Policy Title: Research Grants and Funding Management

Policy Owner: Director, Office of Research and Innovation

Keywords: 1) Research 2) Grant 3) Agreement 4) Award

Policy Code: PL236 [ac092]

1. INTENT

This policy outlines the key principles associated with the administration and management of research funding and the associated costing of research activities.

2. ORGANISATIONAL SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff, affiliated researchers and students involved in research and research-related activities at ECU.

3. DEFINITIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>DEFINITION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Chief Investigator”</td>
<td>a researcher who applies for and receives research funds on behalf of the University, who leads the research activity and ensures that the research project is conducted in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding agreement or contract and University policies. Where more than one Chief Investigator is identified on a project, the first named Chief Investigator shall be responsible for the management of the project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Collaborative Research”</td>
<td>research conducted jointly by two or more investigators within or across organisations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“DOET”</td>
<td>the Department of Education and Training being the Commonwealth Government Department responsible for collecting the University’s research income performance data, the name of which may be subject to change from time-to-time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TERM</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Funding Body”</td>
<td>a grant awarding body, industry partner, sponsor, client, organisation contracting research work or other external organisation which provides funding for research undertaken by staff and research students of the University.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Intellectual Property”</td>
<td>all rights resulting from intellectual activity whether capable of protection by statute, common law or in equity and including copyright, discoveries, innovations, patent rights, registered and unregistered trade-marks, design rights, circuit layouts and plant varieties and all rights and interests of a like nature including but not limited to methods and techniques, together with any documentation relating to such rights and interests.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Investigator”</td>
<td>a researcher who participates in a research project.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Research”</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Research Agreement”</td>
<td>a contract entered into with an industrial, private or public sector organisation. Its aims, objectives and project milestones are typically determined by, or in negotiation with, the external party. The project typically involves an agreed program to provide research services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Research Grant”</td>
<td>sponsored research (basic, strategic, applied or experimental) arising from an application to a funding body that typically:</td>
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<td>• is subject to a competitive process involving review of project applications by experts who are often independent from the sponsoring body;</td>
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<td>• does not specify a precise research deliverable or outcome other than a report; and</td>
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<td>• is defined in scope and objectives by the researcher rather than the funding body.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Research grants normally refer to those provided by external funding bodies however, for the purposes of this policy, it may also extend to grant schemes offered internally e.g. via the Office of Research and Innovation and Schools.</td>
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4. POLICY CONTENT

4.1 The University’s approach to its research is targeted and welcoming of collaborative partnerships. Strategies include; concentrating research in areas of strength and excellence; engaging widely with local, national and international institutions, industry and community partners, and all levels of government; establishing and partnering in Research Centres; appointing researchers who are leaders in their fields; and utilising research outcomes as appropriate through publication, teaching, further research, translation to impact policy and practice within organisations, knowledge transfer and research commercialisation.

4.2 Research funding is critical to ensure the sustainability of the University’s research profile. Researchers are encouraged to actively seek research funding from a wide range of external sources including corporations, foundations, Commonwealth, State and local governments, primary industry, private industry and research institutes.

4.3 The Office of Research and Innovation (ORI) provides support to researchers in all phases of the research grant/funding management process including:

- identifying research funding opportunities;
- supporting the preparation of funding applications and providing critical feedback to enhance the quality of applications and ensuring compliance with funding scheme rules;
- submission of applications to funding body;
- negotiating research agreements and variations to agreements;
- managing the terms of the grant; and
- reporting to the funding agency.

4.4 All formal applications to external funding agencies or potential sponsors for research funding and all legal and other communications, including submission of progress and final reports, must be conducted through ORI.

4.5 The Finance and Business Services Centre (FBSC) are consulted and endorse financial considerations included in grant applications, agreements and variations to the agreements, as well as subsequent award, management and acquittals. Disclosure of any financial information for any purpose will only take place with the approval of FBSC.

4.6 Research Agreements and awards may only be entered into when the research activity and its outputs and outcomes accord with the University’s interests and those of its staff and students. The research activity must not be contrary to the University’s strategic objectives.

4.7 Research Agreements and awards may only be entered into after due consideration of the costs of the work to the University, the recovery of these costs and other important issues such as the ownership of intellectual property, equipment and project assets; ethics requirements; liability; confidentiality; risk management (including safety and health); and legislative compliance.
4.8 ORI manages the review of all agreements in accordance with the University’s Integrated Risk Management policy and the Intellectual Property policy.

4.9 Collaborative research projects with other organisations should have a written agreement before a project begins which typically cover financial management, intellectual property, authorship and publication, consultancies, secondments, ethics approval and ownership of equipment and data.

4.10 Research funds should not be released to researchers for expenditure until all requirements of the relevant University Ethics Committees have been met and agreements executed. Interim accounts may be established only under exceptional circumstances, subject to the conditions as outlined in the ECU Research Grants Funding Management Guidelines.

4.11 This policy should be read in conjunction with the ECU Research Grants and Funding Management Guidelines.

5. ACCOUNTABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In relation to this policy, the following positions are responsible for the following

Policy Owner

The Policy Owner being the Director, Office of Research and Innovation, has overall responsibility for the content of this policy and its operation in ECU.

Staff/students

Staff/students are required to comply with the content of this policy and to seek guidance in the event of uncertainty as to its application.

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

6.1 The policy is supported by the following Guidelines:

- Research Grants and Funding Management Guidelines.

6.2 Other documents which are relevant to the operation of this policy are as follows:

- Accumulated Operating Surpluses Policy (ad061)
- Asset Management and Disposal Policy (ad053)
- Code of Conduct (hr117)
- Competitive Neutrality and Anti-Unconscionable Conduct Procedure
- Conduct of Ethical Human Research Policy (ac023)
- Conduct of Ethical Research and Teaching Involving Animals (ac025)
- Conflicts of Interest Policy and Guidelines (rm009)
- Delegations and Authorities Manual
7. CONTACT INFORMATION
For queries relating to this document please contact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Owner:</th>
<th>Director, Office of Research and Innovation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All Enquiries Contact:</td>
<td>Manager, Research Operations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone:</td>
<td>08 6304 5400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Address:</td>
<td><a href="mailto:research@ecu.edu.au">research@ecu.edu.au</a></td>
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8. APPROVAL HISTORY

<table>
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<th>Vice-Chancellor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date first approved:</td>
<td>12 December 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date last modified:</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
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Revision history:
- 20 November 2015 – minor amendments made as a result of the academic organisational restructure, approved by the Policy Owner.
- 9 December 2015
- 11 September 2017 – Reviewed and Updated, approved by AB and Vice-Chancellor

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<th>September 2020</th>
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<td>HPRM file reference:</td>
<td>SUB/30612</td>
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Edith Cowan University

Research Grants and Funding Management Guidelines

A comprehensive guide to funding your research, from finding funding to closing your project and who can help.

July 2017
1.0 Purpose

These guidelines outline the operational processes associated with the administration and management of research funding and should be read in conjunction with the University's Research Grants and Funding Management Policy.

Research is defined as ‘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.’ This definition encompasses pure and oriented basic research, applied research and experimental development (HERDC).

Research grants refer to external funding including tenders, contract research and direct offer of funding for research projects that meet the definition of research. For the purposes of these guidelines, it may also extend to grant schemes offered internally by the Office of Research and Innovation (ORI) and Schools.

2.0 Overview of ORI Services

ORI plays a critical role in supporting and encouraging researchers’ existing and emerging expertise. Our goal is to ensure researchers are continuously supported to secure funding for their research.

ORI offers a range of services to support and inspire researchers, including:

- Professional development activities;
- Developing research ideas;
- Submission of research applications;
- Research ethics advice;
- Administration of ECU funding schemes;
- Contract preparation, execution and variations;
- Management of funding and milestones;
- Facilitating collaborations;
- Industry liaison and promotion; and
- Research commercialisation and intellectual property advice.

Applications to external agencies or potential sponsors MUST be conducted through ORI. This includes all legal and other communications, including submission of progress and final reports.

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3.0 Pre-award - from finding funding to submitting a grant application

The pre-award team consists of Research Administration Officers (RAOs) and Research Development Advisors (RDAs) who can assist you with finding funding, developing your grant proposal and budget, reviewing drafts, obtaining relevant School approvals and submission.

3.1 Finding research funding

Researchers can obtain research funding from a range of sources, including direct industry funding, dedicated funding bodies and grant schemes. ORI staff can assist you with making decisions that closely align with your research interests and needs.

The University’s Research Intranet – Research Journey provides links to a number of useful resources, such as SPIN and Research Professional funding databases. The Research Professional database allows you access to the content and ability to customise your searches. ORI compiles a weekly funding opportunities alert which is distributed via the Research Weekly email.

The University offers a number of internal funding opportunities, including the ECU Early Career Researcher Grant Scheme and the ECU Industry Collaboration Scheme.

More information on funding your research with an internal grant and how to apply, or subscribing to the Research Weekly newsletter, is available on the Research Intranet.

3.2 Pre-award Help

RDAs are available to assist with developing research concepts, budget construction and with reviews of your drafts. They are nominally allocated to Schools and disciplines and, when required, work across Schools. The RDA contact information for your School can be found on the University’s Research Intranet - Research Journey.

RAOs are available to assist with administrative aspects of grant applications, including assisting you with queries regarding funding guidelines and compliance, submitting an expression of interest, formatting requirements, compilation of documents, and submission processes including internal approval.

3.3 Pre-award processes

Once you have identified a suitable funding opportunity, there are a number of pre-award processes to go through before your application can be submitted to the funding body. These include:

- Submitting an Expression of Interest (EOI) via the ECU Research Management System (ECURMS);
- Developing your proposal and budget;
- Review of your proposal;
- Determining if any cash contributions are required from the University (such
as a co-contribution or shortfall on available funding);

- Obtaining approval e.g. from your School Finance Coordinator (SFC), Associate Dean, Research (ADR);
- Submitting the proposal; and
- responding to funding body enquiries or reviewer feedback.

3.3.1 Submitting an Expression of Interest

Approval from your School's Associate Dean, Research is required before you submit a proposal to a funding body. This can be obtained by submitting an EOI through the ECURMS, which is accessible via the Student and Staff Portal. The ECURMS Guidelines and an EOI Cheat Sheet (link) can assist with your submission.

An EOI should be submitted to provide a brief outline of your research plan, details of any financial contributions required from the School, and co-researchers and partners/collaborators.

When the EOI has been approved, you and the School's RAO will be notified.

3.3.2 Developing a research proposal and budget

To ensure you understand the objectives and requirements of the funding scheme, refer to the funding guidelines and assessment criteria.

Most funding bodies provide detailed instructions on format, content and structure. You should read these instructions and follow all guidance provided, in particular adhering to any page limits and formatting requirements or your application may be ruled ineligible.

When writing your proposal, remember that you need to convince the reviewers that the proposed project needs to be done and you are the best person to do it. It is therefore critical to demonstrate your in-depth knowledge of the current state of research in the area by discussing the field's directions, knowledge gaps and similar research being done by other colleague.

Establishing an effective research team is extremely important. Think about the strategic reasons for including researchers on your project and remember your own research track record will also be considered by the reviewers.

3.3.3 Key considerations

In developing the research proposal, you should consider:

- All relevant application materials provided by the funding body, including funding rules, eligibility criteria, instructions to applicants and potential funding agreements;
- Time frames for submission to allow sufficient time for internal and external (if required) reviews and approval;
- RDA assistance with the development of the application;

Funding bodies may impose budget limitations, define requirements and presentation style. You will need to consider these when preparing the budget. Having a clear link between the research plan and expenditure items will create a convincing budget justification.
3.3.4 Budget preparation

Research projects need to be fully costed, including the following direct costs:

- Salaries for academic, research and professional staff (inclusive of salary on-costs);
- Equipment;
- Travel and accommodation;
- Consumables; and
- Dissemination.

Your School’s RDA and SFC can assist you with developing the budget, some funding bodies provide a template for this.

3.3.5 Data management planning

The responsible conduct of research includes proper management and retention of the research data. When you are preparing a proposal for a funding body, also consider your Data Management Plan outlining how the data generated from the project will be stored, retained, made accessible for use and reuse and/or disposed of. While the data generated from the project will be owned by the University, as Chief Investigator, you will be the custodian and responsible for implementing a data management plan.

If the proposal is successful, you will be responsible for ensuring the research team are aware of the plan and implementation occurs by those team members who are assigned specific tasks.

3.4 ORI review process

If an RDA (or peers) is reviewing your proposal, please allow plenty of time PRIOR to the internal submission deadline, being 10 days prior to the external closing date. The RAO is required to proofread your full application and undertake a compliance and eligibility check. Any edits and changes will be returned to you to finalise prior to submission.
The RAO will coordinate the SFC approval of the budget and review the final proposal for compliance with funding body requirements and related University policies and guidelines. They will also proofread the application, making amendments and suggestions as needed. The RAOs undertake this final check to ensure the application complies with the funding body's guidelines and instructions, is free from any grammatical or typographical errors, and includes all required documentation, certifications and signatures.

4.0 Post award - from accepting an offer to closing the project

The post-award team consists of:

- Grants and Funding Liaison Officers (GFLOs);
- Research Ethics Team (RET);
- Research Contracts Team (RCT);
- School Finance Coordinators (SFCs); and
- Research Business Support (RBS).

These teams can assist you with accepting the award, meeting research ethics requirements, negotiating contracts, setting up a project account and meeting project milestones.

4.1 Award and acceptance

If your proposal is successful, you will need to accept the award in the ECURMS.

If the awarded amount is less than the submitted budget, a revised budget approved by the School’s ADR and SFC will need to be submitted to the GFLOs prior to accepting the award.

At this point in the process you should be considering what you will need to do to meet research ethics requirements.

4.2 Direct offer of funding research projects

This type of project arises when a researcher is offered funding by a funder outside of a formal process. You should advise the GFLOs of these projects as soon as you can and provide the following supporting documentation:

- A final copy of the project proposal;
- A copy of the award notification letter or email; and
5.0 Managing your project

Effective project management is essential for obtaining successful outcomes and will enhance your own track record and increase your chances of securing subsequent external funding.

Once the award has been accepted, there are a number of important processes to manage:

- Preparing, reviewing, negotiating and signing the research contract;
- Meeting research ethics requirements;
- Opening a project account;
- Conducting the project;
- Conducting invoicing;
- Reporting research outputs;
- Milestone reporting;
- Preparing and coordinating contract variations where applicable;
- Finalising the project; and
- Implementing your research data management plan.

The post-award team will be your main contact and will assist you with each of these processes.

5.1 Contract preparation and review

The University enters into an agreement/contract with the funding body (and any other collaborators) for research projects.

If you are the first named investigator or Chief Investigator, you will be responsible for complying with the University’s policy and procedures as outlined in the Research Grants and Funding Management Policy, established to ensure the obligations of the funding contract are met.
The RCT will work with you to review, negotiate and coordinate the sign-off and execution of the contract. The team will manage the internal reviews including legal, finance and risk assessment ensuring contract terms meet University requirements and the contract aligns with the research project. Only the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) and the Director, Office of Research and Innovation are authorised to sign research contracts for the University.

You will be required to review drafts of the contract to ensure all of the details are accurate, up-to-date, reflect the current project plan and that any requirements relating to dissemination or later use of the findings are acceptable.

Your project must be carried out as described in your proposal and in accordance with the terms of the funding contract or conditions of award. You will need to remain aware of these terms/conditions throughout the life of your project and notify the RCT of any and all significant changes to project scope, timing, personnel or budget expenditure. Significant changes may require a variation to the contract to be negotiated and the RCT will manage this process with you and communicate with the funding body and any collaborators.

5.2 Assignment of Intellectual Property (IP)

All University academic staff and students involved in the research project are required to sign a deed which assigns ownership of IP to the University. It is the Chief Investigator’s responsibility to ensure all project researchers complete IP assignment forms and return these to the RCT.

5.3 Meeting research ethics requirements

The Australian research environment is governed by a number of guidelines on how the practice of research is to be conducted. To maintain its standing as an ethical research and teaching institution, the University must comply with the relevant guidelines including the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research. Consequently, all research projects must comply with research ethics requirements.

You will need to submit an application for ethics approval if your research project involves the use of:

- Human participants; or
- Previously collected confidential data; or
- Animals for scientific purposes.

If none of these apply to your project, you will need to complete an Ethics Declaration. Both the declaration and application for approval can be completed online using STREAM. New users should first refer to one of the Getting Started Guides.

Ethics requirements must be in place before a project can start. Retrospective ethics approval cannot be granted.

More information is available on the Research Intranet – Research Ethics website.

5.3.1 Development phase approval

Executive ethics approval may be granted to allow funds to be released for the development phase of the project only. The conditions of executive ethics approval are as follows:

- Approval is for the development phase only, and does not include approval to conduct any recruitment
of participants or data collection for research involving humans, or any use of animals for scientific purposes; and

- A full ethics application must be reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee before any recruitment or data collection can occur.

5.3.2 Multi-centre research projects

If research ethics approval has been granted for your project by another institution’s ethics committee, you will need to send a copy of the following documents to the research ethics team:

- Ethics application approved by the other ethics committee;
- Any supporting documents and correspondence; and
- Final ethics approval notification.

The RET will review the documents, assess any implications, determine monitoring conditions and provide feedback and/or approval.

5.3.3 Ethics monitoring and reporting

All ethics applications are approved with monitoring conditions, which are outlined when ethics approval is granted.

Researchers must complete an annual progress report (if the project is longer than one year) and a final report at the end of the project. You will be notified when a report is due.

These reports are submitted to the RET by email, the ethics report forms are available for download from the intranet website by following this link.

5.4 Record keeping

Retaining and maintaining documentation on your project will be managed by the post-award team. This includes copies of the proposal, contract, IP assignments and other authorisations.

5.5 Reporting progress to the funding body

Most, if not all, funding bodies will require the submission of regular progress reports. These can include progress, milestone, annual and final reports and will be detailed in the offer of award, conditions, or contract.

You will be responsible for preparing and writing the reports. The GFLOs will assist in tracking due dates and submitting the reports on behalf of the University to the funding body.

5.6 Managing the budget

The SFC will arrange access to the funds and monitor the expenditure throughout the life of the project.

The funding body may also require annual and final financial statements to be submitted with progress reports. This requirement will be detailed in the contract. The SFC will record all expenditure within the University’s financial system and is responsible for completing the final acquittal of your project. The GFLOs will submit the reports to the funding body.

5.7 Contract variations

There may be times when changes need to be made to a project, (e.g. changes to personnel and reporting timelines). Whilst not all changes will require the consent of the funding body, many will. For example, if researchers for the project change or delays arise in meeting the reporting due dates.

You should contact the GFLOs once it becomes apparent that there is a variation to any aspect of the project or research contract. The team will advise if the change to the project requires notification to the funding body.
body, a formal request, consent received or variation agreement. The GFLOs and RCT will work with you by reviewing the contract requirements. If required, RCT will assist you with preparing and reviewing the variation documentation, communicating with the funder and coordinating signing of the variation.

5.8 Terminating a project

There are a number of reasons why your project may need to be terminated early. Please liaise with the post-award team who can assist with the following:

- Review of the contract terms and conditions;
- Review of the budget by the SFC to identify the impact of the termination; and
- Recommendation on the viability of a termination.

5.9 Closing your project

When you come to the end of your project, the following requirements need to be fulfilled:

- Submission of final report and financial acquittal to the funding body;
- Final ethics report to be completed;
- Storage of records in accordance with University policy and State legislation;
- Attending to the retention of research data according to your Data Management Plan; and
- Closing the project in various University systems, such as ECURMS.

The GFLOs will liaise with you on these requirements and confirm when all conditions have been met and the project is closed.

5.10 Final reporting

Most funding bodies will require a final report and the format, due date, requirements, etc. will be detailed in the contract.

You will be responsible for preparing and writing the final report, in conjunction with any participants. The report should be forwarded to the GFLOs who will coordinate any financial statements that are required. The final budget position is important and the SFC will work with you on the impact of any residual funds or budget overspends.
6.  Acronyms

ADR  Associate Dean, Research
CRA  Coordinator Research Administration
ECURMS  Edith Cowan University Research Management System
EOI  Expression of Interest
GFLO  Grants and Funding Liaison Officer
MRO  Manager, Research Operations
ORI  Office of Research and Innovation
RAO  Research Administration Officer
RCT  Research Contracts Team
RDA  Research Development Advisor
RET  Research Ethics Team
SFC  School Finance Coordinator
STREAM  System for Tracking Research Ethics Applications and Monitoring
USC  University Services Charge

7.  Policies

Accumulated Operating Surpluses Policy
Asset Management and Disposal
Code of Conduct
Conduct of Ethical Human Research Policy
Conduct of Ethical Research and Teaching Involving Animals Policy
Conflicts of Interest Policy and Guidelines
Fraud and Misconduct Prevention and Management Policy
Intellectual Property Policy
Integrated Risk Management Policy
Joint Arrangements Policy
Research Centres and Institutes Policy
8. Useful contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTACT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Award Team</td>
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