



Australian Government

Australian Research Council

ARC RESEARCH OPPORTUNITY AND PERFORMANCE EVIDENCE (ROPE) STATEMENT

July 2020

CONTEXT

The ARC is committed to ensuring that all eligible researchers, from universities and the wider research sector, including industry have fair and equitable access to the research funding available through the [National Competitive Grants Program](#) (NCGP). The NCGP provides a range of opportunities, for researchers at all career stages, to undertake basic and applied researchⁱ across science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) disciplines, individually and in teams.

The *Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence Statement* is a component of the ARC's research workforce policy framework. The framework comprises a range of [policies](#) implemented through eligibility and assessment criteria that facilitate equitable access to the NCGP for eligible researchers, including those in groups under-represented in the research sector.

The ROPE assessment criterionⁱⁱ, introduced in 2011, is complemented by other mechanisms under NCGP schemes to support researchers, such as extended eligibility timeframes for researchers who have experienced career interruptions and leave and part-time options under fellowship and award schemes.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the ROPE criterion is to enable evaluation of a researcher's activities, outputs and achievements, in the context of career and life opportunities and experiences, including, where relevant, significant career interruptions.

The ARC recognises the diverse circumstances that can affect research opportunity, and introduced the ROPE criterion to enable consideration of a researcher's capacity, productivity and contribution in the context of opportunity and experience. Researchers, at all career stages, have effectively used the ROPE criterion under all NCGP schemes. Enabling consideration of any career interruption under ROPE has ensured equitable access for all eligible researchers, and success rates for proposals including a career interruption have primarily been equal to, or higher, than proposals without an interruption.

ROPE is designed to support all eligible researchers, with particular emphasis on supporting those researchers in under-represented groups or experiencing proportionally more career interruptions, including women, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, and early and mid-career researchers.

PRINCIPLES

Research Opportunity

Research opportunity encompasses all research activities that have contributed to and influenced the development of a researcher's career. Research activities should provide context for performance evidence, and focus on quality and impact relative to career stage and discipline expectations. Research opportunity can include, but is not limited to:

- research training
- employment in research positions, either within the research sector or outside academia, including the research component and/or full-time-equivalence of positions
- research and development activities
- industry engagement

- research environment, including supervision, mentoring and leadership
- professional development
- research management experience, and
- access to research and support facilities.

Research opportunity also incorporates any significant interruptions relating to career and/or life experiences, which have affected a researcher’s capacity, productivity or contribution. The ARC recognises that the impact of any interruption may extend beyond the duration of a specific event, and the full extent of any interruption, reflecting individual circumstances, can be included for consideration by assessors under ROPE. Interruptions can include, but are not limited to:

- unemployment
- non-research employment
- limited or no access to facilities and resources—such as through workplace interruptions
- disaster management and recovery
- misadventure
- medical conditions
- disability
- caring and parental responsibilities, and
- community obligations, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and protocols.

Performance Evidence

Performance evidence should be presented in the context of sector and discipline expectations, and demonstrate research quality, contributions to the research field and to the research sector.

Performance evidence incorporates all research activities, outputs and achievements evaluated in the context of [research impact](#), as appropriate to each discipline, and research opportunity. Performance evidence includes, but is not limited to:

- publications, including research books and chapters, journal articles and conference publications
- intellectual property, including patents, trademarks, designs and plant breeder’s rights
- non-traditional research outputs, including live performances, recordings or renderings of creative works, public exhibitions and portfolios
- research income, including Australian competitive grants, such as ARC and NHMRC grants; other public sector income; and industry funding and investment from Australia and overseas
- research supervision and advice, including higher degree by research student completions
- professional development, mentoring and research leadership
- fellowships, memberships, awards, and keynote addresses
- policy development and advice
- research impact, including the use of research to achieve environmental, cultural, social or economic changes or improvements, and
- research collaboration.

IMPLEMENTATION

Under each scheme, the ROPE assessment criterion is structured relative to the scheme objectives, and the research activities, outputs and achievements appropriate to the cohorts eligible to apply. NCGP scheme documentation, including Grant Guidelines, Instructions to Applicants and the online form within the Research Management System, sets out the relevant elements of the ROPE criterion for each scheme.

ROPE statements should be clear, contextualised, constructively presented, and contain all information necessary for assessors to evaluate research activities, outputs, achievements and impact relative to career and life opportunities and experiences. Significant career interruptions, where relevant, should be presented simply, quantified where possible, noting that the impact of the interruption may last longer than a defined period. Personal or confidential information should not be included.

ⁱ The creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

This definition of research is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development comprising “creative and systematic work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge – including knowledge of humankind, culture and society – and to devise new applications of available knowledge” OECD (2015), Frascati Manual 2015: Guidelines for Collecting and Reporting Data on Research and Experimental Development (p.378).

ⁱⁱ ROPE is a part of the assessment criteria in all NCGP schemes, except the *Linkage, Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities* (LIEF) scheme.