Discovery Program Update

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University of Canberra

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Overview

• Discovery Program, including new rules and policies
• Assessment process
• RMS 2.0
• Questions and discussion
National Competitive Grants Program

**Discovery Program**
- Laureate Fellowships
- DECRA
- Discovery Indigenous
- Future Fellowships
- Discovery Projects

**Linkage Program**
- Centres of Excellence
- Co-Funded & SRIs
- ITRP
- Linkage Projects
- LIEF

**Discovery Program Funding**
2014-15: $549.9 million

**Linkage Program Funding**
2014-15: $325.8 million
DECRA 2012-2015: Success Rates
Discovery Indigenous 2012-2015: Success Rates

Number of Proposals

- 2012: 19 (34.5% successful)
- 2013: 22 (31.3% successful)
- 2014: 16 (38.5% successful)
- 2015: 22 (31.3% successful)
Australian Laureate Fellowships 2008-2014: Success Rates

- 2009: 133 proposals, 15 successful (10.1% success rate)
- 2010: 82 proposals, 15 successful (15.5% success rate)
- 2011: 122 proposals, 17 successful (13.9% success rate)
- 2012: 91 proposals, 17 successful (15.1% success rate)
- 2013: 95 proposals, 17 successful (17.8% success rate)
- 2014: 74 proposals, 16 successful (21.6% success rate)
Discovery Projects

• DP is the largest scheme, supporting excellent basic and applied research by individuals and teams

• Selection criteria (more detail on each in Funding Rules):
  – Investigator (40%)
  – Project Quality and Innovation (25%)
  – Feasibility and Benefit (20%)
  – Research Environment (15%)

• Funding up to five years, up to $500,000 per year

• No salaries for CIs/PIs
Discovery Indigenous

• Supports fundamental research and research training by Indigenous Australian researchers as individuals and as teams

• Selection criteria (more detail on each in Funding Rules):
  – Investigator (40%)
  – Project Quality and Innovation (35%)
  – Research Environment (15%)
  – Feasibility and Benefit (10%)

• Funding up to three years, up to $500,000 per year

• No salaries for CIs/PIs (though note DAATSIsAs)
Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA)

• Support and advance promising early career researchers, and enable research and research training in high quality and supportive environments
• Highly competitive; 200 per round
• Eligibility: up to 5 years post-PhD (note ROPE)
• Selection criteria (more detail on each in Funding Rules):
  – Project Quality and Innovation (40%)
  – DECRA Candidate (35%)
  – Research Environment (15%)
  – Feasibility and Benefit (10%)
• Funding for up to three years
• DECRA salary plus up to $40,000 per year project costs
Discovery Program Rules 2015-16

• As with last year, one section dedicated to the Discovery Program covering:
  – Level and Period of Funding
  – Budget Items Supported and Not Supported
  – Eligible Organisations
  – Limits on Projects and Proposals
  – Submission of proposals
  – Selection and approval process
  – Reporting requirements
  – Fundamental principles of conducting research
Key changes to rules (1)

• Focus groups and reasonable hospitality costs are now included – but must be justified and must directly support the research program
• Simplification of Chief Investigator eligibility rules: CI = at least 0.2 FTE or Emeritus at any Eligible Organisation (not necessarily the Administering Organisation)
• International collaboration further supported in DP via Discovery International Awards (DIAs): old ICA 12-month limit and funding limit removed
Key changes to rules (2)

- Eligibility Exemption Request process introduced for DECRA – must submit an EER if planning to claim a career interruption to extend time beyond 5 years post-PhD
- Discovery Indigenous: introduction of Partner Investigator role in line with DP, and award name change to Discovery Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Award (DAATSIA)
- Re-introduction of relinquishment rule for Australian Laureate Fellowships proposal eligibility
- Maximum teaching load for Laureates and DECRAs increased from 15% to 20%
NCGP Proposal Lifecycle

- Development of Funding Rules
- Eligibility Exemption Request
- Proposal Submission
- Request Not to Assess
- Assessment Process
- Rejoiner
- Selection Meeting
- Approval of Outcomes
- Funding Agreements and Appeals
- Post Award
- Development of RMS
- Recruitment of College of Experts or Selection Advisory Committee
- Eligibility
- Announcement
- End of Year and Progress Reports
- Final Report
Proposal assessment – overview

• ARC staff and Executive Directors assess eligibility etc., but do not decide which proposals should be funded
• All proposals are assessed against the selection criteria, and in accordance with the weightings for that scheme
• Proposals are generally assigned to two College of Experts members and at least two external assessors
• College of Experts meets to moderate judgments and to make final recommendations about fundable proposals and budgets
• Under the ARC Act all recommendations are just that, and must be approved by the Minister
Assessment Process (1)

- The peer review process designed to be fair, thorough and transparent
- The ARC relies on two types of assessors - **Detailed** and **General**
- Detailed assessors drawn from the Australian and international research community
- Detailed assessors complete in-depth assessments of proposals by providing scores and comments against the scheme specific selection criteria
- These assessments are then taken into consideration by General assessors in the later stages of the peer review process
General assessors are members of the College of Experts or a Selection Advisory Committee.

General assessors take into consideration the ratings and comments provided by Detailed assessors and the applicant’s rejoinder, and assign their own ratings to the relevant scheme selection criteria.

Once all assessments have been finalised and submitted to the ARC, Detailed and General assessments and Rejoinders are considered by the panels at the final selection meeting.
Rejoinder

• Where the ARC seeks external assessments, applicants are often given the opportunity to submit a Rejoinder to respond to comments made by external assessors.

• Rejoinders are not viewed by external assessors but are considered by an ARC College of Experts Panel or SAC when deciding on the final recommendation for a Proposal.

• Timeframes for applicants are typically up to ten working days.

• The ARC will consider requests to remove inappropriate assessments; while rare, this is done from time to time.
ARC Medical Research Policy

• The ARC does not normally fund health and medical research through its competitive funding schemes, excepting in special initiatives and circumstances

• The new ARC Medical Research Policy does not change this position but aims to make clear to researchers considering a proposal whether they should apply

• The policy includes FAQs and examples on the ARC website: strongly recommend reading these at first instance
RMS 2.0

• ARC successfully launched Release 1 of RMS 2.0 on Thursday 21 August 2014.

• RMS 2.0 is a more intuitive system that offers:
  • Improved workflow
  • Enhanced navigation
  • Faster PDF generation, and
  • Other technical improvements

• Help information is available on the ARC website

• As new functionality is added to RMS 2.0 more information will be provided to users
RMS 2.0 further improvements

• Since the release the ARC RMS Help Desk has received many queries in relation to password resets and updating org and user details
• The recent RMS release has addressed many of these issues
• This release also introduced auto-populated currently-held ARC project information in person profiles and proposal forms
• Future releases will continue to develop proposal functionality, and any feedback is welcome
• RMS helpdesk rms@arc.gov.au or 02 6287 6789
Discussion/questions