Australian Government

Australian Research Council

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Industrial Transformation Research Program for funding commencing 2022 (ITRP22)

Version 1.1   **Release Date: 27 September 2021**

- The ARC understands that it is a challenging time for researchers and research administrators preparing grant applications.

- The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and responses are designed to provide advice to assist researchers planning applications for ARC National Competitive Grant Program (NCGP) Grant Opportunities for the Industrial Transformation Research Program and include FAQs relevant to general effects of COVID-19.

- All participants should read the Linkage Program (2021) – Industrial Transformation Research Program (grant guidelines) available on GrantConnect.

- The Instructions to Applicants (ITAs), which are available on GrantConnect, also contain important information for Research Office staff and individual participants preparing applications.

- The Australian Research Council (ARC) does not respond to queries from individual participants. Individual participants should direct all queries regarding ARC funding schemes to their Administering Organisation's Research Office (or equivalent).

- All upcoming ARC Grant Opportunity dates are published on the NCGP scheme timelines on the ARC Grant Calendar.

- Please ensure that the application is eligible in accordance with the relevant guidelines, which may differ from grant guidelines for previous years.

- The ARC will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and will update our advice as required.

- If further information regarding any of the NCGP schemes is required, the Research Office should contact the ARC at ARC-NCGP@arc.gov.au or 02 6287 6600.

- Information regarding the Research Management System (RMS) is available on the ARC website, or by contacting ARC-Systems@arc.gov.au for assistance.

1.   Participants

1.1   Are all CIs and all PIs (not only key personnel) required to be listed in Question A2?

Yes. All named participants are required to be listed at Question A2. This list of named participants must include the Research Hub / Training Centre Director, all Chief Investigators (CIs) and all Partner Investigators (PIs).

1.2   Is there a requirement to have at least one PI named amongst the 5 key personnel?

No. Up to 5 of the named participants listed in Question A2 may be identified as key personnel at Question F6. While key personnel may be CIs and/or PIs, participants nominated as key personnel should hold significant roles within the Centre, such as Program Leaders, Theme Leaders, or Node Leaders.

All 5 key personnel may be CIs.

1.3   What is the minimum FTE commitment for a CI to participate?

While the grant guidelines do not state a minimum FTE requirement for CIs, the ARC considers it good practice to have at least a minimum commitment of 0.2 FTE, due to the expected significance of the Research Hub's / Training Centre's research program, capacity building, and its impact.

This is reflected in the assessment criterion 'Investigator(s)/Capability', which states the application will be assessed on the "time and capacity of the team to undertake and manage the proposed research in collaboration with the Partner Organisation(s)".

1.4   What is the minimum FTE commitment for a PI to participate?

While the grant guidelines do not state a minimum FTE requirement for PIs, the ARC considers it good practice to have at least a minimum commitment of 0.1 FTE, due to the expected significance of the Research Hub's / Training Centre's research program, capacity building, and its impact.

This is reflected in the assessment criterion 'Investigator(s)/Capability', which states the application will be assessed on the "time and capacity of the team to undertake and manage the proposed research in collaboration with the Partner Organisation(s)".

1.5   Can international investigators be nominated as PIs for a Training Centre or Research Hub?

Yes, international investigators can be listed as PIs on Training Centre or Research Hub applications. The Administering Organisation is responsible for undertaking due diligence checks on all participants and organisations, including international participants, before the application is submitted.

It is good practice to clearly identify the role of the international PIs in Part D of the application, as part of the requirement to demonstrate their contribution to the proposed research program and their capability, capacity and commitment to the Training Centre or Research Hub.

1.6   Is there a limit on how many PIs may participate on a Training Centre or Research Hub application?

No. There is no limit to the number of PIs that may be named on a Training Centre or Research Hub application. However, all PIs must be appropriate and relevant to the proposed research program. Their participation should be briefly outlined in Part D of the application as part of the requirement to demonstrate their contribution to the proposed research program and their capability, capacity and commitment to the Training Centre or Research Hub.

1.7 Do PIs need to have an RMS account/profile?

All named participants must have an RMS account/profile including PIs. When a PI has been added to an application, they will receive an automated email invitation and will be required to accept this invitation to participate on the application. The PI should check their personal details contained in their profile and make sure they are correct and up to date, as a number of questions in the application form are automatically populated using this information.

If a PI already has an RMS account, the email address associated with this account must be used to invite the PI to participate. The automated invitation email will then ask the PI to accept or decline the invitation.

If the proposed PI does not have an RMS user account, they can request one by using the link found on the RMS Homepage. Alternatively, the automated email invitation will prompt the invited PI to create an RMS account/profile. The PI must complete their profile to ensure automatically populated questions in the application form can be completed.

1.8 Do participants who are not key personnel need to provide their ROPE details in Part F of the application form?

No, only key personnel will be asked to provide additional information regarding their Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) at Questions F15 to F20.

Up to 5 named participants listed in Question A2 may be identified as key personnel at Question F6. Key personnel may be CIs and/or PIs.

1.9 COVID-19 has affected my academic record. Is this considered a career interruption as part of the Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) – Career Interruptions?

Yes. The 'Investigator(s)/Capability' assessment criterion, encompassing Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE), allows inclusion and consideration of any career interruption, which has affected a participant's ability to undertake and contribute to research.

Career interruptions arising from COVID-19 can be included under ROPE for consideration by assessors. The Instructions to Applicants (ITAs) provide specific advice on how to enter this in the application.

2. Impact of COVID-19

2.1. Do I need to include a research contingency plan, with information about potential impacts of COVID-19 on my proposed research, within my application?

Whilst the pandemic is ongoing and continually evolving, the ARC acknowledges that the future impacts of COVID-19 are difficult for anyone to determine. In completing ARC grant applications, the application should be accurate as at the time of submitting the application. Researchers should include a realistic plan of how their research will be undertaken. If applicable, known project specific impacts of COVID-19 can be addressed under the feasibility heading of the Project Description. However, a COVID-19 continuity plan is not required as part of the application. Where an application is successful, applicants will be required to prepare risk

management plan before commencement and any changes in circumstances that affect the proposed research project will be managed as a post award issue.

2.2   Can I include requests for travel both domestically and internationally in my application?

Yes, you can still include requests for travel both domestically and international in accordance with the requirements set out in the Section 5.8 of the grant guidelines, noting the above advice that researchers should include a realistic plan of how their research will be undertaken. Where an application is successful, any changes to the proposed travel plans due to the impact of COVID-19 will be managed as a post award issue.

2.3   Will the minimum level of required cash and/or in-kind contributions by Administering Organisations and Participating Organisations be reduced?

No. All requirements of the current grant guidelines must continue to be met, including minimum cash and/or in-kind contributions from the Administering Organisation and/or Participating Organisations. A key feature of the ITRP scheme are the partnerships that are formed, which is in part signified by the level of cash and in-kind contributions pledged by Participating Organisations.

However, the ARC understands that the level of co-contribution pledged above and beyond the minimum threshold is likely to be reduced in future applications due to the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

2.4   What are the expectations for non-mandated contributions in applications submitted for ITRP?

For those schemes where grant guidelines do not require minimum co-contributions by participating organisations, including Training Centres, the ARC also understands that the level of cash and/or in-kind contributions pledged by Administering Organisations and other Participating Organisations to show support for a proposed research project are likely to be reduced in future applications due to the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Note that Administering Organisations still need to take in account the feasibility of the proposed research project if there are reduced contributions.

ARC assessors will be instructed that they should not make assumptions about an Administering Organisation's level of commitment and support of an application solely based on lower levels of pledged additional cash and/or in-kind support than historically provided.

2.5   How will my application be assessed in relation to COVID-19 impacts on the proposed research project?

Assessment of applications will continue in accordance with ARC's peer review processes. ARC assessors will be instructed to assess all applications based on the content of the application only and not make assumptions about the viability of a proposed research project due to the potential impacts of COVID-19. Where an application is successful, applicants will be required to prepare a risk management plan before commencement and any changes in circumstances that affect the proposed research project will be managed as a post award issue.

3. Application

3.1 Does the certification within RMS replace the ARC written evidence document (certification proforma) on GrantConnect for all named participants and their organisations?

This is correct. The Certification Proforma document which was previously available on GrantConnect has been replaced with a simplified process through RMS. The process includes:

- participant certification within the RMS application form (question F21)
- an additional DVCR certification clause in RMS prior to submission (delegate certification)
- Letter of support for the application including Partner Organisation certification (question G2).

A Partner Organisation letter of support template is available in Appendix D of the Instructions to Applications document.

3.2. Can you confirm there is no requirement for Administering Organisations to hold such certifications on file any more for the ITRP 2022 application round?

The ITRP22 Grant Guidelines state that Administering Organisations must retain the evidence and paperwork relied upon to certify the application in RMS and make this available to the ARC if requested.

The Administering Organisation may determine the form of such evidence and paperwork, but as stated in the grant guidelines, the Administering Organisation must retain it. This can also include supporting documentation as outlined in the RMS form instructions, or in the Instructions to Applicants document.

Administering Organisations are expected to undertake appropriate due diligence as, consistent with the Grant Guidelines, application forms are checked and when certifying applications for submission. The Administering Organisation may wish to ask for appropriate documentation for their own certification purposes. While ARC no longer provides a certification proforma, Administering Organisations can still collect relevant information for their own due diligence purposes using a similar process/document should they choose.

3.3 What additional information should I consider when developing an ITRP application?

In addition to the documentation available on GrantConnect for the application process, the ARC has developed an 'Establishment Toolkit' for ITRP. The Establishment Toolkit is available on the ARC website as a key document under each scheme.

- [Industrial Transformation Research Hubs](#)
- [Industrial Transformation Training Centres](#)

The information in the Establishment Toolkit should be considered during the planning and preparation of an ITRP application.

3.4   Can participants on currently funded ITRP grants be named on Training Centres or Research Hubs applications for funding commencing 2022?

Yes. Participants will need to consider grant limits applicable to other grants held or being applied for, as outlined in relevant grant guidelines, and all participants must meet project limits before a project can start.

All applications are assessed against the assessment criteria and on their own merits, and have to clearly demonstrate that the research proposed has no overlap with existing Commonwealth grants.

Participants intending to apply on multiple Major Investments (ITRP/ARC Centres of Excellence) are expected to demonstrate they have the capacity and commitment to undertake the role and responsibilities required on each grant. See the ITRP ITAs for where this information should be included in the application form.

3.5   How should grant applications announced under embargo be recorded by participants?

Participants on applications announced under embargo, where the research program will be similar or linked to the research program proposed in the ITRP application, should record these in question C4.

3.6   Are all named participants and organisations included on an application required to view it before it is submitted in RMS?

All named participants (Research Hub / Training Centre Director, CIs, PIs) and all organisations (including Other Eligible Organisations, Other Organisations and Partner Organisations) listed on an application should be provided with a copy / access to the application form prior to its submission in RMS by the Administering Organisation. This is an important step in the due diligence process to ensure the information contained in the application is accurate prior to submission. Changes cannot be made once the application form has been submitted and the application period has closed.

Named participants and organisations are able to see all information contained in Parts A, B, C, D, E, and G of an application. The information in Part F is partially restricted to the relevant individual and the Administering Organisation. Due to ARC privacy obligations, certain questions and their corresponding answers in Part F will not be displayed in RMS nor appear in the PDF version of the form and as such will not be visible to other named participants, organisations or assessors.

4.   Partner Organisations

4.1   In regard to the National Redress Scheme, which list should be used when determining who is not eligible to be a Partner Organisation?

To be eligible as a Partner Organisation, an organisation cannot be 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).

An organisation listed on the 'Institutions that are unable to participate in the National Redress Scheme' or 'Institutions intending to participate in the National

Redress Scheme' on the National Redress Scheme's website can be a Partner Organisation.

4.2   Is there a specific ratio for cash contributions from the various participating organisations?

No. There is no specific ratio for contributions provided by Eligible Organisations, Partner Organisations or Other Organisations. Contributions must be appropriate and relevant for the research and personnel being proposed.

4.3   Can industry partners be from overseas?

Yes, noting that there is an expectation of transformation and benefit to Australian industry in the ITRP objectives. Supporting clearly identified market opportunities and intended transformation for Australian industry is part of the assessment criteria for both ITTC and ITRH applications.

4.4   Does a Partner Organisation need an associated Partner Investigator listed on the application?

Yes, as stated in the ITRP22 grant guidelines, at least one PI from each Partner Organisation must be included on the application.

4.5   Can State government departments and Federal government departments be Partner Organisations?

Yes, government departments can be Partner Organisations, noting that the ARC will not fund research or research infrastructure which is being, or will be, supported through other Commonwealth, State or Territory sources. This includes funds used to leverage Commonwealth, State or Territory funds for research or research infrastructure (such as levies from RDCs).

All Partner Organisations must provide a financial commitment (cash and/or in-kind and/or other material resources) to the proposed Training Centre or Research Hub, as stated in the ITRP22 grant guidelines.

If an organisation, including Commonwealth and State/Territory departments and statutory authorities, and industry owned companies which also receive Commonwealth funds, wish to be listed as a Partner Organisation on a Training Centre or Research Hub application, any financial contributions listed will need to certify the source of the funds. Funds appropriated or awarded by or leveraged through Commonwealth, State or Territory sources for research cannot be included on an application as a financial contribution. To do so would be considered a breach of the grant guidelines.

If certification is provided that the contribution is **not** government funding allocated to research, such funds can be included as a contribution by the Partner Organisation. To justify any such contributions, the budget justification questions in the application form would need to include explanations regarding the source of this funding, as well as appropriate certification from the Partner Organisations in letters of support.

4.6   Do Partner Organisations need to be registered in RMS?

Yes, a named Partner Organisation must be listed in RMS to enable it to be included on the application.

4.7   Can you confirm that the certification text in the Partner Organisation letter of support template in the Instructions to Applicants is correct?

Yes. The text in the letter of support template reflects section 4.10 in the ITRP22 Grant Guidelines, which has the same intent as section 7.12(f) in the ITRP22 Grant Guidelines.

5.   Budgets

5.1   Do applicants have to prioritise budget items requested from the ARC?

No. Participants do not need to list budget items in priority order, but will need to justify why budget items have been requested.

5.2   Is Teaching Relief an eligible budget item for Training Centres?

No. Teaching Relief is an eligible budget item for the Research Hubs scheme only.

6.   Industry Growth Centres and Other Agencies

6.1   Is it necessary to approach the Industry Growth Centres or other agencies?

Applicants are encouraged to connect with relevant current Growth Centre(s) or other agencies and discuss applications early in the development process (see section 7.2 of the grant guidelines). Industry Growth Centres and other agencies can provide advice to applicants and facilitate connections with industry.

Engagement with relevant industry experts, including Industry Growth Centre(s) is part of the assessment criteria for both Training Centre and Research Hub applications.

6.2   Does an ITRP application have to align with Industry Growth Centre or other agency priorities?

Engagement with relevant industry experts, including Industry Growth Centre(s), is part of the assessment criteria for both Training Centre and Research Hub applications. The ARC encourages ITRP applicants to align their applications with the key themes, vision and/or strategic directions of relevant Growth Centre(s) or other agency, and to engage early and directly with relevant Growth Centre(s) or other agency to leverage their sector expertise and knowledge.

6.3   Where an ITRP application is relevant to more than one priority area, should all appropriate Growth Centres or agencies be approached?

Yes. Applicants are encouraged to connect with all Growth Centres and agencies relevant to the application.

6.4   How do I contact the relevant Growth Centre or agency to discuss priority areas?

Appropriate contact points for each Growth Centre, Department of Defence and Australian Space Agency have been provided to the Research Office of Eligible Organisations. Applicants should contact the Research Office of their university to obtain a copy of these details.

7.   General

7.1   What is the ARC position on gender equity quotas?

The ARC does not set quotas. All ARC Major Investments (ITRP/ARC Centres of Excellence) are expected to develop a Gender Equality and Diversity plan and create inclusive workplaces. The plan sets out targets and action plans. Information on gender and diversity plans can be found in the ITRP Establishment Toolkit on the ARC website.

The ARC is committed to ensuring that all participants have the same opportunity to participate in the funding schemes of the NCGP irrespective of gender. The ARC supports the highest quality Australian research and innovation.

7.2   Can the ARC fund medical research?

Section 5.2 of the grant guidelines states:

The Linkage Program does not support applications that involve medical research as detailed in the ARC Medical Research Policy on the ARC website. Applications which address the 'Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals' industrial transformation priority, must take the ARC Medical Research Policy into consideration.

ITRP applications must clearly address the objectives of the ITRP schemes. The main aim of the ITRP application must not be to understand the causes, treatment and/or prevention of human diseases and/or the maintenance of human health.

If the application addresses the medical technologies and pharmaceuticals priority (for example principles, concept and the development of a prototype of a medical device), consider how the ARC funding will enable this.

Towards the end of ITRP project, the research outcomes may require some specific medical research activities (for example using animal models, or undertaking human testing), and the application must not request ARC funding to fund such ineligible activities. The application must clearly identify funding drawn from other participating organisations to fully support these specific medical research activities. Consistent with the ARC Medical Research Policy, applicants must clearly justify the inclusion and critical nature of these activities to the success of the research program.

The applicants must use the Medical Research Statement in the application form to articulate which activity is potentially breaching the policy, why it is critical to the overall outcome, how it aligns to the scheme priorities, and how it is funded. This can be further elaborated in the project description and budget justification sections of the application, noting that the NCGP Eligibility Committee will consider the information contained in the Medical Research Statement question in the application form to determine whether the application is eligible.

7.3   Requests not to assess process

A Request Not to Assess (RNTA) form is now submitted through RMS as outlined on GrantConnect and the ARC website.

7.4   What is the maximum character limit for justification for RNTA?

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 a justification (the new maximum character count for the justification has been increased to 2500).

7.5 **If the application is successful what is the new timeframe for accepting the Grant Offer?**

The timeframe to execute a Grant Agreement and the timeframe to make an appeal have both been changed from 28 days to 30 days, reflecting whole of government practice.

7.6. **Is there an optimal or maximum number of nodes for a Training Centre or Research Hub?**

No. It is up to the bid team to determine the most appropriate number of nodes for the Training Centre or Research Hub. The bid team should consider the expertise required to achieve the work, and balance this with the complexity of managing the proposed Training Centre or Research Hub. It is important to ensure the nodes are well integrated within the proposed research program both within the node and across the Training Centre or Research Hub.

Further information can be found in the ITRP Establishment Toolkit.

7.7. **What are the implications of Open Access mandates on publishing of research?**

The ARC Open Access Policy applies to all Research Outputs arising from ARC Funded Research and their Metadata. Any Research Outputs arising from an ARC supported research project must be made openly accessible within a 12-month period from the date of publication. For the purposes of the policy, Research Outputs do not include research data and research data outputs. Further details about the Open Access requirements for research outputs including metadata, licencing, and reporting obligations can be found in the ARC Open Access policy on the ARC website.

8. Preprint or Comparable Resource

8.1 **Will including a preprint or comparable resource in any part of my application make me ineligible?**

No. The inclusion of preprints will no longer be considered an eligibility issue and applications will not be excluded by their use.

8.2 **What is a preprint or comparable resource?**

A preprint or comparable resource is defined in the Grant Guidelines as a scholarly output that is uploaded by the authors to a recognised publicly accessible archive, repository, or pre-print service (such as, but not limited to, arXiv, bioRxiv, medRxiv, ChemRxiv, Peer J Preprints, Zenodo, GitHub, PsyArXiv and publicly available university or government repositories etc.). This will include a range of materials that have been subjected to varying degrees of peer review from none to light and full review. Ideally, a preprint or comparable resource should have a unique identifier or a DOI (digital object identifier).

Comparable resource refers to non-traditional research outputs that are not readily identified as peer-reviewed research outputs. This includes, but is not limited to, datasets, protocols, software, creative works, and documents sourced from or deposited with government and Academy repositories, such as policy papers,

historical and herbarium resources, CSIRO data, software or other digital assets collections.

a.   In the sciences examples may include, but are not limited to the following: *arXiv, bioRxiv, medRxiv, ChemRxiv, Peer J Preprints, Zenodo, GitHub, PsyArXiv and publicly available university repositories, EcoEvoRxiv, PaleorXiv, OSF Preprints, PCI Ecology, Dryad, Atlas of Living Australia, TERN AEKOS, GeneBank, Astrophysics Source Code Library (ASCL); CSIRO ASKAP Science Data Archive (CASDA); CSIRO Data Access Portal; data.csiro.au/collections; Academy of Science Decadal Plans.*

b.   In the Humanities and Social Sciences examples may include, but are not limited to the following resources and databases such as: *Linguistics e.g.* https://childes.talkbank.org/; https://catalog.ldc.upenn.edu/LDC99T42/; https://austalk.edu.au/, *History e.g.* https://dataverse.ada.edu.au/dataverse/australian_historical_criminal_justice_data; *Archaeology e.g.* https://core.tdar.org/collection/31020/national-archeological-database-nadb; *and "Grey literature", including cultural heritage reports, and impact assessments housed on the servers of State and Federal government agencies.*

8.3   How do I appropriately cite a preprint in the project description?

If preprints or comparable resources are cited, these should be explicitly identified in the reference list by including [PREPRINT OR COMPARABLE] after the reference. This reference should include a DOI, URL or equivalent, version number where available and/or date of access, as applicable. This indication is only required in the reference list and not in the project description itself.

8.4   How many preprints can I include?

The ARC has not placed a limit on the number of preprints or comparable resources that you can include within your grant application. You will need to consider the disciplinary standards of preprint or comparable resource use in your field. Detailed and general assessors will consider the academic merit of your research outputs as part of their holistic assessment including the value, relevance and suitability of any preprint or comparable resources within your application.

8.5   Can I include a preprint in my 10 best research outputs?

Yes, if it is best placed to demonstrate the excellence of your research considering preprint or comparable resource use in your disciplinary area.

8.6   Why is the ARC's definition of preprint so expansive?

In conjunction with an academic reference group, in this instance comprising a cohort of the Australian Laureate Fellows, the definition of preprint was developed to be as inclusive of the different types of research output that could be considered given the wide disciplinary spread of research supported through the National Competitive Grants Program.

FAQs relevant to Training Centres only

1.   Budget

1.1   Do we need to enter individual lines in the budget table for each ICHDR and ICPD we are requesting from the ARC?

No. The ARC no longer requires an individual budget line for each ICHDR and ICPD that is being requested. The ARC now captures the number of Higher Degree by Research stipends that would be involved in this application that are proposed to be funded by the ARC. In Part B, the total number of ICHDRs and ICPDs required should be entered. In Part E, ARC-funded ICHDRs and ICPDs can be entered as individual budget lines or as grouped positions at a single institution (e.g. 2 x ICHDRs @ University X).

To ensure the scheme objectives are being met for Training Centres, a minimum number of higher degree by research candidates (10 ICHDRs) and postdoctoral fellows (1 ICPD) must be included in the application.

1.2   Can ICHDRs and ICPDs be partially funded by ARC and partially funded by other organisations?

No. ICHDRs and ICPDs are supported using ARC grant funds which are requested for these roles. ICHDRs and ICPDs have specific employment conditions which are outlined in the grant agreement.

If an HDR or postdoctoral researcher is partially or fully supported by another organisation, these roles are not considered to be ICHDRs or ICPDs. As such, they are not covered by the employment conditions in the grant agreement.

1.3   Salary and Stipend Rates for ICHDRs and ICPDs

The specified amounts for ICPD salaries and ICHDR stipends have been removed from the guidelines in order to streamline the application form, remove some of the complexities in the budget, reflect the salary and stipend policy applied to other Linkage Program grant opportunities and allow applicants additional flexibility to bring together an appropriate mix of people. ICHDRs and ICPDs must be paid at a level appropriate to the employing organisation, which can be no less than the level indicated on the salaries and stipends page of the ARC website.

Changes to document

8 (page 10-11)   Addition of FAQs regarding preprints or comparable resource (27 September 2021)