



Frequently Asked Questions about Completing the Staff Hours Survey 2011

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Who is being Surveyed

FAQ1. Am I required to complete the survey?

You are required to complete the survey if you meet the following criteria:

- a. You are an academic employed by your institution with a 'Teaching and Research' or 'Research Only' classification (Levels A to E) who is 'undertaking research' as distinct from 'supporting research', regardless of whether you are pursuing the research component of your contract; OR
- b. You are a professional or general staff member 'undertaking research' as a material part of your contract. Further information on the definition of 'undertaking research' is provided in [FAQ2](#).

If you met one of the criteria above, you should have received an invitation to complete the survey from your institution and you should complete the survey instrument.

Academic staff with a purely administrative, management or leadership function may be excluded.

In 2011, access to funding under SRE requires each institution to achieve at least a 67% response rate. Your participation is important as your response will be included in your institution's response rate.

FAQ2. What is the definition of undertaking research versus supporting research?

For the purposes of this survey, 'undertaking research' is defined as: *Being engaged in creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge* while 'supporting research' is defined as: *Contributing directly to research without contributing to the creative or analytical aspects of a research project.*

Examples that can help you decide whether you are 'undertaking research' rather than 'supporting research' include:

- Being a named investigator on a current research grant, research grant application or a research contract.
- Being a named author on refereed research publications or conference papers.
- Supervising an HDR or Honours by research student.
- Undertaking research activities such as data analysis, literature reviews, study design and/or research paper writing.
- Undertaking research activities that result in curated events (eg. exhibitions or symposia) or the production of works such as creative writing, music performance, or music composition.
- Being on leave to conduct research (eg. on sabbatical or study leave).

If you contribute directly to research activity (for example, are a technical staff member or other non-academic staff member assigned to a research project) but do not meet the definition of 'undertaking research' you would be classified as 'supporting research'. Those 'supporting research' are not included as part of the target population for this survey and as such you do not have to complete the survey. If you have been sent an invitation to complete the survey please contact the area administering the survey at your institution.

FAQ3. I don't do any research; do I have to complete the survey?

The survey must be completed by all staff who have been identified as 'undertaking research'. The target population was identified by your institution using the criteria outlined in [FAQ1](#). The relevant test for whether you have to complete the survey is whether your employment contract contains a component that could be considered as 'undertaking research' (compared to 'supporting research'), regardless of whether you are currently undertaking any research. See [FAQ2](#) for a definition of 'undertaking research'.

If your contract contains a research component but your role is purely administrative, and you have been identified as a survey participant, please contact the area administering the survey at your institution.

FAQ4. *I don't hold an ACG grant, am I eligible to complete the survey?*

Yes, all employees undertaking research should receive an invitation to complete the survey. The survey is not restricted to ACG grant holders.

See [FAQ12](#) for a definition of ACG Research.

FAQ5. *I have a fractional/part-time appointment. Do I have to complete the survey?*

Yes, you should complete the survey. Your fractional appointment will be known by your employer and you only need to record the hours you actually work each week.

FAQ6. *I am a casual staff member. Do I have to complete the survey?*

No. Casual staff members are not included as part of the target population for this survey and as such you do not have to complete the survey. If you have been sent an invitation to complete the survey please contact the area administering the survey at your institution.

FAQ7. *I hold an honorary position (i.e. Adjunct or Emeritus). Do I have to complete the survey?*

No, **unless** you are also a paid employee of the institution and undertake research as part of a continuing or fixed-term contract. In this case please complete the survey for the hours undertaken as an employee of the institution.

FAQ8. *I am a HDR or Honours student. Do I have to complete the survey?*

No, **unless** you are also a paid employee of the institution and undertake research as part of a continuing or fixed-term contract that is separate to your degree. In this case please complete the survey for the hours undertaken as an employee of the institution. See [FAQ41](#) for further advice about completing the survey as an employed research student.

If you are a paid employee of the institution and supporting research (i.e. do not meet the definition of undertaking research in [FAQ2](#)) you do not meet the criteria for the target population for this survey and as such do not have to complete the survey.

FAQ9. *I am on a period of Outside Studies Program (OSP), Professional Experience Program (PEP) or Special Studies Program (SSP) Leave. Do I have to complete the survey?*

Yes. If you have been identified as a survey participant then you should complete the survey as long as you have access.

If you can not access the survey please contact the area administering the survey at your institution.

See [FAQ13](#) and [FAQ37](#) for more advice on completing the survey while on leave.

Completing the Survey

FAQ10. *What does the survey look like?*

Your institution has designed its survey based on advice that the department has published. The instructions that underlie administering the survey can be downloaded from www.innovation.gov.au/Research/ResearchBlockGrants/Pages/SustainableResearchExcellence.aspx.

FAQ11. *How do I complete the survey?*

Detailed instructions on the completion of the survey instrument will have been provided by your institution.

If you need help to complete the survey please contact the area administering the survey at your institution.

FAQ12. What is ACG Research? What funding comes under ACG Research?

Australian Competitive Grant (ACG) research is research carried out on projects funded by a scheme listed on the Australian Competitive Grants Register. If you're unsure whether you are undertaking ACG research, please check the Register at

www.innovation.gov.au/Research/ResearchBlockGrants/Pages/AustralianCompetitiveGrantsRegister.aspx

You need to have a clear understanding of what specific research projects you are working on at any one time in order to accurately assign the time spent on ACG versus Other research.

Time spent working on ACG projects should be recorded in the "Research – ACG" category regardless of whether the grant is administered by your institution or another institution.

FAQ13. When do I need to complete the survey?

Depending on the method used to gather the data by your institution, you should be able to complete the information require in the survey each day, at the end of each week or at the end of the survey period. Recording your activities on a daily basis is recommended as it is likely to be easier to recall your activities throughout the day.

Your institution will have set a deadline for you to complete/submit the survey response. It is important that your response be completed by this date in order to have your response included in your institution's response rate, and in order to have your research effort counted.

See [FAQ19](#) for other tips on completing the survey.

FAQ14. What if I am on leave for all or part of the survey period?

You cannot estimate the time you would have spent on activities for those days you are on leave. Only actual hours spent on an activity should be reported.

If you know that you are on leave for the **majority** of the survey period - that is, on leave for one working week or a total of 9 days (including weekends) or on leave for 50% or more of the survey period:

- a. Your institution may choose to exclude you from the survey sample and you may not be asked to complete the survey; OR
- b. If you have been identified as a survey participant please contact the area administering the survey at your institution and they will advise as to whether you should still complete the survey.

If you are away for **part** of the survey period, you should record hours spent on formal leave (for example a public holiday, annual leave, or sick leave) during the survey period in the "Leave" category.

If you have been identified as a survey participant and are on leave to conduct research (for example Special Studies Program Leave), please complete the survey provided you have access. You should treat your leave as regular work time and recorded your activities in the appropriate categories.

See [FAQ37](#) for further advice on how to record research work while on leave.

FAQ15. What if I only complete week one of the two week survey?

You must complete the full two week survey (14 days total) in order to have your response included in your institution's response rate, and in order to have your research effort counted.

If you have been on a period of leave during the two weeks, you should refer to [FAQ14](#). Time on leave should be recorded in accordance with [FAQ37](#).

FAQ16. Can someone else complete the survey for me?

No. You must complete the survey yourself; other people cannot estimate your answers for you.

If necessary, you may provide actual hours to another person to input into the survey instrument on your behalf.

FAQ17. I am affiliated with more than one institution. How do I complete the survey?

You should be identified as a survey participant by an institution if you have an employment relationship with that institution and are 'undertaking research'. For example:

- If you are employed by University A and also affiliated with University B but not employed by University B, then you should be surveyed only by University A.
- If you are employed by two or more universities, each university should survey you in respect of the time that you are employed in that university over the survey period. Each university will also need to indicate your fractional FTE.

If you have been seconded to another institution for research/teaching purposes, the rules above apply.

Recording Your Hours

FAQ18. Is there a standard number of hours each day and each week?

No, there are no 'standard hours'. You should record **all hours** that you actually work, regardless of whether they add up to more or less than a standard working day or week.

Some staff will complete work outside normal business hours or on the weekends and these hours should be entered into the survey instrument.

Similarly, many staff will work fewer hours some weeks or part-time hours. Your survey response should reflect what you did for the survey period. If you did not work on a day in the survey period enter zero values in every activity category for that day. Time on leave should be recorded in accordance with [FAQ37](#).

However, to be considered a valid response the total for any one day may not exceed 24 hours and no one week may exceed 168 hours.

FAQ19. What is the best way to complete the survey?

It is important to be as accurate as you can. Data should be recorded in hours to the nearest 15 minutes (for example 3 hours and 15 minutes = 3.25).

For accuracy, daily reporting is the preferred method of reporting. Depending on the method used to gather the data by your institution, you could choose to enter your hours directly into the survey instrument every day, manually record them on a print out of the survey instrument or keep a journal.

Based on experiences from 2010, survey participants found they spent less time completing the survey if they recorded time on a daily basis directly into the survey instrument.

Regardless of the method, you must make sure that your hours are recorded in the survey instrument and submitted by the end of the survey period if your response is to be included.

FAQ20. Why do I have to enter a value for Saturday and Sunday?

Some staff will work on the weekend and it is important to capture this effort in the survey.

If you do not undertake any work on the weekends that fall within the survey period, please enter zero values in every activity category for these days.

FAQ21. Can I change my survey response?

Yes, during the survey period you may change your responses to accurately reflect the hours that you have worked.

Once your survey responses have been submitted you will need to contact the area administering the survey at your institution to confirm whether you can make any changes.

FAQ22. How important is it for me to provide accurate data?

Data integrity is important and the hours you record for the survey must be a true record of activity during the survey period. The department will be reviewing the de-identified data and following up anomalies with universities.

Allocating Your Time

FAQ23. How should I record different types of activities?

The survey instrument will ask you to record the number of hours you spend on each of five different categories of work. These are: "Research – ACG", "Research – Other", "Teaching", "Research Training", "Other".

You must have a clear understanding of the specific research projects you are working on at any one time in order to accurately assign the time spent on "Research – ACG" and "Research – Other".

Please refer to the Example Activities against each Activity Category table which provides a clear set of examples of activities listed against each appropriate category. This document is available at www.innovation.gov.au/Research/ResearchBlockGrants/Pages/SustainableResearchExcellence.aspx

Should you be unsure of how to record a particular activity please contact the area administering the survey at your institution.

FAQ24. What happens if an activity is applicable to more than one category?

You should make the best attempt to allocate a proportion to each applicable category relative to time spent on each. If largely one category applies, you may reasonably allocate all of the time spent on that activity to one category.

FAQ25. Last year I was asked to record time taken to complete the survey, do I have to record this time this year?

No, the time taken to complete the survey **must not** be included in your survey response. This is not an activity that would be ongoing throughout the academic year so it should not be captured by the survey.

FAQ26. How do I know if my research is Research ACG or Research Other?

Time spent working on ACG projects should be recorded in the "Research – ACG" category. You can check the ACG Register to identify whether a project is ACG or not. A link to the Register is found under [FAQ12](#).

Where time spent on research is not ACG funded, then it should be included in the "Research – Other" category. This category includes projects funded by non-ACG grants, internal grants and unfunded projects.

FAQ27. How do I record time spent on administrative activities?

Administrative tasks are recorded under the appropriate category dependent on what the task corresponds to, i.e. "Research – ACG", "Research – Other", "Teaching", "Research Training", "Other".

Administrative activities related to your **existing research** should be recorded under the relevant research category, i.e. "Research - ACG" or "Research – Other".

Examples of administrative activities that should be recorded in the "Other" category include: management of a research centre, conference organisation, staff meetings, consulting work, media relations, volunteering and charity work, professional development and time spent on committees.

FAQ28. How do I record time spent preparing grant applications?

You should record time spent preparing grant applications during the survey period under the “Other” category.

Only activities that relate to your **existing research** should be included in the “Research - ACG” or “Research – Other” categories.

In a separate field, you may be asked to provide an estimate of all time you spent preparing applications for ACG funding in 2011 (to date). It does not matter whether the applications:

- Have been submitted yet or not.
- Were successful or not.
- Name you as a grant holder or not.
- Are joint applications with another institution or not.

Whether or not you are asked to estimate the time you have spent on ACG applications in 2011 (to date) will depend on the survey designed by your institution.

FAQ29. Where do I include completing OH&S, Quarantine and OGTR procedures?

All research related administrative duties should be recorded under the relevant research category, i.e. “Research - ACG” or “Research – Other”.

FAQ30. I have clinical duties as part of my job description. How do I record these?

Time spent on clinical duties directly related to your **existing research**, should be recorded under the relevant research category, i.e. “Research - ACG” or “Research – Other”.

Time spent on clinical duties not directly related to research should be recorded in the “Other” category.

If you undertake clinical practice as part of your employment with another body (for example the State health system) this time must not be included in the survey.

FAQ31. How do I record time spent developing an article for publication?

If the article for publication is being developed out of your existing research then you should record that time under the relevant research category, i.e. “Research - ACG” or “Research – Other”.

FAQ32. What about time spent on activities related to a grant, such as publication preparation, where the funding has ended?

These activities should be attributed to the relevant research category, i.e. “Research - ACG” or “Research – Other”, regardless of the fact that the grant has ended.

FAQ33. I am preparing patent applications based on the outcomes from my ACG project. How do I record these?

This time should be recorded in the “Research – ACG” category.

FAQ34. I am travelling to, and attending a conference. How do I record these hours?

Time spent actually **attending a conference** pertaining to your existing research should be recorded under the relevant research category, i.e. “Research - ACG” or “Research – Other”.

Time spent **travelling** should be recorded in the “Other” category, unless you are actually engaged in research activities while travelling (for example writing a paper on the plane).

FAQ35. Where do I record time spent on unfunded research?

This time should be recorded in the “Research – Other” category.

FAQ36. What if I have no hours of research recorded?

If your role includes research but you did not undertake any research activities during the survey period, you must record zero hours against the "Research – ACG" and "Research – Other" categories.

If your role does not include research and you believe you have been sent the survey in error, please contact the area administering the survey at your institution.

See [FAQ2](#) for a definition of research and advice as to whether you have to complete the survey.

FAQ37. Although I am on leave during the survey, I have been busy with my research. Is the time counted toward the survey?

You may record the time spent on research while on leave. Record your actual hours spent on research under the relevant research category, i.e. "Research - ACG" or "Research – Other".

If the time spent on research is less than the number of hours of formal leave then record the remainder in the "Leave" category.

If you are on Special Studies Program Leave or Conference Leave, treat this as regular work time and record your activities in the appropriate categories.

See [FAQ13](#) for further advice in relation to being on leave during the survey period.

FAQ38. What if my role includes a significant proportion of research centre management and leadership work, how is that recorded?

Time spent on centre or project management (e.g. financial management, managing supplies, human resource management, reporting requirements) should be recorded in the "Other" category.

Time spent on leadership in designing research programs and/or advising colleagues about their research projects should be recorded under the relevant research category, i.e. "Research - ACG" or "Research – Other".

FAQ39. Where do I record time spent with HDR and/or Honours students?

Time spent teaching should be recorded in the "Teaching" category.

Time spent supervising students should be recorded in the "Research Training" category, **unless** your student's project is funded by an ACG or non-ACG grant. In most cases, research as part of a HDR degree is funding through the Research Training Scheme (RTS) not ACG or non-ACG grants.

Time spent directly working on or discussing your research with HDR and/or Honours students should be recorded under the relevant research category, i.e. "Research – ACG" or "Research – Other".

Note: Honours students doing research are treated in the same way as HDR students.

FAQ40. I am giving feedback on a PhD thesis being prepared as part of an ARC Linkage. How do I record these hours?

As the thesis is part of an ACG funded post doctorate this time should be recorded in the "Research - ACG" category.

If it was related to a non-ACG funded post doctorate the time would be recorded in the "Research - Other" category.

If it was related to a HDR student who is not funded under a grant the time would be recorded in the "Research Training" category.

FAQ41. *I am a staff member and a research student. Do I include my research?*

You should only include time spent on research undertaken while being paid by your institution. Time spent on duties related to your employment should be recorded under the appropriate categories, with time spent on research recorded under the relevant research category, i.e. "Research - ACG" or "Research – Other".

Time spent on research undertaken as part of your degree that is **separate** to your paid work **must not** be included in the survey.

If your research forms both part of your employment and part of your degree, then you should record your time under the relevant research category, i.e. "Research - ACG" or "Research – Other".

Please consider carefully the specific research projects you are working on at any one time in order to accurately assign the time spent on research undertaken as part of your employment and research undertaken as part of your degree.

Use of Survey Data

FAQ42. *How will my survey response be used?*

This survey is being undertaken as part of the Sustainable Research Excellence (SRE) initiative. Aggregated data will be used in conjunction with financial return information supplied by your institution to calculate the indirect costs associated with ACG research.

The data you provide **cannot** be used by your institution to evaluate **individual** performance.

Your personal identifiers will be retained temporarily by the area administering the survey at your institution. This is to allow quality assurance of survey responses to be undertaken.

FAQ43. *Is my privacy assured?*

Data will be collected and maintained in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

Your personal information is only used for the purposes of managing the data collection. Your institution is not allowed to use the information gathered in the survey to link responses back to individual staff members.

Stringent mechanisms will be in place to ensure that your privacy is respected. Access to individual data at your institution will be limited to those administering the survey.

Your survey return will be de-identified before it is submitted to the department following the end of the survey period.

FAQ44. *Will the survey data be published?*

Only de-identified data will be published by the department. The data will only be published in an aggregated form that will not allow the identification of individuals.

Who to Contact for Help

FAQ45. *I can't find an answer to my questions. Where do I go now?*

If you can't find the information you need in these Frequently Asked Questions, please direct your inquiry to the area administering the survey at your institution in the first instance.

You can also write to us at the following email address: RBGrants@innovation.gov.au