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 in the first instance. If further ARC Centres of Excellence information is required, the Research Office or equivalent should contact centres@arc.gov.au.

All Participants should read the Funding Rules for schemes under the Linkage Program for the year 2017—ARC Centres of Excellence Funding Rules (Centres Funding Rules), the ARC Centres of Excellence Funding Agreement for funding commencing in 2017 and the ARC Centres of Excellence Expressions of Interest Instructions to Applicants. General information about the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme can also be found at the ARC website.

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

As soon as information regarding important scheme dates becomes available, the ARC website will be updated at Important Dates page. The ARC will also notify the Research Administrators’ Network of any updates via an email message.

This Frequently Asked Questions document will be updated as required. Details of any amendments will be appended to this document.

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1. **General Queries**

1.1 **What is an Eligible Organisation?**

An Eligible Organisation is an organisation which can apply for funding under the *ARC Centres of Excellence* scheme. Please refer to Section A15 of the Funding Rules for a list of Eligible Organisations.

1.2 **If my organisation is not an Eligible Organisation, can we still be involved?**

Yes. Your organisation can be listed on an *ARC Centres of Excellence* Expression of Interest (EOI) as a Partner Organisation. Please refer to section A8.2 of the Funding Rules.

1.3 **Where can I find the closing date for the Expression of Interest for the *ARC Centres of Excellence* scheme?**

Key dates relating to the EOI can be found on the Important Dates page and the *ARC Centres of Excellence* page of the ARC website.

1.4 **Will the ARC support a Centre of Excellence in the field of medical research?**

The ARC does not fund projects in Medical Research, as defined on the ARC website. Please consult with your Research Office in the first instance to determine whether the research proposed in the EOI constitutes Medical Research.

1.5 **Do I have to address all five selection criteria in the Expression of Interest?**

No. The EOI must address the first two selection criteria (A. Research Program and B. Investigators) only. Please refer to section B.5 of the Funding Rules.

1.6 **If I become aware that there has been an Expression of Interest submitted which is very similar to mine, can I combine my Expression of Interest with the other one?**

Once submitted, EOIs cannot be modified. The ARC has the discretion to request that highly ranked EOIs demonstrating significant overlap, synergy or duplication be amalgamated into a single Proposal. Please refer to section B12.1.4 of the Funding Rules.

1.7 **If I am invited to submit a Proposal amalgamating my Expression of Interest and another Expression of Interest, can I or my Administering Organisation choose to not submit an amalgamated Proposal?**

Yes. The relevant Administering Organisations can choose to submit or not submit a Proposal amalgamating those EOIs. Having issued the invitation to amalgamate EOIs, the ARC will not accept individual Proposals from those EOIs.

1.8 **Can I submit a Proposal if I have not submitted an Expression of Interest?**

No. An EOI must be submitted and shortlisted before a full Proposal can be submitted. Please refer to section B10.1.3 of the Funding Rules.

1.9 **Will I be able to make changes to the Participants and/or the research program outlined in the Expression of Interest if I am invited to submit a full Proposal?**

You will be able to make some changes, particularly if EOIs have been requested to be amalgamated. However, you should not include large numbers of additional or replacement participants, nor should the research program in a full Proposal differ significantly from that submitted in the shortlisted EOI. Changes must be justified in the full Proposal.

1.10 **Will the ARC announce the names of the members of the Selection Advisory Committee?**

No. The members of the Selection Advisory Committee will be advised to the representatives of Proposals which are to be interviewed as part of the interview notification process. Selection
Advisory Committee members must not be contacted or approached by Applicants or participants at any time during the selection process.

1.11 Which Strategic Research Priorities should be used on the form?
The EOI form lists the Strategic Research Priorities in place at the time of approval of the Funding Rules. The ARC will advise as to the appropriate priorities for the full Proposal when the full Proposal form is open in RMS 2.0.

1.12 Who will be the peer reviewers at the Expressions of Interest stage?
The ARC will select a range of peer reviewers to assess EOIs, including international experts.

2. Investigators

2.1 Can I be listed as Centre Director on more than one Expression of Interest?
No. A Centre Director can be nominated for this particular role on one Expression of Interest (EOI) only. Please refer to section B9.2.4 of the Funding Rules.

2.2 If I am nominated as a Centre Director, can I be a Chief Investigator on other Expressions of Interest?
Yes. A researcher nominated as a Centre Director can be nominated as a Chief Investigator (CI) on one other EOI. Please refer to section B9.2.4 of the Funding Rules.

2.3 If I cannot give 70 per cent (0.7 FTE) of my time to the Centre, can I still be nominated as a Centre Director?
No. It is expected that a Centre Director have a time commitment of 70 per cent (0.7 FTE) or more to the Centre due to the responsibilities of the role. The ARC may choose to not recommend a Proposal for funding if a Centre Director is not able to commit at least 0.7 FTE. Please refer to sections B9.2.3 and B9.2.5 of the Funding Rules.

2.4 As the holder of a Laureate Fellowship/Future Fellowship/Discovery Outstanding Researcher Award, am I eligible to apply as Centre Director?
Yes. Before applying, you should consider several things. Firstly, think about your capacity to undertake both roles. Some requirements (such as mentoring and leadership) are relevant to both roles. Secondly, think about the proposed research program and management structure of the Centre. An appropriate structure to support you as Director in undertaking both roles should be clearly developed and explained. Finally, think about overlap or duplication of research. Your research project as a Fellow/DORA should not be duplicated within the Centre’s research program.

2.5 I have submitted Proposals for other ARC funding schemes for funding commencing in 2016 or plan to do so for schemes for funding commencing in 2017. Am I eligible to apply as a Centre Director or Chief Investigator on an Expression of Interest?
Yes. All Proposals submitted for other ARC funding schemes can remain until the outcome of the ARC Centres of Excellence selection round is known. Proposals and Grants/Fellowships/Awards held that exceed the limits stated in scheme funding rules would be withdrawn or relinquished only if a Centre Proposal is successful. Please refer to section 9.2 of the Funding Rules.

2.6 I currently hold the maximum number of Discovery Projects grants allowed. Am I eligible to apply as a Centre Director or Chief Investigator on an Expression of Interest?
Yes. All grants, Fellowships and Awards currently held may be retained until the outcome of the ARC Centres of Excellence selection round is known. Grants/Fellowships/Awards held that exceed the limits stated in scheme funding rules would be relinquished only if a Centre Proposal is successful. Please refer to section 9.2 of the Funding Rules.
2.7 I am a part-time researcher at an Eligible Organisation. Can I be a Chief Investigator?  
A Chief Investigator (CI) must be employed at least 20 per cent (0.2 FTE) at an Eligible Organisation to be eligible to be a CI or be a holder of an Emeritus appointment at an Eligible Organisation. Please refer to section B9.3.1 of the Funding Rules.

2.8 I am employed at an overseas campus of an Eligible Organisation. Can I be a Centre Director or a Chief Investigator?  
No. A researcher at the overseas campus of an Australian university does not meet the residential eligibility criteria for a CI. This also applies to the Centre Director role, as Centre Directors must meet the CI eligibility criteria. Please refer to section B9.3.2 of the Funding Rules.

2.9 I hold a position at an Eligible Organisation, but will not be resident in Australia for much of the duration of the Centre. Am I still eligible to be a Chief Investigator?  
No. You must reside predominantly in Australia for the duration of the Centre. Please refer to section B9.3.2 of the Funding Rules.

2.10 I am a Partner Investigator on several ARC grants. Can I be listed as a Partner Investigator on an Expression of Interest?  
As a Partner Investigator (PI), you must consider the commitment you have made to the other grants and determine whether you have the capacity to participate effectively in an ARC Centre of Excellence. Please refer to section B9.4 of the Funding Rules.

2.11 How many investigators can be listed on an Expression of Interest?  
There is no limit to the number of investigators listed in an EOI. Note that in question A2 “Person Participant Summary” you should only include the Centre Director and up to six key researchers. The list of key researchers in question A2 must include a Centre Director and at least one CI, but may also include one or more PI(s). All other CIs and PIs should be listed in question E1 “Other Personnel”.

2.12 Does each investigator need to be listed against an organisation?  
Yes. When a CI is named on the EOI, he/she must be listed against a named Eligible Organisation (the Administering Organisation or a Collaborating Organisation). A PI must be listed against a named Partner Organisation. That is, a person named on the EOI must be associated with an organisation.

2.13 How important is Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)?  
ROPE will be taken into consideration but is not the only investigator measure in the selection criteria. Investigators participating in an ARC Centre of Excellence are expected to be of high quality and standing.

2.14 Can a Partner Investigator be listed as one of the ‘Key Researchers’ on an Expression of Interest?  
Yes. If a PI will have a significant role in the Centre, its research program and/or its management, he/she can be listed as a ‘Key Researcher’.

2.15 Should Associate Investigators be listed on an Expression of Interest?  
No. Only the Centre Director, CIs and PIs should be listed on the EOI.

2.16 Can a Partner Investigator from overseas be a Node Leader?  
No. A Centre Node usually has a major role within the Centre’s research program and is expected to make a significant contribution to the Centre’s financial support. ARC funding does not provide research support for Partner Investigators and therefore ARC funding could not be distributed to the Partner Organisation. Please refer to section B6.3.1 of the Funding Rules.

2.17 Can a Centre have two Directors (co-Directors)?  
No. A Centre can have only one Director. Please refer to sections B9.1 and B9.2 of the Funding Rules.
2.18 When listing ‘other’ Centre personnel on the Expression of Interest form, are RMS IDs required?  
No. You should only list name, institution, role (CI or PI) and FTE.

3. Organisations

3.1 In the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme, are Partner Organisations required to have an associated Partner Investigator?  
No. While a Partner Organisation linked to one or more PIs is preferred, a Partner Organisation can be listed without an associated PI. Note that the Partner Organisation is still required to contribute cash contributions and/or in-kind contributions and/or other material contributions. Please refer to section B8.3.2 of the Funding Rules.

3.2 How many organisations can be listed on an Expression of Interest?  
You must list one Eligible Organisation as the Administering Organisation. You must also list at least one Other Eligible Organisation and at least one Partner Organisation. The total number of organisations able to be listed is not set, but you must take into consideration the role each will play in the Centre’s research program and the resources each will bring. Ensure that those listed are necessary to the Centre.

3.3 I want to include on my Expression of Interest a Partner Organisation which is not listed in RMS. How do I add a new Partner Organisation?  
You will need to contact the ARC through the RMS help desk at rms@arc.gov.au.

3.4 Can Partner Organisations receive ARC funding?  
No. Please refer to section B6.3.1 of the Funding Rules.

4. Completing the Expression of Interest Form

The Expression of Interest form must be completed and submitted through the ARC’s Research Management System (RMS 2.0). Please read the ARC Centres of Excellence Expressions of Interest Instructions to Applicants for funding commencing in 2017 for information relating to completing the Expression of Interest form.

4.1 Do I have to complete all sections in Part D?  
The proposed Centre Director only must complete questions D2, D3 and D4.

Up to six participants who will be considered Key Researchers (e.g. Program Leaders, Node Directors) must complete the questions D4, D5 and D6. They can be Chief Investigators or Partner Investigators.

All other participants are to be listed in a table and uploaded as a pdf in Part E.

4.2 Do I have to list exactly six Key Researchers? Can I list more or less?  
You do not have to list exactly six Key Researchers. You must list no more than six Key Researchers, but you can list fewer than six. The number you list will depend on the proposed Centre structure.

4.3 Although a budget is not required at the Expression of Interest stage, should a budget for the research program be developed?  
Yes. You should be discussing potential financial contributions with participants and participating organisations now. Such discussions will enable more efficient and effective budget preparation at full Proposal stage.
4.4 Is there a specific format or information on participant role required for the table in Part E?
You must meet the requirements stated on page 13 and in Appendix A of the *ARC Centres of Excellence* Expressions of Interest Instructions to Applicants. Participant role should be listed as CI or PI.

5. Submission Requirements

Please read the *ARC Centres of Excellence* Expressions of Interest Instructions to Applicants for funding commencing in 2017 for information relating to submission requirements.

5.1 Can I submit an Expression of Interest on my own behalf?
No. EOIs must be submitted through an Eligible Organisation. Eligible Organisations are listed in section A15 of the Funding Rules.

5.2 Do I need to have an RMS 2.0 profile in order to lodge an Expression of Interest?
Yes. Named researchers (Person Participants) and organisations (Organisation Participants) must be listed in RMS 2.0 to allow them to be added to the EOI form. All researchers listed in Parts A and E in the EOI form will need an RMS 2.0 profile in order to be included on the full Proposal.

5.3 Can I use a smaller font size to meet the page limits?
No. With the exception of references in Part C, 12 point font size, preferably Times New Roman (or an equivalent sized font), should be used. Please refer to Appendix A of the *ARC Centres of Excellence* Expressions of Interest Instructions to Applicants.

5.4 Can I make changes to my Expression of Interest after it has been submitted?
No. EOIs may be withdrawn but additions, deletions and modifications will not be accepted after submission, unless invited by the ARC.

6. Changes to document

6.1 Additional clarification inserted regarding PIs in question A2 (10 June 2015)

6.2 Revised to remove limit on number of other researchers listed in Part E (10 June 2015)

6.3 New question on the membership of the Selection Advisory Committee (26 June 2015)

6.4 New question on the Strategic Research Priorities (26 June 2015)

6.5 New question on peer reviewers (26 June 2015)

6.6 New question on Partner Investigators as Node Leaders (26 June 2015)

6.7 New question on co-Directors (26 June 2015)

6.8 New question on RMS IDs (26 June 2015)

6.9 New question on budget preparation at EOI stage (26 June 2015)

6.10 New question on format and participant role in Part E (26 June 2015)