium resources, CSIRO data, *software or other digital assets collections*.

- a. *In the sciences examples may include, but are not limited to the following: arXiv, bioRxiv, medRxiv, ChemRxiv, Peer J Preprints, Zenodo, GitHub, PsyArXiv and publicly available university repositories, EcoEvoRxiv, PaleorXiv, OSF Preprints, PCI Ecology, Dryad, Atlas of Living Australia, TERN AEKOS, GeneBank, Astrophysics Source Code Library (ASCL); CSIRO ASKAP Science Data Archive (CASDA); CSIRO Data Access Portal; data.csiro.au/collections; Academy of Science Decadal Plans.*
- b. *In the Humanities and Social Sciences examples may include, but are not limited to the following resources and databases such as: Linguistics e.g. <https://childes.talkbank.org/>; <https://catalog ldc.upenn.edu/LDC99T42/>; <https://austalk.edu.au/>, History e.g. https://dataverse.ada.edu.au/dataverse/australian_historical_criminal_justice_data; Archaeology e.g. <https://core.tdar.org/collection/31020/national-archeological-database-nadb>; and “Grey literature”, including cultural heritage reports, and impact assessments housed on the servers of State and Federal government agencies.*

2.6 How do I appropriately cite a preprint in the project description?

If preprints or comparable resources are cited, these should be explicitly identified in the reference list by including [PREPRINT OR COMPARABLE] after the reference. The reference should include DOI, URL or equivalent, version number where available and/or date of access, as applicable. This indication is only required in the reference list and not in the project description itself.

2.7 How many preprints can I include?

The ARC has not placed a limit on the number of preprints or comparable resources that you can include within your grant application. You will need to consider the disciplinary standards of preprint or comparable resource use in your field. Detailed and general assessors will consider the academic merit of your research outputs as part of their holistic assessment including the value, relevance and suitability of any preprint or comparable resources within your application.

2.8 Can I include a preprint or comparable resource in my 10 best research outputs at question F20 of the application form?

Yes, if it is best placed to demonstrate the excellence of your research considering preprint or comparable resource use in your disciplinary area.

2.9 Why is the ARC’s definition of preprint so expansive?

In conjunction with an academic reference group, in this instance comprising a cohort of the Australian Laureate Fellows, the definition of preprint was developed to be as inclusive of the different types of research output that could be considered given the wide disciplinary spread of research supported through the National Competitive Grants Program.

3. Career Interruptions

3.1 COVID-19 has affected my academic record. Is this considered a career interruption as part of the Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) – Career Interruptions?

Yes. The Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) assessment criterion allows inclusion and consideration of any career interruption, which has affected a participant's ability to undertake and contribute to research.

Career interruptions arising from COVID-19 can be included under ROPE for consideration by assessors. The Instructions to Applicants (ITAs) provide specific advice on how to enter this in the application.

3.2 If I have had a significant career interruption, how much information should I include in question F17 of the application form?

All applications submitted to the ARC must be certified by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (DVCR) in the Administering Organisation, and the DVCR does not need to provide any additional certification for this question.

All personal or confidential information relevant to the career interruptions should be excluded in the application form. For example, a medical certificate should not be provided if the interruption was due to a medical condition.

4. Certification

4.1 If I am concurrently applying for funding from the Australian Government (ARC or elsewhere) for similar or linked research, what information should I provide in question C4 of the application form?

Question C4 asks you to briefly explain how funding this project would not duplicate Australian Government funding or overlap with existing projects.

You should briefly explain why you are applying for funding for similar or linked research from the Australian Government and describe how any duplication, overlap or other involvement in applications would be managed if these applications are funded (including any withdrawal of application(s), intention of relinquishing current grants, withdrawal of investigators, or amendment of current project end date).

4.2 Does the certification within RMS replace the ARC written evidence document (certification proforma) on GrantConnect for all named participants and their organisations?

No. The certification in RMS is for the participant only. The simplified process through RMS includes:

1. participant certification within the RMS application form (question F22)
2. an additional DVCR certification clause in RMS prior to submission (delegate certification).
3. A certification proforma is available on GrantConnect for obtaining written evidence for all parties excluding named individual participants as this is now captured in the application form

The Administering Organisation must obtain the written agreement of all relevant organisational participants to allow the proposed project to proceed as specified in the grant guidelines. This excludes the employing organisations of overseas Partner Investigators (PIs) and any participant's current organisation which is not their relevant organisation for the application. This written evidence must be retained by the Administering Organisation and must be provided to the ARC if requested.

The Certification Proforma document which was previously available on GrantConnect has been updated so that it can be used by the Administering Organisation to obtain written evidence from other participating organisations. However, the use of the ARC certification proforma is not mandatory. The Administering Organisation may determine the format for written evidence.

5. Logistics support for Antarctic research

5.1 What logistics advice should I seek if my proposed research project included Antarctic research?

If your proposed research project includes Antarctic research that will require logistical support, please contact the [Australian Antarctic Division](#) for advice about available logistical support prior to submitting your application.

6. Assessment of applications

6.1 How will my application be assessed in relation to COVID-19 impacts on the proposed research project?

Assessment of applications will continue in accordance with ARC's [peer review processes](#). ARC assessors will be instructed to assess all applications based on the content of the application only and not make assumptions about the viability of a proposed research project due to the potential impacts of COVID-19. Where an application is successful, applicants will be required to prepare a risk management plan before commencement and any changes in circumstances that affect the proposed research project will be managed as a post award issue.

6.2 Requests Not to Assess process

A Request Not to Assess (RNTA) form is now submitted in RMS as detailed on [GrantConnect](#) and the [ARC website](#).

6.3 What is the maximum character limit for justification for RNTA?

If a request includes the name of a current ARC College of Experts member, as listed on the [ARC website](#), or in RMS at the time of submitting the RNTA form, the request must be accompanied by a justification (the new maximum character count for the justification has been increased to 2500).

7. Budget

7.1 What are the expectations for non-mandated contributions in applications submitted for upcoming Grant Opportunities?

For those schemes where Grant Guidelines do not require minimum co-contributions by participating organisations, the ARC also understands that the level of cash and/or in-kind contributions pledged by Administering Organisations and other Participating Organisations to show support for a proposed research project are likely to be reduced in future applications due to the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Noting that Administering Organisations still need to take into account the feasibility of the proposed research project if there are reduced contributions.

ARC assessors will be instructed that they should not make assumptions about an Administering Organisation's level of commitment and support of an application solely based on lower levels of pledged additional cash and/or in-kind support than historically provided.

7.2 Can I request more than one HDR stipend?

Yes. More than 1 HDR stipend can be included per application. As per clause 5.6aⁱⁱ of the Grant Guidelines, all HDR stipends in the application must be requested as full-time (1.0 FTE) at the rate specified on the [Salaries and Stipends](#) page of the [ARC website](#).

If an application is successful, stipends may be divided amongst more than one person, for example dividing 1 stipend between 2 students at 0.5 FTE each as per the Discovery Program Grant Agreement.

8. Project Role and Employment Type

8.1 Am I a Chief Investigator (CI) or a Partner Investigator (PI)?

Whether a participant is a CI or PI is determined by meeting the eligibility requirements in sections D3.5-D3.7 in the grant guidelines, not by the level of their intended involvement in the project. Please read the grant guidelines closely and refer to Appendix D of the IN24 Instructions to Applications for a decision tree to assist in determining whether a participant is eligible as a CI or as a PI.

A participant is not eligible to apply as a PI if they meet the requirements to be a CI. Applications may be found ineligible if incorrect information is provided in response to this question.

8.2 When should I choose Honorary Academic Appointment at F7 'Eligibility - Employment Details as at the grant commencement date'?

Participants must only choose the honorary academic appointment role type at F7 if they meet the ARC's definition of an 'honorary academic appointment' as specified in section D3.6.b of the grant guidelines:

An honorary academic appointment for eligibility purposes means a position that gives full academic status to the researcher, as certified by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (or equivalent) in the application. The researcher must have access to research support comparable to employees e.g., an emeritus appointment. The researcher is not eligible to be a Chief Investigator using their honorary academic appointment if they are employed by an organisation other than an Eligible Organisation for more than 0.2 FTE.

Where a participant is not an employee and does not meet the definition of an honorary academic appointment as specified above, they should select 'other' as their employment type.

8.3 I hold an honorary academic appointment only can I be a Project Leader?

A participant can be the Project Leader if they only hold an honorary academic appointment. In certifying the submission of an application, the Administering Organisation confirms that appropriate administrative controls will be in place to manage all governance risks should a participant with an honorary academic appointment act as the project leader for the duration of the project.

9. The National Interest Test (NIT)

9.1 What is the NIT statement and how is it assessed?

The NIT statement is a requirement in all ARC application forms for funding within the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP). It was first introduced, following the Minister's announcement in 2018, for the Discovery Projects round for funding commencing in 2020 and has been included within all subsequent schemes.

The NIT statement is a standalone statement assessed by the ARC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) prior to making recommendations to the Minister. The purpose of the NIT is to demonstrate the societal benefits (economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural) of the proposed research beyond the academic community. The audience of the NIT is the general public, which is a different audience than that of the Application Project Summary, whose audience is the applicant's peers.

The assessment of the NIT is undertaken by the ARC CEO, and is undertaken separately to the peer assessment process. Peer reviewers are not able to view the NIT statement submitted as part of Discovery Indigenous applications.

The NIT statements are a critical part of the funding recommendations to the Minister, in addition to the processes that consider due diligence, eligibility, and peer review assessment of applications.

The Minister makes the final funding decision.

9.2 What changes have been made to the NIT?

Under the Discovery Indigenous Scheme for funding commencing in 2024, the NIT question in the application form aims to clearly identify the information being sought on how the proposed project will benefit Australia beyond the academic community. These considerations are:

1. What is the project about? Describe the project in 1-2 sentences.
2. What are the expected outcomes of the project? What gap is it addressing?
3. How will the research benefit Australia (economically, socially, environmentally, commercially or culturally)? How might the research be used?
4. What translation and adoption pathway(s) might be used to achieve the outcome? For example, are there conditions that would need to be in place for the outcome to occur? If so, briefly describe them.

You should address these four considerations as a single cohesive statement. You should take particular care in addressing each element concisely, noting the statement must be between 100 to 150 words in length and that it needs to be understood by members of the general public.

Avoid technical explanations or jargon that would not be understood by a member of the public without background in the area. Consider whether the statement is written in plain English. For example, does it use a style that would be suitable for popular publications and media? Are there evidence-based outcomes directly related to the proposed research identified? It may be useful to share the draft NIT statement with others outside the application discipline or sector to ensure the project's benefits are clearly understood.

For further information, including examples of well written NIT statements and examples of extracts from NIT statements that do not meet the ARC requirements, please refer to the [Articulating National Interest in grant applications Network Message](#) on the ARC website.

9.3 Who can I talk to about the NIT?

In the first instance, researchers should talk to their Research Office staff for help preparing their NIT statement. Researchers can also contact communications teams or technology transfer officers to test how the proposed project benefits are best articulated for a wider audience. Research Offices may also contact the ARC if further information about the process requirements if needed by using this email - ARC-NCGP@arc.gov.au

10. Project Limits

10.1 For eligibility purposes, how is the number of projects and applications with which I am involved counted?

As per subsections 4.14 4.15 and 4.16 of the grant guidelines, the ARC will calculate limits of projects and applications as at the closing time of submission of applications by totalling:

- a) the number of Discovery Program CI roles or ARC Fellowships that the individual will hold on active projects as at the relevant active project assessment date;
- b) the number of ARC Centres of Excellence and Special Research Initiatives Director roles that the named participants will hold on active projects as at the relevant grant opportunity active project assessment date; and
- c) the number of DECRA, Discovery Indigenous and Discovery Projects applications We (the ARC) are currently assessing which include that individual as a CI or candidate.

Applications for Australian Laureate Fellowships, Future Fellowships, ARC Centres of Excellence or Special Research Initiatives do not need to meet the project limit requirements at the grant opportunity closing date. If an Australian Laureate Fellowships, Future Fellowships, ARC Centres of Excellence or Special Research Initiatives application is successful, named participants must meet the project limits under section 4.13 before the project can start. Project limits can be met by relinquishing existing active project(s), or relinquishing role(s) on existing active projects, or withdrawing application(s) that would exceed the project limits. This does not need to occur until all applications are announced.

10.2 What is an active project?

An active project means a project that is receiving funding according to the terms of an existing funding agreement or grant agreement, or has any carryover funds approved by the ARC, or an approved variation to the project end date.

The active projects, which affect your eligibility to apply for funding, are determined based on the project's end date in RMS.

The number of active projects that a researcher is considered to have is counted as at the active project assessment date.

10.3 What is the active project assessment date?

The active project assessment date is the date on which the active project eligibility will be considered for project and application limits per named participant. The active project assessment date is six months after the grant commencement date. The important dates on the [ARC website](#) lists the dates.

For Discovery Indigenous 2024:

- The grant commencement date for Discovery Indigenous grant opportunity for funding commencing in 2024 is 1 January 2024. This date is when grant funding may commence.
- The active project assessment for Discovery Indigenous grant opportunity for funding commencing in 2024 is 1 July 2024. This date is used to consider project and application limits per named participant.

10.4 What is a project end date?

The project end date means the expected date that the project activity is completed and the grant spent by.

10.5 Can I withdraw a person from an application that is currently under assessment in order to meet the project and application limits?

No. A named Participant cannot be removed from an application once it has been submitted.

10.6 Can I relinquish my role or active project in order to meet the limits?

Yes. Researchers who have already reached the limit under the Discovery Program can submit a variation request to the ARC to either relinquish their role on a project or relinquish the project. As per 4.16 of the grant guidelines this must be submitted and approved by the ARC before the closing date for submission of applications for IN24. For example, a researcher may have 2 active Discovery Indigenous Projects, the researcher could not submit a 3rd application as they already hold 2 active Discovery Indigenous Projects. The researcher would need to vary one of the active projects (either relinquish their role or relinquish their project) to be able to submit an IN24 application.

Examples:

10.7 I have two Discovery Projects (DP) with an End Date of March 2024 and September 2024. Can I apply for a Discovery Indigenous (IN24)?

Yes. The active project assessment date for IN24 is 1 July 2024, and as only one DP project will be held as at 1 July 2024 the limits have not been met.

10.8 I have no current Discovery Program (DP) grants how many Discovery Indigenous (IN24) applications can I submit?

In accordance with section 4.13 of the Grant Guidelines a researcher can be funded for a total of 2 x IN24 projects as a CI.

10.9 I have submitted an Australian Laureate Fellowship (FL23) application can I submit 2 x Discovery Indigenous (IN24) applications?

If you do not hold any other active Discovery Program projects or submitted applications, then yes you can submit 2 x IN24 applications. As per section 4.15 of the Grant Guidelines, applications for Australian Laureate Fellowships, Future Fellowships, ARC Centres of Excellence or Special Research Initiatives are not counted on close of IN24 applications.

In this scenario, question F12 on the application form, *Eligibility – Project Relinquishment or Application Withdrawal*, will be activated for the applicant to identify what action they would like to take to meet the project limits under section 4.13 of the grant guidelines. If the researcher was successful on all three applications, the researcher could not hold all three projects, the researcher can indicate that project limits will be met by relinquishing existing active project(s), relinquishing a role(s) on existing active projects or withdrawing application(s). This does not need to occur until all applications are announced.

10.10 I have submitted a Discovery Early Career Research Award (DE24) application, can I submit 2 x Discovery Indigenous (IN24) applications?

No. If there are no other active projects held within the Discovery Program and only the submitted DE24 application then only 1 x IN24 application can be submitted in accordance with section 4.13 and 4.14 of the grant guidelines. A named participant can be concurrently funded for a maximum of 1 x DE24 and 1 x IN24 as a CI. On close of applications the DE24 application is counted which means that only 1 application can be submitted in the IN24 round.