

ARC Linkage Program

Research Office Post-Award Guide to Eligible Expenditure

Version 5 – August 2023

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1. Overview

The Australian Research Council's (ARC) Linkage Projects scheme promotes national, and international, collaboration and research partnerships between key stakeholders in research and innovation.

Schemes under the Linkage Program include:

- Linkage Projects
- Industrial Transformation Research Hubs
- Industrial Transformation Training Centres
- Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities.

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

- Must ensure that project expenditure is in accordance with the 'Project Description' contained in the application and **within the broad structure of the proposed 'Project Cost' from the application** or any revised budget (where a lesser amount of funding is awarded than was requested in the application), aims and research plan that the ARC has approved.
- **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.**

This Post-Award Guide is a summary of the eligible and ineligible expenditure types for funds awarded to projects for funding commencing in the following years:

- Industrial Transformation Research Hubs commencing in 2023 (ITRH)
- Industrial Transformation Training Centres commencing in 2023 (ITTC)
- Linkage Projects funding commencing in 2022 (LP)
- Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities commencing in 2022 (LIEF)



Please keep in mind that each ARC scheme is governed by calendar-year-specific Grant Guidelines and Agreements.

Accordingly, *expenditure that is permissible under the 2023 edition guidelines may not be permissible for a grant awarded in a previous or future year.* Copies of the Funding Rules/Grant Guidelines and Funding/Grant Agreements for each scheme and year are available from [Grant Connect](#) and/or attached to the GRL.



Please note that **information contained in this Guide specifically relates to expenditure of funding awarded by the ARC.** In some ARC schemes, additional contributions (including cash) will have been made by a project's participating organisations. In some instances, expenditure types restricted by the ARC can be funded by these alternative sources of cash.

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.

2. Eligible expenditure types – all Linkage Program schemes

Budget items that directly support a research program may be funded from project funding. 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.

Expenditure items supported for ARC Linkage Program grants include:

- **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, travel expenses (including accommodation, meals, and incidental 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** essential for the project (i.e. excludes 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 research outputs and outreach activity costs
- **specialised computer equipment** and software essential to the project
- **travel costs** essential to the project, including economy travel costs for domestic and/or international travel and accommodation, not exceeding an average of \$20,000 per year of the project. (Note: Certain travel costs are excluded from the \$20,000 limit.)
- **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.

GENERAL
(all schemes)

3. Eligible expenditure types – individual schemes

Industrial Transformation Research Hubs (IH specific)	<p>In addition to the general eligible expenditure types above for all schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• teaching relief for CIs up to \$50,000 per CI per year where it is demonstrated that it will enhance engagement with the Partner Organisation(s).
Industrial Transformation Training Centres (IC specific)	<p>In addition to the general eligible expenditure types for all schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• salary support for Industry-Collaborative Postdoctoral (ICPDs) researchers appointed for at least 0.5 FTE at an Eligible Organisation for the duration of their role on the project.• stipends for Industry-Linked Collaborative Higher Degree Researchers (ICHDRs) enrolled at an Eligible Organisation at no less than the level indicated on the salaries and stipends page of the ARC website (arc.gov.au/grants/grant-application/salaries-and-stipends)
Linkage Projects (LP specific)	<p>In addition to the general eligible expenditure types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• teaching relief for CIs up to a total of \$50,000 per CI per year.
Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LE specific)	<p>In addition to the general eligible expenditure types, budget items which directly support provision of research infrastructure for use in research projects may be funded, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• purchase, upgrade, transportation of, installation of, maintenance of and/or management of access to the research infrastructure, including costs such as import taxes (and other similar expenses) for purchasing equipment, and salaries, including up to 30 per cent on-costs, directly associated with these activities.• construction of research infrastructure, (which may, for example, include building equipment or facilities, or the development of an online archive), for up to five years. This includes salaries, including up to 30 per cent on-costs, directly associated with this activity.• integrated research facilities consisting of multiple components which can be used either simultaneously or serially for research projects (where each of these research projects is integrated by having a single research aim or theme). However, multiple components that are not genuinely integrated cannot be requested solely to reach the minimum level of funding.• subscription or coordinated access to international facilities and major national facilities (enabled under a written agreement between the Administering Organisation and the relevant international or national facility), for up to five years. Note: the management of access to existing infrastructure, equipment or facilities is not supported• specialised computing facilities and software essential to the project• compilations, catalogues, clearing houses or bibliographies that build on and develop other current or recent competitively funded projects/programs



Reminder - please ensure that the relevant calendar-year-specific Grant Guidelines for the individual scheme are used when assessing eligible expenditure types, see arc.gov.au/grants/grant-application/funding-rulesgrant-guidelines.

4. Ineligible expenditure types

The following expenditure must not be expended from ARC funds.

GENERAL (all schemes)

- **salaries and/or on-costs**, in whole or in part, for Directors (ITRP), CIs or PIs.
- **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 (some exceptions for LIEF – see above)
- **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.

Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LE specific)

- **standard refurbishment costs of a laboratory**
- **costs of accommodation** associated with the proposed research infrastructure
- **teaching and/or teaching relief**
- **travel costs** associated with use of the proposed research infrastructure
- **salaries and/or on costs**, in whole or in part, for research using the facility for example, for research support personnel
- **maintenance costs** of the proposed research infrastructure after the first year of the project, including for multi-year projects
- **operational costs.**

5. Budget variations and other variations

The ARC requires that a **Variation of Grant Agreement** be 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 budget is being moved across categories from the original budget, for example, moving budget from 'Personnel' to 'Travel', or any changes to funds linked to ARC special conditions, such as **any tied budget line items**. If funding is being spent differently from what was outlined in the application within the same category, a variation is not generally required as long as it does not relate to a tied line item. Variations are required to be submitted to the ARC through the Research Office. 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 which are made by the project leader in consultation with the Management Accountant at the start of the project (typically as a result of ARC budget reductions).



Example:

Due to the Industry partner visiting Australia, the Lead CI will not attend their annual meeting 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 Linkage Program schemes, or advice around budget variations can be sent to linkageawards@research.uq.edu.au.