



**Australian Government**  
**Australian Research Council**

## Linkage Program Grant Guidelines ARC Centres of Excellence commencing in 2023

<b>Opening date:</b>	Available on <a href="#">GrantConnect</a>
<b>Closing date and time:</b>	Available on <a href="#">GrantConnect</a>
<b>Commonwealth policy entity:</b>	Australian Research Council
<b>Enquiries:</b>	Researchers are required to direct requests for information to the Research Office within the Administering Organisation.  ARC Contacts are on the <a href="#">ARC website</a> .
<b>Date guidelines released:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> of May 2021
<b>Type of grant opportunity:</b>	Restricted competitive

*Australian Research Council Act 2001*

I, Alan Tudge, Minister for Education and Youth, having satisfied myself of the matters set out in section 59 of the *Australian Research Council Act 2001*, approve these grant guidelines under section 60 of that Act.

Dated 25 May 2021

Alan Tudge  
Minister for Education and Youth

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## 1. Linkage Program: ARC Centres of Excellence processes

**The Linkage Program is designed to achieve the Australian Government's objectives for research and innovation.**

This grant program contributes to the ARC's Outcome 1, which is to grow knowledge and innovation through managing research grants, measuring research excellence and providing advice.

The following process flowchart applies to the *ARC Centres of Excellence for funding commencing in 2023* grant opportunity.



**The grant opportunity opens.**

We (the ARC) publish the grant guidelines and advertise on GrantConnect.



**You (the Administering Organisation) complete an Expression of Interest application (EOI application).**

You may submit a 'Request not to Assess' form two weeks before the closing date for EOI applications.



**We manage the assessment of all EOI applications.**

We manage the assessment of EOI applications against eligibility criteria and assessment criteria and compare Your EOI application to other EOI applications.

Your EOI application will be assigned to Detailed Assessors to undertake in-depth assessments. You will have an opportunity to respond to Detailed Assessors' written comments through a rejoinder.

Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) members will then assess Your EOI application, consider the Detailed Assessors' ratings and comments and Your rejoinder.

The SAC will collectively consider all EOI applications and recommend a shortlist of EOI applications to be invited to submit a full application.

The recommended shortlist and any advice on national security issues will be considered by the ARC Chief Executive Officer (CEO).



**We notify You of the shortlist result.**

If Your EOI application has been shortlisted, We invite You to submit a full application.



**If invited, You complete and submit a full application (full application).**



**We manage the assessment of all full applications.**

We manage the assessment of full applications against eligibility criteria and assessment criteria including an overall consideration of value for money.

Your full application will be assigned to Detailed Assessors to undertake in-depth assessments. You will have an opportunity to respond to Detailed Assessors' written comments through a rejoinder.

Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) members will then assess Your full application, consider the Detailed Assessors' ratings and comments and Your rejoinder and assign a final score.

The SAC will consider all full applications and may recommend a shortlist of full applications to be invited to participate in an interview. You will be advised if Your full application is not shortlisted.

The SAC will undertake interviews with You and other people associated with the full application.



**We make grant recommendations.**

When all interviews are completed, the SAC will consider all full applications interviewed, and recommend to the CEO the full applications to be funded, and the level and duration of funding for each Centre.

The CEO will then recommend to the Minister the full applications to be funded, and the level and duration of funding for each Centre.

In making recommendations to the Minister the CEO will consider the applicant's response to the National Interest Test. The CEO will seek information from Administering Organisations on applications where there is concern about how they meet the National Interest Test based on the information provided in the full application form. The CEO will make grant recommendations to the Minister that satisfy the National Interest Test and which are eligible for funding.

The CEO may take into account any advice received on national security or other matters from Commonwealth agencies.



**Grant decisions are made.**

The Minister decides which full applications are approved, and the level of funding and duration of funding for each approved Centre. The Minister may consider the National Interest Test and any advice on national security risks in determining which full applications to approve.



**We notify You of the outcome.**

We advise You if Your full application was successful or not through Our Research Management System (RMS).



**We enter into a grant agreement with You.**

We will enter into a grant agreement with You through RMS.



**Delivery of the grant.**

You undertake the grant activity and report to Us as set out in Your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with You, monitoring Your progress and making payments.



**Evaluation of the grant opportunity.**

We evaluate the specific grant activity and the grant opportunity as a whole. We will use information You provide to Us through Your reports to inform evaluations.

## Introduction

- 1.1. These grant guidelines establish the rules which govern the administration of the Linkage Program including the application, eligibility, and selection processes to be followed and the assessment criteria that will be used to recommend grantees.
- 1.2. These grant guidelines contain information on the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme.
- 1.3. You and the named participants must read these guidelines before filling out an application.
- 1.4. This document sets out:
  - a. the purpose of the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme;
  - b. the eligibility and assessment criteria;
  - c. how applications are considered and selected;
  - d. how grantees are notified and receive grant payments;
  - e. how grantees will be monitored and evaluated; and
  - f. responsibilities and expectations in relation to the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme.
- 1.5. These grant guidelines are a legislative instrument current as at the date of signing by the Minister and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the ARC Act in force at that date.

## 2. About the grant program

- 2.1. The Linkage Program is one of two Programs under the ARC National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP).

### Objectives

- 2.2. The Linkage Program supports the growth of research partnerships between university-based researchers and researchers in other sectors in Australia and overseas for projects that generate new knowledge, technologies and innovations.
- 2.3. The purpose of the Linkage Program is to promote national and international research partnerships between researchers and business, industry, community organisations and other publicly funded research agencies. By supporting the development of partnerships, the ARC encourages the transfer of skills, knowledge and ideas as a basis for securing commercial and other benefits of research.
- 2.4. The Linkage Program aims to encourage and extends cooperative approaches to research and improve the use of research outcomes by strengthening links within Australia's innovation system and with innovation systems internationally.
- 2.5. The objectives of the Linkage Program are to deliver outcomes of benefit to Australia and build Australia's research and innovation capacity through support for:
  - a. collaborative research between university-based researchers and researchers in other sectors;
  - b. research training and career opportunities that enable Australian and international researchers and research students to work with industry and other end-users; and
  - c. research in priority areas.

- 2.6. The grant opportunities currently available under the Linkage Program are:
- a. Industrial Transformation Research Program (ITRP) comprising:
    - Industrial Transformation Research Hubs (Research Hubs);
    - Industrial Transformation Training Centres (Training Centres);
  - b. Linkage Projects;
  - c. Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF);
  - d. ARC Centres of Excellence;
  - e. Special Research Initiatives;
  - f. Learned Academies Special Projects (LASP); and
  - g. Supporting Responses to Commonwealth Science Council Priorities.

### **Intended outcome**

- 2.7. The intended outcome of the Linkage Program is to increase Australia's research and innovation capacity to generate new knowledge and result in the development of new technologies, products and ideas, the creation of jobs, economic growth and an enhanced quality of life in Australia.

### **Scope and timeframes**

- 2.8. Linkage Program grants are awarded on the basis of excellence through a competitive peer review processes for each grant opportunity.
- 2.9. Depending on the grant opportunity, Linkage Program grant applications may be accepted once a year, on a continuous basis, or as required.
- 2.10. These grant guidelines will be in effect from the date the Minister signs these grant guidelines.

### **Key performance indicators**

- 2.11. The Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Linkage Program are identified each year in the ARC Portfolio Budget Statements and the ARC corporate plan. Reporting is provided every year in Our annual report.
- 2.12. The KPIs focus on long-term outcomes as well as medium-term outcomes relating to building Australia's research capacity, for example, research careers and training, contributions in areas of national need and research collaboration.

### **Other relevant information**

- 2.13. The Linkage Program is undertaken according to the *Australian Research Council Act 2001* (ARC Act) and the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines 2017 (CGRGs).

## About the ARC Centres of Excellence grant opportunity

### Important dates

- 2.14. The grant commencement date for ARC Centres of Excellence is available on the [ARC website](#).

### Description

- 2.15. The ARC Centres of Excellence grant opportunity facilitates significant collaboration which allows the complementary resources of universities, publicly funded research organisations, other research bodies, governments and businesses to be concentrated to support outstanding research in all fields (except Medical Research).
- 2.16. The ARC Centres of Excellence are prestigious focal points of expertise through which high-quality researchers collaboratively maintain and develop Australia's international standing in research areas of national priority.

### Objectives

- 2.17. The ARC Centres of Excellence scheme objectives are to:
- a. undertake highly innovative and potentially transformational research that aims to achieve international standing in the fields of research envisaged and leads to a significant advancement of capabilities and knowledge;
  - b. link existing Australian research strengths and build critical mass with new capacity for interdisciplinary, collaborative approaches to address the most challenging and significant research problems;
  - c. develop relationships and build new networks with major national and international centres and research programs to help strengthen research, achieve global competitiveness and gain recognition for Australian research;
  - d. build Australia's human capacity in a range of research areas by attracting and retaining, from within Australia and abroad, researchers of high international standing as well as the most promising research students;
  - e. provide high-quality postgraduate and postdoctoral training environments for the next generation of researchers;
  - f. offer Australian researchers opportunities to work on large-scale problems over longer periods of time; and
  - g. establish Centres that have an impact on the wider community through interaction with, and beneficial outcomes for, higher education institutions, governments, industry and the private and non-profit sectors.
- 2.18. The intended outcomes of the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme are consistent with those of the Linkage Program.

### Timeframe

- 2.19. ARC Centres of Excellence grant opportunities are conducted approximately every three years.

### 3. Grant amount and grant period

3.1. ARC Centres of Excellence applications for the levels of funding listed in Table 1 will be considered.

3.2. **Table 1:** ARC Centres of Excellence funding and grant duration.

Category	Details
Funding level	Between \$1 million and \$5 million per year.
Funding duration	Up to seven years.

### 4. Eligibility criteria

#### What are the eligibility requirements for applications?

- 4.1. To be eligible, Your EOI application and full application must:
  - a. include at least one Other Eligible Organisation;
  - b. include one or more Partner Organisations;
  - c. nominate a Centre Director, who is the first-named Chief Investigator (CI) on Your application;
  - d. include at least one other CI; and
  - e. include one or more Partner Investigators (PI).
- 4.2. You and each Other Eligible Organisation must commit a significant contribution of cash and/or in-kind and/or other material resources to the full application having regard to the total cost of the proposed Centre and the relative contribution of any Chief Investigators or Partner Investigator(s) at the organisation. We do not specify the type or level of contribution.
- 4.3. We reserve the right to determine the value of Partner Organisation contributions and may determine contributions to be at levels different from those in Your full application.
- 4.4. The application may nominate one or more PIs from each Partner Organisation. A Partner Organisation may choose not to nominate any PIs where it is not appropriate given the role of the Organisation in the proposed Centre. A PI who is representing a Partner Organisation on an application is required to have a role within that Partner Organisation.
- 4.5. Your EOI application must have been shortlisted by the ARC for You to be eligible to submit a full application in the second stage of the application process.

#### Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

- 4.6. We will only accept applications from the Eligible Organisations in Table 2.
- 4.7. The Eligible Organisation that submits the application will be the 'Administering Organisation' and is referred to as 'You'. All other Eligible Organisations named on the application will be an 'Other Eligible Organisation'.
- 4.8. Eligible Organisations may be involved in more than one EOI application or full application but must consider their capacity to contribute if all full applications are successful.

4.9. **Table 2:** Eligible Organisations:

Organisation Name	Organisation ABN
Australian Catholic University	15 050 192 660
Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies	62 020 533 641
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
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

Organisation Name	Organisation ABN
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 Southern Queensland	40 234 732 081
University of Tasmania	30 764 374 782
University of Technology Sydney	77 257 686 961
University of the Sunshine Coast	28 441 859 157
University of Wollongong	61 060 567 686
Victoria University	83 776 954 731
Western Sydney University	53 014 069 881

## Who is eligible to be a Partner Organisation?

- 4.10. To be eligible as a Partner Organisation, an organisation cannot be:
- a. 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](http://www.nationalredress.gov.au))
  - b. an Eligible Organisation;
  - c. a controlled entity of any Eligible Organisation; or
  - d. an entity (for example a joint venture) where more than 50 per cent is owned by one or more Eligible Organisations.
- 4.11. Each Partner Organisation must make a contribution of cash and/or in-kind and/or other material resources that is specific to the Centre, and having regard to the total cost of the project and not be part of a broader contribution to Your organisation or an Other Eligible Organisation.
- 4.12. Partner Organisation cash contributions cannot:
- a. be sourced from funds awarded or appropriated by the Commonwealth or an Australian State or Territory Government for the purposes of research, nor from funds previously used to leverage government research or research infrastructure funding; or
  - b. be a contribution to salaries for CIs and/or PIs on the application.

## Who is eligible to be a named participant?

- 4.13. Named participants are those individual researchers who are nominated for the particular roles identified for the Centre.
- 4.14. Roles that named participants may be nominated for under the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme are:
- a. Centre Director;
  - b. Chief Investigators (CIs); and
  - c. Partner Investigators (PIs).
- 4.15. All named participants in an application must:
- a. satisfy the eligibility criteria for the role they are to perform;
  - b. take responsibility for the authorship and intellectual content of the application, appropriately citing sources and acknowledging significant contributions, including from third parties; and
  - c. have met their obligations regarding previously funded projects, including submission of satisfactory final reports to the ARC at the date of application submission.
- 4.16. An application will not be considered where We have made a decision to exclude grant applications involving a particular named participant for a period of time, whether or not they otherwise meet the eligibility requirements.
- 4.17. A project cannot commence until all named participants meet the eligibility criteria in these grant guidelines.

## Centre Directors

- 4.18. A person nominated as a Centre Director must consider project limits applicable to other ARC schemes for the purpose of eligibility.
- 4.19. A person nominated as a Centre Director is considered to be a CI for the purpose of eligibility.
- 4.20. The Centre Director must:
- a. commit a minimum of 70 per cent (0.7 FTE) to the activities of the proposed Centre;
  - b. be employed by the Administering Organisation for at least 70 per cent of Full Time Equivalent (0.7 FTE) as at the grant commencement date and, if the application is successful, for the project activity period; and
  - c. have a demonstrated capacity to manage the research program and operations of the Centre.

## Chief Investigators

- 4.21. CIs are expected to:
- a. take significant intellectual responsibility for the conception and conduct of the Centre and for any strategic decisions required in its pursuit and the communication of results;
  - b. ensure effective supervision, support and mentoring at all times of research personnel, including Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidates and postdoctoral researchers for whom they are responsible; and
  - c. make a commitment to carrying out the research program and operations of the Centre and not assume the role of a supplier of resources for work that will largely be undertaken by others.
- 4.22. CIs who are not the Centre Director must meet at least one of the following criteria as at the grant commencement date and, if the application is successful, for the project activity period:
- a. be an employee for at least 20 per cent of Full Time Equivalent (0.2 FTE) at an Eligible Organisation; or
  - b. be a holder of an honorary academic appointment at an Eligible Organisation. An honorary academic appointment for eligibility purposes means a position that gives full academic status to the researcher, as certified by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) (or equivalent) in the application. The researcher must have access to research support comparable to employees e.g., an emeritus appointment. The researcher is not eligible to be a Chief Investigator using their honorary academic appointment if they are employed by an organisation other than an Eligible Organisation for more than 0.2 FTE.
- 4.23. CIs must commit a minimum of 20 per cent (0.2 FTE) to the activities of the Centre.
- 4.24. CIs must reside in Australia for more than 50 per cent of the project activity period. Any significant absences including fieldwork or study leave directly related to the research program must have approval from You and must not total more than half the project activity period. In extraordinary circumstances, changes must be approved via a Variation.

4.25. CIs must not undertake an HDR during the project activity period.

### **Partner Investigators**

4.26. PIs are expected to:

- a. take significant intellectual responsibility for the planning and conduct of the Centre and for any strategic decisions required in its pursuit and the communication of results;
- b. have the relevant skills and experience to contribute to the Centre;
- c. make a commitment to carrying out the research program and operations of the Centre and not assume the role of a supplier of resources for work that will largely be undertaken by others; and/or
- d. provide effective supervision, support and mentoring of research personnel, as required.

4.27. PIs must not meet the eligibility criteria for CIs as at the grant commencement date and, if the application is successful, for the project activity period.

4.28. Researchers who do not meet all of the eligibility criteria for being a CI may be PIs. For example, a participant may be a PI if they would otherwise be a CI but will not reside in Australia for more than 50 per cent of the project activity period.

### **What are the limits on the number of applications and projects per named participant?**

4.29. Individuals nominated in either an EOI application or full application may be named on other ARC grant opportunity applications or active projects. All grant applications submitted through other ARC grant opportunities and all ARC grants held may be retained until the outcome of the ARC Centres of Excellence application is known.

4.30. All named participants on a successful application must meet the project limit requirements before the Centre can start. Project limits can be met by relinquishing existing project(s), or relinquishing role(s) on existing projects, or withdrawing application(s) that would exceed the project limits. We reserve the right to determine which grants are to be relinquished.

4.31. The Centre Director and CIs named on a successful full application may retain current ARC grants for active projects provided that:

- a. the full application clearly demonstrates and explains, to Our satisfaction, the overlap between the existing non-Centre grant activities and the proposed Centre research activities; and
- b. funding for the existing non-Centre grant activities is not requested in the budget for the proposed Centre.

4.32. An individual may be nominated as a Centre Director on one EOI application or full application. A person named as Centre Director may be nominated as a CI on no more than one additional EOI application or full application in the same ARC Centres of Excellence grant opportunity. The CI role must be relinquished should both full applications be successful.

- 4.33. An individual may be nominated as a CI on a maximum of two EOI applications or full applications unless an individual is nominated as a Centre Director in which section 4.32 [above] applies.
- 4.34. It is Your responsibility to determine if applying for, or holding, a project under these guidelines will affect an individual researcher's eligibility for the other ARC grant opportunities as other ARC grant opportunities may have different project limits. We reserve the right to change project and application limits in future grant opportunities.

## 5. What the grant money can be used for

### Eligible grant activities

- 5.1. The Linkage Program supports research activities that meet the definition of 'research'.

### Ineligible grant activities

- 5.2. The Linkage Program does not support applications that involve medical research as detailed in the *ARC Medical Research Policy* on the [ARC website](#).
- 5.3. We will not consider any application that utilises ARC funds for clinical trials.
- 5.4. We will not consider applications for a grant where one or more Organisation(s) is seeking expert external assistance, not available within their own organisation, in order to develop specific applications or outputs that involve little innovation or are low risk. We consider such applications to be contracted research or a consultancy arrangement and these are ineligible.
- 5.5. We cannot fund the same research activities, infrastructure or project previously funded or currently being funded through any other Commonwealth grant.
- 5.6. The Linkage Program does not support activities leading solely to the creation or performance of a work of art, including visual art, musical compositions, drama, dance, film, broadcasts, designs and literary works, unless those works are directly related to the project activities and demonstrably research based.
- 5.7. The ARC Centres of Excellence grant opportunity does not support applications that involve Antarctic research (see Glossary for definition).

### What grant funds can be used for

- 5.8. You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure items that directly support the Centre and in accordance with any additional special conditions in the grant agreement.
- 5.9. Eligible expenditure items are:
  - a. personnel, which may include:
    - i. salary support for Centre personnel who perform research or activities that support the research, for example research associates and assistants, a Centre Manager or Chief Operations Officer, technicians and laboratory attendants but excluding the Centre Director, CIs and PIs. Salary support must be at an appropriate level, including 30 per cent on-costs, at the employing organisation;
    - ii. stipends for HDR students, in whole or in part, at an appropriate level for the Eligible Organisation;

- iii. expert services of a third party if the services are directly related to and essential for the Centre. Such services include, but are not limited to:
  - language translation services, transcribing services;
  - purchase of bibliographical or archival material (electronic or hard copy); and
  - data collection and analysis services;
- b. travel costs essential to the Centre research program or Centre governance, including economy travel costs for domestic and/or international travel and accommodation for Centre personnel and visitors to the Centre;
- c. expenditure on field research essential to the Centre, including technical and logistical support, travel expenses (including accommodation, meals and incidental costs);
- d. equipment (and its maintenance) and consumables essential to the Centre. Funding will not be provided for equipment or consumables that are considered to be for broad general use; and
- e. other, which may include:
  - i. access to national and international research and infrastructure facilities including specialist archives, collections and databases;
  - ii. access to technical workshop services necessary for the Centre (for example, machine tools and qualified technicians);
  - iii. publication and dissemination of Centre outputs and outreach activity, including the development and maintenance of the Centre's website costs;
  - iv. specialised computer equipment and software essential to the Centre;
  - v. workshops, focus groups and conferences that are essential for the conduct of the Centre (including reasonable hospitality costs such as morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea);
  - vi. reasonable essential costs to allow a participant who is a carer, or who personally requires care or assistance, to undertake travel essential to the Centre; and
  - vii. professional development and training for students and early career researchers only.

### **What grant funds cannot be used for**

- 5.10. Unless the following activities meet the definition of 'research', the Linkage Program does not support production of:
- a. computer programs, research aids and tools;
  - b. data warehouses, catalogues or bibliographies; or
  - c. teaching materials.
- 5.11. You cannot request or use grant funds for the following activities:

- a. basic facilities that should normally be funded by an Administering Organisation, Eligible Organisation and/or Partner Organisation (including standard refurbishment costs of a laboratory);
- b. capital works and general infrastructure costs;
- c. costs not directly related to the Centre, including but not limited to professional membership fees, professional development courses which are not offered by the Centre, 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;
- d. fees for international students or the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) and Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) liabilities for students;
- e. salaries and/or on-costs, in whole or in part, for the Centre Director, CIs or PIs on the Centre or any other ARC grant;
- f. teaching relief;
- g. cost of investigations that are more appropriately undertaken by way of a consultancy;
- h. direct development of products and other commercialisation activities;
- i. indirect costs, including basic facilities and equipment, organisational overheads, and/or infrastructure costs; and
- j. research support for PIs, apart from short-term project support for investigators visiting from overseas and domestic and international travel associated with the Centre.

### **What basic facilities must be provided**

- 5.12. The following basic facilities must be provided (where relevant) and funded by You, or the Other Eligible Organisation(s), or Partner Organisation(s) and are not funded by the ARC:
- a. bench fees or similar laboratory access fees;
  - b. access to a basic library collection;
  - c. access to film or music editing facilities;
  - d. work accommodation (for example, laboratory and office space, suitably equipped and furnished);
  - e. basic computer facilities such as desktop computers, portable computer devices, printers, word processing and other standard software;
  - f. use of photocopiers, telephones, mail, email and internet services; and
  - g. standard reference materials or funds for abstracting services.
- 5.13. We may determine whether any grant funds involve items not permitted as identified above. If such a determination is made, then We may decide to not recommend part or all of the application for funding.

## 6. The assessment criteria

- 6.1. You must address all of the relevant assessment criteria in Your application. We will assess your application based on the weighting given to each criterion for the relevant application stage.
- 6.2. The application form for both the EOI application and the full application asks questions that relate to the assessment criteria. The amount of detail and supporting evidence You provide in Your application should be relative to the project size, complexity and grant amount requested. The application form includes character, word and page limits.
- 6.3. The EOI application assessment criteria are criteria a and b. These criteria are weighted as:
- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| a. Research program - Quality and Innovation | <b>70%</b> |
| b. Investigators                             | <b>30%</b> |
- 6.4. The full application assessment criteria are criteria a, b, c, d and e. These criteria are weighted as:
- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| a. Research program - Quality and Innovation | <b>20%</b> |
| b. Investigators                             | <b>20%</b> |
| c. Institutional Support                     | <b>20%</b> |
| d. Governance, leadership and mentoring      | <b>20%</b> |
| e. Outcomes and linkages                     | <b>20%</b> |
- 6.5. The assessment criteria for ARC Centres of Excellence are:
- a. Research program - Quality and Innovation**
- Demonstrate this through identifying how the Centre:
- addresses the objectives of the ARC Centres of Excellence grant opportunity;
  - will be innovative and potentially transformational, and lead to significant advancement of knowledge, expertise and technologies;
  - will build effective collaboration and critical mass across groups of researchers;
  - is assembled into an effective and integrated research program (including the proposed conceptual framework, design, human resource commitments, methods and analyses, project structures, budget planning and risk mitigation strategies); and
  - will build effective and high quality national and international partnerships, exchanges and networks.
- If the project involves research pertaining to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities describe:
- the strategies for enabling collaboration with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities (for example, dialogue/collaboration with an Indigenous cultural mentor);
  - any existing or developing, supportive and high-quality relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities; and

- any personal affiliations with local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities that can facilitate the proposed research.

**b. Investigators/Capability**

Demonstrate this through identifying:

- the contribution of the Centre Director, CIs and PIs to the proposed research program and their demonstration of appropriate capability, capacity and commitment to the Centre; and
- the extent to which the investigators are suitable and relevant to the conduct and delivery of the proposed research program, giving consideration to Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE).

**c. Institutional Support**

Demonstrate this through identifying:

- the extent to which the Centre is aligned with the research focus and strategic direction of the Administering Organisation; and
- how the combined level of support and commitment from the Administering Organisation, Other Eligible Organisations and Partner Organisations will be sufficient for the proposed Centre.

**d. Governance, leadership and mentoring**

Demonstrate this through identifying:

- the appropriateness of the organisational structure of the Centre, including:
  - proposed management arrangements and responsibilities (including management of dispersed and diverse teams and reporting arrangements both internally and externally)
  - financial systems, strategic and translation plans, milestones for achievement of objectives and delivery of outputs, outcomes and benefits, and draft Key Performance Indicators
- the relevance of the performance measures listed in the application to the proposed Centre’s objectives, project outputs, outcomes and benefits, and their appropriateness for assessing the Centre’s performance;
- the leadership ability and vision of the Centre Director and leadership team including their capacity to perform the responsibilities of the role including strategic planning and management;
- the contribution of the Centre to research training and mentoring at the Honours, postgraduate and postdoctoral level; and
- the contribution of the Centre’s education and engagement programs to professional development, ethical and technical training, and outreach.

**e. Outcomes and linkages**

Demonstrate this through identifying the:

- proposed research program articulates the path to Research Impact of the proposed research program in terms of delivering benefit to Australia;

- links with Australian researchers in universities, other research organisations, industry and strategic agencies that will facilitate collaboration in, and application of the outcomes of, the proposed research program;
- partners and end-users which will be involved in the translation of outcomes arising from the proposed research program;
- plans and strategies in place for translation of research outcomes including: knowledge transfer, knowledge application, and if applicable, technology transfer, including fostering a culture of innovation, focus on outcomes and Centre legacy;
- supporting organisational arrangements and plans in place relating to ownership and potential exploitation of intellectual property and/or utilisation or commercialisation of research (where appropriate);
- proposed research program expands Australia’s knowledge base and research capability and enhance Australia’s international reputation and competitiveness;
- proposed research program makes a significant contribution to one or more of the Science and Research Priorities;
- proposed research program delivers effective outcomes commensurate with the request for appropriate resources (value for money);
- proposed Centre involves partners and end-users in development of strategic and translation plans and proposed Centre governance; and
- proposed Centre develops and enhances high-level international linkages to benefit the research, training and translation of program outcomes.

## 7. How to apply

- 7.1. Before You submit an EOI application or full application, You and the named participants must read these grant guidelines, the Instructions to Applicants, and the draft grant agreement. These documents may be found on [GrantConnect](#). Any alterations and addenda will be published on [GrantConnect](#) and by registering on this website you will be automatically notified of any changes.
- 7.2. To submit an EOI application and a full application, You must:
- a. complete the application form in the format We require as detailed in the **Instructions to Applicants**;
  - b. address all of the eligibility and assessment criteria;
  - c. make sure that Your application is submitted in accordance with these grant guidelines, grant agreement, **Instructions to Applicants** and application form. You must only submit an application, if it and the named participants, will be eligible for the grant opportunity as per these grant guidelines;
  - d. certify that the application is compliant with these grant guidelines and all relevant laws and regulations including having regard to the *Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector* published on the [Department of Education, Skills and Employment website](#);
  - e. submit Your application through Your Research Office; and

- f. ensure that the person assigned the Research Office Delegate role in RMS is authorised to certify and submit applications.
- 7.3. A full application may be submitted only if invited by the ARC.
- 7.4. Substantial changes to the research program, personnel or organisations in a full application arising from a single previous EOI application must be fully justified.
- 7.5. We reserve the right to invite a single amalgamated full application where the research programs of two or more EOI applications demonstrate significant synergy, overlap or duplication. The Administering Organisations may choose to give effect to Our invitation. Should the invitation be accepted, the Administering Organisations of the EOI applications will be responsible for negotiating with the previously proposed Centre Directors, researchers and organisations in relation to the coordination, preparation and submission of a single amalgamated full application. We will not accept separate individual full applications arising from EOI applications where a single amalgamated full application has been invited.
- 7.6. Where a single amalgamated full application has been invited, the proposed research program, personnel and organisations may vary from those stated in the individual EOI applications. It is expected, however, that the amalgamated full application will incorporate aspects of both the research programs and appropriate personnel and organisations from each initial EOI application.
- 7.7. You must provide a budget in a full application. In the budget:
  - a. You cannot include cash or in-kind contributions in years beyond the project activity period.
  - b. There are no minimum cash or in-kind requirements for any organisations named on the application. If included in the application, in-kind contributions must be essential and central to the application. It is Your responsibility to establish the merit of the case for recognition of in-kind contributions.
  - c. In-kind contributions must not include basic salary for any Commonwealth Fellowships, unless it is salary over and above the Commonwealth component supported.
- 7.8. We reserve the right to determine the value of Partner Organisation contributions and may, for the purposes of assessment, determine contributions to be at levels that may differ from those in Your application.
- 7.9. You are responsible for ensuring that Your application is complete and all details in the application are accurate and current at the time of submission.
- 7.10. You cannot change Your application after the application submission date and time, unless invited by the ARC.
- 7.11. We reserve the right at any point in the process to seek evidence from You to support the certification of applications.
- 7.12. The application form includes help information and further information is in the instructions to applicants document on [GrantConnect](#). If You have any technical difficulties, please contact [arc-systems@arc.gov.au](mailto:arc-systems@arc.gov.au).

## Attachments to the application

- 7.13. You must attach supporting documentation to the application form in line with the instructions provided in the form or in the instructions to applicants. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that We do not request.
- 7.14. Your full application must include a letter of support from each Other Eligible Organisation and Partner Organisation which must:
- a. include the official letterhead;
  - b. be no more than two A4 pages;
  - c. include a brief profile of the organisation;
  - d. provide details of the cash and/or in-kind contributions;
  - e. certify that no part of its cash contribution is drawn from funds previously appropriated or awarded from Commonwealth or Australian State or Territory Government sources for the purposes of research (if a cash contribution is being made) nor from funds previously used to leverage government research or research infrastructure funding;
  - f. specify the participation of named participants in the application;
  - g. certify that it will meet the Participating Organisation requirements outlined in a standard ARC grant agreement, including the requirement to enter into arrangements regarding Intellectual Property which do not unreasonably prevent or delay academic outputs; and
  - h. be signed by a senior representative (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or equivalent; the Chief Executive Officer, or delegate) of the organisation.

## Timing of the grant opportunities

- 7.15. We publish open and closing times for submission on [GrantConnect](#).
- 7.16. You must submit Your application to Us between the grant opportunity opening and closing date and time specified on [GrantConnect](#).
- 7.17. We cannot accept late applications, other than in exceptional circumstances (such as due to natural disasters) in which case We will discuss this with You, and if We agree, invite You to make a late application.
- 7.18. If You are successful, a grant will commence on the grant commencement date, after Ministerial announcement, or in line with other arrangements that are approved by Us.

## Questions during the application period

- 7.19. Questions during the application period should be directed to Your Research Office. Answers to frequently asked questions may also be posted on [GrantConnect](#).

## Withdrawing an application

- 7.20. We may approve the withdrawal of an application upon receipt of a written request with justification from You. We will only approve such a request in exceptional circumstances.

## 8. The grant selection process

- 8.1. All applications will be considered through a competitive peer review process.
- 8.2. We manage the assessment of applications. Further information about the assessment process is available on the [ARC website](#).
- 8.3. We may seek advice on security or other matters from Commonwealth agencies in relation to the application.
- 8.4. We may seek information from You regarding due diligence activities in relation to the application.

### What is the grant assessment process?

#### Eligibility criteria assessment

- 8.5. We will review Your application against the eligibility criteria at both the EOI application and full application stages.
- 8.6. We will assess the EOI application against a subset of the eligibility criteria:
  - a. Individuals nominated as a Centre Director, CI or PI will be assessed against the eligibility criteria for their nominated role and specifically institutional affiliation and grant opportunity limits.
  - b. Research programs will be assessed against the medical research exclusions outlined in the ARC Medical Research Policy.
- 8.7. We will assess Your full application against all the eligibility criteria.
- 8.8. We may determine whether an application meets the eligibility requirements in these grant guidelines at any stage during the assessment process.
- 8.9. If an application is ineligible, the application may not be progressed through the assessment process and We must not recommend the application for funding.

#### The assessment process

- 8.10. All EOI applications and full applications which meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed and merit ranked using the relevant assessment criteria.
- 8.11. If We consider that an application is incomplete We may in Our absolute discretion decide to recommend that the application not be approved for a grant.
- 8.12. If We consider that an application is inaccurate or contains false or misleading information, or is otherwise a breach of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, We will in Our absolute discretion decide to recommend that the application not be approved for a grant.
- 8.13. During the assessment process, We may request additional information, which does not change the nature of Your application.

#### EOI application assessment

- 8.14. All EOI applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed and merit ranked using assessment criteria 'a' and 'b'. From this a shortlist of the most highly meritorious EOI applications is developed.

- 8.15. The process that We will undertake comprises the following steps:
- a. We assign EOI applications to SAC members.
  - b. We assign EOI applications to Detailed Assessors. In assigning assessors. We may take requests not to assess into account (see below for further information).
  - c. Detailed Assessors provide assessments to Us with scores and written comments against assessment criteria for each application.
  - d. Applicants are provided with Detailed Assessors' comments and are invited to submit a rejoinder (see below for further information on this process).
  - e. Applications, scores and comments provided in the detailed assessments and the applicant's rejoinder are provided to the SAC for consideration. Assigned SAC members assign their own scores against the relevant assessment criteria.
  - f. The SAC meets to discuss the ranking of each application and shortlist EOI applications for full application. The SAC may also recommend that two or more EOI applications which demonstrate significant synergy, overlap or duplication be amalgamated into one full application.
  - g. The recommended shortlist of EOIs is submitted to Our CEO for decision. The recommended shortlist and any advice on national security issues will be considered by the CEO.
  - h. If You are shortlisted, You will be invited to develop and submit a full application addressing the full assessment criteria. Only invited applicants are eligible to submit a full application.

#### **Full application assessment**

- 8.16. All full applications which meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed and merit ranked using all assessment criteria.
- 8.17. Your full application will be considered on its merits, based on:
- a. how well it meets the assessment criteria;
  - b. how it is ranked against other applications; and
  - c. whether it provides value for money (as defined in the Glossary).
- 8.18. The process that We will undertake comprises the following steps:
- a. We assign full applications to Detailed Assessors.
  - b. Detailed Assessors provide assessment to Us with scores and written comments against the selection criteria.
  - c. Applicants are provided with Detailed Assessors' comments and are invited to submit a rejoinder (see below for further information on this process).
  - d. Applications, scores, and comments provided in the detailed assessments and the applicant's rejoinder are provided to the SAC. The SAC assign their own scores against the assessment criteria.
  - e. The SAC meets to discuss the ranking of each application relative to other applications and determines funding recommendations.

- f. We may shortlist full applications prior to inviting applicants to interviews. You will be notified if You are unsuccessful at being invited to participate in an interview.

### **Interviews**

- 8.19. If You are required to take part in an interview We will inform You of the interview format, date, time, and any required participants, at the same time. We will not fund interviewee participation. Members of the SAC will conduct the interviews.
- 8.20. Following interviews, the SAC will finalise the list of recommended full applications and recommend a budget for each, relative to other full applications on the basis of the above assessment process and with consideration of value for money.

### **National Interest Test**

- 8.21. On the full application form, applicants must provide a separate response on the national interest of the research proposal.
- 8.22. In making recommendations to the Minister, the CEO will:
  - a. consider the recommendations from the SAC;
  - b. consider the applicant's response to the National Interest Test;
  - c. seek information from Administering Organisations on applications where there is concern about how they meet the National Interest Test based on the information provided in the application form; and
  - d. make grant recommendations to the Minister that satisfy the National Interest Test and which are eligible for funding.

### **Requests not to assess process**

- 8.23. You may name up to three persons whom You do not wish to assess an application by submitting a Request Not to Assess (RNTA) form in RMS as detailed on [GrantConnect](#) and the [ARC website](#). For this grant opportunity, the form must be received by Us in RMS two weeks before the EOI application submission date.
- 8.24. Only one request containing the names of up to three individual assessors may be submitted per EOI application.
- 8.25. An accepted RNTA for an EOI application will be used for any subsequent full application.
- 8.26. If a request includes the name of a current ARC College of Experts member, as listed on the [ARC website](#) or in RMS at the time of submitting the RNTA form, the request must be accompanied by comprehensive evidence justifying the request for the ARC College of Experts member or members named. If We consider the evidence is not sufficient for the named ARC College of Experts member or members, We will reject part, or all, of the request.
- 8.27. We will have absolute discretion about whether We accept or refuse a RNTA. We will not notify You of the outcome.

### **Rejoinder process**

- 8.28. You will be given the opportunity to respond to assessors' written comments on Your EOI application and full application through a rejoinder. Names of assessors will not be provided. Further information on the rejoinder process is available on the [ARC website](#).

## Who will assess applications?

- 8.29. Applications will be assessed by Detailed Assessors and a SAC comprising General Assessors.
- 8.30. Any Detailed Assessors or General Assessors must adhere to and uphold the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.
- 8.31. Any College of Experts or SAC members who are not a Commonwealth Official, will be required to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRGs.
- 8.32. We have procedures in place for managing organisational and personal Conflicts of Interest for Detailed Assessors, SAC members and ARC staff. Details of these procedures are in the relevant section of these grant guidelines and in the ARC's *Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy* available on the [ARC website](#).

## Who will approve grants?

- 8.33. In accordance with the ARC Act, Our CEO will submit grant recommendations to the Minister for consideration.
- 8.34. The CEO may seek advice on national security or other matters from Commonwealth agencies before making recommendations. The CEO will make recommendations for funding to the Minister based on any number of assessments and may take into account any advice received on national security or other matters from Commonwealth agencies.
- 8.35. Under the ARC Act, the Minister may (but is not required to) rely solely on recommendations made by the CEO.
- 8.36. The Minister will determine which grants to approve. In addition to the assessment criteria set out in Section 6, the Minister may consider the National Interest Test and any advice on national security risks in determining which applications to approve.
- 8.37. The Minister's decision is final in all matters, including:
  - a. the approval of the grant;
  - b. the grant funding amount to be awarded;
  - c. the duration of the grant; and
  - d. the terms and conditions of the grant.
- 8.38. The ARC Act states that the Minister must not approve a grant for any application that fails to:
  - a. meet the eligibility criteria;
  - b. comply with the assessment process; and
  - c. satisfy the requirements for financial assistance.
- 8.39. There is no ARC appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant. We will consider appeals against the administrative process as specified at section 13 of these grant guidelines.

## 9. Notification of application outcomes

### EOI application

- 9.1. We will advise You of the outcome of Your EOI application, following a decision by the CEO.
- 9.2. We will advise You whether Your EOI application has been shortlisted. If it has been shortlisted, the notification will include information about the full application stage.
- 9.3. The list of shortlisted EOI applications, including key information, will be distributed to all Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Research), or equivalent, of the Eligible Organisations.

#### **Full application**

- 9.4. We will advise You if Your full application has, or has not, been selected for interview.
- 9.5. We will advise You of the outcome of Your full application via RMS, following a decision by the Minister.
- 9.6. If You are unsuccessful, You may submit a new application for the same, or similar, research in future grant opportunities. This will depend on the specific provisions of the grant opportunity You are applying for. You should include new or more information to address any weaknesses that may have prevented Your previous application from being successful.
- 9.7. If Your application is found to be ineligible, You will be notified of this through RMS.

#### **Feedback on Your application**

- 9.8. You will receive written feedback on Your unsuccessful EOI application.
- 9.9. For full applications, We will:
  - a. provide written feedback to You on successful and unsuccessful full applications; and
  - b. hold a follow-up videoconference with Your Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or equivalent, Research Office Director and the nominated Centre Director.

## **10. Successful grant applications**

### **The grant agreement**

- 10.1. If You are successful, You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth represented by the ARC.
- 10.2. We use the ARC Centres of Excellence grant agreement which contains standard terms and conditions that cannot be changed. A sample grant agreement is available on [GrantConnect](#). Any special conditions attached to the grant will be identified in the grant offer.
- 10.3. You will have 30 calendar days from the date of the grant offer to execute this grant agreement with the Commonwealth.
- 10.4. We must execute a grant agreement with You before We can make any payments. We are not responsible for any Centre expenditure until a grant agreement is executed. You must not start any ARC Centre of Excellence activities until a grant agreement is executed and agreements are in place with all Other Eligible Organisations and Partner Organisations contributing to the Centre and You notify the ARC.
- 10.5. Once You have executed the grant agreement, but prior to all Other Eligible Organisations and Partner Organisations executing agreements with You, You may expend up to \$100,000 of the grant funding in the first year of the Centre to assist in the establishment of the Centre. You must request Our approval to use this grant funding and outline the purposes

to which it will be put. If We approve the request, You must not use this grant funding for any other purpose. Allowable expenses include salary of a Chief Operating Officer or other senior administrative personnel. Further information is available in the Establishment Toolkit document on the [ARC website](#).

- 10.6. You are encouraged to work with Us and refer to the *Establishment Toolkit—ARC Centres of Excellence* to facilitate the effective establishment of Centres of Excellence.
- 10.7. If the grant amount awarded is different from that requested in the full application, but at 90 per cent or more than that requested, You may not make pro rata adjustments to the stated contributions of the Administering, Other Eligible and/or Partner Organisation contributions.
- 10.8. If the grant amount awarded is less than 90 per cent of that requested in the full application, You may make pro rata adjustments to the stated contributions of the Administering, Other Eligible and/or Partner Organisation contributions. These adjusted contributions must not be at a level lower than the value of the ARC grant as a proportion of the requested funding.
- 10.9. If You enter an agreement for an ARC grant, You cannot receive other grants for the same activities from other Commonwealth, State or Territory granting programs.
- 10.10. You will be required to conduct the Centre substantially in accordance with the 'Program Description' contained in the application for the Centre.
- 10.11. We may recover grant funds if You fail to meet the obligations of the grant agreement and We may terminate the Centre.

### **Specific research policies and practices**

- 10.12. You and each participant are required to be compliant with all relevant laws, regulations and have regard to any relevant guidelines.

### **Responsible and ethical research practices**

- 10.13. All applications and ARC-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](#).
- 10.14. An ethics plan must be in place prior to the commencement of the project in line with the grant agreement.

### **Intellectual Property**

- 10.15. We do not claim ownership of any intellectual property in an application or in any research arising from a Centre. All research projects funded by Us must comply with practices and policies on the [ARC website](#).

### **Publication and dissemination of research outputs and research data**

- 10.16. All research projects funded by Us must comply with the *ARC Open Access Policy* on the dissemination of research findings, which is on the [ARC website](#).
- 10.17. A data management plan must be developed prior to the commencement of the project in line with the grant agreement.

- 10.18. We strongly encourage the depositing of data arising from a project in an appropriate publicly accessible discipline and/or institutional repository.
- 10.19. All participants applying for grants are encouraged to have a persistent digital identifier such as an Open Researcher and Contributor Identifier (ORCID ID) in their RMS Profile.

### **How We pay the grant**

- 10.20. Payments will be made as set out in the grant agreement. Grant funding will typically be paid monthly through Our payment system.
- 10.21. The grant offer will specify the approved grant amount to be paid.
- 10.22. We will not pay more than the approved grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, You must meet them.
- 10.23. Grant funding may be subject to indexation.
- 10.24. Once the grant agreement is executed by the Commonwealth, payment will be made on the next available date for grant payments after the grant commencement date.
- 10.25. Any grant awarded will be subject to sufficient funds being available, the provisions of the ARC Act and the continued satisfactory progress of the Centre.

### **Grant payments and GST**

- 10.26. All amounts referred to in these grant guidelines are exclusive of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), unless expressly stated otherwise.
- 10.27. You are responsible for any and all financial and taxation implications associated with receiving funds.

## **11. Announcement of grants**

### **EOI application**

- 11.1. Outcomes of the EOI application process will not be publicly announced.
- 11.2. As noted in 9.3., the list of shortlisted EOI applications, including key information, will be distributed to all Deputy Vice-Chancellors (Research), or equivalent, of the Eligible Organisations.

### **Full application**

- 11.3. If successful, Your grant will be listed on [GrantConnect](#) 21 calendar days after the date of effect as required by section 5.3 of the CGRGs.
- 11.4. We will publicise and report offers and grants awarded, including the following information about the Centre:
  - a. Your name and any other parties involved in or associated with the Centre;
  - b. named participants and their organisations;
  - c. the project description (the title and summary descriptions);
  - d. Your response to the National Interest Test;
  - e. classifications and international collaboration country names; and

- f. the ARC grant funding amount.
- 11.5. You should ensure that information contained in the Centre title and summary descriptions will not compromise Your requirements for confidentiality (such as protection of intellectual property).
- 11.6. In making public information about a Centre that has been approved for a grant, We may use a project description, including title and summary, which differs from that provided in the application.

## 12. How We monitor Your grant activity

### Keeping Us informed

- 12.1. You must let Us know if anything is likely to affect Your Centre.
- 12.2. You must also inform Us of any changes to Your:
  - a. name;
  - b. address(es);
  - c. nominated contact details; and
  - d. bank account details.
- 12.3. If You become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, You must contact Us immediately.

### Reporting

- 12.4. You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. Reports must be submitted to Us through RMS, unless otherwise advised by Us.
- 12.5. The amount of detail You provide in Your reports should be relative to the project's size, complexity and grant amount.
- 12.6. We will monitor progress by assessing reports You submit and may conduct site visits or request records to confirm details of Your reports if necessary. We may occasionally need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

### End of year report

- 12.7. You must submit an end of year financial report by 31 March in the year following each calendar year for which the grant was awarded. We will make the form for these reports available in RMS, with instructions on the [ARC website](#).

### Progress reporting

- 12.8. Progress reporting must be completed in accordance with instructions on the [ARC website](#).
- 12.9. If We are not satisfied with the progress of the Centre, further payment of grant funds will not be made until satisfactory progress has been made. If satisfactory progress is not achieved within a reasonable period of time, the grant will be terminated and all outstanding grant funds will be recovered by Us.

## Annual report

- 12.10. You must submit an annual report covering both financial operations and research performance for Your Centre by 31 March in the year following each calendar year for which the grant was awarded.
- 12.11. You must report on a range of KPIs common to all ARC Centres of Excellence and these are given in the grant agreement. The Centre may also report on a range of Centre-specific KPIs. KPI targets must be developed by You and submitted for approval by us within six months of the commencement of the Centre's operation and later specified as part of the grant agreement.

## Final report

- 12.12. You must submit a final report for the Centre within 12 months of the final ARC approved project end date. We will make the form for this report available in RMS, with instructions on the [ARC website](#).
- 12.13. The final report must address compliance with the conditions on which funding was granted, as set out in the grant agreement.
- 12.14. If the final report is not submitted or is not satisfactory to Us this will be considered as an eligibility matter for future ARC applications for the named participants on the Centre.
- 12.15. We may seek additional information about subsequent Research Outputs after submission of the Final Report.

## Performance reviews

- 12.16. Each Centre will undergo an external performance review arranged by Us in its fourth year of operation.
- 12.17. Continuation of funding for the remaining years of operation will be dependent on the outcome of the review and You providing a satisfactory response including a plan to address the review recommendations.
- 12.18. We may undertake ad hoc reviews of any Centre at any time. A review will be triggered in special circumstances including, but not limited to, a change of Centre Director.
- 12.19. Outcomes and feedback arising from the performance reviews may inform any evaluations of the grant opportunity.

## Grant agreement variations

- 12.20. We recognise that unexpected events may affect the progress of a Centre. In these circumstances, You can request a variation to Your grant agreement by submitting a Variation to Us in RMS.
- 12.21. You cannot request an increase to the approved grant amount.
- 12.22. You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on provisions in the grant agreement, the likely impact on achieving outcomes and any national security risks.

## Compliance visits and record keeping

- 12.23. We may visit You during or at the completion of Your Centre to review Your compliance with the grant agreement. We may also inspect the records You are required to keep under the grant guidelines and grant agreement. We will provide You with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.
- 12.24. You must retain the evidence and paperwork relied upon to certify Your application in RMS and make this available to Us if requested.

## Evaluation

- 12.25. We will evaluate the ARC Centres of Excellence grant opportunity 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 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.
- 12.26. We may contact you up to five years after You finish Your grant for more information to assist with this evaluation.

## 13. Probity

- 13.1. 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 CGRGs and the ARC Act.

## Appeals process

- 13.2. The appeals process is designed to ensure that the application has been treated fairly and consistently in the context of selection processes.
- 13.3. We will only consider appeals against NCGP administrative processes and not against committee decisions, assessor ratings and comments or the assessment outcome. Appellants must identify the specific guideline/legislative instrument clause, policy or procedure which they believe has been incorrectly applied.
- 13.4. You must submit an appeal using the ARC Appeals Form on the [ARC website](#) and have it authorised by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or equivalent. Appeals must be received **within 30 days** of the date You receive notification of the outcome of Your application. We will not accept appeals later than 5.00pm (AEDT/AEST) on the appeals submission due date.
- 13.5. Appeals must be submitted to Us electronically to [ARC-NCGP@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-NCGP@arc.gov.au).
- 13.6. If You do not agree with the way We have handled Your appeal, You may complain to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with Us. The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072

Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)

Website: [ombudsman.gov.au](http://ombudsman.gov.au)

- 13.7. Applicants may at any time seek to appeal Our decisions using available external appeal options. Regarding available options for external appeal, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal does not have general power to review Our decisions.

## Conflict of interest

- 13.8. Our purpose is to support the highest quality research and as such Our conflict of interest policy is designed to ensure that all material personal interests are disclosed. Conflicts of interest are identified and managed in a rigorous and transparent way to ensure the integrity, legitimacy, impartiality and fairness of Our processes and to maintain public confidence in Our business processes.
- 13.9. Any conflicts of interest could affect conduct of the selection processes and/or the performance of the grant. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the relevant ARC staff, an assessor, member of a committee or advisor and/or You or any of Your personnel:
- a. 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 SAC member;
  - b. 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
  - c. has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the NCGP.
- 13.10. You will be asked to certify, 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. Each individual or organisation named in an application must declare any conflict of interest that exists or is likely to arise in relation to any aspect of the application or Centre to You at the date of submission.
- 13.11. If a Conflict of Interest exists or arises, You must have documented processes in place for managing the Conflict of Interest for the duration of the Centre. Such processes must comply with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, the *ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy* and any relevant successor documents.
- 13.12. If You later identify that there is an actual, apparent, or potential conflict of interest or that one might arise in relation to an application, You must inform Us in writing immediately.
- 13.13. We will handle any conflicts of interest as set out in Australian Government policies and procedures. Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian *Public Service Code of Conduct* (Section 13(7)) of the *Public Service Act 1999*. Committee members and other officials must also declare any conflicts of interest.
- 13.14. We publish Our *Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy* on the [ARC website](#).

## Privacy and protection of personal information

- 13.15. We treat your personal information according to the Australian Privacy Principles and the *Privacy Act 1988*. This includes letting You know:
- a. what personal information We collect;
  - b. why We collect Your personal information; and

- c. who We give Your personal information to.
- 13.16. You are required, as part of Your application, to certify Your compliance with the *Privacy Act 1988*, including the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on any subcontractors You engage to assist with the activity. You must ask for the Australian Government's consent in writing before disclosing confidential information.
- 13.17. Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else:
- a. if You are given reasonable notice of the disclosure;
  - b. where disclosure is authorised or required by law or is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law;
  - c. if it will prevent or lessen a serious and imminent threat to a person's life or health; or
  - d. if You have consented to the disclosure.

### **Confidential information**

- 13.18. The Australian Government may use and disclose confidential information about grant applicants and grant recipients under the NCGP in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.
- 13.19. We may reveal confidential information to:
- a. assessors, the SAC and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help Us manage the program effectively and in accordance with any other provision of these grant guidelines or subsequent grant agreement;
  - b. the Minister and their staff;
  - c. employees and contractors of Our entity so We can research, assess, monitor and analyse Our programs and activities;
  - d. employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery;
  - e. other funding bodies for the purpose of obtaining funding from that body;
  - f. other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations;
  - g. the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner; and
  - h. a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.
- 13.20. We will treat the information You give Us as confidential if it meets one of the four conditions below:
- a. You clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why We should treat it as confidential;
  - b. the information is commercial in confidence;
  - c. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to You or someone else; or
  - d. You provide the information with an understanding that it will stay confidential.

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

### **Freedom of information**

- 13.22. All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about the Linkage Program, are subject to the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act).
- 13.23. The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.
- 13.24. All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail:        Freedom of Information Coordinator  
  
                    Australian Research Council  
                    GPO Box 2702  
                    CANBERRA ACT 2601

By email:      [foi@arc.gov.au](mailto:foi@arc.gov.au)

## **14. Consultation**

- 14.1. We may conduct a survey of applicants after the outcomes of each grant opportunity are announced. Outcomes of the survey have been considered in the development of these grant guidelines.

## 15. Glossary

### Acronyms

15.1. In these Grant Guidelines, the following acronyms are used.

Acronym	Description
ARC	Australian Research Council
ARC Act	<i>Australian Research Council Act 2001</i>
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CGRGs	<i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines</i>
CI	Chief Investigator
EOI	Expression of Interest
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FOI	Freedom of Information
GST	Goods and Services Tax
HDR	Higher Degree by Research
HECS	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
HELP	Higher Education Loan Program
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NCGP	National Competitive Grants Program
LASP	Learned Academies Special Projects
LIEF	Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities
ORCID ID	Open Researcher and Contributor Identifier
PI	Partner Investigator
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
RMS	Research Management System
ROPE	Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence
SAC	Selection Advisory Committee

## Definitions

15.2. In these grant guidelines, terms have the meanings defined below.

Term	Definition
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person	a person of Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and is accepted as an Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person by the community in which they live or have lived.
active project	a project that is receiving funding according to the terms of an existing Funding Agreement or grant agreement, or has any carryover funds approved by the ARC, or an approved variation to the project end date.
Administering Organisation	an Eligible Organisation which submits an application for a grant and which will be responsible for the administration of the grant if the application is approved for funding.
Antarctic research	Antarctic research includes any research or monitoring project that could reasonably be considered to fall within the goals of the Australian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan.
applicant	the Administering Organisation.
application	a request for funding submitted through RMS by an Administering Organisation seeking grant funding under an ARC grant program. It includes the specifics of a proposed grant activity as well as the administrative information required to determine the eligibility of the application. In this grant opportunity it refers generically to either an EOI or full application.
ARC assessor community	the Australian and international assessors that assess applications submitted to the ARC that are within their areas of expertise.
ARC College of Experts	the body of experts of international standing appointed to assist the ARC to identify research excellence, moderate external assessments and recommend applications for funding. Its members are specialist and generalist experts in their knowledge fields drawn from the Australian research community.  The <a href="#">ARC website</a> provides information on who is a member of the College of Experts.
ARC website	the website accessed using <a href="http://www.arc.gov.au">www.arc.gov.au</a> .
assessment criteria	the specified principles or standards, against which applications will be considered. These criteria are also used to assess the merits of applications and, in the case of a competitive grant opportunity, to determine application rankings.
bench fees	fees that an organisation charges for an individual to use infrastructure which would normally be provided by the organisation for their employees. This infrastructure may vary and could include, for example, an office or laboratory space with appropriate equipment, or access to non-specialised equipment owned by the organisation.

Term	Definition
cash contribution	the cash from an organisation, which is used for the operations of the Centre.
Centre	an application for ARC Centres of Excellence funding approved by the Minister.
Centre Director	The person nominated to direct the ARC Centre of Excellence.
Chief Executive Officer	means the person holding the position of ARC Chief Executive Officer in accordance with the ARC Act or any person acting in that position.
Chief Investigator	a participant who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a CI under these grant guidelines.
Commonwealth	the Commonwealth of Australia.
Commonwealth Fellowship	a position held by a participant where the salary is funded wholly or partly by the Commonwealth.
Consultancy	the provision of specialist advice, analysis, assistance, services or products to another organisation(s), generally where the consultancy services are for the sole or preferred use of that other organisation(s).
date of effect	the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date.
Detailed Assessors	assessors drawn from the ARC assessor community who are assigned applications to review for their specific expertise in a field of research.
eligibility criteria	the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
Eligible Organisation	an organisation listed in section 4.6 of these grant guidelines.
Expression of Interest	a preliminary request to the ARC for a research Program which is submitted in accordance with the grant guidelines approved by the Minister.
field research	the collection of information integral to the project outside a laboratory, library or workplace setting and often in a location external to the individual's normal place of employment.
full application	The complete application that invited applicants that are shortlisted from the EOI stage of the process may submit. It addresses all eligibility and assessment criteria.
General Assessors	the members that make up a grant opportunity's Selection Advisory Committee. General Assessors utilise knowledge of their disciplinary areas and a broad understanding of intellectual and methodological issues and good research planning. Each application has a lead General Assessor (known as Carriage 1) who is typically close to the academic field of the application, and one or more General Assessors (known as Other Carriages) with supplementary expertise.

Term	Definition
grant activity	the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake. A project consists of a number of grant activities.
grant agreement	the agreement entered into by the ARC and an Administering Organisation when an application from that organisation is approved for grant funding. This was previously referred to as a 'Funding Agreement'.
grant commencement date	the date on which grant funding may commence.
GrantConnect	the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs.
Grantee	the Administering Organisation which has been selected to receive a grant.
grant offer	the details listed in the ARC's RMS under 'Grant Offers' showing the project details and grant amount.
grant opportunity	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.
GST	the meaning as given in section 195-1 of the <i>A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999</i> .
Higher Degree by Research (HDR)	a 'Research Doctorate or Research Masters program, for which at least two-thirds of the student load for the program is required as research work' as defined by the <i>Commonwealth Scholarships Guidelines (Research) 2017</i> .
in-kind contribution	a contribution of goods, services, materials and/or time to the project from an individual, business or organisation. Values should be calculated based on the most likely actual cost, for example, current market, preferred provider or internal provider rates/valuations/rentals/charges (that is in the financial year of the date of the application) of the costs of labour, work spaces, equipment and databases. The calculations covering time and costs should be documented by the Administering Organisation. We may require these calculations to be audited.
instructions to applicants	a set of instructions prepared by the ARC to assist applicants in completing the application form.
Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)	a set of quantifiable measures that the ARC use to monitor and report on progress of research outcomes.
legislative instrument	a law on matters of detail made by a person or body authorised to do so by the relevant enabling legislation.

Term	Definition
Linkage Program	the schemes funded under the Linkage Program of the NCGP consist of: ARC Centres of Excellence, Industrial Transformation Research Hubs, Industrial Transformation Training Centres, Linkage Projects, Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities, Learned Academies Special Projects, Supporting Responses to Commonwealth Science Council Priorities, Special Research Initiatives and other grant opportunities as announced from time to time under the Linkage Program.
medical research	medical research as defined in the <i>ARC Medical Research Policy</i> available on the ARC website.
Minister	the Minister responsible for the administration of the ARC Act, or the Minister's delegate.
named participants	individual researchers nominated for particular roles in an application.
national interest	the extent to which the research contributes to Australia's national interest through its potential to have economic, commercial, environmental, social or cultural benefits to the Australian community.
officials	officials of a Commonwealth entity. An official of a Commonwealth entity is an individual who is in, or forms part of the entity (see section 8 of the PGPA Act).
ORCID Identifier	a persistent digital identifier for an individual researcher available on the ORCID website, <a href="http://www.orcid.org">www.orcid.org</a> .
Other Eligible Organisation	an organisation listed in section 4.6 of these grant guidelines which is not the Administering Organisation on an application.
other material resources	resources where a monetary value is not relevant or to which it is difficult to assign a monetary value, for example, access to restricted data, samples or documents.
participants	all named participants on an application (i.e. CIs and PIs); and all unnamed researchers such as postdoctoral research associates and postgraduate researchers working on a Centre.
Partner Investigator	a named participant who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a PI under these grant guidelines.
Partner Organisation	an Australian or overseas organisation, other than an Eligible Organisation, which satisfies the eligibility requirements for a Partner Organisation and is to be a cash and/or in-kind or other material resources contributor to the Centre.
PhD	a qualification that meets the level 10 criteria of the Australian Qualifications Framework Second Edition January 2013.
Project	an application approved by the Minister to receive funding from the ARC.

Term	Definition
project activity period	the period during which a project is receiving funding according to the original grant offer, or has any carryover funds approved by the ARC, or an approved variation to the project's end date. During this period, the project is known as an active project.
project end date	the expected date that the project activity is completed and by which all grant funding will be spent.
Recipient	an individual or organisation who has received grant funding from the ARC.
Research	<p>for the purposes of these grant guidelines, the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies, inventions and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.</p> <p>This definition of research is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development comprising "creative and systematic work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge – including knowledge of humankind, culture and society – and to devise new applications of available knowledge"</p> <p>OECD (2015), <i>Frascati Manual 2015: Guidelines for Collecting and Reporting Data on Research and Experimental Development</i> (p.378).</p>
Research Associate	A postdoctoral research associate funded by the Commonwealth through the Administering Organisation, who will be employed on the Project.
Research Impact	The demonstrable contribution that research makes to the economy, society, culture, national security, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, beyond contributions to academia.
research infrastructure	the assets, facilities, services, and coordinated access to major national and/or international research facilities or consortia which directly support research in higher education organisations and more broadly, and which maintain the capacity of researchers to undertake excellent research and deliver innovative outcomes.
Research Office	a business unit within an Eligible Organisation that is responsible for contact with the ARC regarding applications and projects.
Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)	an ARC policy framework used to consider and assess the quality and research excellence of a named participant within the context of the participant's career and life experiences. One key element is that the assessment process takes into account the quality rather than simply the volume or size of the research contribution.
research output	all products of a research project that meet the definition of research excluding pre-prints, which are the original version of manuscripts as submitted to a journal or other publication.

Term	Definition
Science and Research Priorities	those priority research areas identified by the Australian Government, and available on the Australian Government’s Science website. <a href="http://www.science.gov.au/scienceGov/ScienceAndResearchPriorities">www.science.gov.au/scienceGov/ScienceAndResearchPriorities</a> .
Selection Advisory Committee (SAC)	a group of experts from academia and industry appointed to assist the ARC to assess applications and to provide a recommendation for funding to the CEO. A SAC may be drawn from the ARC College of Experts.
selection criteria	the eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.
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.
Special Condition	a condition specified in a grant offer which governs the use of the funding provided by the ARC.
technical workshop services	the specialised construction and maintenance activities carried out by a technician, often within a dedicated facility for working with materials such as wood, glass, metal, plastics or electronics.
travel costs	the domestic and international economy travel costs associated with the project, including to foster and strengthen collaboration between researchers in Australia and overseas.
value for money	‘value for money’ is a judgement based on the application representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources determined from a variety of considerations: merit of the application, risk, cost and expected contribution to outcome achievement.
Variation of grant agreement (Variation)	a request submitted to the ARC in RMS to agree a change in the grant agreement.
We	the Australian Research Council (ARC). ‘Us’ and ‘Our’ are also used in this context.
You	the Eligible Organisation that submitted the application. ‘Your’ is also used in this context.