



**Australian
Academy of
Science**

23 August 2021

The Hon Alan Tudge MP
Minister for Education and Training
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
Via email: alan.tudge.mp@aph.gov.au

Dear Minister Tudge

The Australian Academy of Science (the Academy) is concerned that applications for Discovery Early Career Researcher Awards and Future Fellowships have been ruled ineligible for funding by the Australian Research Council (ARC) because they referenced 'pre-prints' or documents on pre-print servers.

Pre-prints are not peer-reviewed literature, but they are increasingly used to disseminate current research and supplemental information. It could easily be argued that a researcher not referencing material found in preprints is not using the full range of contemporary knowledge in a discipline. That, in the view of the Academy, would be more of an indictment than using and referencing material published as pre-prints.

Several funding agencies, in Australia and internationally, allow the inclusion of pre-prints. See, for example, the list collected at <https://asapbio.org/funder-policies> or the recent International Science Council report, *Opening the record of science: making scholarly publishing work for science in the digital era*.ⁱ

As a body that brings together distinguished scientist within its Fellowship as well as hosting the Early-and Mid-Career Researchers Forum (comprising more than 6000 EMCRs many of whom are directly impacted by this matter), the Academy would be happy to assist the ARC review their current policy framework, as a matter of urgency, such that best practice can be achieved across disciplines and applied to all future grant rounds. I look forward to an opportunity to discuss this matter with you further.

In the meantime, the Academy is concerned that such a technicality should have a major impact on so much of Australia's research potential, especially when it was applied to applications after they were deemed to meet the criteria for funding. While we understand that it may be difficult to reverse the decision already made, it would be appropriate to permit those affected to apply in future funding rounds – and not use another technicality (the number of times an applicant may apply) to deny these outstanding young and early career researchers an opportunity to advance their careers and bring benefits to Australia.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Shine', written over a stylized blue graphic element.

Professor John Shine AC PresAA FAHMS(Hon) FRS

President

The Australian Academy of Science

cc.

Professor Sue Thomas, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Research Council
Chair, Early & Mid-Career Researchers Forum
Chair, Universities Australia
President, Science and Technology Australia
Chair, Group of Eight
Chair, Australian Technology Network
Chair, National Committee for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Chair, National Committee for Antarctic Research
Chair, National Committee for Astronomy
Chair, National Committee for Biomedical Sciences
Chair, National Committee for Brain and Mind
Chair, National Committee for Cellular and Developmental Biology
Chair, National Committee for Chemistry
Chair, National Committee for Crystallography
Chair, National Committee for Data in Science
Chair, National Committee for Earth Sciences
Chair, National Committee for Earth System Science
Chair, National Committee for Ecology, Evolution and Conservation
Chair, National Committee for Geographical Sciences
Chair, National Committee for History and Philosophy of Science
Chair, National Committee for Information and Communication Sciences
Chair, National Committee for Materials Science and Engineering
Chair, National Committee for Mathematical Sciences
Chair, National Committee for Mechanical and Engineering Sciences
Chair, National Committee for Medicine and Public Health
Chair, National Committee for Nutrition
Chair, National Committee for Physics
Chair, National Committee for Space and Radio Science
President, Australian Institute of Physics
President, Royal Australian Chemistry Institute

ⁱ International Science Council. 2021. Opening the record of science: making scholarly publishing work for science in the digital era. Paris, France. International Science Council. <http://doi.org/10.24948/2021.01>