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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities for funding commencing 2025 (LE25)

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- All participants should read the *Linkage Program Grant Guidelines (2024 edition): Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities* (Grant Guidelines) available on GrantConnect and specific *Instructions to Applicants* documents available on Grant Connect as they 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 grant opportunities to their Administering Organisation's Research Office (or equivalent). If further information regarding the National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) is required, the Research Office should contact the NCGP at arc-ncgp@arc.gov.au.

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

This Frequently Asked Questions document will be updated as required.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Timing of Grant Opportunities

1.1   Where are the key dates for upcoming ARC Grant Opportunities advised?
Dates of all upcoming ARC Grant Opportunities are published on the NCGP scheme timelines on the ARC Grants Calendar.

1.2   When will the Funding Outcomes be announced?
The ARC publishes anticipated Funding Announcement dates. Please refer to the Scheme Calendar PDF on the ARC Grants Calendar.

2. Application information

2.1   What font size can I use for figures, tables, or pictures in my application to comply with ARC submission requirements?
Applicants should ensure that the text is readable both online and in print as detailed in the Instructions to Applicants. It is recommended that 12pt font is used to ensure readability. Readability also needs to be ensured for text within figures and tables and it is recommended that 10pt font is used.

2.2   Can I use generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in writing my application?
Please see the advice to applicants in *ARC's Policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in the ARC's grants programs* available on the ARC website.

3. Certification

3.1   Does the certification within RMS replace the need for the Administering Organisation to seek written evidence of agreement from all named organisational participants?
No. The certification in RMS is for the participant only. The simplified process through RMS includes:

- Individual participation certification within the RMS application form
- an additional DVCR certification clause in RMS prior to submission (delegate certification).

The Administering Organisation must obtain the written agreement of all relevant organisational participants to allow the proposed project to proceed as specified in the Grant Guidelines. This excludes the employing organisations of overseas Partner Investigators (PIs) and any participant's current organisation which is not their relevant organisation for the application. This written evidence must be retained by the Administering Organisation and must be provided to the ARC if requested.

4. Assessment of applications

4.1   Request Not to Assess process
A Request Not to Assess (RNTA) form is now submitted in RMS as detailed on GrantConnect and the ARC website.

4.2   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 maximum character count for the justification is 2500).

5.   Project Role and Employment Type

5.1   Am I a Chief Investigator (CI) or a Partner Investigator (PI)?
Whether a participant is a CI or PI is determined by meeting the eligibility requirements in sections 4.19-4.27 in the Grant Guidelines, not by the level of their intended involvement in the project. Please read the Grant Guidelines closely and refer to Appendix C of the Instructions to Applications for a decision tree to assist in determining whether a participant is eligible as a CI or as a PI.

A participant is not eligible to apply as a PI if they meet the requirements to be a CI.

5.2   When should I choose Honorary Academic Appointment at B3 'Employment Details as at the grant commencement date'?
Participants must only choose the honorary academic appointment role type at B3 if they meet the ARC's definition of an 'honorary academic appointment' as specified in Appendix A of the Grant Guidelines:

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.
Where a participant is not an employee and does not meet the definition of an honorary academic appoint as specified above, they should select 'other' as their employment type.

6.   The National Interest Test (NIT)

6.1   What is the NIT statement and how is it assessed?
Information regarding the requirements of the National Interest Test, including examples and detailed FAQs, can be found on the ARC website.

7.   Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities (LIEF) Frequently Asked Questions

7.1   I would like to use funds awarded through other funders (HERDC Category 2 or Category 3) as an Eligible Organisation contribution towards a LIEF application. Would this be possible and if so, would it be considered as a cash contribution from the Eligible Organisation or would it be noted as an in-kind contribution?
The Administering Organisation would need to be cautious to ensure that any awarded HERDC Category 2 or Category 3 funds are not misrepresented as university funds contributing to a LIEF application. This is to ensure that clause 8.4 of the Grant Guidelines is not contravened (clause copied below):

In Our absolute discretion, We may recommend an application not be approved if we consider it (a) incomplete, (b) inaccurate or contains false or misleading information, or (c) is otherwise in breach of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

The two categories are as follows:

- If the funds awarded through other funders is category 3 funding, it may be an acceptable contribution on a LIEF application, with an explanation in the budget justification about what the funds were for originally, and what the funds will be

used for now. Please check the funder's grant agreements and with your finance team to ensure these sourced funds do not contravene any clauses within the funder's grant agreement(s).

- If the funds awarded through other funders is category 2 funding, government non competitive funding, this is more difficult. It may be an acceptable LIEF contribution if it was not awarded for research, of if the university could justify how the original grant is related to the intended contribution and show it is not the grant money being represented as university money. Any funds sourced from grant money must not be represented as university money. An example of this is:
  - Commonwealth fellowships funding as mentioned in the Grant Guidelines – the money is coming from the Commonwealth for research, so the university cannot represent it as a university contribution.

7.2 **I am applying for ARC funding through the LIEF scheme for the purchase of equipment for a one year project. The equipment comes with a standard one year warranty, and to ensure that the equipment is operational beyond the life of the project, can ARC funding and cash contribution from a participating organisation be used to cover the cost of the extended warranty?**
Extended warranty is considered to be an indirect cost and as such under section 5.5.i of the Grant Guidelines, ARC funding cannot be requested for costs not directly related to the project.

Contributions from participating organisations can be used to pay for such items, however contributions for indirect costs are not eligible to make up part of the minimum of 25 per cent of the total direct cost of the research infrastructure.

Contributions for years beyond the project activity period cannot be entered into the application budget. Section 5.5.g of the Grant Guidelines also states that you cannot request or use grant funds for "maintenance costs of the proposed research infrastructure after the first year of the project…"

7.3 **Is it mandatory to provide a quote from multiple suppliers at Question D6 for my proposed infrastructure?**
No. It is not mandatory to include quotes from multiple sources for the proposed infrastructure on an LE25 application, however if only one quote was provided for an item in the Summary of Quotes at D6, a statement must be provided detailing the reason(s) for each instance where only one quote was provided for an item.