



# Research Block Grants

## An Overview

### Policy

The Australian Government operates a 'dual support system' for the public funding of research and research training in its higher education sector. The system comprises both competitive programs, where funding is distributed through merit-based, peer-determined processes; and block grants, which are allocated according to performance-based formula and are independent of funding for specific research projects, programs or fellowships.

The Government's research block grants are established under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA) and provide block funding to [eligible Australian higher education providers](#) for research and research training. In 2021, the Government will provide \$2.99 billion to 42 providers as block grants through two programs, the [Research Support Program](#) (RSP) and the [Research Training Program](#) (RTP). Research block grants are administered by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.

Research block grants are allocated on a calendar year basis using program-specific formulae that reward the performance of providers in attracting research income and the successful completion of higher degree by research students.

Providers have autonomy in deciding which research projects, researchers, students, equipment and infrastructure the block grant funding will support. This also includes decisions by providers about which businesses, international providers and other organisations they collaborate with in establishing research and research training partnerships. In this way, the Australian research funding system recognises that these sorts of decisions are best made by the provider, its researchers and stakeholder communities.

### Programs in 2021

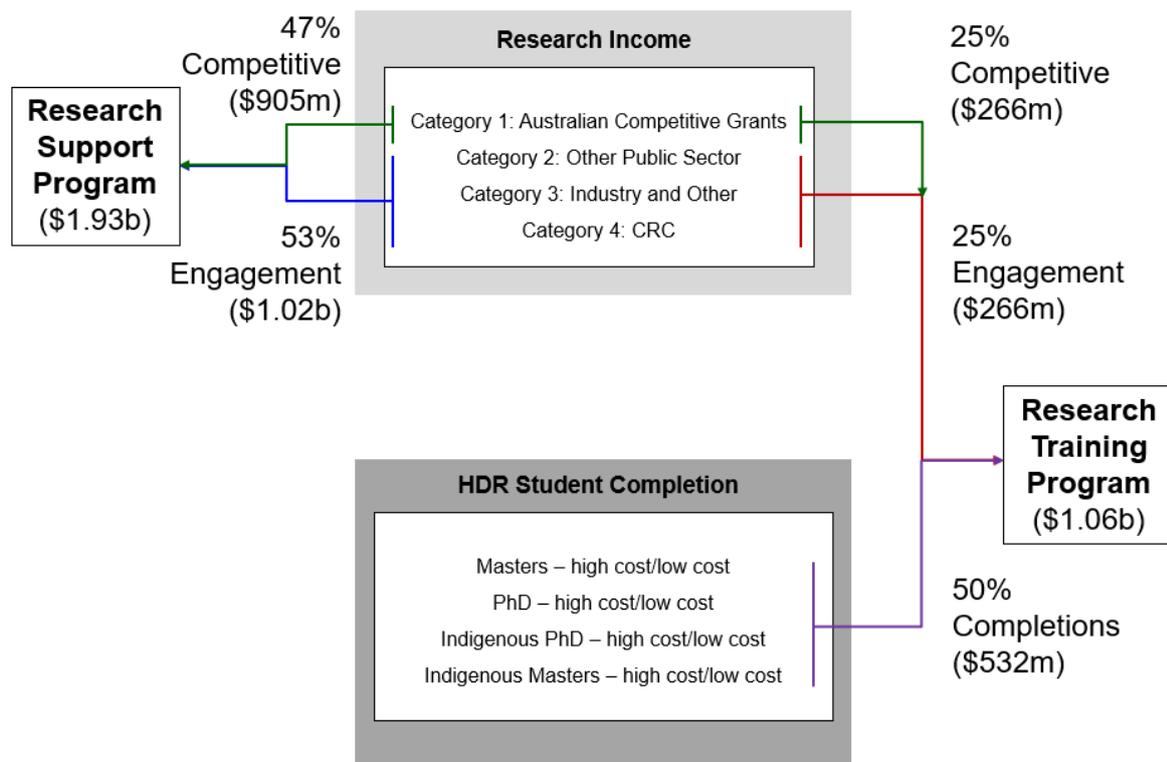
The **Research Support Program (RSP)** provides a flexible funding stream to support the systemic costs of university research. This forms part of the Government's dual funding system for the higher education sector where competitive and other grants support the direct costs of research, and the RSP supports the systemic costs such as research projects not funded through other means, and the indirect costs such as libraries, laboratories, consumables, computing centres and the salaries of support and technical staff.

In 2021, the Government will provide \$1.926 billion through the RSP. In response to the impact of Covid-19 the program's base funding of \$926 million will be supplemented with a further \$1 billion in government support.

The **Research Training Program (RTP)** provides funding to support the training of domestic and international students undertaking Research Doctorate and Research Masters courses, known as higher degrees by research (HDR). In 2021, the Government will provide \$1.064 billion through the RTP.

RTP scholarships are available to research doctorate degree students for between three to four years, and up to two years to research masters students. RTP scholarships can be provided to fund a student's tuition fees, to provide a stipend to support a student's general living costs, or to support the ancillary costs of an HDR such as thesis publication costs.

## 2021 funding drivers



## Transitional Arrangements

The research block grants include transitional arrangements that are in place until the end of the 2021 calendar year. These arrangements include:

- a safety net for RSP funding to ensure that no university receives less than 95 per cent of its funding from the previous year's allocations.
- 75 per cent of RTP funding is based on a university's previous year's allocations, with the remaining 25 per cent determined by applying the 2021 funding drivers.

## Further information

Detailed information can be found on the [Research Block Grants](https://www.research.gov.au/research-block-grants) website or by contacting [RBGrants@dese.gov.au](mailto:RBGrants@dese.gov.au)