

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1

Output Group: ARC

DEST Question No. E826_04

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Question:

- (a) The success rate under the Linkages-International is just under 70%. Can you confirm that? (Annual Report pp. 190-191)

But for Awards under this program – as opposed to Fellowships – the success rate is over 75%.

- (b) What costs do these schemes cover? What costs have to be met by the researchers who get grants under this program?
- (c) What is the difference between the Awards and the Fellowships program?
- (d) Was the Awards component a new one in 2003?
- (e) Why was it established as a separate category of grants?
- (f) This is the program that moved away from having a definite closure date for applications – that's correct, isn't it? When did that happen?
- (g) What was the success rate before the application closure date was abolished? What were the numbers of applications in a typical year, prior to that change? Have applications dropped? By how much?
- (h) This is another area where success rates are very high. Are you concerned about the credibility of these programs? Are they selective enough?
- (i) Why is there not greater interest in applying for some of these programs – especially Fellowships, and this international program?

Answer:

Linkage-International

The ARC has provided the following response:

- (a) The overall success rate of applications for Linkage-International funding commencing in 2003 was 75%. The success rate for Linkage-International Fellowships was 73%. The success rate for Linkage-International Awards was 75%.

- (b) & (c) ARC International Fellowships fund outstanding postdoctoral, research or senior researchers to work in Australian or overseas institutions. To bring international fellows to Australia, Australian-based Chief Investigators submit an application for a collaborative project with the Fellow as a named participant on the application. For Australian researchers to work in overseas institutions, the researcher applies as a Fellow directly to the ARC, with an Australian eligible higher education institution as the administering organisation. At least one Overseas Investigator (OI) must be included as a named participant on the application. The application must demonstrate the support of the proposed host institution and researcher collaborators in the host institution. Applications for overseas fellows may seek funding for the salary of the Fellow based on the ARC notional salary scale. Australian applicants for ARC International Fellowships may request a living allowance or stipend.

Linkage-International Awards provide funds for researchers based in Australia to participate in joint research projects with overseas researchers, establishing new collaborations, strengthening on-going collaborations and providing international research experience for early career researchers. Applications for support under Linkage-International Awards may be for collaboration with appropriate researchers in any country or countries. Funding is available to Australian-based researchers for the direct costs of the collaboration.

Collaborations for which funding may be requested include:

- reciprocal visits by leading researchers (Chief Investigators (CIs) and Overseas Investigators (OIs));
- reciprocal exchanges for postgraduate and/or postdoctoral researchers working in the CI's and OI's research teams;
- funding for innovative modes of international research collaboration, for example through e-research networking; and
- participation in international activities, such as meetings and workshops, that are prospective in moving the research agenda of the field(s) forward, and shaping collaborative and complementary research programs to address significant problems or capture new opportunities.

To be eligible for Linkage-International funding, an Australian administering institution or overseas host institution must undertake to provide appropriate facilities and equipment for the researchers, to meet the associated infrastructure support costs, and to continue collaboration with the overseas researchers.

Further details about Linkage-International, including information about funding, is contained in funding rules for the scheme which are available on the ARC website at www.arc.gov.au.

- (d) & (e) The Awards component was not new in 2003. The current Linkage-International categories of Fellowships and Awards commenced in 2000. A distinction between the Fellowships and Awards components of the scheme, and the main reason for their being established as separate categories of grants, is that the former meets salary components of research costs while the latter does not.
- (f) Continuous assessment for Linkage-International Awards was established in the 2001 application year to assist researchers establishing international collaborations by providing enhanced flexibility to coordinate with the timing of partner countries' funding arrangements.

- (g) Data on success rates and application numbers are provided in the table below.

Success rates for Linkage-International Awards

Year of Funding commencement	Success rate	Applications (no.)	Funded (no.)
2000	47%	189	89
2001	45%	190	86
2002	74%	87	64
2003*	73%	75	55

* note: the 2003 figures differ from those in the 2002-03 Annual Report as they are calendar year figures, while those in the Annual Report include 2002 rounds held after publication of the previous Annual Report, and do not include 2003 rounds held after the publication of the 2002-03 Annual Report.

- (h) & (i) Under programs in which the number of awards is relatively few, success rates are more sensitive to changes in the number of applications – hence changes in success rates from year to year are likely to be more volatile for these programs. A requirement that Linkage-International Awards applicants already hold an ARC grant was introduced in 2002. This ensures that the quality of applications is high.