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\*Note - At page 17 of the report there is a reference to a paragraph titled 'Draft Report Limitations.' This paragraph was included in error and the report is a final version.

# Expenditure Review

Final Report

Macquarie University

July 2025











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# 1. Executive Summary

This report has been prepared for Macquarie University (MQU) and will be shared with the Australian Research Council (ARC) to report the scope and approach, test results and a summary of exceptions identified during this expenditure review of disbursements made under ARC funding.

## 1.1 Objective and scope

The objective of the Expenditure Review was to assess the validity of disbursements for the Research Grant in line with the ARC Future Fellowship grant and MQU policies.

The in scope transactions are governed under the relevant Commonwealth Grant Agreement with Macquarie University. This Agreement requires that:

- a) Macquarie University ensures that the project described in the Grant Offer is implemented in accordance with the Grant Agreement, and aligned with the proposed 'Project Cost' contained in the application;
- b) Grant funds only be used for eligible expenditure items as set out in the Grant Guidelines;
- c) Macquarie University monitor the expenditure of Grant funds; and
- d) If Macquarie University's Responsible Officer holds an opinion that Grant funds are not being expended in accordance with the Grant Agreement, Macquarie University must take all action necessary to minimise further expenditure in relation to the project and inform the ARC immediately.

The scope of the review was to validate that all expenditure relating to the disbursement of the grant was:

- Supported by evidence (e.g. invoices) and has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the:
  - Grant Agreement (*Commonwealth Grant Agreement* between the Commonwealth represented by the Australian Research Council and Macquarie University (Discovery Program - Future Fellowships for funding commencing in 2022));
  - Guidelines (*Discovery Program Grant Guidelines (2021 Edition)*); and
  - Relevant Macquarie University policies and procedures, including the Travel and Expense policies (refer to Appendix B for full list of documentation).
- Consistent with the approved project application.

An in-depth review of the University's end-to-end payroll processes was not undertaken as part of this review.

The Research Grant was approved for funding by the ARC for financial year 2022-2023 to financial year 2025-2026. The scope of the review encompassed transactions from 1 January 2023 to 31 February 2025, noting expenditure under this grant was temporarily suspended on 12 February 2025 whilst a broader review was undertaken.

Further detail on the documents inspected during the engagement have been outlined in *Appendix B - Documents reviewed*, and a list of key Macquarie University stakeholders involved in the engagement are listed in *Appendix C - Personnel consulted*.

The engagement scope was limited to the assessment of monitoring and oversight controls that directly related to grant expenditure and did not assess processes or system controls relating to the end-to-end payroll, travel or other expenditure controls.

Our work was not performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing, review or other assurance standards in Australia and accordingly does not express any form of assurance.

## 1.2 Background

The Future Fellowships scheme, initiated by the Australian Government, aims to support mid-career researchers in conducting high-quality research that benefits both national and international communities.

The grant under review, 'Arab/Muslim Australian Social Movements since the 1970s: a hidden history' - Project ID FT220100427 (the Research Grant), commenced in December 2022 (awarded \$852,000.00) and was paused in February 2025 (expenditure of \$419,969.52 across 1016 transactions (including payroll)).

Expenditure in relation to the grant can occur through:

- **Cash and credit card reimbursements:** Direct expenditure incurred by the First Investigator and other employees employed on the grant can occur through cash (or debit card) payments or corporate credit card transactions. Both these forms of expenditure are documented and processed through Concur, the university's expense management system. Receipts and other information, such as attendees and business purpose, must be provided when reimbursing expenses through Concur. Review and approvals are in place prior to Concur reimbursements paid.
- **Direct payments made through Macquarie University:** Some payments are made directly through other MQU business systems, such as flight expenditures, which are made through the University Corporate Travel Management (CTM) system.
- **Payroll expenditure:** Payroll related payments are made through the University's payroll management system.

Transactions recorded under the ARC grant are recorded against three separate Major Accounts (also known as 'project codes') within the university's general ledger, they are categorised as follows:

1. **5298000 ARC funded other expenses project account:** Expenditure relating to travel, incidentals (including meals and transport), research and equipment.
2. **5298019 ARC funded future fellowship salary project account:** Expenditure relating to payroll, including the salary of the First Investigator and the wages of the supporting casual employees.
3. **5298020 DVCR internally funded (by MQU) other expenses project account:** Expenditure relating to travel, such as airfares and other expenses, e.g. research related expenses

### 1.3 Summary of test results

We have tested all transactions for the Research Grant, as outlined in Section 1.1. As part of our test procedures, we had no contact with the First Investigator in relation to the review of grant expenditure.

We did not identify any material exceptions, indicating systemic issues relating to inappropriate expenditure of grant funds. Instances of grant expenditure that may not align with the grant guidelines and MQU policy were identified, which consisted of multiple low value expenditure items, as outlined in the below table.

These examples have been summarised below with a complete listing of transactions provided to Management for their record. We recommend Management perform further analysis on the transactions to understand the reasoning and justifications behind the expenditure. In parallel with these investigations, Macquarie University has informed us that they will refund the \$8,598.76 of funding to the ARC.

The following is a summary of the transaction exceptions of the Grant Expenditure Review. Exceptions were identified and shared with Management for validation. Management confirmed that based on their interpretation no significant instances of the misuse of grant funds have been identified, noting Management will perform further analysis against the supporting documentation collated to ascertain further details relating to the below transactions.

**Table 1: Summary of Test Results**

#	Type	Example	No. of transactions	Value
1	Expenditure not aligned to grant guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The purchase of books already available in the Macquarie University Library</li> <li>Travelling with non-relevant attendees</li> <li>Purchasing personal items</li> <li>Purchasing premium alternatives</li> </ul>	19	\$3,262.8
2	Transactions not aligned to Macquarie University Travel and Expense Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receipts had no Australian Business Number (ABN)</li> <li>Receipts were missing (or there was insufficient itemisation within the receipts)</li> <li>Split Invoices</li> </ul>	93	\$5,335.95
<b>Total</b>			<b>112</b>	<b>\$8,598.76</b>

## 2. Summary of transactions

### 2.1 Summary of the three project code grant transactions and expenditure test results

Outlined below is a summary of the expenditure across the three project codes relating to the Research Grant covering the period of 31 January 2023 to 31 December 2024. The table below illustrates that the project expenditure across the three project codes (\$419,969.52) remains within the grant award value (\$852,000) and the travel cost limit (\$100,000) for non-flight and accommodation related travel expenditure (outlined in section B4.1 of the Grant Guidelines).

As outlined in the Section 1.2 transactions recorded for the ARC grant are recorded against three separate Major Accounts (project codes) within the university's general ledger. The below information has been summarised from an extract of the Major Account transactions from the University's finance system, Finance One.

**Table 2: Overview of indicative grant award, current expenditure, reviewed items, and follow-up items**

Research Grant (FT220100427) - Summary					
Project code description	Major Account (project code)	Funded by	Total no. of transactions*	Amount awarded (budget)	Total expenditure 31/01/23 - 31/12/24
ARC funded other expenses project account	5298000	ARC	450	\$147,608.00	\$66,206.70
Concur (Credit Card & Reimbursement)	-	-	355	-	\$18,359.73
Travel	-	-	184	-	\$13,452.82
Food	-	-	139	-	\$3,106.10
Research	-	-	32	-	\$1,800.81
Non-Concur	-	-	95	-	\$50,511.19
ARC funded Future Fellowship salary project account	5298019	ARC	545	\$654,392.00	\$347,271.82
DVCR (Internally funded) other expenses project account	5298020	MQ	21	\$50,000.00	\$6,491
				\$852,000.00	\$419,969.52

## 2.2 Analysis of salary and wages for 2023 and 2024

The table below presents analysis of total salary and wages expenditure for 2023 and 2024 against the allocations outlined in the grant application. Within the application the following staffing was outlined:

- **First Investigator:** The First Investigator (or the 'Fellow') is the individual who applied for the grant and is responsible for leading research activities and ultimately accountable for the achievement of project outcomes.
- **Employees (Casual):** The role of the Research Associates is to support the FI by taking on essential tasks, allowing the FI to focus more on extensive fieldwork, data analysis, and writing up the project's proposed outputs. The Research Associates assist in building the digital archive and public exhibition, developing curriculum aids, running the writing workshops, and editing the anthology.

The analysis indicates that overall spend for both years remains within the total specified grant application allocation (i.e. it is still within budget awarded to the Grant). The total expenditure is under the award allocation and is compliant with the grant application.

**Table 3: Comparison of salary and wages by project code and grant allocations for 2023 and 2024**

Research Grant (FT220100427) - Salary and Wages										
		Total spend			Award allocation (as per Grant application)			Variance		
Employee Name	Code	2023	2024	Actual Total	Year 2 (2023)	Year 3 (2024)	Award Total	2023	2024	Total
First Investigator	5298019	\$157,005.53	\$162,435.88	\$319,441.41	\$163,598.00	\$163,598.00	\$327,196.00	\$6,592.47	\$1,162.12	\$7,754.59
	5298020	\$727.00	-	\$727.00	-	-	-	-\$727.00	-	-\$727.00
<b>Subtotal - Academic</b>		<b>\$157,732.53</b>	<b>\$162,435.88</b>	<b>\$320,168.41</b>	<b>\$163,598.00</b>	<b>\$163,598.00</b>	<b>\$327,196.00</b>	<b>\$5,865.47</b>	<b>\$1,162.12</b>	<b>\$7,027.59</b>
Employee 1	5298000	\$23,237.68	\$22,258.57	\$45,496.25	-	\$47,123.00	\$47,123.00	-\$23,237.68	\$24,864.43	\$1,626.75
Employee 2	5298000	\$0	\$5,644.78	\$5,644.78	\$17,725.00	-	\$17,725.00	\$17,725.00	-\$5,644.78	\$12,080.22
<b>Subtotal - Casual</b>		<b>\$23,237.68</b>	<b>\$27,903.35</b>	<b>\$51,141.03</b>	<b>\$17,725.00</b>	<b>\$47,123.00</b>	<b>\$64,848.00</b>	<b>-\$5,512.68</b>	<b>\$19,219.65</b>	<b>\$13,706.97</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>\$180,970.21</b>	<b>\$190,339.23</b>	<b>\$371,309.44</b>	<b>\$181,323.00</b>	<b>\$210,721.00</b>	<b>\$392,044.00</b>	<b>\$352.79</b>	<b>\$20,381.77</b>	<b>\$20,734.56</b>

### 3. Test results

The following section outlines the test results of the Grant Expenditure Review. We have tested all transactions for the Research Grant, outlined in Section 1.1. We did not identify any material exceptions, indicating no systemic issues relating to inappropriate expenditure of grant funds. However, the review did identify multiple low value expenditure items not aligned with the grant guidelines and MQU policy, these examples have been summarised below. All transactions summarised below relate to ARC funded other expenses project account e.g. expenditure relating to travel, incidentals (including meals and transport), research and equipment (project code 5298000).

Exceptions were identified based on the results of the test criteria and confirmed with Management for validation. Management confirmed that this expenditure was within reasonable application of the grant guidelines and no significant instances of the misuse of grant funds were identified, noting Management will perform further analysis against the supporting documentation collated to ascertain further details. Exceptions related to:

**Table 3: Summary of transactions not aligned with grant guidelines and Macquarie University policies.**

#	Type	Example	No. of transactions	Value
1	Expenditure not aligned to grant guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The purchase of books already available in the Macquarie University Library</li> <li>Travelling with non-relevant attendees</li> <li>Purchasing personal items</li> <li>Purchasing premium alternatives</li> </ul>	19	\$3,262.80
2	Transactions not aligned to Macquarie University Travel and Expense Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receipts had no Australian Business Number (ABN)</li> <li>Receipts were missing (or there was insufficient itemisation within the receipts)</li> <li>Split invoices</li> </ul>	93	\$5,335.95
<b>Total</b>			<b>112</b>	<b>\$8,598.76</b>

### 3.1 Summary of exceptions against grant guidelines

The 19 transactions (totalling \$3,262.80) attributed to Major Account 5298000, summarised below, were identified as transactions that are not aligned with the grant guidelines. The transactions were identified through detailed testing of receipts (submitted within Concur) against attributes gathered from review of the grant guidelines, and Macquarie University policies and procedures. These transactions were discussed and validated as exceptions with key stakeholders, however further investigation by Management is recommended.

These can be summarised into the following categories:

**Table 4: Summary of transactions, by exception category, not aligned with the grant application.**

#	Type	Description	No. of transactions	Value
1	Book availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Items were purchased which are available within MQU library.</li></ul>	5	\$534.90
2	Missing attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Attendees had not identified to confirm if relevant to the research.</li></ul>	3	\$1,258.64
3	Personal item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Personal items not aligned with the grant or research reimbursed.</li></ul>	8	\$959.84
4	Premium alternative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Premium items reimbursed e.g. airfare seat upgrade claimed.</li></ul>	3	\$509.42
<b>Total</b>			<b>19</b>	<b>\$3,262.80</b>

### 3.2 Summary of transactions not aligned with MQU's Travel and Expense policies

The below table outlines the transactions that were identified not aligning to Macquarie University Travel and Expense policies. The test results indicate that the nature these exceptions are not material and are individually of low value. These exceptions relate to the documentation and processing of expenses. Management should investigate these transactions further. The summary of transactions is as follows:

**Table 5: Summary of transactions to be investigated further by Management to determine if they breach MQU Travel and Expense policies**

Exception category	Category description	# of transactions	Total value (Incl GST)
No ABN in receipt	Receipts that do not include an ABN	28	\$2,000.91
Missing itemisation or receipt	Receipts are missing and/or receipts do not itemise particular items, resulting in an inability to review specific details of the purchases and their level of appropriateness.	47	\$1,115.26
Concur amount discrepancies	Discrepancies in the amounts recorded in Concur for reimbursement and the amounts documented on the receipt.	15	\$385.99
Split invoice	An explanation or reason for the invoice split is needed. Noting invoices are not typically reimbursed if they have been split.	3	\$1,833.79
		<b>93</b>	<b>\$5,335.95</b>

# Appendix A - Transmittal Letter



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28 July 2025

██████████  
Deputy Group, Chief Financial Officer  
Macquarie University  
Balaclava Road, North Ryde  
New South Wales, 2109

Dear ██████,

## Grant Expenditure Review

Thank you for the opportunity to support Macquarie University (MQU) through the Grant Expenditure Review engagement. We have completed our engagement to assess the validity of disbursements for the Research Grant in line with the Australian Research Council (ARC) Future Fellowship grant and MQU policies. Our services (February 2025 - April 2025) were performed in accordance with our engagement agreement dated (24 February 2025), and our procedures were limited to those described in that agreement.

## Scope of Services

During the period (February 2025 - April 2025), EY assessed the validity of disbursements for the Research Grant in line with the ARC Future Fellowship grant and MQU policies. Our Deliverables resulting from our engagement are outlined within the Grant Expenditure Review Final Report.

## Restrictions on the use of our Deliverables

The Deliverables are intended solely for the information and use of you and are not intended to be and should not be used by anyone else. EY disclaims all responsibility to any other party for any loss or liability that the other party may suffer or incur arising from or relating to or in any way connected with the Deliverables, the provision of the Deliverables to the other party or the reliance upon the Deliverables by the other party.

All Deliverables are based on information provided to us by you or by other parties on your behalf and current as of 28 July 2025. Since this date, material events may have occurred which are not reflected or considered in these Deliverables.

## Conclusion of Services

This transmittal concludes our services and obligations under our engagement agreement with all Deliverables issued and accepted as complete. If we have not heard from you within seven (7) days, it will be inferred that

you have accepted the terms detailed in this letter, enabling us to move towards formally closing our engagement.

If you have any questions about our report or the work that it describes, please contact me on

[REDACTED].

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Attachment:

- ▶ Appendix B - Methodology

# Appendix B – Methodology

## Approach and methodology

The following approach and methodology were undertaken to complete the Grant Expenditure Review:

- Conducted an Opening / Planning Meeting to validate scope and approach and request documentation and necessary access to systems.
- Inspected key agreements, guidelines, policies and grant application documents as provided by Macquarie University, which included:
  - Discovery Project Grant Guidelines.
  - Research Project Application Form.
  - Australian Research Council (ARC) Discovery Program Agreement.
  - Expenditure Summary.
  - Key Macquarie University policies and procedures (outlined within *Appendix B*).
- Met with key stakeholders (as outlined in *Appendix C*) to develop an understanding of the grant and related expenditure, identified key artefacts and validated our understanding of the grant expenditure process.
- Using the Project Code Listing and Concur Expenditure Records we:
  - **Conducted a reconciliation:** Inspected all expenditure transactions relating to the grant from 31 January 2023 to 12 February 2025. This was provided by Management in an excel format that was validated against the Finance One (system of record) from which it had been extracted.
  - **Test procedures:**
    - Agreed each expense transaction through sighting evidence to the grant agreement, grant guidelines and the research project application
    - Assessed against test criteria that the expenditure was in line with requirements.
    - Assessed applicability of transactions against test criteria from key Macquarie University policies and procedures (outlined within *Appendix B*) and relevant artefacts relating to the grant as outlined above.
  - **Examined supporting evidence:** Obtained access to Concur to review substantiation relating to expenses submitted and reviewed supporting evidence, such as CVs, role descriptions and timesheets to assess payroll related payments.
- Provided weekly status reports to the Deputy Group, Chief Financial Officer and Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research Services, including progress, initial findings, and actual and forecast costs via email. Where required a meeting was set up to discuss the progress and status of the engagement.
- Developed and discussed a draft report prior to finalising with Management.

## Limitations on scope

This engagement only encompassed the assessment of monitoring and oversight controls directly related to grant expenditure and did not encompass process or system controls relating to the end-to-end payroll, travel nor other expenditure controls.

Due to the inherent limitations of any internal control structure, it was possible that fraud, error or non-compliance with laws and regulations may occur and not be detected. Further, the internal control structure, within which the control procedures that have been subject to this engagement operate, was not reviewed in its entirety and, therefore, no opinion or view is expressed as to its effectiveness of the greater internal control structure. General limitations are included in our engagement agreement with Macquarie.

Our work was not performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing, review or other assurance standards in Australia and accordingly does not express any form of assurance.

Other than the provision of our report to the ARC EY provides no approval for release to additional third parties and / or publishing the report in a public domain.

EY will not be held liable for claims or counter claims that arise from this report by any third party.

This scope of services was not designed to apply fraud detection or forensic analysis.

# Appendix C – Documents reviewed

We reviewed the following documentation as part of the Grant Expenditure Review:

**Table 7: Documentation, including Grant Guidelines, Macquarie University Policies and Procedures**

Document name	Purpose
Discovery Program Grant Guidelines 2021	Which outlines: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The purpose of each Discovery Program scheme;</li> <li>The general eligibility and assessment criteria applicable for all schemes;</li> <li>The additional specific eligibility and assessment criteria applicable to each scheme;</li> <li>How applications are considered and selected;</li> <li>How grantees are notified and receive grant payments;</li> <li>How grantees will be monitored and evaluated; and</li> <li>Responsibilities and expectations in relation to each scheme.</li> </ol>
ARC DP Agreement (2022-2023)	Details the Grants provided between The Commonwealth of Australia and Macquarie University as part of the Discovery Program.
FT220100427 Submitted Application	Information collected to make recommendations to the Minister on the allocation of financial assistance under the Australian Research Council Act 2001 and for due diligence and post award reporting.
FT220100427 ARC RMS Funding Details	Evidence of funding provided for the research project.
Casual Employment Policy	To detail the principles related to the employment of appropriately skilled and qualified casual staff.
Casual Employment Procedure	To detail the steps and responsibilities associated with the recruitment, selection and appointment of casual staff.
Credit Card Policy	Specifies the principles that govern the issuing and use of a University Credit Card.
Credit Card Procedure	Establishes how the University facilitates the issuing and use of a University Credit Card pursuant to the Credit Card Policy.
Delegations of Authority Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In relation to any matter or class of matters, or in relation to any activity or function of the University, to appoint Delegates to perform those functions;</li> <li>To establish the requirements for approval and review of Delegations; and</li> <li>To specify the principles by which Delegations of Authority are exercised.</li> </ol>
Delegations of Authority Procedure	Provides instructions on how to request an amendment, deletion or addition to the Delegations of Authority Register in accordance with the Delegations of Authority Policy. This includes documenting the appointment of an Authorised Agent.

Expense Guideline	Provides advice regarding all non-contracted expenditure up to and including AU\$10,000 ex GST per transaction (Low Value Expenditure).
Expense Policy	Specifies the principles by which Macquarie University and its controlled entities (the University) will execute and manage all non-contracted expenditure with a total value up to and including AU\$10,000 ex GST per transaction (Low Value Expenditure).
Group Financial Risk Management Framework	Summarises the suite of activities, documents and behaviours which collectively serve to identify, manage and report on risks within identified Financial Cycles.
Project and Operations Ledger Account Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Covers the purpose, set-up, usage, carry-forward and use of residual funds.</li> <li>b. Establishes the permitted uses of the two ledgers (Project and Operations Ledgers) within the University finance system, and the authority for governance and procedural ownership of the Project and Operations Ledgers.</li> </ul>
Project and Operations Ledger Account Procedure	To support the implementation of the Project and Operations Ledger Account Policy. Provides guidance on the process of creation and maintenance of an account in the Project and Operations Ledgers.
Travel Policy	Specifies the principles by which Macquarie University and its Controlled Entities (the University) will facilitate Travel for Business.
Travel Procedure	Outlines the required processes for Travel for Business for Macquarie University and its Controlled Entities (the University).

# Appendix D – Personnel consulted

We would like to extend our thanks to the following key individuals involved in the review:

*Table 8: Personnel consulted*

Stakeholder name	Stakeholder title
[REDACTED]	Deputy Group, Chief Financial Officer
[REDACTED]	Pro Vice-Chancellor of Research Services
[REDACTED]	Director, Research Grants and Awards
[REDACTED]	Finance Business Partner, Faculty of Arts
[REDACTED]	Purchasing Manager
[REDACTED]	Finance Business Partner, Faculty of Arts

#### Inherent Limitations

We believe the statements made in this report are accurate, but no warranty of completeness, accuracy or reliability is given in relation to the statements and representations made by, and the information and documentation provided by MQU management and personnel. We have indicated within this report the sources of the information provided and have not sought to independently verify those sources.

The internal audit findings expressed in this report have been formed on the above basis and do not provide an evaluation of control procedures into the future or an opinion or view on the effectiveness of the greater internal control structure.

#### Third party reliance

This internal audit report has been prepared at the request of MQU in connection with our engagement to perform internal audit services as detailed in the statement of work dated 8 January 2024. Other than our responsibility to the Council and Management of MQU, neither EY nor any member or employee of EY's undertakes responsibility arising in any way from reliance placed by a third party, including but not limited to MQU's external auditor, on this internal audit report. Any reliance placed is that party's sole responsibility.

#### Draft Report Limitations

This draft report contains preliminary information and is not to be relied on in any way. This draft report is intended solely for the information of management of MQU and should not be shared with any other parties. EY assumes no responsibility for this draft report.

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