



## Vice-Chancellor’s Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Early Mid-Career Research Fellowship Scheme Guidelines and Instructions 2024

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## 1 Introduction

- 1) The University of Wollongong (UOW) has a proud history of delivering research excellence that has impact.
- 2) The UOW 2020-2025 Strategic Plan sets out the University's vision to *inspire a better future through education, research and partnership*. Key to achieving this vision, is UOW's research strategy which positions UOW to create knowledge for a better world and be globally recognised for delivering impactful research that drives positive change.
- 3) To help realise this vision, and in line with the [UOW Reconciliation Action Plan](#), the UOW Vice-Chancellor's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Early Mid-Career Research Fellowship Scheme awards fellowship funding to connect outstanding Australian Indigenous researchers, within 10 years of Doctoral award<sup>1</sup>, with established, world-class academics working in highly productive research areas of strategic importance at UOW.

## 2 About the Fellowship Scheme

- 4) The Fellowship Scheme aims to grow Australian Indigenous research capacity at UOW by attracting and developing outstanding Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander early-mid career researchers.
- 5) Through the Fellowship Scheme, researchers will work full-time to establish a focused research program that will increase their potential to attract external research funding and to make an impact through translation and partnerships.
- 6) To be successful, candidates will have a highly competitive track record (relative to opportunity), an emerging national/international reputation, demonstrated leadership potential, and proven capacity to plan and conduct high quality research, attract competitive funding, regularly disseminate outcomes, develop national / international research networks and manage collaborative research projects. Candidates will propose an innovative program of research with the potential to make a significant contribution to the [University's research profile and priority research areas](#). Projects must also clearly align with the [research strategy of the host Faculty](#).
- 7) In 2024 there will be one targeted VC's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Early Mid-Career Research Fellowship, of three years duration, offered for early-mid career researchers within 10 years of award of their first Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 10 qualification. Both Doctor of Philosophy and Professional Doctorate (with a substantial research component or equivalent outputs) are accepted.
- 8) As this is a targeted appointment, all candidates are required to provide confirmation of their Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander heritage.
- 9) On successful completion of the Fellowship, and subject to meeting or exceeding performance expectations, the Fellow will have the opportunity to transition to a continuing academic position (teaching and research) at the University of Wollongong.
- 10) UOW is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. As an equal opportunity employer, and a recognised leader in gender equality, we encourage and welcome applications from

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<sup>1</sup> Taking into account any periods of significant career interruption which occurred after the Doctoral award date.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Australians, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people of all genders and from the LGBTIQ+ community, and people living with disability.

- 11) UOW also offers a non-targeted VC's Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Scheme which is open to all candidates within five years of Doctoral award date. Please refer to the [separate Scheme Guidelines and Instructions](#) for further information on this scheme. Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander candidates within five years of Doctoral award date are eligible to apply for either Fellowship scheme. Candidates who are eligible under both Schemes are welcome to submit two separate applications to be considered on merit against the selection criteria relevant to each Scheme.

### 3 Eligibility

#### Eligibility criteria

- 12) This is a targeted position and an affirmative measure, therefore is ONLY open to applicants of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage in accordance with an exemption granted under section 126 of the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW). This is a recruitment strategy to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed by the University of Wollongong.
- 13) Confirmation of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage is required as part of the application process.
- 14) Candidates must:
- a) be a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, and is accepted as such by the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community;  
AND
  - b) have been awarded a Doctorate on or before the closing date of applications;  
AND EITHER:
  - c) have been awarded a Doctorate no more than 10 years prior to the closing date of applications (i.e. awarded on or after 30 April 2014 for the 2024 Fellowship Round);  
OR
  - d) have been awarded a Doctorate prior to 30 April 2014, and have experienced periods of significant career interruption which occurred after the Doctorate award date, that when taken together would be commensurate with a Doctorate being awarded on or after 30 April 2014. Career interruptions of less than one month will not be considered, unless related to chronic illness or disability. The following types of interruption will be considered:
    - i. primary care of a dependent child (up to two years may be claimed per child, inclusive of parental leave);
    - ii. other carer's responsibility, for family or community members;
    - iii. disruption due to international relocation for postdoctoral studies or other research employment, not exceeding three months per international relocation;
    - iv. disability or medical condition;

- v. unemployment, or non-research employment outside of the research sector, including time working in industry;
- vi. limited or no access to facilities and resources—such as through workplace interruptions.

### **Confirmation of career interruption and eligibility**

- 15) Candidates whose Doctorate was awarded prior to 30 April 2014, and who are claiming a career interruption to establish eligibility, must submit a written Confirmation of Eligibility Request of no more than 300 words to [research-services@uow.edu.au](mailto:research-services@uow.edu.au) addressed to the Director, Research Services Office (RSO) by 5pm, Monday 15 April, 2024.
- 16) Candidates must clearly state the type/s (using numbering given in the list above), duration in weeks, and details of each career interruption, clearly indicating the total time period claimed to demonstrate that the period is commensurate with a Doctorate being awarded on, or after, 30 April 2014.
- 17) UOW reserves the right to seek independent confirmation of claims for career interruption.
- 18) *Confirmation of Eligibility Requests received after 15 April 2024 will not be accepted.*
- 19) Candidates whose Doctorate was awarded prior to 30 April 2014, but who do not confirm their eligibility through the above process, will be considered ineligible.

### **4 Selection Criteria and Assessment Process**

- 20) Applications will be ranked by a sub-committee of the University Research Committee (URC), with representation from relevant discipline areas, and including senior UOW Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander academic staff member(s).
- 21) The URC sub-committee will focus on the experience of the candidate (relative to opportunity) and the potential for the project to contribute to and develop research at UOW. Committee members will consider information provided in the application as well as Mentor and Referee Reports.
- 22) Candidates should ensure that their proposal can be easily understood by academics from outside their discipline area.
- 23) Applications will be assessed against the following selection criteria:
  - a. Research track record (publications, research achievements, awards, etc.) and the potential of the candidate, taking into account research opportunity (weighting 30%);
  - b. Current or future potential of the applicant for academic and/or cultural leadership, (weighting 20%);
  - c. The excellence of the proposed research project (weighted 40%);
  - d. Alignment of the research project and candidate with the research strategy of the host faculty (weighting 10%).
- 24) The URC sub-committee's decision regarding the selection of successful candidates is final. There is no avenue for appeal.

## 5 Application Process and Key Dates

### General Requirements

- 25) All candidates must secure the support of a UOW Mentor. It is preferable, but not essential, for the UOW Mentor to be located in the host faculty.
- 26) The UOW Mentor must be able to make a time commitment to providing support and guidance to the candidate over the life of the fellowship.
- 27) A Mentor cannot support more than one Fellowship candidate in each round of this Scheme.
- 28) Candidates must discuss their application with their proposed UOW Mentor, and the Head of the proposed host school, prior to commencing the application.
- 29) Applications that do not have appropriate endorsements will not be considered.

### Application

- 30) Candidates must submit the application online at the [UOW Jobs website](#) and upload the following **five documents** as PDFs.
  - a. **Project Proposal:** this section must outline the candidate's research plan for the duration of the Fellowship (maximum **4 pages, references additional** to the page count).

The following headings must be used:

    - Project title
    - Aims
    - Significance
    - Approach and methods
    - Project alignment with the host school/faculty
    - Strategic alignment with UOW priority research areas
    - Budget (\$10,000 p.a. is available for project costs - clearly state and justify these costs)
    - Project timeline
    - Expected outputs during the term of the Fellowship, including plans to publish and seek external research funding
    - Expected outcomes of the research, including economic, commercial, environmental and /or social benefits and impact beyond academia
    - References (not counted in page limit)
  - b. **Curriculum Vitae:** including qualifications, employment history, details of research performance (grants, contracts, awards, etc.), summary of significant contributions to the research field; evidence of academic and/or cultural leadership experience and/or potential; and a full publications list. No more than **4 pages, plus the publications list**.
  - c. **External Referee Report:** One Referee Report should be provided from a referee external to UOW. This referee is required to comment constructively on the research capability, potential and track record (relative to opportunity) of the candidate.
  - d. **UOW Mentor Report:** The UOW Mentor Report must detail how the candidate's research project aligns with the host research group and faculty, and with UOW strategic research priority research area/s. The Mentor Report must also outline support to be provided by the host research group and faculty during the Fellowship, and must be endorsed by the Head of the host school and host faculty Associate Dean Research.

- e. **Confirmation of Aboriginality (COA):** As this is a targeted position, confirmation of Aboriginality is required. UOW will accept the following as verification of a candidate's Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander heritage:
- i. a confirmation letter from a Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) on letterhead signed by the LALC Chairperson or the Chief Executive Officer confirming the candidate's acceptance as a LALC member; or
  - ii. a letter from an incorporated Aboriginal organisation where the applicant is known or lives (or where their family is known), stamped with the organisation's common seal as confirmation of Aboriginality.

Where a candidate is unable to obtain a COA letter, UOW will accept a Statutory Declaration that includes a detailed statement outlining how the applicant:

- i. is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent or both,
- ii. identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or both, and
- iii. is recognised by the community as such.

The Statutory Declaration must include a contact name and phone number of an Aboriginal community representative for verification purposes, and evidence to support this statement is encouraged and may be required.

- 31) The application must comply with the following formatting requirements:
- a. Single column and single spacing
  - b. 12-point font size in Times New Roman or Arial font. References may be 10-point font size.
  - c. At least 2 cm margins on all sides.
- 32) The UOW Mentor and External Referee Reports must be completed on the templates provided on the [UOW VC's Fellowships webpage](#).

### Interview

- 33) Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview with the representatives of the host faculty and the Selection Committee (either in-person or online, as appropriate).

### Key Dates

Applications open:	Late February 2024
Request for confirmation of eligibility due (if required):	Monday 15 April 2024
Application closing date:	Tuesday 30 April 2024
Interviews:	May 2024
Candidates notified of outcome:	May 2024
Fellowship commencement date:	Between 1 July - 31 October 2024

## 6 Conditions of Award

- 34) The Fellowship is awarded under the conditions outlined below.
- a. Funding for the Fellowship shall be awarded for a period of three (3) years.

- b. Throughout the approved Fellowship period, Fellows must become full-time, fixed-term employees of UOW and must not hold a concurrent paid appointment at another organisation. Part-time employment may be considered at any time during the Fellowship, however, the total duration of the Fellowship will not be extended beyond 3 years full-time (*pro rata* for part-time Fellows), unless approved by the DVC-RSF.
- c. A set of performance expectations, governed under the UOW Academic Staff Enterprise Agreement, will be established at the commencement of the Fellowship. The work performance of Fellows will be reviewed annually against these expectations by their supervisor in accordance with the University's Performance Enhancement and Career Development program, and must meet or exceed performance expectations. Fellowship funding will be contingent upon satisfactory performance being maintained.
- d. Fellows are expected to focus on research for at least 80% of their time for the duration of the Fellowship. Fellows will be required to undertake other duties for up to 20% of their time, made up of a combination of teaching, governance, and community engagement activities (as agreed between the Fellow, Head of School and Mentor).
- e. At the end of the third year, Fellows are eligible to transition to a continuing academic (teaching and research) position at UOW. Fellows must meet or exceed performance expectations during the term of the Vice Chancellor's Fellowship to be considered for a continuing UOW appointment.
- f. Fellowship appointments should commence between 1 August and 31 October 2024, unless otherwise approved by the DVC-RSF.
- g. A salary (taxable) will be provided. Appointment will commence in the range Level B to Level C of UOW's academic salary scale (step will be dependent on the successful candidate's experience and track record, as determined by the DVC-RSF).
- h. Fellows will be entitled to recreational, sick, parental, and cultural/ceremonial leave in accordance with the [University's Enterprise Agreement](#) for academic staff. All recreational leave must be taken within the period of the Fellowship. The RSO must be notified of parental leave in advance of the leave commencing. Requests to suspend or vary the working hours of a Fellowship must be submitted in writing to the RSO and be approved by the host school and DVC-RSF.
- i. For the term of the Fellowship, the proposed research (excluding fieldwork) will be carried out predominantly at one of UOW's Australian campuses, unless another location is approved by the DVC-RSF.
- j. Relocation costs will be paid as per the [UOW Relocation Assistance Guidelines](#).
- k. Fellows are to perform the duties as described in the Position Description to be provided with the Letter of Offer.
- l. Project costs of up to \$10,000 per annum for three years will be provided and approved based on assessment of the budget details in the application.
- m. During the period of the Fellowship, Fellows should seek additional funding through external grant funding schemes for projects/fellowships administered through UOW.
- n. Where a Fellow is awarded an external grant or fellowship which includes a salary component, the VC Fellowship will be discontinued from the commencement date of the external award. The VC Fellowship will not be extended or suspended. The VC Fellowship

project costs awarded will continue to be available concurrent with the external award until the end of the year in which the external fellowship commences. Transition to an external fellowship will not affect the opportunity to be appointed to a continuing position (transition will be managed on a case-by-case basis depending on duration of the external fellowship);

- o. Fellows are required to submit annual reports on their research work and funding expenditure, including details of their intended program for the following 12-month period. A final report, covering all aspects of the work undertaken, must be submitted at the completion of the Fellowship. All reports must be provided to the RSO.
- p. If a Fellow is considered not to be making satisfactory progress, the Fellowship will be reviewed by a committee appointed by the DVC-RSF which, at its absolute discretion, may terminate the Fellowship.
- q. The University asserts certain ownership rights of Intellectual Property created in the course of the Fellowship subject to the [University's Intellectual Property Policy](#).

## 7 Roles and Responsibilities

- 35) A sub-committee of the URC, chaired by the DVC-RSF, is responsible for the assessment and final determination of successful Fellowship applications.
- 36) The RSO is responsible for management of the application process including:
  - a. providing confirmation of eligibility due to career interruption (where required);
  - b. collating applications and supporting the URC sub-committee;
  - c. disseminating information relating to the application process and Fellowship outcomes;
  - d. managing any variations, including parental leave, during the term of the Fellowship;
  - e. receiving and approving annual and final reports.
- 37) The host faculty and school are responsible for:
  - a. contributing to the review of candidate applications through representation on the selection committee;
  - b. finalising recruitment processes for successful candidates;
  - c. onboarding and inductions;
  - d. establishing a set of performance expectations at the commencement of the Fellowship;
  - e. supervising the Fellow and managing all employment conditions, such as leave, career development interview, probation, performance, progression and promotion;
  - f. connecting the Fellow with opportunities for mentoring and academic career development throughout the period of the Fellowship;
  - g. providing a recommendation, through the Head of School, to the faculty Executive Dean at the conclusion of the Fellowship on the Fellow's suitability (based on performance against the expectations defined above) to transition to a continuing academic position at UOW.

## 8 Definitions

Word/Term	Definition
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Australian	An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Australian is a person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, and</li> <li>• Who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, and</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is accepted as such by the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community.</li> </ul>
Aboriginal ‘Targeted’ position	This position is ‘targeted’ to Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander Australians only. Under the provisions of Section 126 the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW), an exemption is granted from sections 8, 25 and 51 to enable UOW to put in place affirmative measures (previously known as special measures) to select any vacancies as open only to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander applicants. This is an employment strategy used to increase the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff employed with UOW.
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework (Second Edition January 2013)
Awarded an AQF Level 10 qualification	<p>Have met all the conditions for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy, Professional Doctorate, or other equivalent qualification recognised as meeting the AQF Level 10 criteria. For qualifications other than Doctor of Philosophy, a substantial research component or equivalent outputs will be required to be competitive.</p> <p>If all of the conditions for awarding of the degree have been met but the graduation ceremony has not yet taken place, a letter from the Postgraduate Student Office stating this, will be accepted.</p>
Confirmation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Heritage	<p>Where vacancies are advertised as an Aboriginal ‘Targeted’ role (affirmative measures, Sec 126 ADB NSW 1977), applicants are required to provide Confirmation of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Heritage.</p> <p>UOW accepts a Confirmation of Aboriginality Letter OR a Statutory Declaration as outlined in the Application Process (clause 30(e)).</p>
Doctorate	In these Guidelines, used to describe any degree qualification awarded at AQF Level 10
DVC-RSF	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Sustainable Futures)
External Referee	A person, not employed by UOW, who provides a reference statement for the candidate in terms of their research capability and track record.
Mentor	An experienced member of the academic staff at UOW who is championing the Fellowship application, and will act as a formal mentor to the applicant if the Fellowship is awarded.
Organisation	Australian or international university or a research organisation
RSO	Research Services Office
UOW	University of Wollongong
URC	University Research Committee

## 9 Contact for further information

University of Wollongong Research Services Office [research-services@uow.edu.au](mailto:research-services@uow.edu.au).