



NIC Research Program

National Intelligence Postdoctoral Grant (NIPG): Guidelines

Opening date:	17 November 2025
Closing date and time:	4pm (AEDT) on 13 February 2026
Commonwealth policy entity:	Office of National Intelligence
Administering entity:	Office of National Intelligence
Enquiries:	If you have any questions, contact NIPG@oni.gov.au Questions should be sent no later than 6 February 2026
Date guidelines released:	3 November 2026
Type of grant opportunity:	Open competitive

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1 National Intelligence Postdoctoral Grant (NIPG): process

The NIPG is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program, which contributes to the National Intelligence Community's (NIC) outcome to fund and collaborate in academic research in areas of interest. The Office of National Intelligence (ONI), works with NIC members and other stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles](#) (CGRPs).



The grant opportunity opens

We (ONI on behalf of the NIC) publish the grant guidelines on [GrantConnect](#). The SmartyGrants online application portal is where the NIPG application form is to be completed and submitted.



The Postdoctoral Candidate completes and submits a grant application on behalf of the sponsoring Accredited Australian University

Applications are to address a defined research topic and Postdoctoral candidates will submit applications in consultation with the Accredited Australian University sponsoring their proposed research.



We assess all grant applications

We assess the applications against eligibility criteria and notify you if you are not eligible. An expert panel will assess your eligible application against the assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value with money and compare it to other applications.



We make grant recommendations

An expert panel will provide advice to the decision maker on the merits of each application.



Grant decisions are made

The Program Delegate (decision maker) will decide and approve successful applications from the recommendations.



We notify you of the outcome

We advise you of the outcome of your application.



We enter into a grant agreement

We will enter into a grant agreement with the Accredited Australian University sponsoring the research if successful. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and will be proportional to the risks involved.



Delivery of grant

The Postdoctoral Candidate undertake the grant activity as set out in the grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with the Sponsoring University and Postdoctoral Candidate for payment of funds and monitoring progress.



Evaluation of the NIPG

We evaluate your specific grant activity and the NIPG as a whole. We base this on information provided to us and what we collect from various sources.

1.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the National Intelligence Postdoctoral Grant (NIPG) program (the program). You must read these guidelines before filling out an application.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program/grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant applications are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

2 About the grant program

The National Intelligence Community (NIC) ensures the protection and security of Australian national interests and Australian citizens at home and abroad. The NIC was officially formed following the Australian Government's adoption of the 2017 Independent Intelligence Review (IIR) recommendations. The NIC comprises the six agencies that formerly made up the Australian Intelligence Community (AIC) as well as the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) and the intelligence functions of the Australian Federal Police (AFP), Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) and the Department of Home Affairs. These agencies and departments form the Australian Government's intelligence enterprise, working to collect, analyse and disseminate intelligence information and advice in accordance with Australia's interests and national security priorities.

The Office of National Intelligence (ONI) has developed a NIC Research Program to address the innovation, technology and research needs of the NIC. The program was established in response to the [2017 Independent Intelligence Review's](#) Science, Technology and Innovation recommendations. Contemporary guidance is provided in the [Report of the 2024 Independent Intelligence Review](#). As part of the broader NIC Research Program, this program fosters NIC collaboration with academic institutions and experts, drawing on their expertise with respect to the objectives of the NIC agencies.

The program will offer funding for Postdoctoral Research Fellow positions (NIPG Fellowship) for early-mid career academics to undertake research in relation to NIC Research Topics - specific areas of interest and relevance to the NIC (see further Part 4.3 below). The program started in FY2020/21 and will run annually until FY2030/31 with each position funded full time for a period of two (2) years or part time for a maximum period of four (4) years. Part time will only be considered for those with carer/family responsibilities and/or relevant and limited teaching appointments, not for professional convenience.

The Research Topics have been identified to address the [Intelligence challenges](#). The Intelligence areas of interest include:

- Covert Collection
- Space

- Identity Management
- Biological Science
- Material Science
- Cyber Security, Protective Security & Physical Security
- Human Behaviour & Influence
- Data-Driven & Real-Time Analytics
- Situational Awareness & Multi-Source Assessments.

The program may also support research in areas identified by the UK ([UKIC](#)) and US ([USIC](#)) Intelligence Community Postdoctoral Programs.

New Research Topics will be released annually during the program and can be found in Section 5 of these Guidelines.

2.1 Objectives and intended outcomes

The NIPG program objectives are to:

- guide the direction of the NIC to ensure a structured and appropriate response to technological advancements;
- seek solutions for emerging or future capability gaps;
- improve the NIC's science and technology responsiveness;
- build understanding of emerging technologies and science issues and solutions; and
- enable innovative activity and research programs not currently possible.

The intended outcomes of the program are:

- to deliver research outcomes that help drive solutions in areas of direct relevance to the NIC;
- to build and sustain academic partnerships between the NIC and Australian institutions; and
- to invest in and foster capability in Australian research in areas relevant to the NIC.

The program is administered according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles](#) (CGRPs).¹

3 Grant amount and grant period

3.1 Grants available

The program will award grant opportunities for at least ten (10) postdoctoral NIPG fellowship positions in 2026 followed by up to ten (10) further opportunities awarded annually until 2030/31.

Individual grants will be funded up to a maximum of \$365,000 (GST exclusive) for a period no longer than two (2) years for full time, and up to four (4) years for part time (where agreed to by ONI for carer/family responsibility or relevant and limited teaching appointments).

Successful Postdoctoral Candidates will be required to contribute towards academic research in the relevant field, which will be further defined and described in the grant agreement.

¹ [Commonwealth Grants | Department of Finance](#)

3.2 NIPG period

The maximum grant period is two (2) years for full time and up to four (4) years part time (where requested and agreed to by ONI) following the commencement date and your grant activity (i.e. your research) must be completed within this period.

Part time requests will only be approved for the following reasons:

- Carer/family responsibilities up to 0.5 FTE (4-year period)
- Teaching appointment in a field relevant to the NIPG project up to 0.33 FTE (3-year period)

Grants for this application round must commence no later than 31 December 2026. Extensions will be considered in exceptional circumstances in which case we will discuss this with you, and if we agree, an extension may be approved.

4 Eligibility criteria

4.1 What are the eligibility requirements for applications?

We cannot consider your application if you do not satisfy all the eligibility criteria. To be eligible, your application must address one of the Research Problems/Topics. Applications that target more than one Research Problem/Topic will not be accepted.

Applications for this grant opportunity must:

- be submitted by an eligible Postdoctoral Candidate on your behalf as their sponsoring accredited Australian university;
- be sponsored by an Eligible Organisation (an accredited Australian university), and
- nominate an eligible Research Advisor.

4.2 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

Eligible Postdoctoral Candidates

To be an eligible Postdoctoral Candidate:

- Be an individual that is an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident or New Zealand Special Category Visa Holder. A copy of their passport and/or visa number will be required during the application process.
- Have a PhD in a relevant field within ten years of the application closing date. Career Interruptions will be considered (including disruptions due to COVID-19) within the first 10 years after the PhD was conferred, as long as the interruption period is less than the research working period after the PhD was conferred. If the PhD is not yet awarded, the PhD thesis must be submitted by the NIPG application closing date and a letter provided from the Faculty Dean vouching for their anticipated conferral timeframe. The PhD must be conferred before 30 June 2026.

Eligible Organisations

Postdoctoral Candidates and their proposed research must be sponsored by an Accredited Australian University.² The sponsoring accredited Australian university will be expected to engage the Postdoctoral Candidate as a full time or part time (where agreed by ONI) staff member if the application is successful.

Applications must include a completed Commitment for Sponsored Research Form from the Postdoctoral Candidate's Accredited Australian University sponsoring their proposed research. For successful applications, the resulting grant agreement will be entered with the Accredited Australian University who will be responsible for compliance with the agreement.

Table 1: Eligible Organisations

Organisation Name	Organisation ABN
Adelaide University	41 202 953 738
Australian Catholic University	15 050 192 660
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	62 020 533 641
Avondale University	53 108 186 401
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education	32 039 179 166
Bond University	88 010 694 121
Central Queensland University	39 181 103 288
Charles Darwin University	54 093 513 649
Charles Sturt University	83 878 708 551
Curtin University	99 143 842 569
Deakin University	56 721 584 203
Edith Cowan University	54 361 485 361
Federation University Australia	51 818 692 256
Flinders University	65 542 596 200
Griffith University	78 106 094 461
James Cook University	46 253 211 955
La Trobe University	64 804 735 113
Macquarie University	90 952 801 237
Monash University	12 377 614 012
Murdoch University	61 616 369 313
Queensland University of Technology	83 791 724 622
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University)	49 781 030 034

² Accredited Australian Universities refer to those Australian universities listed - <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register>

Organisation Name	Organisation ABN
Southern Cross University	41 995 651 524
Swinburne University of Technology	13 628 586 699
The Australian National University	52 234 063 906
The University of Adelaide	61 249 878 937
The University of Melbourne	84 002 705 224
The University of New England	75 792 454 315
The University of New South Wales	57 195 873 179
The University of Newcastle	15 736 576 735
The University of Notre Dame Australia	69 330 643 210
The University of Queensland	63 942 912 684
The University of Sydney	15 211 513 464
The University of Western Australia	37 882 817 280
Torrens University Australia	99 154 937 005
University of Canberra	81 633 873 422
University of Divinity	95 290 912 141
University of South Australia	37 191 313 308
University of the Sunshine Coast	28 441 859 157
University of Tasmania	30 764 374 782
University of Technology Sydney	77 257 686 961
University of Wollongong	61 060 567 686
Victoria University	83 776 954 731
Western Sydney University	53 014 069 881

Please see <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/national-register> for the most current list.

Eligible Research Advisor

Postdoctoral Candidates must nominate an eligible Research Advisor to supervise their proposed research in the application. An eligible Research Advisor must be:

- engaged as a full-time employee or otherwise as a contractor (subject to any flexible working arrangements) of the sponsoring accredited Australian University;
- an Australian citizen, Australian permanent resident or New Zealand Special Category Visa Holder. A copy of their passport and/or visa number will be required during the application process.

Applications must include a completed Confirmation of Commitment Form from the Postdoctoral Candidate's nominated Research Advisor who will supervise the proposed research.

4.3 Who is eligible to be an Other Organisation?

Organisations that are not Eligible Organisations but that are named as a participating organisation on an application will be Other Organisations.

Organisations must be Australian organisations. The Organisation is not required to make a cash and/or in-kind contribution to the project but must be relevant to and involved with the project.

An organisation included on the National Redress Scheme's website on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme' (www.nationalredress.gov.au) cannot be an Other Organisation.

5 What the grant money can be used for

5.1 Eligible grant activities

To be eligible, the application must propose academic research that addresses one of the defined Research Topics. The 18 defined Research Topics for which applications can be submitted for the 2025/26 application are:

Reference	Topic Title
NIPG-2026-001	RISCV exploitation techniques and state of the market
NIPG-2026-002	Decoding money laundering activities using topographic maps and artificial intelligence
NIPG-2026-003	Forecasting climate change impacts on health security in the Indo-Pacific - national security implications for Australia
NIPG-2026-004	The human factor in cyber security resilience
NIPG-2026-005	The psychology of influence: Effective persuasion in the cybercrime ecosystem
NIPG-2026-006	Security evaluation of system-on-chip field programmable gate array designs against remote power side channel attacks
NIPG-2026-007	Loyalty in the Australian context
NIPG-2026-008	Using AI in psychological continuous assessment
NIPG-2026-009	The impact of artificial intelligence and machine learning on chemical and biological counter-measures
NIPG-2026-010	Rapid detection and identification of environmental pathogens
NIPG-2026-011	Enhancing intelligence benefits from suspicious activity reporting and analysis
NIPG-2026-012	Anti-authority ideological radicalisation and violence
NIPG-2026-013	Person-related misinformation as a strategic threat: understanding and mitigating its impact
NIPG-2026-014	Algorithmic recommender-based radicalisation and offline behaviour
NIPG-2026-015	Multifunctional metamaterials for broadband absorption of high-power microwaves

NIPG-2026-016	Creating cryptographic protocols with mature, diverse and performant quantum resistance
NIPG-2026-017	Engineering biology for sustainable power generation
NIPG-2026-018	Bio-inspired molecular sensors for adaptive computing and environmental intelligence

Further information on each of these Research Topics can be found in the application pack.

5.2 Eligible expenditure

The grant can only be spent on eligible expenditure items that directly support the eligible grant activities described in your application and in accordance with any additional special conditions in the grant agreement.

Eligible expenditure items are:

- Postdoctoral Salary;
- Associated University on-costs including:
 - work accommodation (for example, laboratory and office space, suitably equipped and furnished); **University on-costs is default 30% of total salary.**
- Research Advisor Stipend (can be used for reasonable costs incurred by the Advisor in direct connection with the Post-Doc);
- Travel costs essential to the project, including economy travel costs for domestic and international travel and accommodation, up to \$10,000 per year. This includes the requirement to attend the annual NIC Emerging Tech Summit in Canberra and an equivalent conference in Washington or London.. If the grant is undertaken part-time (carer or teaching) then attendance at the NIC Emerging Tech Summit in your third year is also required (see 12.3).
- Expenditure on field research essential to the project, including technical and logistical support, travel expenses (including accommodation, meals and incidental costs);
- Research Expenses, up to \$40,000 per year:
 - equipment (and its maintenance) and consumables essential for the project;
 - expert services of a third party if the services are directly related to and essential for the project. Such services include, but are not limited to:
 - language translation services, transcribing services; and
 - purchase of bibliographical or archival material (electronic or hard copy);
 - access to national and international research and infrastructure facilities including specialist archives, collections and databases;
 - access to technical workshop services linked to and justified explicitly against the project (for example, machine tools and qualified technicians);
 - publication and dissemination of project research outputs and outreach activity costs;
 - Access to security measures as agreed to by University officials/protocols;
 - specialised computer equipment and software essential to the project. (Funding will not be provided for equipment or consumables that are considered to be for broad general use or are basic computer facilities);

- web hosting and web development specific to the project;
- workshops, focus groups and conferences that are essential for the conduct of the project (including reasonable hospitality costs such as morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea); and
- reasonable essential costs to allow a participant who is a carer, or who personally requires care or assistance, to undertake travel essential to the project.

Note that the postdoctoral position funded by the grant must be undertaken full time or, where otherwise agreed by ONI part time, but may involve flexible working arrangements in accordance with the host Universities' policies.

If an application is successful, we may ask for verification of proposed project costs provided in the application. Evidence such as quotes for major costs may need to be provided.

Not all expenditure for the proposed academic research may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

Expenditure on any grant must be incurred between the commencement date and completion date for the grant for it to be eligible. We may seek to recover any unspent Grant funds.

5.3 What the grant money cannot be used for

Unless the following activities meet the definition of 'research', the NIPG does not support production of:

- computer programs, research aids and tools;
- data warehouses, catalogues or bibliographies; or
- teaching materials.

The grant cannot be used for the following activities:

- purchase of land or basic facilities that should normally be funded by you as the sponsoring accredited Australian university (including standard refurbishment costs of a laboratory);
- the covering of retrospective costs or costs relating to activities before the commencement date or after the completion date of the grant agreement;
- costs incurred in the preparation of a grant application or related documentation;
- grant-related activities or collaborations occurring outside of Australia, except United States, Canada, United Kingdom and New Zealand;
- subsidy of general ongoing administration of an organisation such as electricity, phone and rent;
- costs not directly related to the project, including but not limited to professional membership fees, professional development courses, fees for patent application and maintenance, equipment for live music or drama performances, equipment for gallery and museum exhibitions, visas, relocation costs, entertainment costs, purchase of alcohol, insurance, mobile phones (purchase or call charges) and other indirect costs;
- major construction/capital works, and

- activities for which other Commonwealth, state, territory or local government bodies have primary responsibility.

The following basic facilities must be provided (where relevant) and funded by You as the sponsoring accredited Australian university or others as appropriate:

- bench fees or similar laboratory access fees;
- access to a basic library collection;
- access to film or music editing facilities;
- basic computer facilities such as desktop computers, portable computer devices, printers, word processing, and other standard software; and
- standard reference materials or funds for abstracting services.

6 The assessment criteria

The following assessment criteria must be addressed in an application. We will assess each application based on the weighting given to each criterion. The amount of detail and supporting evidence required in an application is indicated below. The application form includes page limits, which must be complied with. We will only award funding to applications that score highly against all assessment criteria. Applications that fail to meet the requirements, including provision of full publication lists and academic positions and affiliations, may be considered ineligible.

Criterion 1

Academic Qualifications of Postdoctoral Candidate – 30%

You must demonstrate the academic qualifications and experience of the Postdoctoral Candidate by including:

- Postdoctoral Candidate Curriculum Vitae (CV); and
- Postdoctoral Candidate Publications List (all publications).

Criterion 2

Research Proposal – 60%

You must demonstrate the scientific and technical merits in your Research Proposal by identifying the:

- clarity of the hypothesis, theories and questions, and how this will address the proposed research problem;
- novelty/originality and innovation of the proposed research (including any new methods, technologies, theories or ideas that will be developed);
- new or advanced knowledge resulting from outcomes of the research;
- cohesiveness of the project design and implementation plan (including the appropriateness of the aim, method, timeline, techniques and expected results);
- extent to which the project would build research capacity; and
- potential to enhance Australian intelligence and national security capabilities.

Criterion 3

Research Advisor and supporting University Documentation – 10%

You must demonstrate the academic qualifications and experience of your nominated Research Advisor and your support as the sponsoring accredited Australian university by including:

- Research Advisor CV;
- Research Advisor Publications List (all publications from last 10 years);
- Signed Research Advisor Confirmation of Commitment Form; and
- Signed University Commitment for Sponsored Research Form.

7 How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines and the draft grant agreement. These documents may be found at [GrantConnect](#). Any alterations and addenda will be published on GrantConnect.³ Applications must be submitted via the SmartyGrants online application portal – <https://oni.smartygrants.com.au/>.

To apply you must:

- meet all eligibility criteria;
- complete the application form;
- provide all the information requested;
- address all assessment criteria;
- include all necessary attachments to the application form in the SmartyGrants online application portal;
- submit your application/s electronically via SmartyGrants by 4:00 pm AEST on 13 Friday February, 2026.

You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code 1995](#) and we will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should contact us immediately by emailing NIPG@oni.gov.au (please include your name and reference/application number). We do not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from you to correct your application after the closing time. **You cannot change your application after the closing date and time.**

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application. However, we can refuse to accept any additional information from you that would change your submission after the application closing time.

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents. Once you submit your application, you will receive acknowledgement of submission from SmartyGrants.

Proposals that involve the use of animals or humans must comply with all University human and/or animal ethics policies and processes. Ethics requirements must be noted in the application form and formal ethics approvals must be provided to NIPG@oni.gov.au before commencement of the project. The Delegate reserves the right to withdraw the Grant if ethics approvals are not provided.

³ Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents.

All funded research projects must comply with the requirements for responsible and ethical research practice specified in the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and the codes, guidelines, practices and policies on the [ARC website](#) including the *ARC Conflict of Interest Policy* and any actions that have been applied under the *ARC Research Integrity Policy*.

All funded research and participants are required to be compliant with all relevant laws and regulations and have regard to any relevant guidelines. This includes, but is not limited to, Australia's obligations under the *Defence Export Controls Legislative Framework*. These include Australia's international obligations including the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (Biological Weapons Convention)*. Consideration must be given to ensure proposals are not open to misinterpretation, and do not put at risk Australia's long-standing commitment and reputation.

All funded research and participants are required to be compliant with the *Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector* published on the [Department of Education website](#).

If you need further guidance about the application contact us at NIPG@oni.gov.au.

7.1 NIPG Application Form

We require the following information to be completed and submitted in the SmartyGrants online application portal.

1. Application Contact Details

- The following details for both the Postdoctoral Candidate and Research Advisor:
 - Personal Details including date and place of birth.
 - Australian passport number. If not an Australian citizen, please provide nationality and passport number and Australian permanent residency/visa number.
 - Attachment - Clear and legible scanned copy of the passport identity data page and (where applicable) visa.
 - Attachment - If there is a current application in process for Australian residency or citizenship, please provide evidence.
 - Declaration of Foreign Engagement and Affiliations.
- Sponsoring University contact details
- Participating Organisation details (if applicable)

2. Project Proposal Details

- Research Topic
- Proposal Title (limited to 12 words)
- Key Words – 5 key words relevant to the proposal
- Proposal Summary – simple and clear in plain language. If the application is successful, the Application Summary will be used to give the general community an understanding of the research. Avoid the use of acronyms (limited to 100 words)

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- Background and statement of the specific research problem to be addressed (limited to 400 words)
- Aims, methodology and activities with expected timeline for completion (limited to 600 words)
- Explanation of new or unusual techniques (limited to 200 words)
- Expected results and their significance and application (limited to 400 words)
- Literature citations (if applicable)

3. Postdoctoral Candidate and Research Advisor Capacity

- Postdoctoral candidate background, previous experience and relevance to proposed research
- Upload:
 - Postdoctoral Candidate's CV and Publications List
 - CV:
 - **Include all** tertiary education.
 - **Include all** academic positions and affiliations
 - Limited to 3 pages (additional pages will be removed prior to review).
 - **Total** publication list (all publications).
 - Research Advisor CV and Publications List
 - CV:
 - **Include all** tertiary education.
 - **Include all** academic positions and affiliations
 - Limited to 3 pages (additional pages will be removed prior to review).
 - All publications from **last 10 years**.

4. Project Budget

- Postdoctoral Salary - include academic level
- University on-costs - default 30% of salary total
- Research Expenses - e.g. computer costs and access, laboratory costs
- Travel Costs - attendance at the 'NIC Emerging Tech Summit' in Canberra, ACT every year and attendance at the 'ODNI S&T IC Tech Week' in Washington DC in Year 2 is a condition of accepting the postdoctoral program offer and must be budgeted for.
- Research Advisor - stipend/time is to be budgeted at \$10,000 per year
- Please ensure figures are given as GST exclusive amounts.
- Declare any contributions/financial support from non-Australian Governments or non-Government sources related to your proposal.

5. Certifications - Acknowledgement and Confirmation of Commitment

In the SmartyGrants online application portal please download, complete, sign and upload the - Acknowledgement, Confirmation and Certification form.

- Sponsoring University - An authorising institutional official who is legally authorised to act for and on behalf of the institution is required to:
 - Certify that the University supports the application submitted.
 - Confirm University commitment to serve as the host facility if the application is successful.

- Research Advisor - Is required to:
 - Certify that they are a full-time staff member of the accredited Australian institution of higher education that is sponsoring this application.
 - Agrees to serve as the Research Advisor and will abide by the Terms and Conditions of the appointment if the application is successful.
 - Acknowledge that identity checks with relevant parties will be conducted.
- Postdoctoral Candidate - Is required to:
 - Acknowledge that identity checks with relevant parties will be conducted.

You must attach supporting documentation to the application in line with the instructions provided within the form and as set out above. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

7.2 Timing of grant opportunity processes

You must apply between the published opening and closing dates. We cannot accept late applications other than in exceptional circumstance in which case we will discuss this with you, and if we agree, invite you to make a late application. If you are successful, we expect the Postdoctoral Candidate will be able to commence their postdoctoral position by 31 December 2026.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of applications	Begins late February 2026
Approval of outcomes of selection process	May 2026
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	Late May-June 2026
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	Early July 2026
Earliest commencement date	July 2026
Completion date	Two years after commencement date for full time. Up to four years after commencement date for part time.

7.3 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, contact the Office of National Intelligence team at NIPG@oni.gov.au. The Office of National Intelligence team will respond to emailed questions within three working days.

8 The grant selection process

8.1 Assessment of grant applications

We first review your application against the eligibility criteria. Only eligible applications will move to the next stage. We consider eligible applications through an open competitive grant process.

If eligible, we will then assess your application against the assessment criteria (see Section 6) and against other applications. We consider your application on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the criteria
- how it compares to other applications
- whether it provides value with relevant money.

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, we will have regard to:

- the overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant
- the relative value of the grant sought
- the extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives.

8.2 Who will assess applications?

An expert panel will assess each application on its merit and compare it to other eligible applications before recommending which grant applications should be awarded a grant. The expert panel may consist of leading Australian academics in relevant areas NIC technical experts and/or Research Problem/Topic authors.

We may ask external and international Intelligence Community experts to assist with the assessment process. The expert panel recommends to the Program Delegate which applications to approve for a grant.

ONI, in consultation with the Australian National Intelligence Community, reviews the applications to determine which applications to fund based on the fit with the Intelligence Challenges, the Australian National Intelligence Community's priority research needs, Australia's national interest, including national security, applications already funded and available funding.

8.3 Who will approve grants?

The Director General of the Office of National Intelligence or their delegate (the Program Delegate), decides which grants to approve taking into account the recommendations of the expert panel and the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program.

The Program Delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

9 Notification of application outcomes

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing. If you are successful, we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

If no suitable applications are received for an application round, we may decide not to award a grant for that application round.

If unsuccessful, you can submit a new application for a NIPG (or a similar grant) in any future grant opportunities under the program provided you still meet the eligibility criteria listed in Section 4.1. You should include new or more information to address any weaknesses that may have prevented your previous application from being successful.

9.1 Further grant opportunities

If there are not enough suitable applications, we reserve the right to not award any Grants.

10 Successful grant applications

10.1 The grant agreement

If successful, the sponsoring accredited Australian University must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth on the Postdoctoral Candidates behalf. We will use the standard grant agreement in this program. Sample grant agreements are available on GrantConnect.

We must execute a grant agreement before we can make any payments. We are not responsible for any of your expenditure until a grant agreement is executed. If you choose to start your grant activities before we have an executed grant agreement, you do so at your own risk.

The grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate. We will identify these in the agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

Standard Grant Agreement

We will use a standard grant agreement. The sponsoring accredited Australian university will have five (5) business days from the date of a written offer to execute this grant agreement with the Commonwealth ('execute' means both University and the Commonwealth have signed the agreement). During this time, we will work with you to finalise details.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application.

You may request changes to the grant agreement. However, we will review any required changes to these details to ensure they do not impact the grant as approved by the Program Delegate.

10.2 How we pay the grant

The grant agreement will state the maximum grant amount to be paid. We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

The Grant will be paid in a single instalment by Us before the end of the 2025/26 Financial Year, subject to Your compliance with Your obligations under the Grant Agreement.

10.3 Grants Payments and GST

Payments will be GST exclusive. The Australian University will issue us an invoice (**GST exclusive**), the invoice will not include GST in addition to the amount stated in the Grant Agreement. If the accredited Australian University is registered for the [Goods and Services Tax \(GST\)](#), where applicable, we will add GST to your grant payment and issue you with a [Recipient Created Tax Invoice](#).

We recommend you seek independent professional advice about taxation obligations in relation to the grant or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#).⁴ We do not provide advice on the particular taxation circumstances for your application.

11 Announcement of grants

A high-level summary of the grants awarded will be listed in aggregate on the GrantConnect website after a security briefing has been provided.

12 How we monitor your grant activity

12.1 Keeping us informed

The grant agreement will set out requirements relating to, among other things, reporting and the provision of information. You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your grant activity, your Postdoctoral candidate or your nominated Research Advisor.

You must also inform us of any changes to your Postdoctoral candidate's:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details.

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

You must notify us of events relating to your grant and provide an opportunity for a NIC representative to attend.

12.2 Reporting

Reports must be submitted in line with the grant agreement. We will provide sample templates for these reports upon commencement of the grant. We will remind you of your reporting obligations before a report is due.

The amount of detail you provide in your reports will be indicated in the report template. We will monitor progress by assessing reports you submit and may request records to confirm details of your

⁴ <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

reports if necessary. You must discuss any reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

When your publications are accepted, as soon as practical please notify NIPG@oni.gov.au, along with a pdf copy.

Progress reports

You will be required to submit Progress Reports. Progress Reports must:

- include evidence of your progress towards completion of agreed grant activities and outcomes
- show the total expenditure incurred to date and records of expenditure should be maintained for potential audit purposes
- be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant activities). It is expected that Progress Reports will be completed **every 8 months from the commencement of the grant.**

Travel reports

Where you undertake travel involving activity directly related to this grant, you must submit a travel report. Travel reports must include:

- Itinerary, including:
 - Dates, places, institutions visited, key collaborators, conferences attended.
- Summary of all presentations in which the grant-related research is discussed.

Final report

When you complete your grant activity, you must submit a final report. Final reports must:

- identify if and how outcomes have been achieved
- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred
- be submitted within 60 days of completion in the template provided.

12.3 Participation at Intelligence Community S&T Events

We require that Postdoctoral candidates participate in the following domestic and international events:

- annual participation at the NIC Emerging Tech Summit in Canberra, ACT (usually in December);
 - If the grant is undertaken part-time (carer or teaching) then attendance in your third year is also required.
- during the project's second year present at an international event
 - Usually in the United States in September
 - Potential for presentation in the United Kingdom
 - Attendance during the first year is optional.

We will provide details for the events closer to the time and also reserve the right to not run these events in any given year.

12.4 Financial acquittal report

We may ask you to provide a financial acquittal report. A financial acquittal report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement. The financial acquittal report template will be provided if this is required. When the grant activity is completed, any unspent funds must be returned to ONI.

12.5 Grant agreement variations

We recognise that unexpected events may affect your progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement. The grant agreement will set out a process for requesting variations.

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on provisions in the grant agreement and the likely impact on achieving outcomes.

12.6 Compliance visits

We may visit you during or at the completion of your grant activity to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

12.7 Record keeping

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

12.8 Evaluation

We will evaluate the grant program to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may also interview you, your Research Advisor, or your sponsoring accredited Australian university, or ask for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

We may contact you, your Research Advisor or your sponsoring accredited Australian university up to one year after you finish your grant for more information to assist with this evaluation.

12.9 Acknowledgement

The Office of National Intelligence requests that you acknowledge our support in all Material, publications and promotional and advertising materials published in connection with the Grant Agreement. This is for the purposes of funding recognition and to acknowledge the Commonwealth as directly funding the research.

13 Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRPs.

These guidelines may be changed from time to time by ONI. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

13.1 Enquiries and feedback

Any questions you have about grant decisions for this grant opportunity should be sent to NIPG@oni.gov.au.

The Office of National Intelligence Complaints Procedure applies to complaints about this grant opportunity. All complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing by emailing NIPG@oni.gov.au.

If you do not agree with the way the Office of National Intelligence has handled your complaint, you may complain to the Inspector General of Intelligence and Security. The Inspector General of Intelligence and Security will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Office of National Intelligence.

The Inspector General of Intelligence and Security can be contacted on:

Email: complaints@igis.gov.au
Post: 3-5 National Circuit Barton ACT 2600
Phone: (02) 6141 4555

13.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the Office of National Intelligence's staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or member of an external panel;
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently; or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/ grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the Office of National Intelligence team in writing immediately.

13.3 Security

Upon receiving a NIPG, contact your University security office (foreign interference) to advise them of the nature of your research. We strongly advise that you:

- ensure an ongoing engagement and follow their advice in accordance with University security (foreign interference) policies and procedures;
- establish and maintain a point of contact within the security office in relation to all your travel, collaboration, publication and professional engagement.

Your University Research office can advise of the best initial point of contact.

13.4 Privacy

We treat your identifiable information according to the [Office of National Intelligence Rules to Protect the Privacy of Australians](#) made under the *Office of National Intelligence Act 2018* (Cth) and applicable to ONI.

The Australian Government may use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything, which would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Act.

13.5 Confidential Information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you; or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential.
2. the information is commercially sensitive.
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- the NIC members and staff, other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively;
- ONI employees and contractors so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities;
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery;
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations;
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner;
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary; and
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

14 Glossary

Term	Definition
administering entity	when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes
allowable career interruptions	<p>International relocation commensurate with the interruption, not exceeding three months per international relocation</p> <p>Primary carer of a dependent child, for up to two years, inclusive of parental leave, per dependent child. If required, an additional period of time commensurate with the interruption.</p> <p>Any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring responsibilities • Disability • Disaster management and recovery • Limited or no access to facilities and resources—such as through workplace interruptions • Medical conditions • Non-research positions, not concurrent with research employment • Parental leave • Unemployment <p>commensurate with the interruption.</p>
assessment criteria	are the specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of proposals and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings.
Australian Organisation	an Organisation that has its headquarters in Australia, has a board with a majority of Australian citizens or Australian Permanent Residents or New Zealand Special Category Visa holders, and has an Australian Business Number (ABN).
closing date	13 February 2026 unless otherwise notified by ONI
commencement date	the expected start date for the grant activity
Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs).	establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.
completion date	the expected date that the grant activity must be completed and the grant spent by
date of effect	can be the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.

Term	Definition
decision maker	the person who decides to award a grant
eligibility criteria	refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
Commonwealth entity	a Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act
grant	for the purposes of the CGRPs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. under which relevant money⁵ or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money⁶ is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.
grant activity/activities	refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake
grant agreement	sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant
GrantConnect	is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs
grant opportunity	refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single [entity] Portfolio Budget Statement Program.
grantee	the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant
selection process	the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria.
SmartyGrants	is a grants administration system where the NIPG application is to be prepared and submitted.

⁵ Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

⁶ Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

Term	Definition
value with money	<p>value with money in this document refers to ‘value with relevant money’ which is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the quality of the project proposal and activities;• fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives;• that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government’s outcomes being achieved; and• the potential grantee’s relevant experience and performance history.