

University Research Fellowships Scheme - Procedures



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Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Term for policies and procedures.

1. Call for expressions of interest

To initiate the call for expressions of interest, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) submits an Authority to Recruit to Human Resources.

Advertising is organised and coordinated by Human Resources.

2. Key steps for applicants

1. Read guidelines

2. Complete Application Form

3. Contact the School and/or Research Centre to identify possible Academic Mentor

4. Applicants must establish contact with a prospective Academic Mentor to discuss research opportunities, priorities and alignment with existing research strengths to facilitate the development of their project plan

5. Submit the Application Form along with any other documentation required by the due date.

3. Submission of applications

Applications must reach Human Resources by 5pm on the advertised closing date. Late Expressions of Interest will not be accepted.

Applications are to be submitted as a pdf file by email to USCcareers@usc.edu.au.

Guidelines are provided and applicants must complete all sections of the application form and any other documentation requested.

Applicants must ensure that their prospective Academic Mentor completes an Academic Mentor Statement and submits this to Human Resources.

Human Resources will acknowledge applications as soon as possible after the application closing date.

3.1. Academic mentor statement

Each applicant must discuss their research plans with a proposed Academic Mentor and gain their support.

Applicants will complete section A of the Academic Mentor Statement and give this to their proposed Academic Mentor. Applicants should notify their proposed Academic Mentor when they have submitted their application so that the Academic Mentor can complete the form.

If the proposed Academic Mentor is willing to supervise the applicant for the term of the Fellowship they will complete section B and seek the required certification from the Head of School and/or Director of Research Centre. The completed form is to be sent to Human Resources within 1 week of the closing date for applications.

If the proposed Academic Mentor is not willing to act as a supervisor they must inform the applicant during initial discussions and before the closing date for application.

4. Fellowship Selection Panel

A Selection Panel is appointed and chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) to consider all expressions of interest for any one round. Additional panel members may be co-opted at the discretion of the Chair.

The membership will include:

- Heads of School
- Head (Research)
- Directors of USC Research Centres or nominees

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Office of Research

FIRST APPROVED

1 December 2011

LAST AMENDED

7 August 2019

REVIEW DATE

20 March 2024

STATUS

Active

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The Chair is required to ensure that every panel member is aware that all information in relation to the selection process is confidential. Private and personal information provided by applicants is to be kept in strict confidence.

During the selection process for new Fellows the role of the panel is to:

- short list preferred applicants
- interview shortlisted applicants
- rank candidates on the basis of merit and determine which candidates should be recommended by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for appointment.

5. Eligibility

To be appointed as an Early Career Research Fellow (Level B), applicants:

- are within 5 years since the award of their doctoral qualification at the time of the closing date of applications, or
- have submitted a PhD (or equivalent) thesis and expect to be awarded a PhD (or equivalent research doctorate) within 3 months from the closing date of applications. If these conditions are not met, the offer of a Research Fellowship may be revoked
- their proposed project aligns with an identified research priority.

To be appointed as a Senior Research Fellow (Level C), applicants:

- are an established researcher with over 5 years of research experience since the award of their PhD or equivalent research doctorate
- have an excellent research track record in an identified area of strength, with a proven capacity for research leadership, and
- their proposed project aligns with an identified research priority.

6. Short listing

The Fellowship Selection Panel will rank all applications and decide which applicants are placed on a shortlist. Statements from prospective Academic Mentors will be taken into consideration during the short listing process.

Short listing will normally take place within four weeks of the closing date for applications. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will provide Human Resources with names of the short listed candidates who are to be interviewed.

7. Interviews

Short listed applicants will be invited to attend an interview. Applicants must be given reasonable notice of their requirement to attend an interview and/or participate in other forms of assessment.

8. Selection

Each application is assessed by the Fellowship Selection Panel. Applicants will be considered and ranked according to quality and trajectory of their track record, relative to opportunity. Project proposals will also be ranked according to quality and degree of alignment with existing research priorities.

The Fellowship Selection Panel will use the same process for all applications; however, when necessary additional measures may be used to distinguish between closely matched candidates.

8.1. Quality and trajectory of the applicant's track record relative to opportunity

Applicants are expected to demonstrate their personal achievement in relation to:

- refereed publications (over the last 5 years) and other acknowledged research outputs that are discipline specific. Applicants must clearly identify their contribution as distinct from other contributors and provide evidence of the quality of the output (impact factor, citations etc)
- external funding awarded over the last 5 years. Applicants must clearly identify their contribution as distinct from other contributors
- esteem measures (key note addresses or invitations to present, prizes and awards, committee/board membership etc)
- technology transfer activities
- outreach activities (including engagement with external partners)
- supervision of research students. In the case of all applicants, supervision of higher degree research students and number of completions will also be taken into consideration.
- Applicants are expected to demonstrate their experience with, and capacity to:
 - provide research leadership
 - establish new linkages with local, domestic and international research groups and manage existing collaborations
 - manage and mentor other research staff, and
 - contribute to the research agenda of the host School and University more broadly

8.2. Referee Checks

Applicants will provide the names and contact details for three referees.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will carry out the reference checks or may delegate this to another member of the Fellowship Selection Panel.

Referees may be contacted at any stage during the selection process to assist with the short listing process or to obtain further information and verification following interview.

Reference checks are confidential and must be completed before an appointment offer is made.

9. Category and Number of Fellowships recommended for appointment

All Fellowships are offered at the discretion of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) based on recommendations from the Fellowship Selection Panel.

The following considerations are used to determine the number offered, the category of Fellow/level of appointment and appointment destination:

- Total amount of funding available for the Fellowship scheme each year
- Quality of applicants
- Alignment of applicant research projects to existing University research priorities

10. Notification of appointment

Once appointments are approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) can notify the successful candidates by telephone. This will be followed up with a letter of offer.

Successful candidates should not make any decisions regarding the offer of employment until the written letter of offer is received, read, signed off and a contract of employment is established.

11. Appointment duration

The Fellowships are funded for a five year period with a three year probationary period.

If a Fellow is awarded an externally funded Fellowship, the University Research

Fellowship will be suspended for the duration of the externally funded Fellowship, and can be reinstated after the cessation of the externally funded Fellowship for a period equivalent to the remainder of the term of the original University Fellowship.

12. Remuneration

Early Career Research Fellows are remunerated on the Level B salary scale, commencing on the first step of the scale. Senior Research Fellows are remunerated at Level C, commencing on the first step of the scale.

Annual increments are awarded subject to satisfactory performance.

Base salaries for Fellows appointed under this University Research Fellowship Scheme will be met by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

Salaries above these will not be supported by the Fellowship. However, subject to successful negotiation with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), supplementation within the Level by the host School may be negotiated at the time of appointment where a Fellow is currently occupying a position above the proposed level, or where their track record is such that a higher level of remuneration is deemed appropriate.

13. Work Allocation

During the first two years the Fellow will have a limited teaching commitment to facilitate the establishment of a productive research program.

Fellows are progressively integrated into a quality research and teaching role within a School. This progression is negotiated through formal Performance Planning and Review discussions.

The normal progression is outlined in the table below:

FELLOWSHIP YEAR	RESEARCH	TEACHING	ENGAGEMENT
1	90%	10%	
2	90%	10%	
3	80%	20%	
4	70%	20%	10%
5	60%	30%	10%

When allocating teaching responsibilities, Heads of School, Program Coordinators and Course Coordinators should comply where possible with the work allocations contained in these procedures.

Supervision of higher degree by research and Honours students should be considered as part of a teaching load.

The allocation and distribution of annual teaching hours is subject to negotiation with the Head of School and will be linked to appropriate program offerings which may be based on semester or session delivery.

14. Probation

Probationary periods are determined in accordance with the Performance Management - Managerial Policy.

Supervisors and Fellows should note the requirements for a Probation Plan in the Probation for Academic Staff - Procedures.

15. Performance, Planning and Review

Fellows must participate in formal Performance, Planning and Review discussions, in accordance with the University's Performance, Planning and Review (PPR) Procedures.

16. Research Support

Fellows may apply for a research support grant to cover research costs associated with the proposed project. Full justification is required. Two basic principles are used in determining award of research support grants. These are (i) accurate estimates of costs and (ii) a clear explanation of the reasons for all proposed expenditure in relation to the research plan.

Up to \$50,000 may be awarded over three years subject to funding available and at the discretion of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation). The award of funds in years two and three of the Fellowship to support project related costs are conditional upon the approval of the annual progress reports.

Newly appointed Fellows seeking research support must provide the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) with a research management plan which includes a fully justified budget. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will determine the amount of support provided. If the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) approves research support, the Office of Research prepares a statement of conditions of support and forwards this to the Fellow. The Fellow signs the statement of grant conditions and returns it to the Office of Research.

The School will open an account for the project, and request the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) to the transfer the grant funds into the account, notify the Fellow of the account number, and enter details onto the file and database.

Project funding for years two and three will be determined by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) on receipt of the annual progress report and budget statements. Funding carry over at the end of the third year will be at the discretion of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

16.1. Acquittal and file closure

At the conclusion of the Fellowship the School will close the project account, notify the Fellow of the project closure, and enter the relevant details onto the file and the database.

17. Annual Progress Reporting

Fellows are required to submit an annual progress report that includes a budget acquittal of any research support funding received. This report is to be submitted to the Office of Research by the 15th of December each year.

The Office of Research will provide a Report Template to Fellows six weeks in advance.

Fellows will report on both their research and teaching commitments to enable the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) to determine the extent to which conditions of the Fellowship are being met.

Typical information that is required:

- Teaching and HDR supervision activities
- Progress against Research Management Plan
- Research Highlights
- Research outputs
- External linkages
- Budget acquittal
- Plan for next 12 months
- Budget for the next 12 months and justification.

The Fellow will submit to the Office of Research copies of publications, conference papers or any other published outputs of the research project.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will review the report.

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Annual progress reports will contribute towards the Fellow's professional portfolio which will be used for the three year review and any promotion submission.

18. Third Year Probationary Review

A formal Fellowship review is conducted by the Probationary Review Panel at the end of the third year to determine if the Fellow qualifies for further employment.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will be provided with a copy of the probation review by the relevant Head of School.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) will consider the probation review and seek further advice from the Head of School if necessary.

19. Application for ongoing appointment

Six months prior to the completion of the Fellowship period the Fellow may apply for an ongoing appointment within the relevant School. The Fellow will provide an evidence-based portfolio to the Head of School who will consider the portfolio with the assistance of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation).

After that consideration, should the Head of School consider that the Fellow is suitable for ongoing appointment such an appointment will be recommended for commencement on the expiration of the Fellowship period.

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

[University Research Fellowships Scheme - Academic Policy](#)

LINKED DOCUMENTS

[University Research Fellowships Scheme - Academic Policy](#)