



**DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION,
TRAINING AND YOUTH AFFAIRS**

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
Researchers Development Scheme**

Guidelines for Year 2000 Grants

AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH COUNCIL

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Acronyms

ARC	Australian Research Council
DEETYA	Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs
FORC	Field of Research Code
HEFA	Higher Education Funding Act 1988
NHMRC	National Health and Medical Research Council
SEO	Socio-Economic Objective

1. Introduction

The Higher Education Research Programme provides funding to teams or individuals for worthy and high quality research through several application-based and formula-based grant schemes. These schemes aim to maintain and strengthen Australia's knowledge base and research capabilities by developing an effective research and research training system, focused on the higher education sector.

2. Objective

The key objective of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers Development Scheme is to develop the research expertise of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers to a level at which they can compete in open competition for mainstream research funding.

3. Description

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers Development Scheme provides:

- support for research projects by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers in the biological, mathematical, physical, chemical, engineering, earth and applied sciences, and the humanities and social sciences, which are likely to lead to a significant conceptual advance in the understanding of a subject or to contribute to the solution of an important practical problem;
- experience in the preparation of research grant applications; and
- training and/or development in research methodology during the course of the research projects.

3.1 Areas and items not supported

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers Development Scheme does not support researchers to undertake:

- **research more appropriately funded** under other Commonwealth Schemes (eg. those administered by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and the Rural Research & Development Corporation);
- **scholarly investigations** which, while important in themselves, do not lead to conceptual advances or discoveries, or to novel practical outcomes or applications. Such projects as uncritical bibliographical compilations and purely descriptive catalogues or editions, which do not involve original research, are not funded;
- **activities that lead solely to the creation or performance of a work of art**, including visual art, musical compositions, drama, dance, designs and literary works. Commonwealth Government support for personnel pursuing these activities is provided through the Australia Council for the Arts; and
- **production of teaching/curriculum materials**, even though some research may be involved.

Applicants should also note that assessors in most fields tend not to give a high rating to data compilation or the development of research aids and tools (including computer programmes). If databases, computer programmes or other research aids are being compiled as part of a project, a statement must be provided indicating the research objectives to which they would be directed.

3.2 Funding

In 2000, the total amount available for distribution under this Scheme is \$210,000. Grants will be for a minimum of \$3,000 per year, for up to three years, for a research project. Funding is available for research by higher education institutions and incorporated companies.

4. Eligibility

4.1 Applicant eligibility

Applications are accepted only from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers and all Chief Investigators must meet this criterion. As this Scheme aims to develop the research expertise of successful applicants, it is strongly recommended that a mentor (who does not need to be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander) be associated with the proposal to provide specific expert advice on the subject of the research.

Applicants must possess a research degree or research experience which the selection committee regards as equivalent. Students who are seeking a grant for a research project which forms part of their current research higher degree may also apply.

4.1.1 Persons not eligible

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers are ineligible to apply for a grant if they are:

- living permanently overseas or are employed out of Australia during the term of the grant;
- students undertaking an undergraduate degree or an undergraduate diploma;
- currently holding, or have held, a nationally competitive grant or fellowship from the ARC or the NHMRC;
- deriving more than 50% of their salary from a non-higher education sector organisation that is primarily funded for research from State or Commonwealth Government sources, eg. Defence Science and Technology Organisation; Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation; Australian Geological Survey Organisation; State Research and Development organisations, or the Institute of Advanced Studies at the Australian National University; or
- a full-time Director of any Commonwealth-funded Centre.

5. Application Process

5.1 Application procedure

Application forms and guidelines for this Scheme are available from the institution's Research Office or relevant incorporated company which are also responsible for establishing the timeframe for submission of applications.

Advice on the preparation of applications is at Appendix 1.

5.2 Timetable

<i>Month</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Event</i>
February	1999	Scheme guidelines and application forms available from Research Administrators and Aboriginal Support Units in higher education institutions and relevant incorporated companies
30 June	1999	Closing date for applications with DEETYA in Canberra
October	1999	Reference Group meets to consider applications
October	1999	ARC considers recommendations
October	1999	Recommendations submitted to Minister
December	1999	Announcement of grants; advice to applicants; grant offers to higher education institutions/incorporated companies

5.3 Limit on number of applications

Only one application will be accepted from a sole researcher. Up to two applications will be accepted from a researcher if at least one involves another researcher as a collaborating Chief Investigator.

5.4 Nomination of assessors

Up to two suitable assessors may be nominated by the applicant to comment on the application relative to the selection criteria, if requested by the Reference Group. Nominated assessors must not be close family members of the applicant or members of the ARC or the Reference Group, or have published with the applicant(s) in the last five years. Applicants may also nominate one person whom they do not wish to assess the application, giving justification which will be considered by the RGC.

6. Selection and Approval Process

6.1 Selection criteria

Primary criteria in considering applications are:

- the quality of the research project being proposed;
- the quality of the researcher(s) proposing the research project; and
- the quality of the research environment and/or mentor.

Other considerations may be:

- the probable impact of a successful outcome for the research project; and/or
- the extent to which the successful completion of the research project will train and equip the researcher to compete for mainstream research funding.

If an application is judged to be outside the scope of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers Development Scheme, it may be referred for consideration under other ARC grant schemes.

6.2 Selection procedure

Assessment of applications is undertaken by the ARC Reference Group which consists of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons, representatives of key Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, the Chair of the Research Grants Committee (RGC) and one RGC discipline panel member. As part of the assessment process, the Reference Group should seek reports on the quality of the research proposal and the researcher(s)/research team from appropriately qualified external assessors. The Reference Group prepares funding recommendations which are submitted first to the ARC for endorsement and then to the Minister for approval.

6.3 Offer of grant

Following the Minister's approval, the successful administering institution will be informed by DEETYA in a letter of offer which will indicate the funding to be provided and include the Conditions of Award.

6.4 Conditions of grant

Applicants should familiarise themselves with the Conditions of Award which are available on the ARC/DEETYA Web site at:

<http://www.deetya.gov.au/divisions/hed/highered/research/grants/grantap1.htm#atsi>

The grantee must accept the Conditions of Award, in writing, before grant payments can be made.

7. Appeals Process

Appeals will be considered only against process issues and not against decisions or assessor ratings and comments. Appeals must be made on the appeals form available on the ARC/DEETYA Web site at:

<http://www.deetya.gov.au/divisions/hed/highered/research/grants/grantap1.htm#atsi>

The form must be received, **within 28 days** of the date on the letter notifying the outcome of applications, by:

The Appeals Officer
 Higher Education Research Branch
 Higher Education Division
 Department of Employment, Education, Training & Youth Affairs
 GPO Box 9880
 CANBERRA CITY ACT 2601

8. Grant Administration

8.1 Reporting requirements

Institutions are required to submit to DEETYA:

- an **Exceptions Report** on all grants by 1 November in the calendar year for which they were granted;
- an **End of Year Report** on the expenditure of grant funds by 31 March in the year following the calendar year for which they were granted;
- a **Progress Report** on the project by 31 March in the year following the calendar year for which they were granted;
- a **Final Report** on the project within six (6) months of its completion; and
- an **Audited Financial Statement**, pursuant to the HEFA, by 30 June of the year following the grant.

DEETYA reserves the right to suspend payment of further instalments of any current grant until the appropriate reports have been received.

8.1.1 Failure to provide reports

Where an institution fails to submit satisfactory reports, as required, the Minister may, under section 108 of the HEFA, determine that funds have not been used in accordance with conditions applicable to the grant, and that all or part of the grant must be repaid. In this case, DEETYA may withhold the remainder of the institution's payments under the scheme for the current year or initiate recovery of grant moneys.

8.2 Monitoring and evaluation

Reviews of ARC/DEETYA schemes are undertaken periodically, as deemed necessary. It is expected that institutions will provide access to DEETYA staff and consultants involved in this process and it is appreciated if institutions assist by providing information and comments.

8.3 Transfer of grant

Grant payments are made to the institution at which the grantee is employed. If, during the term of research funding, the grantee transfers to another institution, approval from the Minister's delegate is required before any funds or equipment may be transferred.

8.4 Financial management

8.4.1 Payments

The Scheme operates on a calendar year basis. Subject to appropriations, payment of funds will be made to institutions or relevant incorporated companies, in regular instalments, in accordance with approved payment arrangements made under section 111 of the HEFA. Funds must only be used for purposes approved under the Scheme otherwise they must be returned.

8.4.2 Carry overs

As grants are made for the specified calendar year, carry overs beyond 31 December of the year in which the grant was made require approval. Carry over requests should be made in the End of Year Report.

8.4.3 Deferrals

It is not possible to defer a grant before it is taken up. If an applicant is awarded a grant and is unable to start work on the project in the first year, the grant will lapse and the funds will be reallocated to another project. Grantees should notify DEETYA as soon as it is known that a grant cannot be taken up.

If a grantee wishes to defer continuation of a project during the tenure of a grant, written application should be made to DEETYA.

8.4.4 Recoveries

Any funds which have not been spent, or are not to be carried over, will be recovered by DEETYA, following advice provided in the End of Year Report, in accordance with section 108 of the HEFA.

9. General Information

9.1 Roles and responsibilities

Broadly, roles and responsibilities under the Higher Education Research Programme are as follows.

9.1.1 The Minister

The Minister for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, under the *Higher Education Funding Act 1988* (HEFA), has responsibility for approving:

- the mechanism for allocation of funds awarded for research;
- research funding schemes guidelines and their associated conditions;
- the expenditure, carry over and recovery of Programme funds; and
- variations to awards and the reallocation of unused funds.

9.1.2 Australian Research Council (ARC)

The ARC, under the *Employment, Education and Training Act 1988*, provides advice on research policy, and recommendations on the allocation of funding resources, to the Minister.

9.1.3 DEETYA staff

Staff of the Higher Education Research Branch, DEETYA, on behalf of the Minister's delegates, are responsible for:

- providing advice to the Minister on the allocative mechanisms;
- providing advice to the Minister, the ARC and institutions on the operation of the schemes; and
- administering the range of research funding schemes and mechanisms, including providing secretariat support to the ARC during selection meetings.

9.1.4 Higher education institutions and other organisations

Higher education institutions and other organisations are the first points of contact for parties interested in grant opportunities and are responsible for:

- maintaining records on the receipt and expenditure of grant funds;
- exercising quality control over grant applications; and
- ensuring compliance with grant conditions.

9.2 Privacy of individuals

All relevant documents are handled in compliance with the *Privacy Act 1988* which sets standards for the collection, storage, use and disclosure of, and access to, personal information.

9.3 Freedom of information

All relevant documents are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* unless exempt in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

9.4 Confidentiality

DEETYA, ARC, institutions and assessors are required to maintain the confidentiality of all applications.

9.5 Intellectual property

The institution must adhere to an Intellectual Property policy, approved by the institution's governing body, which has as one of its aims the maximisation of national benefits arising from the research.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander researchers will need to negotiate appropriate arrangements directly with administering institutions and Aboriginal communities where this is appropriate. While evidence that agreement on intellectual property has been reached will not be a precondition for applications to be considered, it is strongly suggested that such matters be settled at the outset.

9.6 Incomplete/misleading information

If an application is incomplete or contains information which is considered misleading, it will not be considered for funding.

If the RGC believes that omissions or inclusion of misleading information is intentional, or if there is evidence of malpractice, it reserves the right to undertake an investigation. Examples of malpractice include, but are not restricted to:

- providing fictitious track records; and
- falsifying claims in publications records (eg. describing a paper as accepted for publication when it has only been submitted).

9.7 Insurance and liabilities

By accepting funds under an ARC/DEETYA research scheme, institutions and/or relevant incorporated companies agree to indemnify the Commonwealth from any expense arising from any action that may be made or brought against the Commonwealth resulting from

activities funded under the scheme. Institutions are responsible for taking out appropriate insurance.

9.8 Contact points

In the first instance, the institution's Research Office should be contacted for further information.

Applications for funding under this Scheme should be sent to:

Executive Manager
Research Programme Management Group
Higher Education Research Branch LC 441
Department of Employment,
Education, Training and Youth Affairs
GPO Box 9880
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Enquiries about this Scheme may be addressed to:

Scheme Manager
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers Development Scheme
Research Programme Management Group
DEETYA

Fax: (02) 6240 9781
Email: rblarge@deetya.gov.au

Web site address:

<http://www.deetya.gov.au/divisions/hed/highered/research/grants/schemes.htm>

Appendix 1: Advice on the preparation of applications for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers Development Scheme

The application form and guidelines are available from Research Offices in institutions or may be downloaded from the ARC/DEETYA Web site at:

<http://www.deetya.gov.au/divisions/hed/highered/research/grants/grantap1.htm#atsi>

Instructions and help facilities to assist applicants complete their application form and required documentation are also available at the above site.

Applications should address the selection criteria, as detailed in Section 6.1, and include the following information:

1. aims, expected outcomes and significance. This should be a precisely and convincingly argued outline of the research project being proposed;
2. specific research methods. These must be described clearly and in enough detail so that experts in the field can ascertain whether the methods and techniques will lead to desired outcomes;
3. research plan, methods and techniques. Where appropriate, any research training to be included in the project should be described;
4. justification of the budget; and
5. proposed timing;

Applicants are required to include in their application a maximum 100-word summary of the aims of the research project and the expected outcomes.

The administering institution must be willing to certify that the facilities are available to conduct the proposed research and that it is willing to manage the grant, if awarded.

Where appropriate, a clearly defined role for the mentor or project supervisor should be provided. A mentor is highly desirable to provide guidance to the researcher and, in particular, to provide expert advice on the subject of the research.

Budget information

The budget section of the application form seeks three sets of information about financial matters:

1. specification of the various items requested. These should be outlined under the main headings: personnel, equipment, maintenance, travel and other;
2. costing of each of the above headings for all years, at prices which will apply in 2000;
3. justification of the budget providing an explanation of the elements of the requested budget and why each element is required.

If the application is successful, grant offers will have one-line budgets, ie. no particular budget items will be specified as being approved for funding. It is the responsibility of grantees who receive a grant with a one-line budget to ensure that their expenditure on the project is in accordance with the aims and research training plan of the project.

It should be noted that no part of a one-line grant may be used for a Chief Investigator's salary unless this is specifically provided for in the Offer of Grant. If researchers wish to apply for a Chief Investigator's salary for themselves as part of a grant, the reasons for seeking such a salary must be clearly spelt out in the application. This must include reasons for seeking the salary and justification for the level of remuneration requested.

Application length and format

- The body of the application is to be no longer than 10 pages of text, excluding the application form, the Chief Investigator's CV and publications.
- Copies should be in black type, size 12 font on white A4 paper, single-sided, and unbound. The budget information on the application form may be in a smaller type size, but it must be provided in the designated space.

Please note: Pages in excess of the limit may be removed and not considered by the Reference Group or assessors.

Copies of application

An original and one (1) copy are required.

Application submission

Applications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers Development Scheme grants should be sent, by the administering institution or the relevant incorporated company:

by **mail**, to:

Executive Manager
Research Programme Management Group
Higher Education Research Branch LC 441
Department of Employment, Education,
Training and Youth Affairs
GPO Box 9880
CANBERRA ACT 2600

by **courier**, to:

Executive Manager
Research Programme Management Group
Level 4
10 Mort Street
CANBERRA

to arrive by close of business on **Wednesday 30 June 1999**.

Changed circumstances after submission of application

Applicants must inform DEETYA, in writing, of any changes to the application after lodgement as soon as possible so that accurate records can be maintained.