



# Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)

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Policy Name:	Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)		
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## Context

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The Australian Research Council (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 pure basic, strategic basic and applied research across science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), and humanities, arts and social sciences (HASS) disciplines, individually and in teams.

## Purpose

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The purpose of the Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) policy is to enable the research achievements of applicants in the NCGP to be evaluated in the context of their 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 ROPE to enable consideration of a researcher's capacity, productivity and contribution in the context of opportunity and experience. ROPE is intended to ensure equitable access for eligible researchers at all career stages to NCGP schemes. Since ROPE was introduced, NCGP proposals that include career interruptions have had similar or higher success rates as those that do not include career interruptions.

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

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### ***Research Opportunity***

Research opportunity provides context for performance evidence and can include:

- research training
- employment in positions with a research component, either within the research sector or outside academia
- 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 specifically allows researchers to quantify significant interruptions relating to career and/or life experiences, which have affected their research capacity, productivity or contribution. The ARC recognises that the impact of any such significant interruption may extend beyond the duration of a specific event. It allows researchers to quantify the full extent of any significant career interruption, reflecting their individual circumstances. Assessors consider performance evidence in relation to the duration of the significant career interruption.

Significant interruptions can include:

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

The nature and extent of significant career interruptions must be certified by the applicant's Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research or equivalent.

### ***Performance Evidence***

Performance evidence should be presented in the context of sector and discipline expectations and address scheme assessment criteria. Such performance evidence may demonstrate research quality, contributions to the research field including research training, contributions to the research sector and economic, environmental, social, cultural and other benefits arising from a candidate's research record.

The research activities, outputs and achievements that assessors in the NCGP evaluate can include:

- 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 National Health and Medical Research Council (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

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Under each scheme, ROPE 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, Frequently Asked Questions and the application form in RMS, sets out the relevant elements of ROPE for each scheme.

As part of the ARC's commitment to streamlined grant programs and processes, the mechanisms for implementing ROPE in ARC schemes are regularly reviewed and updated where improvements can be found.

## Contact details

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## Document control

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Number	Date Approved	Approved By	Brief Description
Version 2023.1	December 2023	Chief Research Officer	Minor edits to reflect changes made to simplify the implementation of ROPE in ARC schemes and to align with current Grant Guidelines.