How to Pitch an EOI

Discovery Projects: Two-stage (EOI) process

New EOI stage
- Short, user-friendly application form
- Assessment criteria of a) Investigator/s 30% and b) Project 70%
- Expedited assessment process by College of Experts
- Invitation to submit full application for shortlisted applicants

Streamlined full application stage
- Assessment criteria largely consistent with previous rounds
- Assessed through Selection Advisory Committee and Detailed Assessors
- Auto-filled information on Investigators from EOI into full application in RMS
The Expression of Interest Form

A. Administrative Summary
- Title
- Person & Organisation
- Summary
- FOR codes

B. Participant Details
- Qualifications & Employment
- Research Load
- Time Commitment
- Streamlined ROPE

C. Project Summary
- Project Description (2 A4 pages)

The Assessment Criteria for Project Quality and Innovation: EOI stage

- Project Quality and Innovation (70%)
  - Contribution to an important gap in knowledge or a significant problem
  - Novelty/originality and innovation of the proposed research
  - Appropriateness of the proposed research design
  - Potential to create new knowledge and research capacity, and economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for Australia.
Speakers

Professor Penny Brothers
Professor Catharine Coleborne
Professor Michael Mintrom

How to Pitch an EOI

Professor Penny Brothers
Research School of Chemistry, ANU

Marsden Fund (Royal Society of NZ)
Convenor, Physics, Chemistry and Biochemistry Panel

Marsden Fund Council

My Marsden track record
Unsuccessful EoIs
EoI successes
Unsuccessful full applications
Full application successes
Evaluated ca. 1000 EoIs

Australian National University
MARSDEN FUND

2A. ABSTRACT OF RESEARCH PROJECT

We have recently developed new fluorinated sugar analogues which will be used for the observation of sugar interactions with cell membranes. We will explore the possibility of using these analogues as potential drug targets for the treatment of certain diseases. The goal is to develop new drugs that are effective against a wide range of diseases, including cancer and infectious diseases. The project will be carried out in collaboration with a leading pharmaceutical company, and we expect to see significant progress within the next two years. The research will be funded by the Marsden Fund, and we are excited to contribute to the development of new treatments for these important diseases.

Marsden Fund Council

2B. ABSTRACT OF RESEARCH PROJECT

We have recently discovered a new class of compounds that show promise as potential drug candidates. These compounds exhibit unique properties that set them apart from existing drugs, and we believe they could have significant therapeutic benefits. The goal is to further develop these compounds and evaluate their potential in preclinical trials. The research will be carried out in collaboration with a leading pharmaceutical company, and we expect to see significant progress within the next two years. The research will be funded by the Marsden Fund, and we are excited to contribute to the development of new treatments for these important diseases.

Marsden Fund Council
Writing an EoI

- New form of grants-person-ship
- If your EoI is not selected, this year’s round is over for you!
- This decision will be made without input from detailed assessors or your rejoinders
- Why – this has to be compelling
- How – more for the full proposal but needs to be credible
- Who - this has to be compelling
- Capture the reader’s attention with the opening
- You are crafting a short story, not a novel, and this takes time
- Write for your audience
- Enlist draft EoI readers and peer reviews

ARC Discovery Projects scheme
The DP scheme is intended to contribute to Australia’s research and innovation capacity*

Objectives
- Investigator-driven, basic or fundamental research which supports new ideas and research excellence
- Increases the stock of new knowledge and developing new capabilities
- Broadens and deepens research skill capacity base
- Fosters national and international research collaboration
- Ambitious projects at the international cutting edges of their disciplines
- Enhances knowledge and understanding, not accumulates information
- Nationally relevant, internationally significant research
- Future-focused research (currency)

Professor Catharine Coleborne
University of Newcastle

*ARC DISCOVERY PROJECTS FACT SHEET
EOI form and content: two A4 pages

• Project title

• Project quality and innovation
  • How will the project address a significant gap in knowledge or problem?
  • What are the key research questions of the project?
  • What methods and/or conceptual/theoretical framework will be used?
  • What is the new knowledge that will result?
  • How might this research result in economic, environmental, social/cultural benefits to Australia?

• References (10-point font)

• Acknowledgements (if required, or leave out)

AIMING FOR SUCCESS

• Be focused: what is the question? What is your answer?
• Be realistic: size, scale, scope
• Emphasise the innovative aspects: what differentiates your work from existing knowledge?
• Does it meet the aims of the ARC Scheme?
• Write for a ‘research literate’ but general assessor audience
• Include a research plan (how will you do this?)
• Your project should align with and build from your track record!

Work from a longer more developed proposal and imagine intentionally staging your program of research over 3+ years.

REASONS YOU MIGHT NOT SUCCEED AT EOI STAGE

• No hypothesis or aim, or element of discovery
• Too vague, too much jargon, incomprehensible
• Little about how the research will happen
• Not appropriate for scheme, better funded from other sources
• Page is poorly laid out, instructions not followed

The shorter EOI format requires disciplined writing and presentation and clever crafting of a compelling research project.
The Pitching Process

Roles:  
- Historian: Position your topic in a tradition, then innovate
- Captain: Form a cohesive team – show proof
- Storyteller: Build towards a compelling narrative, bit by bit
- Consultant: Work with visual tools: logic models / story boards
- Chef: Write as if others will implement your research design
- Analyst: Ask for input, advice – as if you were taking a client journey
- Economist: Think about feasibility, reliability
- Writer: Keep two sets of books

How Pitching Can Improve Our Research

1. The Puzzle or Challenge
   - What’s at stake?
   - Why should people care?
   - What’s the payoff?

2. Literature & Theoretical Framework
   - What’s the tradition?
   - What’s the cutting-edge?
   - Where are the gaps?
   - Where might we build new pathways, bridges?

3. Key Research Question
   - Is it clear?
   - Is it unique and important?
   - How might you be bold here?

4. Research Design
   - Is it feasible?
   - What makes it innovative?
   - How can you ensure the findings will be valid?

5. New Knowledge
   - What will we learn?
   - Why is this worth knowing?
   - How could others build on the findings?