



UNSW
SYDNEY

Enhancing support for ECRs: From a central Research Strategy Office perspective

ARMS NSW Chapter Presentation 2026

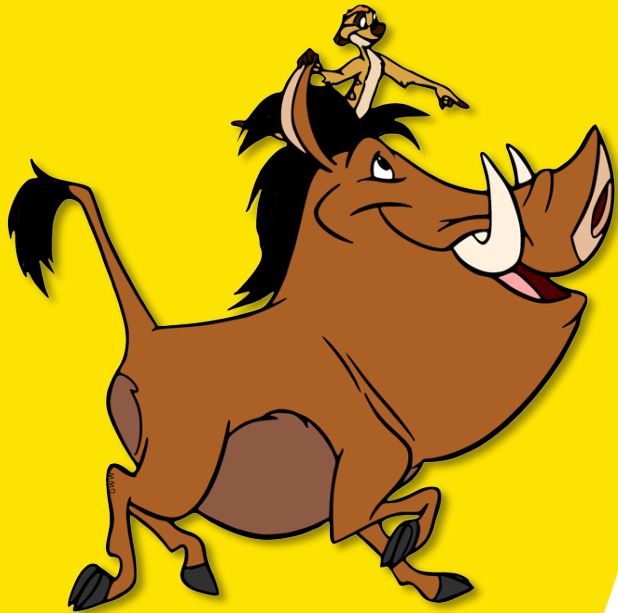
**Louise Norman
Dimitrios Pandioras**

Research Strategy Office (RSO), Division of Research & Enterprise





UNSW
SYDNEY



Research Strategy Office – Vision and Activities



Enhance UNSW's Research Performance



Identify opportunities for research funding



Strategic reviews



Advise and assist with research grant development



Assist with the development and management of strategic partnerships for collaborative research funding



Seminars

1 on 1 Meetings

Reviews

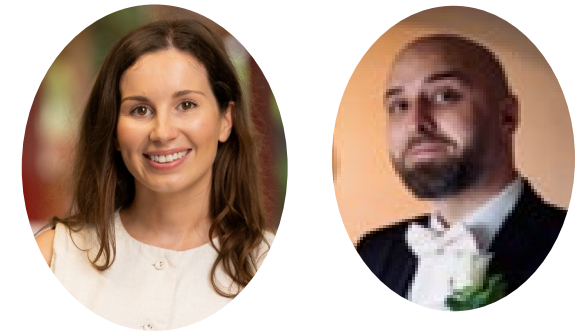
Workshops

Partner Meetings

Templates

Research
Strategy Office
(RSO)

Meet the RSO Discovery Team



- Our remit is to **enhance the competitiveness** of UNSW grant applications.
- **Strategic** writing reviews, workshops, and meetings with researchers.
- We support a **large number** of Discovery Program applications.

Round	No. of UNSW submissions
Future Fellowships	137
DECRA	211
Discovery Projects	149

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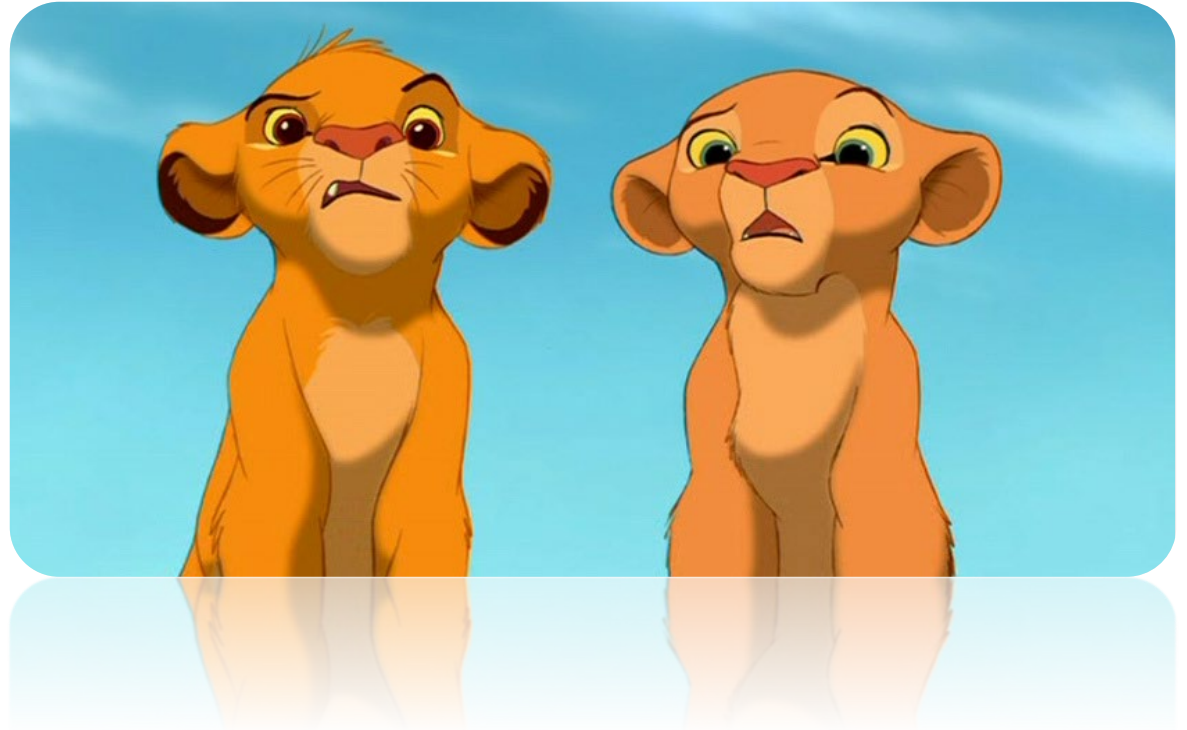
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ECR Challenges

1) Limited understanding of fellowship competitiveness (e.g., DECRA)

2) Low confidence in writing grant applications (experience)

3) Administrative burden from complex approval processes



Solution 1: Enhancing awareness of competitiveness

Preparing for Success seminar:

- benchmarking tools from UNSW Library
- timing of submissions
- boosting track record and research profile
- project planning

Mentoring ECRs to Success seminar:

- prepare the mentors to support ECRs through grant applications – peer review, support project design, understand their standing in the field, FoR codes, knowing your assessors
- mentoring competitive candidates / how to boost their competitiveness



Solution 2: Grant writing workshops



Writing your ROPE and writing your Project Description



2 workshops for each of the 3-disciplines



Format – RSO advice, polls, breakout room activities



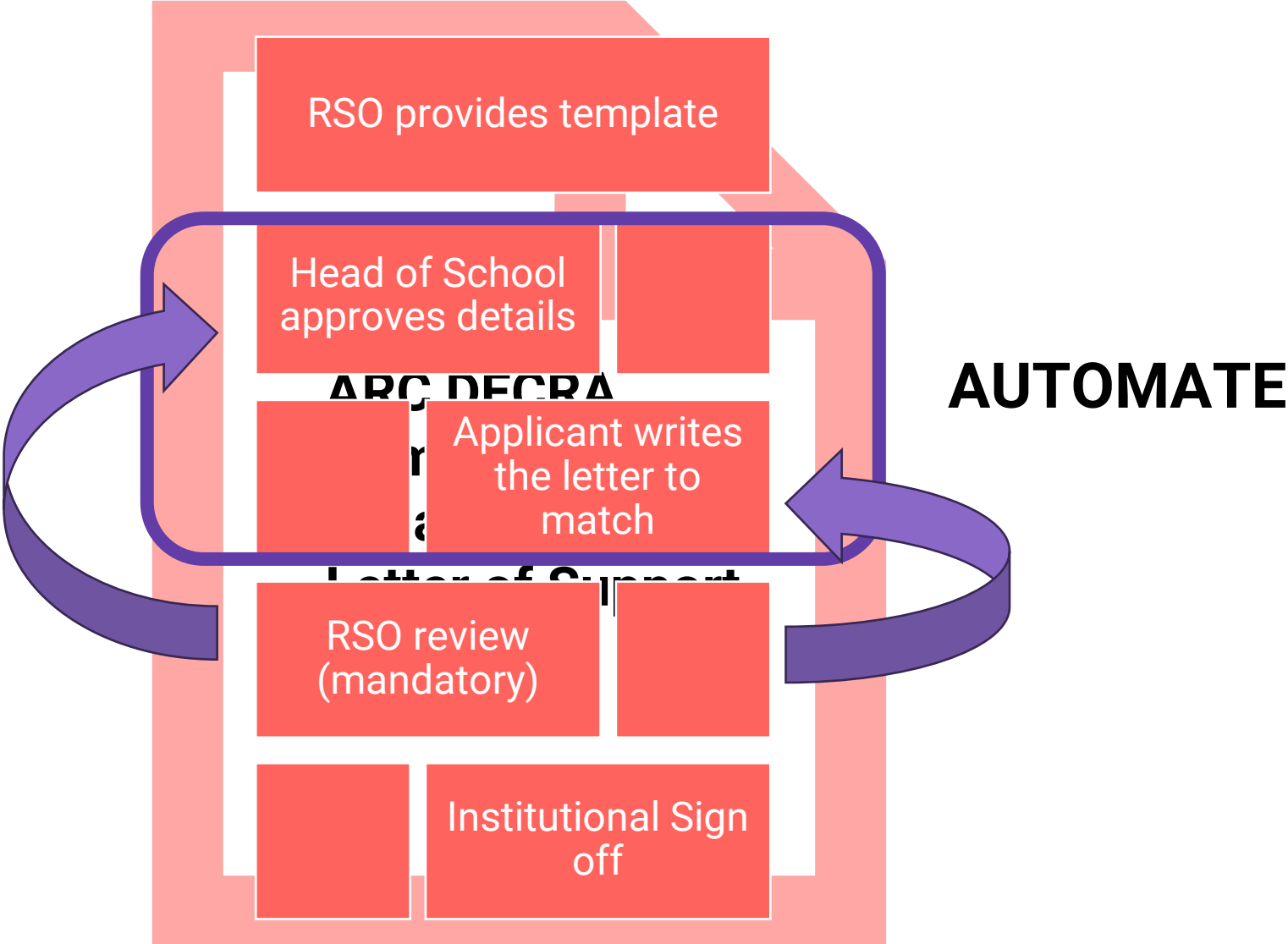
Recent awardee presentations



ARC College of Expert Members Q&A



Challenge 3 – Complex approval process



Step 1: Applicant submits approval request form

DECRA approvals

HoS Approval Form

ARC DECRA - C2 Letter of Support

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

* Required

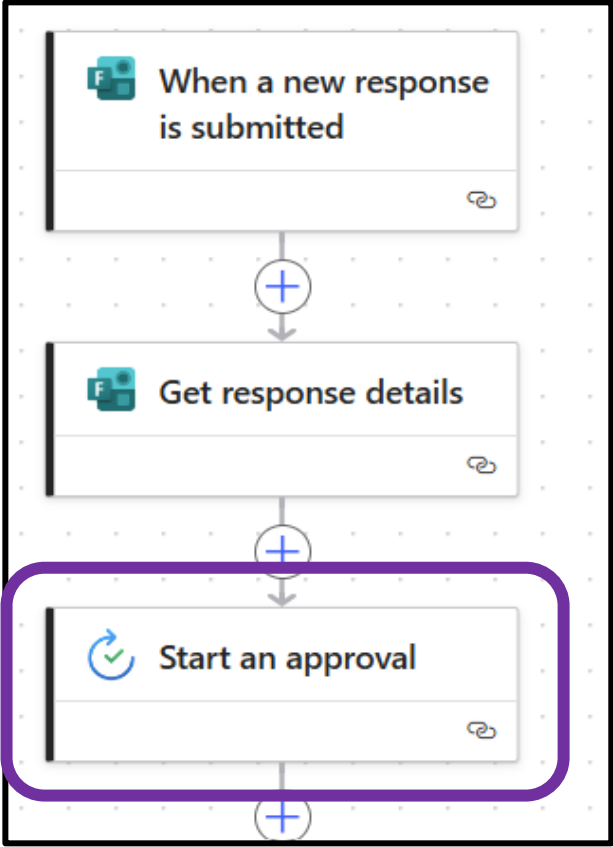
Questions

1. DECRA Applicant Full Name *

2. DECRA Applicant UNSW email address *

3. Which UNSW Faculty are you applying for the DECRA through? *

- Arts, Design & Architecture
- Business School
- Engineering
- Law & Justice
- Medicine & Health



Step 2: Head of School receives request

DECRA approvals

Assigned to *

Please enter the... X

Details

Dear Head of School

Applicant full na... X candidate has submitted request for School support for their DECRA proposal. Please review the below request, and either Approve or Reject the request.

Applicant Name: Applicant full na... X

Host School: Which School/C... X

Applicants current contract: Please provide t... X

1) Contributions for DECRA to support their research: Is the School ca... X

2) The 0.2 FTE allocated to the administering institution over the life of the DECRA will be used for: Detail how the 0... X

Approvals
Approval request details

Requested

Dimitrios Pandioras - DE26 School resources & support approval request

Dear Head of School

Dimitrios Pandioras has submitted request for School support for their DECRA proposal. Please either approve or reject.

Applicant Name: Dimitrios Pandioras
Host School: Arts
Applicants current contract: Fixed term contract that concludes prior to DECRA commencement date (DATE)

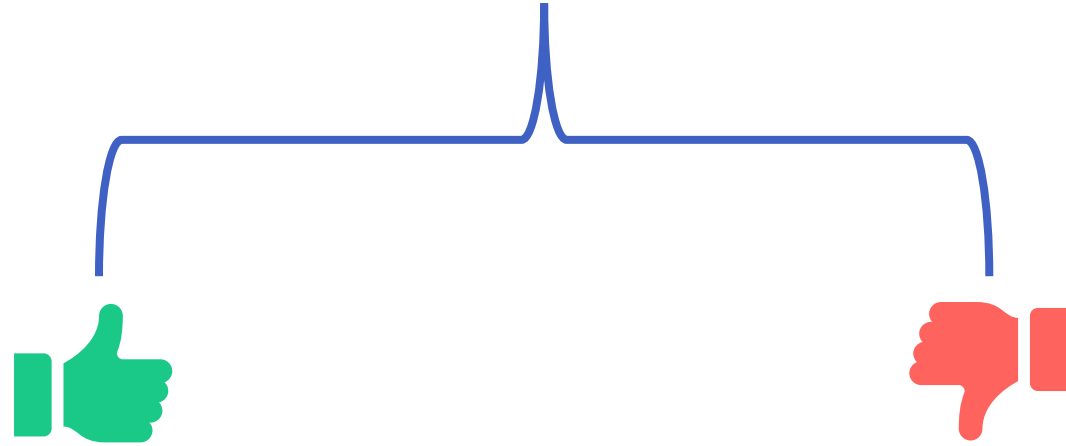
Comments

Add your comments here

More actions v

Reject Approve

Step 3: Applicant receives outcome



If DECRA support rejected:

To *

DECRA Applican... X

Subject *

DE26 School resources & support approval request

Body *

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Dear DECRA Applican... X

Your request requires changes and has **not** been approved. Please discuss with Head of School and submit a new form.

HoS comments: comments X

If DECRA support has been approved:

Approvals

Approval request details

- 1 School contributions. Any facilities, equipment, and access to infrastructure that will be provided by the School to support the DECRA project: 24
2. The above in-kind contributions will be used to support: travel
- 3 School contributions: 23 Per annum
4. Purpose of the above cash contribution: travel
5. Applicant requesting HDR stipend from the ARC?
6. The 0.2 FTE allocated to the administering institution over the life of the DECRA Fellowship will be used by the School for: no
7. Current employment status of applicant: Fixed term contract that concludes prior to DECRA commencement date (DATE)
8. If applicant is internal (UNSW staff): The salary that was previously provided by the University will be used to:

All the best
RSO Grants Team
Contact grants.rso@unsw.edu.au if you have queries.

▼ Final status: **Approved**

LM Approved by Louise Milazzo
Test 1
21/05/2025 10:21:47 am

LN Requested by Louise Norman
21/05/2025 10:19:58 am

Save as PDF

Louise Request APPROVED DE26 school resources & support

RG RSO Grants
To: Louise Norman

Thank you for submitting your School request form for DE26 resources and

Your request has been **approved**.

NEXT STEPS. *PLEASE READ*:

The answers you provided in this form are listed below. Please use these app

You will only be contacted if there are any clarifications required. Once you r requires correction. Once your C2 statement is finalised, RSO will send it dire

Your approved support is listed below:

Applicant Name: Louise
Host School: arts


- 1) School contributions. Any facilities, equipment, and access to infra
- 2) The above in-kind contributions will be used to support: post
- 3) School contributions: 56 Total
- 4) Purpose of the above contribution: travel
- 5) Applicant requesting an HDR stipend from ARC?

Updates

- Request for C2 letter attachment so Head of School has full context
- Request for option to add additional contributions

15. Please upload a copy of your completed C2 Letter template. The answers in the C2 These two documents will be reviewed together by your HoS. *

Please ensure the file is saved as: Surname_First Name_DE27XXXXX

 Upload file

File number limit: 1 Single file size limit: 10MB Allowed file types: Word


16. If you have any additional cash contributions from other UNSW sources, please indicate.
*

Please note, if you select 'Yes', you will be required to upload confirmation of approval

Yes, I have additional contributions

No further contributions

17. Please upload email confirmation of the approval from the relevant approver here.

 Upload file

File number limit: 1 Single file size limit: 100MB Allowed file types: PDF, Image

Updates

Head of School approval:

(For RSO Use Only): Yes, I have additional contributions

All the best
RSO Grants Team
Contact grants.rso@unsw.edu.au if you have queries.

▼ Attachments



HoS Please Check - Shanno...

<https://unsw-my.sharepoint.com/...>

▼ Final status: Approved



Approved by
Louise Norman

8) Additional cash contributions from other sources? Yes, I have

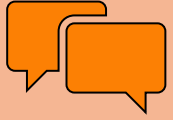
Additional HoS comments: This is a strong application that I full

APPROVED LETTER - <https://unsw-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/>

HAKUNA MATATA!



Reflections



1) Understanding Competitiveness and Mentor Support:

- ARC NCGP review resulted in a huge increase in DECRA applications.
- Support from School leadership and supervisor/mentors is critical to ECR success.
- We continue to regularly encourage ECRs and mentors to work together through the grant application process.



2) Grant Writing Workshops:

- We collected feedback from ECRs –
 - They liked seeing the successful grants and receiving structured guidance by application section
 - However, many found the workshops too long (3 hours)
 - Our aim was for the workshops to be highly interactive, however online workshops can limit the interactivity

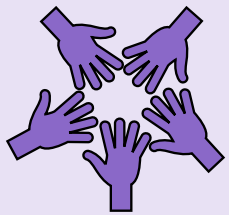


Reflections



Automated approvals:

- More streamlined and encouraged early engagement from researcher with Schools.
- Due to access constraints, our many external DECRA candidates could not use this process.



We are one part of the large support network at UNSW – RGC, mentors, Schools/Faculty leadership and research support teams, Library and many more!



Thank you for listening!

