

# Research Awards for Academic Staff following Parental Leave Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy informs staff of the conditions and procedures when applying for the Research Awards Program for Academic Staff following Parental Leave and should be read in conjunction with the [Research Awards for Academic Staff following Parental Leave Procedure](#).

(2) In line with the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework, the Australian Catholic University (ACU) is committed to the ongoing support of academic staff members who are primary carers and resume work at ACU following a period of approved parental leave, in association with the birth of an infant or adoption of an under-school age child. These Awards are designed to assist academic staff to re-establish their research profile consistent with the strategic directions of the University and the individual academic staff member's career pathway.

## Section 2 - Policy Statement

(3) The University will make available at least three (3) Research Awards per annum (valued at up to \$12,500 each) to academic staff who return to the University following a period of approved leave in association with the birth of an infant or adoption of an under-school age child. Eligible academic staff can apply for a Research Award within the period of two (2) years from the date of their return to work at ACU from such leave.

## Section 3 - Application of Policy

### Scope of the Awards

(4) At least three (3) research awards, valued at up to \$12,500 each, may be granted annually to academic staff members who meet the eligibility criteria under this Policy.

(5) The grant may be used for activities which include, but are not limited to:

- a. associated relevant travel for the project within Australia (or, in exceptional circumstances, overseas);
- b. buyout of some teaching time to enable time to pursue the research; or,
- c. hiring of research assistance support.

(6) Awards will not be granted for a staff member to complete doctoral or other postgraduate studies.

### Eligibility

(7) Academic staff who return to work on a full-time or part-time basis following a period of approved leave in association with the birth of an infant or adoption of an under-school age child may apply for a Research Award within the two-year period following resumption of duty. Applicants may claim interruptions to extend their eligibility.

(8) The granting of the Research Award will be directed towards establishing / re-establishing a staff member's

research profile, and thus facilitate continued advancement of the staff member's academic career pathway.

(9) The research proposal will normally be consistent with the research profile of the School / Faculty / Institute / Directorates within which the staff member is located and be supported by the staff member's National Head of School, Institute Director or Dean, and Executive Dean.

## Section 4 - Procedures

### Application Process

(10) Applications for a Research Award for Academic Staff following Parental Leave must be submitted on the [Research Awards for Academic Staff following Parental Leave Application Form](#).

(11) Applications must fully outline the nature of the proposed project, an indicative budget and the time required to pursue the project, including any time required away from the University to be contributed by the applicant. All applications must identify a suitable academic mentor with a track record of research excellence and external engagement.

(12) Applications must be submitted by close of business to the designated email address by the time and date advertised in the Staff Bulletin. Applications will be acknowledged in writing.

### Selection Process

(13) Applications will be assessed on a competitive basis by a Committee chaired by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise).

(14) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) will consider the diversity of committee membership, with a focus on equitable gender representation.

(15) In discussing an application, the Committee may, on a confidential basis, consult with relevant senior academic staff. The Committee may be assisted by a member of People and Capability, who may be present as an observer.

### Assessment Criteria

(16) In assessing applications, the Research Award Committee will consider:

- a. the quality and relevance of the proposed project (including the relevance of the proposed outcomes to the University's strategic direction and to the staff member's academic career pathway);
- b. the relevance of the proposed project in strengthening the research directions of the School / Institute / Faculty or Directorate in which the applicant works;
- c. evidence of the capacity of the School / Institute / Faculty or Directorate in which the applicant works to tangibly support the proposed project;
- d. the track record and expertise of the applicant (including conference papers, presentations, publications and evidence of external engagement etc) as recorded in ORION;
- e. any special conditions that have impacted on an applicant's track record;
- f. whether the applicant was in receipt of the Research Award in the previous year, with a view to prioritising those who have not received it;
- g. endorsement of the proposed research project by the National Head of School / Institute Director and Executive Dean or nominee to whom the applicant reports that:
  - i. the applicant has the capacity, at that stage of their professional development, to undertake the project;
  - ii. completion of the project is of demonstrated career advantage to the applicant; and

- iii. completion of the project is of clear advantage to the School / Institute / Faculty or Directorate in furthering research objectives of the [ACU Strategic Plan](#).

## Management of the Award Grant

(17) Funds will be provided on provision of all receipts / invoices related to the approved Award as set out in the application. All bookings for accommodation and travel should be made in accordance with the [Travel Policy](#) and through [FCM Travel Solutions](#) where possible. If actual expense incurred is less than the approved amount, the unspent funds will be retained by the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) central finance account.

## Obligations of Award Recipients

(18) Successful recipients of a Research Award are required to:

- a. Liaise with your nominated academic mentor;
- b. complete the research project within the agreed time frame;
- c. complete the research project to agreed standards; and
- d. provide the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise), Executive Dean and Associate Dean, Research with a comprehensive report on the research and its findings within three months of the completion of the project, including advice on where it will be published.

## Section 5 - Revisions made to this Policy

(19) The revision table includes revisions up until this document was migrated into the current policy platform. Any later changes will show in the Status and Details tab.

Date	Major, Minor or Editorial	Description
11 July 2016	Major	Updated to incorporate the provisions of the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2013 - 2017.
14 September 2018	Minor	Updated to include new ACU brand template, application procedure and other minor editorial updates.
14 September 2018	Major	Updated to include an additional Assessment Criteria item in relation to whether the applicant was in receipt of the Research Award in the previous year.
17 September 2019	Editorial	Minor editorial change to section 4.1.
24 August 2020	Minor	Amendments to section 4.1 Application Process requiring applicants to identify a mentor with a track record of research excellence and amendment to mentor description in section 4.5.
22 September 2021	Minor	Increase in number of awards available, editorial changes to ensure consistency across research awards, and updates to nomenclature.
8 November 2023	Editorial	Updated to incorporate the provisions of the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2022-2025. Updated Human Resources to People and Capability.

(20) The University will develop a process for reviewing the effectiveness of the Research Awards for Academic Staff established by this Policy. Where applicable, the review will take account of necessary changes to other relevant University policies and procedures. Any staff member wishing to suggest improvements to this Policy is invited to forward their suggestions to People and Capability.

## Section 6 - Further Assistance

(21) Staff members who require further assistance in understanding this Policy should refer to the [Research Awards for Academic Staff following Parental Leave Procedure](#) or consult their nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in their work area. Should further information or advice be required staff should visit [Service Central](#).

## Section 7 - Associated Information

(22) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	5th February 2024
<b>Review Date</b>	24th August 2025
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice-Chancellor and President
<b>Approval Date</b>	5th February 2024
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Angelle Laurence Chief People Officer
<b>Responsible Manager</b>	Angelle Laurence Chief People Officer
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	People and Capability