



## Vice-Chancellor’s Postdoctoral 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, the UOW Vice-Chancellor's Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Scheme awards fellowship funding to connect outstanding early career researchers, within five 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 VC's Fellowship Scheme aims to grow research capacity in key areas of strategic research focus at UOW by attracting and supporting high-performing early career researchers.
- 5) Through the VC's Fellowship Scheme, outstanding early career researchers will undertake full-time research 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, 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 up to three VC's Fellowships, of three years duration, offered for early career researchers within five 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) On successful completion of the Fellowship, and subject to meeting or exceeding performance expectations, the Fellow may be offered a further one-year UOW Boost Fellowship at the University, which combines research with greater teaching opportunities.
- 9) 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 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. Competitive applications from candidates in underrepresented groups may be given priority.

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

- 10) In line with the [UOW Reconciliation Action Plan](#), UOW has also established a Vice Chancellor's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Early-Mid-Career Research Fellowship to attract outstanding Australian Indigenous researchers within 10 years of Doctoral award date. Please refer to the [separate Scheme Guidelines and Instructions](#) for further information on this targeted 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

11) Candidates must:

- a) have been awarded a Doctorate on or before the closing date of applications;  
AND EITHER:
- b) have been awarded a Doctorate no more than five years prior to the closing date of applications (i.e. awarded on or after 30 April 2019 for the 2024 Fellowship Round); OR
- c) have been awarded a Doctorate prior to 30 April 2019, 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 2019. 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.

12) IN ADDITION, candidates must meet one of the following:

- a) be external to UOW (see definitions table); or
- b) be a UOW Doctoral graduate, who has held a postdoctoral research/academic position with another organisation subsequent to the award of that degree, for a period equivalent to 12 months full-time at the closing date of applications, and who does not currently hold a continuing paid position at UOW; or
- c) be a current UOW employee, with a paid fixed-term appointment, who obtained their Doctoral degree elsewhere.

- 13) Strong preference will be given to candidates seeking to join UOW from other organisations within Australia or from overseas.

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

- 14) Candidates whose Doctorate was awarded prior to 30 April 2019, 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.
- 15) 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 2019.
- 16) UOW reserves the right to seek independent confirmation of claims for career interruption.
- 17) *Confirmation of Eligibility Requests received after 15 April 2024 will not be accepted.*
- 18) Candidates whose Doctorate was awarded prior to 30 April 2019, but who do not confirm their eligibility through the above process, will be considered ineligible.

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

- 19) Applications will be ranked by the Faculty Research Committee (FRC) of the host faculty.
- 20) A sub-committee of the University Research Committee (URC), with representation from relevant discipline areas, will review all applications and rankings and make the final decision.
- 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 a key strategic research area 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 50%).
  - b. The excellence of the proposed research project (weighted 30%).
  - c. Alignment of the research project and candidate with an existing strong research group within the host faculty, and with UOW's strategic research priority areas (weighting 20%).
- 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 from within 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 **four 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 an existing strong research group within the host 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; and a full publications list. No more than **3 pages, plus the publications list**.
  - c. **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.
  - d. **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.

- 31) The application must comply with the following formatting requirements:
- Single column and single spacing
  - 12-point font size in Times New Roman or Arial font. References may be 10-point font size.
  - 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](#).

### Interviews

- 33) Shortlisted candidates may be invited to an interview with the URC sub-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 (if required):	May 2024
Candidates notified of outcome:	May-June 2024
Fellowship commencement date:	Between 1 July - 31 October 2024

## 6 Conditions of Award

- 34) The Fellowship is awarded under the conditions outlined below.
- Funding for the Fellowship shall be awarded for a period of three (3) years.
  - 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.
  - 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.
  - 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).
  - At the end of the third year, Fellows may be eligible to receive a one-year UOW Boost Fellowship (combining research and teaching). Fellows must meet or exceed performance

expectations during the term of the Vice Chancellor's Fellowship to be considered for a UOW Boost Fellowship.

- f. Fellowship appointments should commence between 1 July and 31 October 2024, unless otherwise approved by the DVC-RSF.
- g. A salary (taxable) will be provided. Appointment will commence at Level B 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's Fellowship will be discontinued from the commencement date of the external award. The VC's Fellowship will not be extended or suspended. The VC's 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 receive a UOW Boost Fellowship at the conclusion of the external award (transition will be managed on a case-by-case basis depending on duration of the external award).
- 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:
- providing confirmation of eligibility due to career interruption (where required);
  - collating applications and supporting the URC sub-committee;
  - disseminating information relating to the application process and Fellowship outcomes;
  - managing any variations, including parental leave, during the term of the Fellowship;
  - receiving and approving annual and final reports.
- 37) The host faculty and school are responsible for:
- reviewing and ranking all applications relevant to that faculty through the Faculty Research Committee;
  - finalising recruitment processes for successful candidates;
  - onboarding and inductions;
  - establishing a set of performance expectations at the commencement of the Fellowship;
  - supervising the Fellow and managing all employment conditions, such as leave, career development interview, probation, performance, progression and promotion;
  - connecting the Fellow with opportunities for mentoring and academic career development throughout the period of the Fellowship;
  - 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 UOW Boost Fellowship, and partially supporting the Fellowship salary during the one-year Boost Fellowship.

## 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> <li>• Is accepted as such by the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community.</li> </ul>
AQF	Australian Qualifications Framework (Second Edition January 2013)
Awarded an AQF Level 10 qualification	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.  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.



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 to UOW	Not a current or past employee, or Higher Degree Research student, of UOW
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 candidate 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).