ARC Discovery Program

Research Office Post-Award Guide to Eligible Expenditure

Version 5 – August 2023

In this guide:

CRICOS Provider Number: 00025B

1. Overview

The Australian Research Council's (ARC) Discovery Program aims to support the growth of Australia's research and innovation capacity and delivers outcomes of benefit to Australia.

The Schemes under the Discovery Program are:

- Australian Laureate Fellowships
- Future Fellowships
- Discovery Early Career Researcher Awards
- Discovery Indigenous
- Discovery Projects.

Funding awarded for schemes under the Discovery Program is subject to a Grant Agreement between the University and the ARC, which includes the following obligations for UQ as the Administering Organisation:

- The Administering Organisation must ensure that expenditure on each project is in accordance with the 'Project Description' contained in the application and **within the broad structure of the proposed 'Project Cost' detailed in the application** or any revised budget, aims and research plan that the ARC has approved.
- The Administering Organisation **must not use the funding** for purposes specifically excluded in the Grant Guidelines, for items excluded as a Special Condition in the Funding Offer, to purchase alcoholic beverages, or for purposes specifically excluded in the Grant Agreement.
- If the Project was awarded a lesser amount of funding than requested, the Project Leader should liaise with their Finance Professional Services team to ensure that a revised project budget is incorporated into MyBalance before commencement. If the budget needs to be amended across categories of expenditure or more significantly than within a category, the Research Office will work with you to determine whether a Budget and/or Revision of Scope may be needed.
- The funding must not be used to fund any research and/or activities for which other **financial assistance from the Commonwealth has been, is being, or is intended to be provided**.

Provided in this Post-Award Guide is a summary of the eligible and ineligible expenditure types for funds awarded to projects under the latest version of the Grant Agreement, the **ARC Grant Agreement for schemes under the Discovery Program (for the years 2023 and 2024)**. **This relates to awards for funding commencing in the following years:**

- Australian Laureate Fellowships commencing in 2023 (FL23)
- Future Fellowships commencing in 2023 (FT23)
- Discovery Early Career Researcher Award commencing in 2024 (DE24)
- Discovery Indigenous commencing in 2024 (IN24)
- Discovery Projects commencing in 2024 (DP24).

> **Please keep in mind that each ARC scheme is governed by calendar-year-specific Funding Rules/Grant Guidelines and Funding/Grant Agreements.**
>
> Accordingly, **expenditure that is permissible under the 2021 Guidelines edition rules may not be permissible for a grant awarded in a previous or future year**. Copies of the Grant Guidelines and Grant Agreements for each scheme and year are available from https://help.grants.gov.au/ and/or attached to the GRL.

2. Eligible expenditure types – all Discovery Program schemes

Budget items that directly support a research program may be funded from project funding. Provided below is a summary of eligible expenditure types allowable under the 2021 edition ARC Grant Guidelines (section 5.6) and agreement for the Discovery Program. Such expenditure can be charged to the project account for an awarded ARC project, provided it is in line with the broad structure of the proposed budget detailed in the application.

Budget items supported for ARC Discovery Program grants include:

GENERAL (all schemes)

- **access to national and international research and infrastructure facilities** including specialist archives, collections and databases

- **access to technical workshop services** linked to and justified explicitly against the project (for example, machine tools and qualified technicians)

- **expenditure on field research** essential to the project, including technical and logistical support and travel and accommodation costs

- **expert services of a third party** if the services are deemed to be directly related to and necessary for the proposed project

- **equipment (and its maintenance) and consumables** required for the project. Funding is not provided for equipment/consumables deemed for broad general use

- **personnel,** for example, postdoctoral research associates, research assistants, technicians and laboratory attendants. Salary support must include 30% on-costs. *Where the scheme-specific guidelines contain a specified salary level, only funding up to this level may be used.*

- **Higher degree by research (HDR) stipends** at an appropriate level.

- **publication and dissemination** of project outputs and outreach activity costs

- **specialised computer equipment** and software essential to the project

- **travel costs** (economy flights) essential to the project, as defined for each scheme

- **web hosting and web development** specific to the project

- **workshops, focus groups and conferences** that are necessary for the conduct of the proposed research (including reasonable hospitality costs)

- **reasonable essential extraordinary costs** to allow a researcher who is a carer, or who themselves require care, to undertake travel essential to the project.

Please note that **information contained in this Guide specifically relates to expenditure of funding awarded by the ARC.** In some ARC schemes, additional contributions will have been made by participating organisations to the project, including cash contributions from UQ in the form of a *Capacity Building Package*. In some instances, expenditure types restricted by the ARC can be funded by contributions from these alternative sources. However, the *expenditure of any non-ARC project funding should remain consistent with the broad structure of the project budget as detailed in the original Application.*

Please contact the Research Office regarding any queries around eligible types or changes to the expenditure of project cash contributions from non-ARC sources.

3. Eligible expenditure types – individual schemes

In addition to the general eligible expenditure types for all schemes the 2021 Guidelines allow for the following scheme specific expenditure:

Laureate Fellowships	• the ARC provides a **salary supplement** to a Professorial Level E for a successful Australian Laureate Fellow, along with additional funding for up to **two postdoctoral research associates (PDRAs)** and up **to two postgraduate researchers** (four-year stipends). These are all tied budget line items, meaning that these funds cannot be spent on other project costs. *Please see the individual Fellowship GRL for further information on salary funding.* • additional funding of up to $20,000 per annum (for five years) may be provided where a female candidate has been awarded the ***Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate Fellowship*** or ***Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellowship*** and intends to use these funds as part of their ambassadorial role to promote women in research. This is also a tied budget line item.
Future Fellowships	• the ARC provides a **salary contribution** at one of three fixed salary levels for a successful Fellow – *please see Briefing Document attached to the GRL for further information.* • **travel costs essential to the project** up to $100,000 over the life of the fellowship. Travel costs related to field research and carers' costs are not included in this limit.
DECRA	• the ARC provides a **salary contribution** at a fixed rate for a successful DECRA – *please see Briefing Document attached to the GRL for further information.* • **travel costs essential to the project** up to $50,000 over the life of the DECRA. Travel costs related to field research and carers' costs are not included in this limit.
Discovery Indigenous	• a **Discovery Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Award (DAATSIA)** may be awarded to a CI at one of five salary levels. • **teaching relief for CIs** (but not DAATSIA recipients) may be awarded up to a total of $50,000 per year per Project • **travel costs** essential to the project up to $50,000 over the life of the project. Travel costs related to field research or carers' costs are not included in this limit. • **HDR stipends** may be supported for 1.0FTE Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander students.
Discovery Projects	• **teaching relief for CIs** may be awarded up to a total of $50,000 per CI per year. • **economy travel costs** essential to the Project up to $50,000 over the life of the project Travel costs related to carrying out Field Research or carers' costs are not included in this limit.

4. Ineligible expenditure types

Provided below is a summary of the budget items that are not supported by ARC funding, per the 2021 edition Grant Guidelines (sections 5.7–5.9) and Agreement for the Discovery Program. Such expenditure must not be charged to ARC funds in the project account for an awarded ARC project. ***Any project expenditure incurred by UQ in addition to the approved amount, or as otherwise varied by the ARC, is the responsibility of UQ as the Administering Organisation.***

	Budget items **not** supported for ARC Discovery Program grants include:
GENERAL (all schemes)	• **Salaries, HDR stipend and/or on-costs,** in whole or in part, for CIs or PIs except where salaries are specifically provided for under the individual schemes, e.g. ARC Fellowships and Awards) • **salary top ups** for personnel above the salary level specified in the Grant Guidelines • **fees for international students or the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS)** and Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) liabilities for students • **capital works** and general infrastructure costs • **bench fees** or similar laboratory access fees • **basic facilities** including access to a basic library collection; access to film or music editing facilities; accommodation (for example, laboratory and office space, suitably equipped and furnished); basic computer facilities and standard software; and standard reference materials or funds for abstracting services; use of photocopiers, telephones, mobile phones (purchase and call charges), mail, fax, email and internet services • **costs not directly related to research or the project**, including but not limited to professional membership fees, professional development courses, fees for patent application and maintenance, equipment for live music or drama performances, equipment for gallery and museum exhibitions, visas, relocation costs, entertainment costs, purchase of alcohol, insurance, mobile phones (purchase or call charges), and other indirect costs.
Laureates and Futures	• The funding specified in the Funding Offer for the Laureate salary supplement or Future Fellow salary must **only be used for the provision of salary and on-costs** for the Laureate Fellow or Future Fellow. No additional ARC funds can be contributed towards salary costs for the Fellow.
DECRA and Discovery Indigenous	• The funding specified in the Funding Offer for the salary should **be used for the provision of salary and on-costs** for the DECRA or DAATSIA. No additional ARC funds can be contributed towards salary costs. However, a DECRA recipient's salary or a DAATSIA recipient's salary may be used for other purposes to support the Project in exceptional circumstances with the prior approval of the ARC.
Discovery Projects	• Not applicable

5. Budget variations and other variations

The ARC requires that a variation is submitted and approved for all **major changes** that occur on ARC-funded projects. This includes any **material changes to the broad structure of the budget** detailed in the original application for a project.

A variation is required when funding is being moved across budget categories from the original budget. For example, moving funding from 'Personnel' to 'Travel', or any changes to funds linked to ARC special conditions or any other tied budget line items (such as Teaching Relief). If funding is being spent differently from what was outlined in the application within the same category, but the intention of the expenditure is consistent, a variation is not generally required as long as it does not relate to a tied budget line item and is eligible expenditure. Variation requests are to be approved by the project leader and include:

- explanation for the change

what is being changed, where it is going to, and the amount being changed. For example, '*transferring $15,000 from Year 3 maintenance to Year 3 travel*'. For multiple changes, across different years and items, there should be different lines for each item.

Reminder:
When considering whether a budget variation is required, please refer to the original budget in the application, or any approved variations, in the first instance. The decision to submit a variation is not necessarily based on the UQ budget modifications that are made by the first-named CI/fellow/awardee in consultation with the Management Accountant at the start of the project (typically as a result of ARC budget reductions).

Example:
Due to an international collaborator visiting Australia in Year 1, the Lead CI will not need to travel overseas but will host the meeting at the Administrative Organisation instead. As a consequence, the research team is requesting a variation of the budget for AUD $3,000 from Year 1 travel to Year 2 Personnel to appoint a Research Assistant at 0.2 FTE for 3 months to assist in the fieldwork preparation and transcription later in the year.

6. Research Office contacts for further advice

Any enquiries regarding eligible expenditure types under the ARC Discovery Program schemes, or advice around budget variations, should be sent to the relevant Awards team (see https://www.uq.edu.au/research/research-office for a list of contacts).