Thinking about research after your PhD?
This document contains a handy summary of opportunities for postdoctoral research at the University of Sydney. No matter what stage you’re at in your PhD, there are many things you can do to help increase your chances of success when you apply.

The University of Sydney has been consistently ranked by the *Times Higher Education Supplement* since 2006 in the top 20 universities in the world for arts and humanities. Research in the Faculty of Arts extends across a diverse range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, embracing traditional, emerging and cross-disciplinary subjects.

Applying for postdoctoral fellowships is highly competitive as there is only a limited number of fellowships available for funding each year. In order to develop a mature application, it is advisable that you begin to plan and discuss your project proposal as early as possible so that you will have at least three months to write and refine your application. The University of Sydney’s Research Office, the Faculty Associate Dean of Research, the Faculty Director of Research Development, Research Support Officers (RSO) in each School and the members of the Faculty Research Committee offer excellent support to help you to prepare the best application possible.

ARC Fellowships

The Australian Research Council (ARC) is the chief funding body for research in Australia and under its National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) the ARC provides support for high-quality research leading to the discovery of new ideas and the advancement of knowledge as well as training and skills development of the next generation of researchers.

The Discovery Projects (DP) scheme offers fellowships to nurture the talents of promising researchers by providing funding for research projects that can be undertaken by either individuals or research teams. Applications for funding under the DP scheme are processed once a year with the ARC deadline generally in the first week of March for funding to commence in the following year.

The Linkage Projects (LP) scheme supports collaborative research and development projects between higher education institutions and other organisations (including within industry). Proposals for funding under Linkage Projects must involve a partner organisation from outside the higher education sector. The partner organisation must make a significant contribution in cash and/or in kind to the project that is equal to, or greater than, the ARC funding. Applications for funding under the LP scheme are processed in two rounds each year with the deadlines falling in May and November.
Under both DP and LP schemes, you may apply as the sole researcher in the project or as a member of a research team for larger projects. You will need to keep your eyes out for opportunities for the latter since such projects are usually conceived by more experienced or established researchers such as your PhD supervisor or other academics.

The Discovery Indigenous Researchers Development scheme also provides support for researchers of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent. For further information, please contact Annette McLaren (see List of Contacts, p. 4).

What ARC Fellowships am I eligible for?
Most PhD students will be looking to apply for an Australian Postdoctoral Fellowship (APD) under the Discovery Projects scheme or an Australian Postdoctoral Fellowship (Industry) (APDI) under the Linkage Projects scheme.

Eligibility requirements for the APD and APDI are identical. These fellowships are available to those who have been or will be awarded a PhD no earlier than three years immediately preceding the closing date for applications. You may also apply if you are expecting to submit your PhD thesis before the end of the year of application and as long as the PhD is awarded by 30 June of the year in which the funding commences. For example:

To apply for an APD to commence in 2012, you must have been awarded a PhD no earlier than March 2008 since the deadline for applications will be in March 2011. If you are currently completing a PhD, you must submit your thesis before the end of 2011 in order to be eligible.

APDs are funded for 3 years. (see below under “Is it possible to hold the grant on part-time basis?”).

Indigenous Researcher Fellowships (IRF), which provide a salary equivalent to the APDs, are also available. For specific rules on eligibility and the award, please contact Annette McLaren (see List of Contacts, p. 4).

I've been employed in a non-research occupation since I completed my PhD more than 3 years ago. Can I still apply for an ARC fellowship?
You may be able to obtain approval from the ARC for the relaxation of the qualification and/or timing requirements of the fellowship by submitting an Eligibility Exemption Request prior to the application. The deadline for Eligibility Exemption Requests usually falls around two months before applications are due. To check whether you require an Eligibility Exemption Request, please contact Prof Margaret Harris or Annette McLaren (see List of Contacts, p. 4).

What do the ARC funds cover?
The bulk of the ARC funds provide for a full-time salary pro rata plus on-costs. The notional salary for an Australian Postdoctoral Fellowship and Indigenous Researcher Fellowship commencing in 2011 is $62,642 per annum. In addition, the University of Sydney will contribute a “top-up” to bring the salary in line with the starting level of the academic scale so that successful applicants will receive a total of $71,607 per annum.

Other costs which directly support the research project may be funded such as salaries for additional personnel, equipment, maintenance, access to workshop services linked to the project, and travel and accommodation. If you will be moving to Sydney from within
Australia or from overseas, the ARC can also provide a relocation allowance to the following maximum amounts:

- From North America – $17,000
- From Europe/Asia (Northern Hemisphere)/Africa/South America – $14,000
- From Asia (Southern Hemisphere)/Oceania – $11,000
- From within Australia – $8,000

**Is it possible to hold the grant on a part-time basis?**
If you are applying for 100% funding from the ARC for an APD, you will be expected to work full-time on your research project for 3 years. There is an alternative by which the ARC funds 75% of the salary plus pro rata on-costs for 4 years. The Fellow then spends 25% of their time on activities other than the proposed project, such as teaching or other professional activities. The Faculty has to agree to provide the remaining 25% of salary support for the Fellowship. Please contact the relevant Head of School if this is your preference. If you request that the other 25% of time be used on non-remunerated activities, such as family or carer responsibilities, the School may permit you to undertake a 75% fellowship-only role. Note that these options apply only to the APD and not the APDI.

**What is the ARC looking for in an application?**
Fellowships are awarded by the ARC to applicants on the basis of their research track record (or “Research Opportunities and Performance Evidence”, 40%) and proposed project (60%). A candidate with a good track record will already have a number of publications and some experience working in the relevant field of the project. Projects themselves are assessed on their significance and innovation, as well as the approach and methodology – you must be able to demonstrate the calibre of the project which should be original and not simply a rewriting or extension of your PhD thesis.

**How can I build my research track record?**
Publications are the principal component of your track record. Aim for articles in highly-ranked journals, mindful that you need quantity as well as quality, and that your productivity will be assessed relative to time elapsed since the award of your PhD. In practice, at least three articles published or accepted, would be a reasonable threshold for an application.

Relevant publications include books (think about publishing your PhD thesis as a book), a chapter in an edited collection, articles in refereed journals, and conference papers, especially if there is the likelihood that they will be included in refereed published proceedings.

In order to prove you are capable of undertaking the proposed research, you should take advantage of any opportunities which arise to involve yourself in research or work in the relevant area. If your project involves travelling to another country, it would be advantageous to make sure that you have done some fieldwork or have knowledge of the resources and informants situated there. This experience will also help you to formulate a solid and workable project and to write your application.
Where can I find out more information about ARC fellowships and the application process?
This guide to the ARC fellowships is by no means comprehensive. If you have any further queries or would like more detailed information, visit the ARC’s website at:
http://www.arc.gov.au/

The University of Sydney’s Research Office can assist with any difficulties you may have in understanding the rules – please contact Annette McLaren, Research Administrator (see List of Contacts below). You must also indicate your intention to submit an application and discuss your proposal with Professor Margaret Harris, Director of Research Development (see List of Contacts below).

University of Sydney Fellowships
The University of Sydney has a Postdoctoral Research Fellowship scheme which allows outstanding researchers within 1 to 6 years of the award of their PhD to undertake research in any department at the University of Sydney. These fellowships are highly competitive and strong preference is given to applicants from outside the University. These Fellowships are rarely awarded to applicants coming directly from their PhD and frequently go to applicants who have already held postdoctoral funding. The starting salary will be $72,433 per annum (as at 1 January 2009) and a total research support grant of $25,000 is provided. The duration of the Fellowship is three years. The closing date for applications usually occurs in mid-September.

Note that there are a number of other postdoctoral fellowship opportunities available with details on the Research office website.

Summary of Deadlines

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