**Strategic Research Fund – Leveraging Grants**

**Guidelines for Applicants**

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| 1.0 Program purpose | 1.1 The NSW Department of Education has established a Strategic Research Fund (“Research Fund”) to enhance research collaboration, and outcomes for NSW education priorities. The Research Fund forms part of the Waratah Research initiative, which aims to enhance research collaboration between NSW public universities and the NSW Government for improved social, economic and environmental outcomes. | |
|  | 1.2 The Research Fund is Administered by Higher Education and Tertiary Policy (“HETP”) within the NSW Department of Education (“the Department”). | |
|  | 1.3 The Research Fund is made up of four streams:  **a) Leveraging Grants**  b) NSW Priority Projects  c) Building the Evidence Base  d) Scholarships | |
|  | 1.4 The Leveraging Grants stream supports nationally competitive projects aligned to the Department’s education research priorities. | |
|  | 1.5 The Leveraging Grants stream will contribute funding to Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage or Discovery Projects and increase the translation of research project outcomes, outputs, and impacts to NSW. ARC Linkage, Discovery and Discovery Indigenous projects are eligible. | |
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| 2.0 Support available | 2.1 For post-award ARC Linkage or Discovery Projects: up to 20% of total ARC funding or $150,000, whichever is lower, per year, for up to two years. | |
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| 3.0 Use of grant funds | 3.1 Funding from the Research Fund will take the form of a cash contribution following the execution of a funding deed between the administering organisation and the Department. | |
|  | 3.2 The grant monies must be used primarily on resources and activities within NSW. If part of the research is occurring outside NSW, details must be included in the application. | |
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| 4.0 Eligibility criteria | 4.1 Funding is available to post-award ARC Linkage or Discovery projects that have a completion date beyond **31 December 2022**, and, in subsequent funding rounds, to new Projects subject to Departmental consultation and ARC approval. | |
|  | 4.2 Applications must address identified NSW Education research priorities and demonstrate how the additional funding will extend the project and/or its impacts to benefit NSW Government and communities.  The application must address one of the following ‘Statements of Opportunity’:   1. Curriculum differentiation for students with different learning needs 2. Building the evidence relating to the connection between physical and digital learning environments and student outcomes and wellbeing 3. The factors that impact on mathematics subject selection in stage 5 and how it impacts on a student's ability to study stage 6 mathematics | |
|  | 4.3 Applications are only open to Linkage or Discovery Projects within NSW public universities (“the administering organisation”). | |
|  | 4.4.1 If the proposed research projects involves schools, the lead researcher must apply through the NSW State Education Research Applications Process (SERAP), or have evidence of SERAP approval to be submitted with their application.  4.4.2 If a SERAP is unsuccessful, the proposed research will not be funded. | |
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| 5.0 Selection Criteria | 5.1 Applications will be evaluated and assessed according to the criteria outlined below. **Please note** that for post-award ARC Linkage and Discovery projects, a) and b) will be awarded 100% of weighting due to ARC assessment.  a) Researcher(s) capability 35%   * Time and capacity to undertake the research * Evidence of experience in research training, mentoring and supervision (where appropriate) * The capability of the Lead Researcher or team to build collaborations both within NSW and nationally.   b) Project quality and innovation 20%   * Contribution to an important gap in knowledge or significant problem * Novelty/originality and innovation of the proposed research (including any new methods, technologies, theories or ideas that will be developed) * Clarity of the hypothesis, theories and research questions * Cohesiveness of the project design and implementation plan (including the appropriateness of the aim, conceptual framework, method, data and/or analyses); and * Research that demonstrates benefits to more than one NSW government department.   c) Benefit 35%   * New or advanced knowledge resulting from outcomes of the research * Social and/or cultural benefits against economic, state and national priorities * Potential for translation into priority policy settings including NSW Education, Premier’s and state priorities, for example as articulated in NSW Education’s Strategic Plan * Suitability of proposed project and research translation into NSW context * Research impact and engagement, and anticipated outputs (summary)   d) Feasibility 10%   * Availability of the necessary facilities to complete the project (assessed by ARC) * The value-add of NSW ‘top up’ contribution - cost-effectiveness of the research * Extent to which the project’s design, participants and budget create confidence in the timely and successful completion of the project. | |
|  | 5.2 The application will be assessed against the criteria by a selection panel to determine whether to award funding to the applicant, and how much funding to award. | |
|  | 5.3 The Department reserves the right, at its absolute discretion, to adopt any strategy in assessing applications received. | |
|  | 5.4 The Department may choose not to award funding under this program. | |
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| 6.0 Application process | 6.1The Department has identified eligible post-award ARC Linkage and Discovery Projects and will invite applications for the Leveraging Grants stream as part of a closed process. | |
|  | 6.2 **Applications for this round of *Leveraging Grants* close at 6PM AEST on Monday 11 October 2021.** | |
|  | 6.3 Applicants are required to submit an electronic copy of the completed application form to: [higher.education@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:higher.education@det.nsw.edu.au) with the subject line **“Strategic Research Fund Application”**. | |
|  | 6.4 Applications must be signed by the lead researcher and endorsed by the Research Office at the Administering Organisation. | |
|  | 6.5 The Research Office of the Administering Organisation should be copied on the application email. | |
|  | 6.6 Late applications will not be accepted. | |
|  | 6.7 Unsuccessful applicants may reapply in future funding rounds. | |
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| 7.0 Selection process | 7.1 A selection panel will:   1. Assess and rank grant applications according to the NSW Priority Project’s eligibility and selection criteria; and 2. Determine which applicants, if any, should receive grants, and the amount of those grants. | |
|  | 7.2 The panel will assess each application on a competitive basis relative to the criteria and other applications. | |
|  | 7.3 An applicant may be contacted to clarify their application. | |
|  | 7.4 All applicants will be informed of the outcome of the decision on their applications. | |
|  | 7.5 The timetable for the selection process is as follows: | |
|  | **September 2021** | Identified projects invited to EOI |
|  | **6PM Monday 11 October 2021** | Applications close for *Leveraging Grants* for post-award ARC Linkage and Discovery Projects |
|  | **We anticipate December 2021** | Successful applicants notified |
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| 8. Funding agreements and reporting requirements | 8.1 All successful applicants who accept the offer of a Leveraging Grant will be required to enter into a formal Funding Deed (“the Deed”) with the Department. The Deed will specify obligations that relate primarily to the recipient’s accountability for the grant, including using the grant for activities occurring in NSW, the return of unspent grant monies and reporting on progress. | |
|  | 8.2 The administering organisation of the successful applicant will be awarded funding subject to the project meeting ARC reporting requirements and the terms of the Deed. | |
|  | 8.3 In the final year of NSW funding, regardless of whether the project has been completed, the funding recipient will submit a final report using the provided template and a presentation on the outcomes of the funding and implications for NSW Government. | |
|  | 8.4 The Funding Deed must be signed by an authorised signatory of the administering organisation. | |