



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Research Council**

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# GENDER EQUALITY IN RESEARCH

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ARC Gender Equality Action Plan 2015–16

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## Background

The ARC is committed to ensuring that all eligible researchers, irrespective of gender, have the opportunity to participate in National Competitive Grants Programme (NCGP) funding schemes. The ARC draws on the diversity and experience of the ARC Advisory Council, the ARC College of Experts and Selection Advisory Committee members, and research leaders (such as Australian Laureate Fellows) for advice on mechanisms to best support gender equality in all areas of research.

## INITIATIVES IN PLACE

In support of its commitment the ARC:

<b>Targeted awards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>offers at least two named Australian Laureate Fellowships targeted at outstanding women researchers. Recipients of these awards receive additional funding to undertake an ambassadorial role to promote women in research and to mentor early career researchers, particularly women, to encourage them to enter and establish careers in research in Australia.</li> </ul>
<b>Eligibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has extended the timeframe of eligibility requirements for early- and mid-career awards and fellowships in acknowledgement of the impact of career interruptions including those experienced as a result of maternity leave and caring responsibilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has established Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) as a selection criterion, to help mitigate the effect of career interruption, including as a result of childbirth and caring responsibilities</li> <li>provides guidance for members of the ARC College of Experts, assessors and applicants in respect of the application of ROPE</li> <li>monitors the gender balance of membership on ARC selection committees.</li> </ul>
<b>Conditions of award</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provides part-time opportunities for all researchers under the <i>Discovery Early Career Researcher Award</i> and <i>Future Fellowship</i> schemes</li> <li>provides maternity and parental/partner leave in all fellowship and award schemes</li> <li>requires administering organisations, where relevant, to acknowledge and comply with their obligations under the <i>Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012</i></li> <li>expects administering organisations to have a gender policy in place.</li> </ul>
<b>Monitoring / reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provides gender disaggregated data in scheme selection reports and other reporting mechanisms</li> <li>monitors the gender outcomes of selection rounds to identify any issues arising.</li> </ul>
<b>Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>works closely with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) with regard to policy and best practice processes</li> </ul>

in gender equality

- participates in relevant forums in relation to women in research
- highlights the topic of gender equality and women in research to the wider community.

Further details of these mechanisms are provided below.

## Actions 2015–16

In 2015–16 the ARC will:

- monitor and evaluate the impact of changes to the eligibility requirements under the Discovery Early Career Researcher Award scheme
- provide information on its website about the ARC's support for gender
- improve the gender balance of membership on ARC selection committees relative to the overall gender balance in particular research fields
- work with named Australian Laureate Fellows about mentorship activities undertaken as part of their fellowship
- raise awareness of the option for recipients of fellowships and awards to utilise parental leave and part-time arrangements for caring responsibilities
- include a requirement for the development and implementation of a Centre-specific equity plan within the Funding Agreement for ARC Centres of Excellence commencing in 2017
- continue to promote gender issues through presentations and participation in relevant forums
- investigate options for unconscious bias training for ARC College of Experts and/or assessors
- monitor leave provisions under fellowships to ensure continued consistency.

## Details of initiatives in place

### TARGETED AWARDS

#### ***Scheme: Australian Laureate Fellowships***

#### ***Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate Fellowship and Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellowship***

The *Australian Laureate Fellowships* scheme directly supports world-class research leaders and includes the award of at least two dedicated fellowships for exceptional women researchers. The Kathleen Fitzpatrick and Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellowships are available to women research leaders of international repute.

Named after two distinguished and inspiring women researchers, the recipients of these fellowships will receive up to \$20 000 each year, in addition to the funding provided for the Australian Laureate Fellowship. This funding is awarded to support an ambassadorial role for the recipient to promote women in research and to mentor early career researchers, particularly women, to encourage them to enter and establish careers in research in Australia.

The Kathleen Fitzpatrick Fellowship supports a candidate from the humanities, arts and social science disciplines, and the Georgina Sweet Fellowship supports a candidate from the science and technology disciplines.

Candidates applying for a Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate Fellowship or a Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellowship are assessed against the same selection criteria and are subject to the same conditions and obligations that apply to all Australian Laureate Fellowship candidates as outlined in relevant Funding Rules. Candidates must be highly ranked for an Australian Laureate Fellowship and are required to address an additional criterion targeted at mentoring and capacity building.

## ELIGIBILITY

### **Scheme: *Discovery Early Career Researcher Award and Future Fellowships***

The *Discovery Early Career Researcher Award* (DECRA) and *Future Fellowships* schemes provide targeted support for researchers who experience career interruptions, including due to carer responsibilities, maternity or parental leave, through an extended eligibility exemption to support researchers return to the research workforce.

Researchers may be eligible to apply for the DECRA scheme if they have been awarded a PhD within five years or together with periods of significant career interruption, have been awarded a PhD within nine years at the time of submission of Proposals.

The following type of career interruption will be considered for eligibility extensions for the DECRA scheme:

- a. carer's responsibility
- b. disruption due to international relocation for post-doctoral studies or other research employment not exceeding three months per international relocation
- c. illness
- d. maternity or parental leave
- e. unemployment and/or
- f. non-research employment not concurrent with research employment.
- g. for the primary carer of a dependent child (inclusive of carer's responsibility and any maternity or partner/parental leave), two years per dependent child.

For DECRA funding commencing in 2017, the window of eligibility has been further extended to recognise the impact of carer responsibilities on a researcher's career. Researchers with career interruptions due to primary caring responsibilities for dependent children are now able to extend their eligibility by up to two years per dependent child.

Researchers may be eligible to apply for the Future Fellowships scheme if they have been awarded a PhD within 5–15 years or together with periods of significant career interruption, have been awarded a PhD within 22 years at the time of submission of Proposals.

The following type of career interruption will be considered for eligibility extensions for the *Future Fellowships* scheme:

- a. carer's responsibility
- b. disruption due to international relocation for post-doctoral studies or other research employment not exceeding three months per international relocation

- c. illness
- d. maternity or parental leave
- e. unemployment and/or
- f. non-research employment not concurrent with research employment.

For Future Fellowships funding commencing in 2015, the window of eligibility has been further extended to recognise the impact of carer responsibilities on a researcher's career. Researchers with career interruptions due to primary caring responsibilities for dependent children are able to extend their eligibility by up to two years for a dependent child and up to a maximum of four years for two or more dependent children.

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY AND PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE**

**Scheme: *Discovery Projects; Discovery Indigenous; Discovery Early Career Researcher Award; Future Fellowships; Australian Laureate Fellowships; Linkage Projects; Linkage Infrastructure; Equipment and Facilities; Industrial Transformation Research Hubs; Industrial Transformation Training Centres; Special Research Initiatives; ARC Centres of Excellence***

The ARC acknowledges that caring responsibilities for a child and maternity or partner/parental leave can have an effect on a person's career above and beyond any actual time taken as leave. To help mitigate the effect of career breaks for family and other reasons on research careers, the ARC introduced the new selection criterion of Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) to replace the concept of 'track record'.

ROPE aims to ensure that all eligible researchers are competitive for NCGP grants, particularly those under-represented owing to limited career opportunities, non-research career intervals or alternative career pathways. In particular, ROPE is seen to address possible perceived bias in the success rate of researchers in research only positions, compared to those in teaching only, teaching and research or administrative positions, researchers who have experienced non-research career intervals and early-career-researchers.

**Research Opportunity** is the measure of a researcher's education, experience, employment and achievement, in all aspects of research, relative to their opportunity and participation in the research workforce.

**Performance Evidence** is the demonstrated capacity, contribution to research, abilities and accomplishments of a researcher in all aspects of research.

ROPE is a selection criterion under all current ARC schemes.

Evidence of research opportunity considers:

- years since graduation with highest educational qualification
- opportunities for research in the course of employment periods of part-time employment, unemployment, career interruptions for child birth, carer's responsibilities or illness
- research mentoring and research support facilities available
- any other relevant aspects of career or opportunities for research.

Performance Evidence enables researchers to demonstrate research achievements and professional activities within a defined time period. Within the ARC schemes this is captured by:

- recent significant research outputs in five categories:
  - scholarly books
  - scholarly book chapters
  - refereed journal articles
  - refereed conference papers only when the paper was published in full in the proceedings
  - other (for example, major exhibitions, compositions or performance)
- ten career-best research outputs
- most significant contributions to the research field of the Proposal
- further evidence in relation to research impact and contributions to the field—
  - research outputs other than academic publications, for example, patents, IP licences, other research support income, relevant consultancies, policy advice and other professional activities, and
  - description of research Impact relative to opportunity and in the context of discipline/end user benefits.

In February 2014, the ARC released a ROPE Statement designed to provide both applicants and assessors with information regarding the principles and implementation of ROPE across the NCGP schemes.

## **CONDITIONS OF AWARD**

### **PART-TIME ARRANGEMENTS**

#### ***Scheme: Discovery Early Career Researcher Award; Future Fellowships; Australian Laureate Fellowships***

Discovery Early Career Researcher Awards and Future Fellowships may be undertaken on a full-time or part-time basis. These Awards/Fellowships may also be converted to (or from) part-time at any time to enable the recipient to continue to fulfil family and/or carer responsibilities or with the prior approval of the ARC to pursue exceptional research opportunities. The Award/Fellowship must not exceed six (DECRA) or eight (Future Fellows) years from the date of commencement (excluding any periods of suspension and/or maternity and/or parental leave).

DECRA and Future Fellowships do not have a minimum full-time equivalent (FTE) for ARC purposes, but the FTE of the DECRA and Future Fellowship recipient, for ARC purposes, must match that of the recipient's employment contract.

All researchers in receipt of an award or fellowship are able to utilise part-time arrangements for caring responsibilities.

Recognising the significant departure rates from the research workforce of early to mid-career researchers, particularly women, Postdoctoral Research Associates and Postgraduate Researchers (under the *Australian Laureates Fellowships* scheme) may undertake the project on a part-time basis and access additional leave to support carer responsibilities.

## **MATERNITY AND PARTNER/PARENTAL LEAVE**

**Scheme: *Discovery Projects; Discovery Indigenous; Discovery Early Career Researcher Award; Future Fellowships; Australian Laureate Fellowships; Linkage Projects***

All ARC Fellowship and Award recipients are entitled to access to periods of up to 14 weeks paid maternity leave during the course of the fellowship/award, with an equivalent extension to the life of the project. The Administering Organisation must seek ARC approval for any extension to the life of the Project exceeding the 14 weeks paid maternity leave.

All Fellowship and Award recipients are entitled to two weeks paid partner/parental leave at the time of birth or adoption to the parent who is not identified as the primary carer, also with equivalent extension to the life of the project.

Additionally, under the *Australian Laureate Fellowship* scheme, Postdoctoral Researcher Associates and Postgraduate Researchers are also able to access to periods of up to 14 weeks paid maternity leave and two weeks paid partner/parental leave during the course of the project.

## **INSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

**Scheme: *Discovery Projects; Discovery Indigenous; Discovery Early Career Researcher Award; Future Fellowships; Australian Laureate Fellowships; Linkage Projects; Linkage Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities; Industrial Transformation Research Hubs; Industrial Transformation Training Centres; Special Research Initiatives; ARC Centres of Excellence***

Through the signing of the ARC Funding Agreement, any Administering Organisations that receive ARC funding must acknowledge and comply with any obligations under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*.

## **MONITORING / REPORTING**

**Scheme: *Discovery Projects; Discovery Indigenous; Discovery Early Career Researcher Award; Future Fellowships; Australian Laureate Fellowships; Linkage Projects; Linkage Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities; Industrial Transformation Research Hubs; Industrial Transformation Training Centres; Special Research Initiatives; ARC Centres of Excellence***

Selection reports for all NCGP schemes include data disaggregated by gender where practicable. The NCGP statistical information provided on the ARC website also provides trend data on success rates by gender.

## **GENDER EQUALITY AND COMMITTEES**

### **ARC College of Experts**

The ARC College of Experts plays a key role in assessing and ranking ARC grant applications submitted under the NCGP, making funding recommendations to the ARC and providing strategic advice to the ARC on emerging disciplines and cross-disciplinary developments. Its members are experts of international standing drawn from the Australian research community: including from higher education, industry and public sector research organisations. Nominations from women, people of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

origin, and end-users across the private, public and not-for profit sectors are particularly encouraged.

The ARC provides guidance to ARC College of Experts members on the implementation of ROPE and other issues around gender equality within the assessment and selection advisory committee processes.

## **ARC Committees**

The ARC aims for gender equality in the membership of ARC committees, including ARC Advisory Council, ARC College of Experts, Research Evaluation Committees and Selection Advisory Committees, where possible. The makeup of the ARC Committees may depend on the overall gender balance in particular research fields, however, the ARC is committed to improving the overall gender balance of these panels.

<b>Number</b>	<b>Date Approved</b>	<b>Approved By</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
1.0	19/10/2015	Senior Management Group	ARC Gender Equality Action Plan 2015-16