

## **Important advice for external research grant applicants**

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The Research Office is noticing a rise in the number of communications, including grant applications, going directly from Macquarie University researchers to external funding bodies.

Researchers are asked to note that all external grant funding applications and all enquiries and communications must be directed to the Research Office. External funding bodies provide research funding not to the investigators themselves but to Macquarie University, which then devolves the funding to its researchers. Funding bodies expect the Research Office to be their only point of contact on administrative matters. There are no exceptions to this arrangement.

The Australian Research Council in particular has been reporting an upward trend in unsolicited enquiries from our University. As a result, it has asked us to ensure that researchers understand the Research Office's role in brokering their communications and ensuring compliance with funding agreements. The ARC is not prepared to field questions or receive correspondence directly from researchers. This is the case for researchers across all Australian Universities.

Where funding applications are concerned, the Research Office requires drafts to be first signed off by Departments and Deans of Division and then provided for review. In the case of funding rounds with a small number of applications, this must happen at least five working days before the despatch date to the external funding body (preferably fifteen working days). For ARC and NHMRC Schemes, researchers should without exception observe the advertised internal closing dates.

The timeframe for submission of applications allows Research Office staff to familiarise themselves with the rules of the funding scheme and to prepare advice for researchers and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). Only the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or his delegate has the authority to bind the University to the requirements of the external funding scheme.

With respect to external financial reports, financial reports are only to be prepared by the Office of Financial Services and signed off by the Director, Office of Financial Services or their delegate before submission to the funding body. Office of Financial Services staff will discuss and confirm report details with the academic Division prior to sign off and submission.

This does not mean that the Research Office or Finance Office is managing grants for researchers. Once funding is devolved to researchers they are required to manage their grants efficiently and effectively, monitoring progress against the milestones and budget put forward to the funding body, notifying the Research Office of any variations, substantiating claims for reimbursement of expenses when they put them to their Divisional administrators for processing, and preparing progress and final reports. The Research Office and Finance Office provide a brokering role with the external agencies and a compliance role only.

We ask all researchers for their cooperation in this regard. Compliance with the requirements of external agencies will assist Macquarie University researchers to gain even greater funding success. It also means that a record of your research grant making activity is recorded and tracked in the University's research information system from the outset.