



ARC Industrial Transformation Research Program (ITRP) Grant Guidelines Changes – 2019

Consultation

Feedback from stakeholders was considered in the drafting of the grant guidelines.

Changes have been made in accordance with the Australian Government's Streamlining Government Grants Administration Program (announced in 2015–16) and in response to the Parliamentary inquiry into efficient, effective and coherency of Australian Government funding for research (2018).

In addition to the standard consideration of comments provided throughout the previous year's grant opportunity assessment processes, ahead of the 2019 drafting process a number of changes were proposed to streamline the guidelines, agreements and assessment process through the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) Streamlining Workshop held with members of the Australasian Research Management Society (ARMS) in November 2018. Some of the proposed changes were presented to ARMS members and the ARC College of Experts for further feedback prior to their submission to the Minister for approval.

OVERALL CHANGES TO THE 2019 GRANT GUIDELINES

1. Multi-year guidelines

In the past the ARC has revised and issued grant guidelines for each scheme every year. From 2019, we intend to issue the scheme guidelines every second year.

This is reflected in removing reference to specific dates in the grant guidelines so the document can apply for a number of grant opportunities (scheme rounds).

Changing the guidelines period provides researchers and research office staff with assurance that the details of each scheme will stay the same for a longer period, meaning longer term planning can be put in place and less time is devoted to the interpretation of ARC grant documentation. It will also provide the ARC with more time to consider policy issues affecting its funding schemes, rather than spending significant time amending wording and formatting.

Guidelines references: applicants are referred to the ARC website (www.arc.gov.au) for dates for each grant opportunity where relevant in the guidelines.

2. Format and streamlining

Since the ARC's move to the whole-of-government grant guidelines template in 2018, the ARC has continued to review the format and content of its guidelines with a view to:

- standardising presentation across all ARC funding schemes;
- increasing alignment with the guidelines of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) where appropriate; and
- ensuring the ARC's grant guidelines are consistent with the whole-of-government grant guidelines.

While no significant changes to the format and content of the guidelines have been made, minor revisions include the following:

- clarifying the eligibility requirements (especially project limits) to ensure that they are as simple as possible;
- changing the layout of the Eligible Organisation list to match NHMRC (guidelines ref: 4.7);
- removing lists of policies, and instead referring applicants to the ARC website for the most up to date information (this is also in line with the NHMRC) (guidelines ref: 10.6); and
- removing any other unnecessary duplication or repetition.

CHANGES TO ASSESSMENT

3. Scheme objectives and assessment criteria streamlined and updated

In 2019, the ARC reviewed the assessment criteria for all NCGP funding schemes as part of streamlining activities being undertaken by the agency. The review was undertaken on the basis that clarity and consistency in presentation of the assessment criteria and their sub-elements will help provide clarity for both applicants and assessors. In some instances, the changes made relate specifically to changes made in the application form to streamline the collection of information.

4. Scheme objectives structure

The scheme objectives and outcomes have been separated to clarify the objectives and expected outcomes of each scheme where:

- objectives are ‘the specific result the ARC/Australian Government is trying to achieve within the scheme timeframe and with the available resources’; and
- outcomes are ‘the result the ARC/Australian Government hopes to achieve if the objectives are accomplished’.

This approach is consistent with the whole-of-government grant guidelines template and the NHMRC.

5. Requests not to assess – removed option to request more than 3 assessors be excluded

In order to streamline this process, a maximum of three assessors may be requested not to assess an application. Previously more than three assessors could be requested not to assess an application in extraordinary circumstances and only if additional justification was provided. The administrative burden of this process was high. The option was not taken up by many applicants, and many of the requests were already covered by standard conflict of interest processes. Further information about this process is available on the [ARC website](#).

CHANGES TO ELIGIBILITY

6. Project limits simplified

Chief Investigators with projects funded under the *Special Research Initiatives*, *Learned Academies Special Projects* or *Supporting Responses to Commonwealth Science Council Priorities* schemes will no longer count towards *Linkage Projects* scheme project limits requirements.

The wording in this section of the grant guidelines (*What are the limits on the number of applications and projects per named participant?*) has also been revised for clarity.

Further information about NCGP project limits is available on the [ARC website](#).

Guidelines reference: 4.28-4.34 (page 15-16)

CHANGES TO BUDGET REQUESTS

7. **Changed budget item limit - Teaching Relief**

In the *Industrial Transformation Research Hubs* scheme, the limit for teaching relief will now be considered per Chief Investigator (CI) rather than at a project level. The new limit allows teaching relief to be requested for up to \$50,000 per CI per year. As the limit was previously set by Project rather than CI, CIs participating in a project involving multiple CIs were disadvantaged when requesting teaching relief. This change seeks to rectify this issue.

Guidelines references: A4.1 (page 34)

Attachment A – Changes to the ITRP assessment criteria

Industrial Transformation Research Hubs Assessment Criteria

Project Quality and Innovation

30%

- Describe the extent to which the:
 - Aims, concepts, methods and outcomes will drive growth, productivity and competitiveness within relevant sectors
 - Conceptual/theoretical framework is genuinely integrated, cross-disciplinary, innovative and original
 - Project draws together high quality innovative national and international partnership(s) into an integrated Research Hub.
 - ~~○ Extent to which the method, approach and intended benefits address the objectives of the Research Hubs grant opportunity-[removed]~~
 - ~~○ Describe the extent to which the research clearly addresses one or more of the Industrial Transformation Priorities-[moved to Benefit]~~

Feasibility and Commitment

20%

- Describe the:
 - Extent to which the Research Hub represents value for money
 - Appropriateness of the design of the Research Hub and the expertise of the participants to ensure the project can be completed within the proposed budget and timeframe (including identified risks and mitigation strategies)
 - Proposed level of collaboration to support the research project including national and international networks and linkages
 - High-quality intellectual support provided for the Research Hub by the research environment of the participating organisations
 - Availability of and access to the necessary facilities required to support the proposed research (physical, technical, access to infrastructure, etc.)
 - Commitment by each Partner Organisation(s) to collaboration in the Research Hub
 - Adequacy of the budget, including cash and in-kind Contributions pledged by participating organisations
 - Extent to which the proposed Research Hub engages, and will continue to engage, meaningfully with the relevant Industry Growth Centres
 - ~~○ The extent to which Capacity of each Partner Organisation(s) has the capacity to support the Research Hub [covered by above]~~

Benefit**30%**

- Describe:
 - The extent to which the research clearly addresses one or more of the Industrial Transformation Priorities
 - The economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for relevant Australian research end-users (including relevant industry sectors)
 - The extent to which the proposed Research Hub supports clearly identified market opportunity(ies) and intended transformation for Australian industry or other end users
 - The extent to which the proposed Research Hub will build research capacity in the Partner Organisation(s) [moved from Feasibility]
 - The extent to which there are adequate strategies to encourage dissemination, promotion, and the commercialisation of research outcomes; and
 - The potential contribution of proposed research to address the needs of industries and communities as articulated in Australia's Industrial Transformation Research Priorities
 - Where relevant, the extent to which the applicants have identified the freedom to operate in the Intellectual Property and patent landscape to enable future benefits to industry.
 - ~~○ Extent to which the Research Hub represents value for money [moved to Feasibility]~~
 - ~~○ The Extent to which the proposed Research Hub engages, and will continue to engage, meaningfully with the relevant Industry Growth Centre(s) [relocated to Feasibility]~~

Investigator(s)/Capability**20%**

- Describe the:
 - Demonstrated ROPE of proposed team, including (i) evidence of experience in managing distributed and/or collaborative industrial and end-user focussed research; (ii) evidence of significant outcomes on industry related projects; and (iii) evidence of experience in and capacity to provide effective supervision, support and mentoring for HDR candidates and postdoctoral researchers over the life of the Research Hub.
 - Appropriateness of team's research track record to achieve the Research Hub's goals
 - Time and capacity of the team to undertake and manage the proposed research in collaboration with the Partner Organisation(s)
 - ~~○ Extent to which the leadership and team have suitable management experience in distributed and/or collaborative industrial and end-user focussed research~~
 - ~~○ Experience and capacity of the Research Hub Director and supervisors to provide effective supervision, support and mentoring for the Higher Degree by Research candidates and postdoctoral researchers over the life of the Research Hub~~
 - ~~○ How this is the best team to achieve the Research Hub's goals [reworded]~~
 - ~~○ How the team demonstrates suitable Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) [reworded]~~

Industrial Transformation Training Centres Assessment Criteria

Project Quality and Innovation

30%

- Describe the extent to which:
 - The aims, concepts, methods and outcomes will drive growth, productivity and competitiveness within relevant sectors;
 - The project builds skills and capacity in end-user focussed research; and
 - The conceptual/theoretical framework is genuinely integrated, cross-disciplinary, innovative and original.
 - The Training Centre has a wide level of collaboration, including the development of national and international networks and linkages
 - ~~○ The method, approach and intended benefits address the priorities and objective of the Training Centre grant opportunity [reworded]~~

Feasibility and Commitment

20%

- Describe the:
 - The extent to which the Training Centre represents value for money [moved from Benefit]
 - Practicality of the proposed project objectives, budget and timeframe (including identified risks and mitigation strategies).
 - Proposed level of collaboration to support the research project
 - High quality intellectual support provided for the Training Centre by the research environment of the participating organisations
 - The availability of and access to necessary facilities required to support the proposed research (physical, technical, access to infrastructure, etc.)
 - Capacity of each partner organisation to support the training centre (including the plan for student placements)
 - The extent to which the proposed Training Centre will engage, and will continue to engage, meaningfully with the relevant Industry Growth Centre(s).
 - The commitment by each Partner Organisation(s) to collaboration in the Training Centre. The Partner Organisation(s) facilities and personnel contribution to the effective supervision, on-site training, support and mentoring for the HDR candidates and postdoctoral researchers over the life of the project.
 - ~~○ how each of the Partner Organisation(s) is genuinely committed to, and prepared to collaborate in, the Training Centre~~
 - ~~○ the Partner Organisation(s) facilities and personnel contribution to provide effective supervision, on-site training, support and mentoring for the HDR candidates and postdoctoral researchers over the life of the project~~
 - ~~○ the extent to which each Partner Organisation(s) has the capacity to support the Training Centre~~

Benefit**30%**

- Describe:
 - The extent to which the research clearly address one or more of the Industrial Transformation Priorities
 - The economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for relevant Australian research end-users (including relevant industry sectors)
 - The extent to which the proposed Training Centre supports clearly identified market opportunity(ies) and intended transformation for Australian industry or other end users;
 - The extent to which the proposed Training Centre will build the ability to exploit research outcomes in the Partner Organisations
 - The extent to which there are adequate strategies to encourage disseminations and promotion among the priority industry sector of research outcomes
 - The potential contribution of the proposed research to addressing the needs of industries and communities as articulated in Australia's Industrial Transformation Priorities
 - Where relevant, the extent to which the applicants have identified the freedom to operate in the Intellectual Property and patent landscape to enable future benefits to industry.
 - ~~○ the extent to which the Training Centre represents value for money [moved to feasibility]~~
 - ~~○ how the Training Centre has a wide level of collaboration, including the development of national and international networks and linkages;~~

Investigator(s)/ROPE**20%**

- Demonstrated ROPE of proposed team
 - Evidence of experience in managing distributed and/or collaborative industrial and end-user focussed research
 - Evidence of significant outcomes on industry related projects
 - Evidence of experience in and capacity to provide effective supervision, support and mentoring for higher degrees by research candidates and postdoctoral researchers over the life of the Research Hub
- Appropriateness of team's research track record to achieve Training Centre's goals
- Time and capacity of the team to undertake and manage the proposed research in collaboration with the Partner Organisation(s)