



ABN: 18 133 225 331

2026 AINSE Early Career Researcher Grant (ECRG)

Terms and Conditions

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The following terms and conditions establish the rules which govern the administration of the 2026 AINSE Early Career Researcher Grant (ECRG), hereafter referred to as the **Award**.
- 1.2 The **Award Period** for the 2026 AINSE Early Career Researcher Grant is 1st October 2026 – 31st December 2027.
- 1.3 Applicants must read these terms and conditions before filling out an application.
- 1.4 The Award is open to application from any researchers employed primarily in a research role by a financial member institution of AINSE, subject to the eligibility criteria as outlined in Section 3, regardless of the applicant's citizenship.
- 1.5 Previous recipients of an AINSE Early Career Researcher Grant are not eligible to apply.
- 1.6 Individuals employed by AINSE on a full-time or part-time basis at the time of application are not eligible to apply.
 - 1.6.1 Applicants who accept employment with AINSE on a full-time or part-time basis are required to withdraw their application upon commencement of their AINSE employment.
 - 1.6.2 Award recipients who accept employment with AINSE on a full-time or part-time basis are required to relinquish their Award upon commencement of their AINSE employment.
 - 1.6.3 Casual employees of AINSE are exempt from Sections 1.6, 1.6.1, and 1.6.2.
- 1.7 Enquiries regarding these terms and conditions should be directed to the AINSE Secretariat by email (applications@ainse.edu.au) or phone (+61 2 9717 3376).

- 1.8 To maintain a fair and equitable award, AINSE reserves the right to modify these terms and conditions at any time.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **AINSE:** the [Australian Institute of Nuclear Science and Engineering](#). AINSE offices are co-located with ANSTO's Lucas Heights campus.
- 2.2 **ANSTO:** the [Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation](#). ANSTO has two campuses: one Sydney-based campus at Lucas Heights, and one Melbourne-based campus at Clayton.
- 2.3 **Early Career Researcher (ECR):** an individual holding a Research Higher Degree (RHD) and employed in a research role at a financial member institution of AINSE, whose RHD award date, or earliest RHD award date in the case of an individual holding multiple RHDs:
- 2.3.1 falls within 5 full-time equivalent (FTE) years of 1st January 2026; or
 - 2.3.2 together with an allowable period of career interruption (e.g. maternity leave), as assessed by AINSE, would be commensurate with an award date within 5 FTE years of 1st January 2026.
 - 2.3.2.1 Applicants requiring assessment of a period of career interruption must contact AINSE by emailing applications@ainse.edu.au prior to submitting their application form.
- 2.4 **Full-time equivalent (FTE) year:** a period of 52 weeks employment at 40 remunerable working hours per week.
- 2.5 **Project:** a research undertaking in collaboration with at least one researcher employed by ANSTO and utilising at least one ANSTO research facility.
- 2.6 **Research Higher Degree (RHD):** a Research Doctorate or Research Masters degree.
- 2.7 **University:** The financial member institution of AINSE at which the recipient is employed primarily in a research role as of 1st January 2026.
- 2.8 **ANSTO Employee:** a person directly employed by ANSTO (paid directly by ANSTO; not a contractor or working for ANSTO under another relationship through an agent with ANSTO).

3. Eligibility Criteria

- 3.1 AINSE Early Career Researcher Grants may be offered:
- 3.1.1 To scholars who are in direct paid employment in a research role at a financial institutional member of AINSE during the award period stipulated in Section 1.2 (please note that honorary fellow appointments at financial institutional members, and/or employment at an independent institution affiliated with a financial institutional member, are NOT considered eligible); and
 - 3.1.2 To scholars who hold a Research Higher Degree (RHD); and

- 3.1.3 To scholars whose RHD award date, or earliest RHD award date in the case of an individual holding multiple RHDs:
 - 3.1.3.1 falls within 5 full-time equivalent (FTE) years of 1st January 2026; or
 - 3.1.3.2 together with an allowable period of career interruption (e.g. maternity leave), as assessed by AINSE, would be commensurate with an award date within 5 FTE years of 1st January 2026;
 - 3.1.3.2.1 If you have accumulated more than 5 years of active research-related employment since acquiring your PhD, you are not eligible to apply.
 - 3.1.3.2.2 Applicants requiring assessment of a period of career interruption must contact AINSE by emailing applications@ainse.edu.au prior to submitting their application form.
- 3.1.4 To a maximum of one Early Career Researcher employed by ANSTO in each application round; and
- 3.1.5 A maximum of once per applicant; applications from prior AINSE ECRG recipients will not be considered; and
- 3.1.6 To recipients who are listed on an approved proposal to commence work at an ANSTO facility within the period 1st October 2026 – 31st December 2027 and/or to collaborators that are undertaking research collaboration directly with an ANSTO employee.
 - 3.1.6.1 In cases where the relevant proposal(s) have been submitted to the ANSTO Research Portal but not yet approved at the time of ECRG application review, success in the ECRG application will be contingent upon success in the relevant ANSTO portal round.
 - 3.1.6.2 In cases where the relevant proposal(s) have yet to be submitted to the ANSTO Research Portal at the time of ECRG application review, applicants must demonstrate intent to commence work at ANSTO within the period 1st October 2026 – 31st December 2027. This intent must be verified by a signed letter from their nominated primary ANSTO collaborator (see Section 5.3) providing proof of planned collaboration with ANSTO. Success in the ECRG application will be contingent upon success in a relevant ANSTO portal round.
 - 3.1.6.3 In cases where there is a direct collaboration with an ANSTO employee a letter must be provided to explain the direct collaboration and why this is not covered under the existing ANSTO portal round. If clarification is required, email AINSE directly at applications@ainse.edu.au.

4. Tenure

- 4.1 AINSE may terminate an Award at any time if it is not satisfied with the progress or conduct of a recipient, or if the recipient fails to meet any security clearance requirements at ANSTO, or if the university at which the recipient is employed ceases to be a financial member of AINSE, or if the recipient ceases to be employed at a financial member of AINSE.
- 4.2 Upon termination of an Award, any unspent grant funds will be reclaimed by AINSE (see Section 7.3).

5. Project

- 5.1 The Project shall be in collaboration with at least one researcher employed by ANSTO and require the use of at least one ANSTO research facility.
- 5.2 The objective(s) of the Project shall not be changed without the prior written approval of AINSE.
- 5.3 The applicant will nominate a suitably qualified member of staff from ANSTO as their primary collaborator for the Project.
- 5.4 Access to ANSTO facilities is not guaranteed.
- 5.5 AINSE does not accept any responsibility for the consequences of ANSTO facilities becoming unavailable.

6. Application Review

- 6.1 Applicants must apply by submitting a form via the [AINSE Portal](#) and provide all materials and information requested prior to the application deadline, including the following items:
 - 6.1.1 Project Details outlining the details of the applicant's collaborative Project (see Section 5) including aim, methodology, timeline, and expected publications;
 - 6.1.2 A Budget for grant expenditure, including a detailed breakdown of expenditures within the eligibility categories and capped limits outlined in Section 7.4.1;
 - 6.1.3 An employment history, outlining commencement and end dates, and full-time/part-time loading, for all prior and current employment undertaken since the applicant's RHD award date, or earliest RHD award date in the case of an individual holding multiple RHDs.
 - 6.1.4 A signed letter from the nominated primary ANSTO collaborator (see Section 5.3) providing proof of collaboration with ANSTO; and
 - 6.1.5 One signed letter of reference from a university or research collaborator, excluding the nominated primary ANSTO collaborator (see Section 5.3).
- 6.2 The signed letters referenced in Sections 6.1.4 and 6.1.5 must be submitted by the applicant together with the application form.
- 6.3 All applications are subject to review by the relevant AINSE Specialist Committee(s). All application approvals are at the discretion of the AINSE Specialist Committees and the AINSE Secretariat.

7. Grant

7.1 Amount:

- 7.1.1 The grant amount applicable during the Award period will be **up to A\$10,000 excluding GST**.
- 7.1.2 The grant is for the exclusive use of the recipient only and is not transferable to another party.
- 7.1.3 The grant amount approved by AINSE is at the discretion of the AINSE Specialist Committees and the AINSE Secretariat and will be determined as part of the application review process.

7.2 Payment:

- 7.2.1 AINSE will provide authorisation for the University to invoice the grant payment once AINSE receives official confirmation of the recipient's access to ANSTO facilities via the recipient providing details of the approved ANSTO research proposal to award@ainse.edu.au, and AINSE verifying the details provided (if required) from the recipient's ANSTO collaborator and/or the ANSTO User Office.
- 7.2.2 The grant will be paid directly to the University upon receipt of a tax invoice and is then paid to the recipient in accordance with the University policy.
- 7.2.3 Any transaction fees incurred in paying the grant to the recipient must be borne by the University.
- 7.2.4 Responsibility for any potential taxation liability lies with the Award recipient. Independent tax advice should be sought by the recipient where required.

7.3 Return of Funds:

- 7.3.1 Should the recipient relinquish, or AINSE terminate the Award for any reason, the University will be required to refund the remaining grant balance to AINSE. This may require reimbursement of the remaining grant balance to the University by the recipient.
- 7.3.2 Should the recipient cease employment as a researcher at the University within one year of receipt of the grant for any reason, the University will be required to either refund the remaining grant balance to AINSE or transfer the remaining grant balance to another AINSE member institution per 7.3.3, at the direction of AINSE. This may require reimbursement of the remaining grant balance to the University by the recipient.
- 7.3.3 Should the recipient transfer employment between AINSE member institutions during the Award period, the recipient is eligible to request a transfer of funding. In such a scenario, the recipient must contact AINSE to request the transfer.
- 7.3.4 Should the University cease to be a financial member of AINSE, the University will be required to refund the remaining grant balance to AINSE. In such a scenario, the recipient is advised to contact AINSE for guidance.

7.4 Grant Usage:

- 7.4.1 The grant amount must be spent within the Award Period as specified in Section 1.2.
- 7.4.2 The grant amount is to be spent on items within the following eligible categories relating to the recipient's approved ANSTO proposal (see Section 3.1.6), subject to AINSE's discretion:
 - 7.4.2.1 The recipient's reasonable travel and accommodation costs for the purpose of conducting fieldwork relating to samples that will be analysed at ANSTO facilities, **capped at A\$5,000 excluding GST**, noting that travel to attend ANSTO facilities for experimentation is not covered as a successful applicant will already have this provided through the ANSTO approved merit-based proposal process (applicants can apply for extra travel if needed outside of this experimentation time);
 - 7.4.2.2 The recipient's reasonable travel and accommodation costs, and/or registration fee, for a conference, workshop, or symposium within the Award Period (see Section 1.2) at which the recipient is presenting a poster or oral presentation on which the nominated primary ANSTO collaborator (see Section 5.3) is listed as a co-author, concerning the research arising from the recipient's approved ECRG, **capped at A\$5,000 excluding GST**;
 - 7.4.2.2.1 Total travel and accommodation costs for each individual domestic conference, workshop, or symposium hosted in Australia or New Zealand are capped at **A\$2,000 excluding GST**.
 - 7.4.2.2.2 Total travel and accommodation costs for each individual non-domestic conference, workshop, or symposium hosted outside Australia or New Zealand are capped at **A\$5,000 excluding GST**.
 - 7.4.2.3 The purchase of laboratory consumables, **capped at A\$5,000 excluding GST**;
 - 7.4.2.4 Publication fees and printing costs, **capped at A\$1,000 excluding GST**; and
 - 7.4.2.5 Carer requirements, including costs relating to childcare, respite, and support of dependents;
- 7.4.3 AINSE will provide a Final Report Form, including a Disposal Section as part of the acquittal process (see Section 7.5) for single-use equipment items, excluding reagents.
- 7.4.4 The grant amount cannot be spent on facility access or service costs.
- 7.4.5 The grant amount cannot be spent on meal costs.
- 7.4.6 The grant holder is not permitted to transfer spending between the eligible categories in the approved budget unless approval is received by AINSE. The request for approval by AINSE is outlined in section 7.4.7.

- 7.4.7 Requests to reallocate the expenditure of an approved grant amount from the Budget outlined in the grant letter issued by AINSE must be made by contacting AINSE via email (award@ainse.edu.au). Upon receipt of the email a budget reallocation form will be provided via the AINSE portal for completion and review by AINSE. The budget reallocation request is not to be taken as approved unless AINSE issues an updated grant letter outlining the new budget for each eligible category. Budget reallocation requests that involve increases above capped category amounts in 7.4.2 are not permitted.
- 7.4.8 Requests to extend the end date of the Award will only be considered in the event of exceptional circumstances outside the recipient's control. Any such requests must be made, prior to the end date specified in the Award letter, in writing, to award@ainse.edu.au, clearly outlining the requested extension period and including documentation to support the request.
- 7.4.8.1 Approval of the end date extension request is at the discretion of the AINSE Secretariat.
- 7.4.8.2 AINSE will provide written notification of the outcome of the end date extension request.

7.5 Acquittal Process:

- 7.5.1 AINSE will request a formal financial acquittal statement from the recipient's University to verify the amount spent up to the end date. Any unused grant funds as of the end date specified in the Award letter will be recovered by AINSE.
- 7.5.2 AINSE will provide a Final Report Form to the recipient, including Acquittal and Disposal Sections (see Section 7.4.3). The recipient must complete and submit this Final Report Form via the [AINSE Portal](#), together with the totality of tax invoices/receipts, no later than two (2) months after the end date specified in the Award letter.
- 7.5.3 Any grant funds used for purchases deemed by AINSE to be ineligible will be recovered by an invoice for return payment. If recipients are unsure of purchase eligibility, they must contact the AINSE Secretariat by email (award@ainse.edu.au) for clarification.

8. Reports

- 8.1 A final report on the Project, on a form provided for that purpose via the [AINSE Portal](#) which will then go to the nominated primary ANSTO collaborator (see Section 5.3), must be submitted to AINSE no later than two (2) months after the end date specified in the Award letter.
- 8.2 All documentation regarding the acquittal process, as outlined in Section 7.5.2, must be submitted to AINSE no later than 28th February 2027.
- 8.3 The final report is subject to review by AINSE Specialist Committees. Resubmission of the final report will be required if the submission is deemed unsatisfactory by the AINSE Specialist Committees.
- 8.4 The deadlines in Section 8.1 and 8.2 can be extended, in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of AINSE.

9. Publications

9.1 Appropriate acknowledgement of AINSE and ANSTO must be included by the recipient when any material embodying the results of work undertaken during tenure of the Award is submitted for publication.

9.1.1 Any publications embodying the results of work undertaken during tenure of the Award, including but not limited to: journal publications, conference publications, research theses, and media articles, must include the following statement:

“This research was supported by an AINSE Ltd. Early Career Researcher Grant (ECRG).”

9.1.2 Any variations to the statement in Section 9.1.1 must be approved in writing by AINSE prior to submission of the material for publication.

9.1.3 Any visual media embodying the results of work undertaken during tenure of the Award, including but not limited to: posters, presentation slides, and video productions, must include the official AINSE logo and must adhere to the usage guidelines for the official AINSE logo. Please email the AINSE Secretariat at award@ainse.edu.au to request the AINSE logo files and usage guidelines.

9.2 Any material arising from work undertaken at ANSTO facilities, or the analysis of data previously collected from ANSTO facilities, must be approved by the recipient’s primary ANSTO collaborator (see Section 5.3) prior to submission of the material for publication.

9.3 Full references of any publication embodying the results of work undertaken during tenure of the Award must be supplied to AINSE Ltd

10. Intellectual Property Rights

10.1 As a general rule, intellectual property rights in the results of an AINSE Award involving ANSTO personnel shall be the joint property of the University accepting the Award and ANSTO, however such rights may, in all cases, be subject to negotiation between those parties.

10.2 Where it is anticipated that intellectual property rights of commercial value will be generated by a project which is the subject of an AINSE Award, applicants are advised to consult their legal representatives.

10.3 Intellectual property rights which exist, or may exist, in any AINSE Award project must be identified and steps taken to ensure that whatever protection is required is put into place before disclosure of the subject matter is made to any outside parties.