



**Australian Government**

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**Australian Research Council**

# **Assessor Handbook**

**Industrial Transformation Research Program  
commencing in 2023**

A guide for both **General** and **Detailed** Assessors on the  
selection process for assessing ITRP23 applications

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## Key Dates and Notes – ARC Industrial Transformation Research Program (ITRP) commencing in 2023 (ITRP23)

### Detailed Assessors

Task	ITRP23 Dates	Detail
<b>Assessment Period</b>	10 January 2023 – 1 March 2023	<p>Check the application details for any <a href="#">Conflict of Interest</a> as soon as the Research Management System (RMS) email containing assignments has been received; then accept or reject assignments in RMS (to allow for timely re-assignment of the rejected assignments).</p> <p>Assess each application assigned using an A-E rating scale and give a written report against two of the assessment criteria.</p> <p>Submit assessments to the ARC on or before this deadline date.</p>

### General Assessors

Task	ITRP23 Dates	Detail
<b>SAC Assessment Period</b>	Early February 2023 – Early May 2023 (Dates to be confirmed)	<b>Carriages 1, 2 and 3</b> Assess applications independently to determine preliminary and provisional rating and ranking.
<b>Rejoinder</b>	10 March 2023 – 24 March 2023	Applicants to read comments from Detailed Assessors and submit a Rejoinder.
<b>Review and finalise assessments</b>	25 March 2023 to 11 April 2023	<b>Carriages 1, 2 and 3</b> Review Detailed assessments and Rejoinders. Revise and finalise ratings and ranks in RMS.
<b>SAC Selection Meeting</b>	16 May 2023 to 17 May 2023	SAC members discuss shortlist and recommend applications

## 1. Overview

This Handbook provides information, instructions, and advice for both **Detailed** and **General** Assessors on the assessment process for the Australian Research Council (ARC) ITRP scheme, under the ARC [National Competitive Grants Program \(NCGP\)](#). The NCGP supports the highest-quality fundamental and applied research and research training under two funding programs, [Discovery](#) and [Linkage](#). The ITRP scheme sits within the Linkage Program.

The ITRP encourages and supports university-based researchers and industry to work together to address a range of strategic government priorities to transform Australian industries.

ITRP comprises:

- Industrial Transformation Research Hubs (**Research Hubs**)
- Industrial Transformation Training Centres (**Training Centres**)

Research Hubs and Training Centres are research entities with a highly integrated research program. They are not a network or loose grouping of smaller projects.

**Research Hubs** engage Australia's best researchers to develop collaborative solutions to the strategic priorities. The focus is on building **capability** for the industry sector – the creation of industry and academic partnerships working together on research and development projects to create innovative and transformative solutions for industry.

**Training Centres** foster close partnerships between university-based researchers and industry, through creating and delivering innovative Higher Degree by Research (HDR) and postdoctoral training. The focus is on building **capacity** (a future research workforce) – to develop researchers with capability in end user research that is vital to Australia's future. In delivering this training, Training Centres focus the researchers on developing solutions relevant to the Industrial Transformation Priorities

The Objectives and Assessment Criteria for Research hubs and Training Centres covered in this Handbook are listed in [Appendix 1](#) and [Appendix 2](#). They are also available in the Linkage Program *Grant Guidelines – Industrial Transformation Research Program (2021 edition for projects) commencing in 2023* located on [GrantConnect](#).

This Handbook does **not** cover the assessment of applications under any other ARC funding scheme.

The [Research Management System \(RMS\)](#) is the web-based computer system available for the preparation and submission of research applications, assessments and rejoinders for the ARC. The **RMS Handbook for Assessors**, a guide for **General** and **Detailed** Assessors to navigate the RMS assignment and assessment process is available on the [ARC website](#).

Detailed and General Assessors have different roles in the peer review process. Key aspects of their roles are outlined in Sections 2.2 and Section 2.3 respectively.

## 2. The Assessment Process

Peer review plays a critical role in the assessment of ITRP applications. Applications are assessed by Detailed Assessors and a Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) comprised of General Assessors.

Detailed Assessors are assigned applications to review for their specific expertise in a field of research and / or industry expertise. Detailed Assessors provide detailed assessments with scores and written comments against assessment criteria for each application.

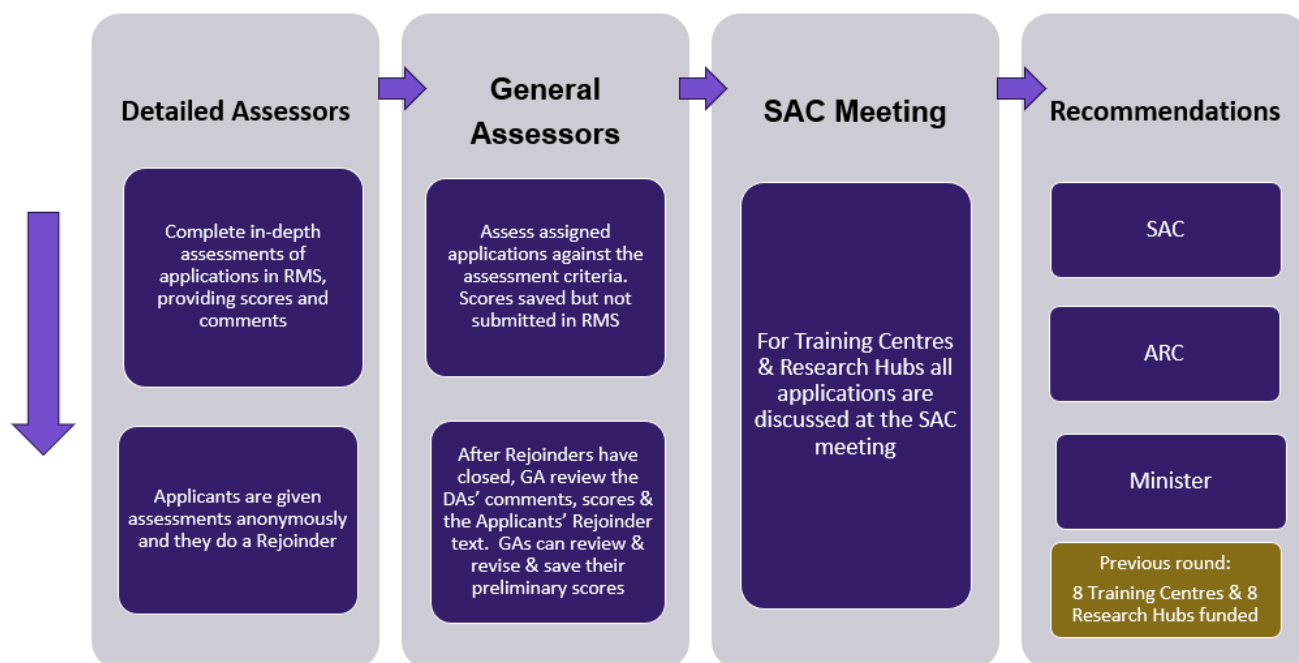
General Assessors utilise knowledge of their disciplinary areas and a broad understanding of intellectual and methodological issues, good research planning, and experience in assessing and/or managing major research entities. Each application has a lead General Assessor (known as “Carriage 1”) who is typically close to the academic or industry field of the application, and 2 General Assessors (known as Other Carriages”, “Carriage 2/3”, or “co-Carriages) with supplementary expertise.

The Assessors from each group review applications against the assessment criteria and contribute to the process of scoring and ranking research applications. These reviews assist in the evaluation, selection, shortlisting, recommendation, and funding of successful applications. The CEO of the ARC then makes recommendations to the Minister for Education who decides which Training Centres and Research Hubs will be allocated funding under the NCGP.

The peer review process for ITRP is based on the assessments completed by Detailed Assessors and the SAC who assess, moderate and compare the applications using an A-E scale and rank within that scale to facilitate the overall assessment process.

All Detailed Assessors are typically assigned a small number of applications to assess and rank in accordance with their individual expertise. General Assessors will be assigned a larger number of applications, a number of which may be well outside their area of research expertise.

A diagram of the assessment process is below.



## 2.1 Assessment Process for ITRP23

### Assessment process

- Applications are assessed by both Detailed Assessors and General Assessors.
- Detailed Assessors are typically assigned 2-3 applications, while General Assessors are assigned higher numbers of applications as either Carriage 1 or Other Carriage. ARC Executive Directors assign both Detailed Assessors and General Assessors to the applications.
- Detailed and General Assessors must log in to RMS to check their assignments for any Conflicts of Interest (COI) and accept or reject the assignment (see Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 4.1 of this Handbook for more information).
- Detailed Assessors provide a written report and an A-E rating against the scheme assessment criteria (see Appendices 1 and 2 of this Handbook). If more than one application has been assessed, the Detailed Assessor may be prompted to provide a unique rank within the list of assessed applications. Completed assessments must be submitted to the ARC through RMS before the end of the Assessment period, as per the Detailed Assessors table above on page 3. The text from the assessments completed by Detailed Assessors is anonymously provided to the applicant for Rejoinder. Detailed Assessors have no further tasks after this point.
- General Assessors assess the applications to which they have been assigned as a Carriage (this may be as Carriage 1 or Other Carriages) and provide a rating only against each of the scheme assessment criteria using the rating scale provided in Section 2.4 of this Handbook. This should be a preliminary assessment only and General Assessors **should not submit their initial assessments in RMS at this stage**.

### Review

- When the rejoinder period closes, the General Assessors are able to review their initial assessment in the context of the assessment comments and ratings provided by the Detailed Assessors and the Rejoinders provided by applicants.
- Final ratings should be finalised in RMS using the rating scale provided in Section 2.4 of this Handbook. General Assessors are also prompted to provide each application with a unique rank within their list of assigned applications. This is useful to distinguish the ranking of applications where a number of applications are equally ranked by RMS. Once General Assessors are comfortable with their own ratings/ranks for all assigned applications, they submit their final assessments to the ARC by the end of the SAC Assessment Period listed in the General Assessors table above on page 3.

### SAC Meeting

- General Assessors will attend the SAC meeting to discuss the applications. All Carriage members should consider each application within their assigned list and be prepared to articulate reasons for shortlisting or

not. Carriage members will be asked to comment on the strengths/weaknesses of the applications on their assigned list.

- Prior to the meeting the ARC will also give General Assessors access to other applications that they are not conflicted with. General Assessors should also form an opinion of the merit of all other applications in addition to the applications they have been assigned as Carriages. The ARC will provide additional guidance on the shortlisting process prior to the meeting and suggested feedback to be provided to unsuccessful applications.
- The selection SAC meeting will be held on **Tuesday 16 May and Wednesday 17 May 2023** SAC members will meet to discuss the applications. SAC members will be asked to consider each application against the assessment criteria, taking into consideration information from the application, assessments, and rejoinder. SAC members will then recommend which applications are recommended for funding to the ARC. Budgets for recommended applications are also discussed and recommended funding levels for each Training Centre or Research Hub are agreed by the SAC. The SAC will also discuss and provide qualitative feedback for applications not recommended for funding.
- Once grant outcomes of the round have been announced, the ARC will provide feedback on unsuccessful applications to unsuccessful applicants.

**It is important to note that for reasons of fairness to applicants, the ARC cannot use your expert assessment if you do not follow the assessment procedures outlined in the following sections.**

## 2.2 Detailed Assessors

### Assignment of Applications

Industrial Transformation Research Program applications are assigned to Detailed Assessors using information from their RMS profile. Detailed Assessors are assigned in RMS by an ARC Executive Director.

### RMS Profile

Detailed Assessors are assigned application assessments in RMS by an ARC Executive Director.

A completed Detailed Assessor's RMS profile plays an essential role in the assignment process as information contained in the profile assists with the matching of applications with appropriately skilled Detailed Assessors. It is important that Detailed Assessors ensure that their RMS profile is up to date and contains the following details:

- **Expertise text:** Please outline your expertise briefly. The following format is suggested "My major area of research expertise is in a, b, c. I also have experience in research q, r, s. I would also be able to assess in the areas of x, y, z. The research facilities and techniques I use are l, m, n."
- **Field of Research (FoR) Codes:** Please include between six and ten 6-digit FoR codes that reflect your key areas of expertise. You should include the 2020 FoR codes.
- **Employment History:** Please ensure that your employment history is kept up to date, to enable your organisational conflicts of interests to be identified by RMS.
- **Personal Details:** Please ensure your personal details are up to date, including conflicts of interest and personal material interest declarations.

**Note:** If applicable - Obligated assessors (those who are participants on an ARC project currently receiving funding) are required to keep their RMS profile up to date and to undertake assessments as required in the relevant Commonwealth grant agreement for their project(s).

### Detailed Assessments

Detailed Assessors provide scores and written comments addressing the assessment criteria on each application. They can be assigned a number of applications within their field of research or across a broader disciplinary area on the basis of their RMS profile expertise text and FoR codes. Detailed Assessors are asked to:

- Complete in-depth assessments of applications in RMS, providing scores and comments against scheme-specific criteria (refer to Appendices 1 and 2 below for the ITRP Research Hubs and Training Centres assessment criteria).
- Identify the merits or otherwise of the application with respect to the assessment criteria
- Assess and score the application for each assessment criterion separately.

Detailed Assessors are asked to provide a minimum of 500 characters (approximately 75 words) per assessment criterion and a minimum of 3,500 characters (approximately 525 words) for the overall assessment.

Detailed Assessor comments are made available to Applicants anonymously once the Rejoinder process has been opened.

**Note:** If a Detailed Assessor identifies a COI with an assigned application this must be declared to the ARC by rejecting the assignment in RMS and no further participation in the assessment process for that application should take place.

If a Detailed Assessor identifies a COI with an assigned application this **must** be declared to the ARC via email to [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) and no further participation in the assessment process should take place for that application.

Detailed Assessors may receive applications to assess at any stage of the assessment process due to late COIs being declared by other assessors.

## How to Ensure High Quality Detailed Assessments

Detailed Assessors can refer to the [ARC Peer Review webpage](#) for **examples** of good Detailed assessments.

Detailed Assessors are asked to provide high quality, constructive assessments with the following:

- **Objective** and professional comments.
- **Detailed** comments on the merits or otherwise of the application with respect to the assessment criteria (one or two sentences is not sufficient). Applications should present as a national research entity with a highly integrated Research Program. It should address the objectives of the Research Hubs or Training Centres scheme and not be a network or loosely linked group of smaller projects.
- **Sufficient** information to allow applicants to provide a Rejoinder to constructive comments about the application.
- **Comments that align closely with ratings**—for example, an ‘A’ rating should not be submitted if an application is assessed as being of limited merit against a criterion. Further, if a ‘D’ rating is given, then suitable constructive criticisms and comments justifying the rating are required. It is important to remember that applicants see only the comments and the SAC will see both comments and scores.

It is essential that your scores and comments are fit for purpose and provide appropriate information for the person using them.

- **Comments that are fair, meaningful and balanced**, addressing only issues relevant to the application in terms of the assessment criteria. Comments should provide a sound, comprehensive account of, and justification for, views about the application, while respecting the care with which applications have been prepared.
- **Comments that are free** from platitudes, exaggeration and understatement.
- **Timely submission** via RMS as early as possible is appreciated, and by the ARC deadline is required.

Refer to the [ARC Peer Review webpage](#) for examples of good quality Detailed assessments. The webpage also provides links to two new supplementary guides: (i) *How to Write a Quality Peer Review* guide, and (ii) *The Assessment Process* which reviews Conflicts of Interest. For information about supporting the implementation of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018 (the Code) and other information – please see the [ARC's Codes and Guidelines](#) webpage.

## How to Avoid Inappropriate Assessments

Detailed Assessors **should not** use the following in their assessment comments, as this may render the assessment inappropriate:

- Excessive use of acronyms
- Generic comments used in multiple assessments
- Very brief assessment text
- Scores which do not align with assessment text
- Scores that are included within the assessment text
- Information that identifies researchers named on other applications
- Information or advice about their own identity, standing in, or understanding of, the research field in the application
- The outcome or status of other relevant research not mentioned in the application
- Restatement or rephrasing of any part of the application



- Comments about the potential ineligibility of an application. All queries regarding eligibility should be sent to [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) from General Assessors OR [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) from Detailed Assessors
- Comments comparing one application with another in this round
- Text that has been copied from a previous assessment
- Text that appears to be discriminatory, defamatory or distastefully irrelevant (such as gratuitous criticism of a researcher and/ or Eligible Organisation).
- Assumptions of the impact of COVID-19 on the proposed research in the application

**Note:** Under no circumstances should Detailed Assessors contact researchers and/or institutions about a submitted application or seek additional information from any sources.

This includes following any hyperlinks that may have been included in the application. The inclusion of webpage addresses/URLs and hyperlinks is only permitted under certain circumstances such as publications that are only available online (such as preprints and comparable resources) and letters of support. Webpage addresses/URLs and hyperlinks should not be used to circumvent page limits, nor should they provide information that is not contained in the application. All information relevant to the application must be contained within the application.

## Treatment of Inappropriate Assessments

Inappropriate assessments compromise the integrity of the peer review process. To be fair to all applicants, the ARC will reject assessments with inappropriate or highly subjective comments from individual assessors about any aspect of the application. If the ARC considers an assessment to be inappropriate, the ARC may request that an Assessor amend the assessment or may completely remove the assessment from the process.

The ARC website also contains information for applicants advising how to request that the ARC review an assessment that contains inappropriate elements during the rejoinder period.

## 2.3 General Assessors

### RMS Profile

It is important that General Assessors ensure that their RMS profile is up to date and contains the following details:

- **Expertise text:** Please outline your expertise briefly. The following format is suggested “My major area of research expertise is in a, b, c. I also have experience in research q, r, s. I would also be able to assess in the areas of x, y, z. The research facilities and techniques I use are l, m, n”.
- **Field of Research (FoR) Codes:** Please include between six and ten 6-digit FoR codes that reflect your key areas of expertise. You should include both the 2008 FoR codes and the 2020 FoR codes.
- **Employment History:** Please ensure that your employment history is kept up to date, to enable your organisational conflicts of interests to be identified by RMS.

This information will be used to match assessors with applications and should therefore represent the research expertise.

General Assessors are selected to form the SAC which oversee the peer review process. The General Assessors are chosen to ensure relevant expertise based on the requirements of the ARC grant scheme. The SAC for the ITRP schemes may include members who are eminent members of the wider national and international academic community and/or key industry groups. The ITRP SAC is a single multi-disciplinary panel who are discipline and/or industry experts with experience in assessing and/or managing large research entities.

Following the deadline for submission of applications, Executive Directors at the ARC assign each application to General Assessors. Carriage 1 is usually closely associated with the application’s academic field while the Other Carriages have supplementary expertise. Carriage 1 has primary responsibility for the application, which will include speaking to the application, the relevant assessments and rejoinder, as well as taking the lead in providing feedback at the selection meetings.

Detailed Assessors for the schemes of the ITRP are assigned by an ARC Executive Director (see Section 2.2 above for more information on Detailed Assessors). Table 1 below provides an overview of the SAC format and assignment requirements for the ITRP schemes.



## The Selection Advisory Committee (SAC)

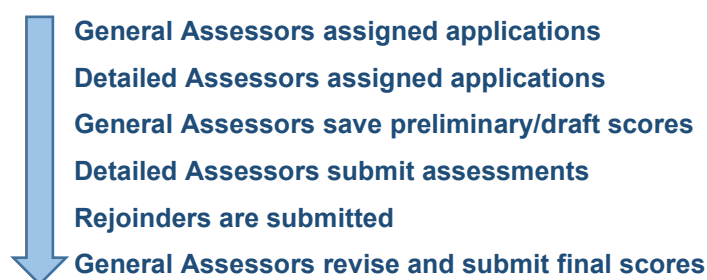
Table 1: Overview of SAC format and assignment requirements for the ITRP schemes

Scheme	SAC Detail	Assignment Detail
<b>Industrial Transformation Research Program</b>	<p>The SAC is comprised of academic and industry experts (where required) related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Advanced Manufacturing;</li><li>- Cyber Security;</li><li>- Food, Beverage and Agribusiness;</li><li>- Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals;</li><li>- Mining Equipment, Resources Technology and Services, Critical Minerals Processing;</li><li>- Oil, Gas and Energy Resources;</li><li>- Recycling and Clean Energy;</li><li>- Defence; and</li><li>- Space.</li></ul>	<p>ARC Executive Director assigns 3 General Assessors</p> <p>ARC Executive Director assigns 4 Detailed Assessors and up to 4 Reserves</p>

### Order of the Assessment Process

The following diagram provides an overview of the General Assessor's assessment process.

Diagram 1: Overview of the General Assessor Assessment Process



### General Assessment Process

All assessors must declare any Conflicts of Interest (COI) and reject the assignments on which they are conflicted as soon as possible. This will assist in the timely re-assignment of applications. See Section 4.1 for further information on COIs.

When assessing applications General Assessors must rely solely on the information provided within the application and should not seek additional information from any sources. This includes following any hyperlinks that may have been provided in the application. The inclusion of webpage addresses/URLs and hyperlinks is only permitted under certain circumstances such as publications that are only available online (such as preprints and comparable resources) and letters of support. Webpage addresses/ URLs and hyperlinks should not be used to circumvent page limits, nor should they provide information that is not contained in the application.

We suggest that General Assessors keep personal working notes as they do their assessments, to facilitate discussions at Selection Meeting. These personal working notes are your own record of your views on each application and must not be sent to the ARC or other SAC members.

### Preliminary Assessment

Following the assignment process, while the Detailed Assessors are undertaking assessments, General Assessors independently read and assess all assigned applications against the four relevant criteria using the [A to E Scoring Matrix](#). These assessment scores can be saved in RMS but are not to be submitted until after the Applicant Rejoinder period is closed (see *Revising and Submitting Final Assessments* for more details) or can be recorded in the General Assessor own working notes.

During the Rejoinder process, the comments from Detailed Assessors are provided anonymously to the applicant. The applicant then has an opportunity to provide a Rejoinder in RMS to address any issues raised by the Detailed Assessors.

After the Rejoinder process has closed, General Assessors review the Detailed Assessors' comments and scores, and the applicants' Rejoinder text. Both the Detailed Assessors assessments and Rejoinders inform General Assessors' scores. At this point General Assessors can review and, if necessary, revise and save their preliminary scores.

General Assessors then ensure that their scores are entered in RMS before the preliminary assessment due date. This is to enable their co-Carriages to view the scores and write personal working notes to facilitate discussion at the Selection Meeting.

Unlike other ARC schemes, we want you to make your assessment independent of the other Carriages. You should not discuss your scores for applications with the other Carriages to prevent their scores to initially influencing yours. It does not matter if there is discrepancy between the scores of various assessors. There will be opportunity for discussion by Carriages on the applications at the selection meeting.

## Revising and Submitting Final Assessments

After the Applicant Rejoinder period is closed, and the preliminary scores are finalised the General Assessor will submit these scores in RMS.

When all final ratings are submitted, RMS will produce an initial ranking list of all applications — see [Section 2.4](#) for more details. This indicative ranking list is the order of applications to be discussed during the selection meeting and is used to assist with the identification of applications that are of sufficient quality to be recommended for funding. Final recommendations to fund (or not to) based on all aspects of the application assessment and decided by the SAC as a whole.

## Inappropriate Assessments

If General Assessors are concerned about the appropriateness of any assessment text from Detailed Assessors, or identify a COI, then they **must** contact the ARC via the [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) inbox as soon as possible.

The ARC will investigate the concerns and decide whether an assessment should be amended or removed from the process. If inappropriate assessments are identified early in the assessment process, the ARC may ask the assessor to amend their assessment or assign an alternative assessor to the application

If the assessment cannot be amended, it may be removed by the ARC. This happens in rare circumstances and requires the ARC CEO's approval.

## 2.4 Rating and Ranking Assessments – All Assessors

### Rating Scale

When applying the Scoring Matrix, Assessors should take into consideration the Research Hubs or Training Centres scheme objectives and the assessment criteria summarised below (see Appendices 1 and 2 of this Handbook for further information).

The Research Hubs scheme objectives are to:

- a. support collaborative research projects between universities and organisations outside the Australian higher education sector that involve cutting-edge research on new technologies, and
- b. leverage national and international investment in targeted industry sectors, including from industry and other research end-users.

The Training Centres scheme objectives are to:

- a. support HDR candidates and postdoctoral researchers to undertake industrial training,
- b. support research collaboration between universities and organisations outside the Australian higher education sector, and
- c. strengthen the capabilities of industry and research end-users in identified Industrial Transformation Priority areas.

Scoring applications against assessment criteria can be a difficult exercise when assessors might only look at a small number of applications in a given round.

Only the best applications are recommended. As a guide, those in the top scoring band ('A') would be assessed as near flawless across all selection criteria.

A Scoring Matrix for both Detailed and General Assessors is provided in **Table 2** below.

**Table 2: Scoring Matrix for Research Hubs and Training Centres Applications**

Score	Criteria	Recommendation
A	<b>Outstanding:</b> Of the highest quality and at the forefront of research in the field.	<b>Recommended unconditionally</b>
B	<b>Excellent:</b> Of high quality and strongly competitive.	<b>Strongly support recommendation</b>
C	<b>Very Good:</b> Interesting, sound and compelling.	<b>Support recommendation with reservation</b>
D	<b>Good:</b> Sound, but lacks a compelling element.	<b>Unsupportive of recommendation</b>
E	<b>Uncompetitive:</b> Uncompetitive and has significant weaknesses or more fatal flaws.	<b>Not recommended</b>

## Ranking

Detailed and General Assessors who have been assigned multiple applications must establish a ranked list. Assigning scores to each assessment is a convenient way of initially ranking applications. RMS will use your scores to automatically rank applications assigned to you.

Each application must also have a unique rank, therefore assessors who have multiple assessments of applications with an identical final rank are prompted by RMS to give each assessment a unique rank to differentiate between them. Differentiation should be based on how you compare the applications in relation to the Rating Scale.

Detailed Assessors cannot leave an assessment criterion score blank for any reason. Assessments can only be submitted when all applications you have been assigned to have both 1) a score given and 2) a unique ranking.

## 2.5 Important Factors to Consider When Assessing – All Assessors

All Assessors of ITRP applications must take into consideration the following when undertaking assessments.

### Objectives and Assessment Criteria

Assessors must take into consideration both the scheme objectives and the assessment criteria as outlined in the Grant Guidelines and Appendices 1 and 2 of this Handbook.

### National Interest Test

From November 2018, applications now include a National Interest Test Statement. Applicants must provide a separate response on the national interest of their research proposal, which is considered by the ARC's CEO before recommendations are made to the Minister. This does not form part of either the General and Detailed Assessors assessments and will not be visible.

### Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)

Assessment of ROPE requires all assessors to identify and consider research excellence relative to a researcher's career and life experiences. It aims to ensure that the NCGP assessment processes: (i) accurately evaluates a researcher's career history relative to their current career stage, and (ii) considers whether their productivity and contribution is commensurate with the opportunities that have been available to them.

The required elements of ROPE vary according to the objectives of each grant opportunity. All General and Detailed Assessors should be familiar with the full ROPE statement located on the [ARC website](#).

### Research Impact

The [Research Impact Principles and Framework](#) provided on the ARC website provides a definition of research impact and examples of where research components fit into an impact pathway. You should include applicants' information about the intended benefit of the proposed Training Centre or Research Hub when assessing an application against a feasibility and benefit assessment criterion.

## Interdisciplinary Research

The ARC recognises the value of interdisciplinary research and the ARC's commitment to supporting interdisciplinary research is outlined in the [ARC Statement of Support for Interdisciplinary Research](#).

Research undertaken at a Training Centre or Research Hub is expected to be interdisciplinary, innovative and transformational. The ITRP encourages and supports university-based researchers and industry to work together to address a range of strategic government priorities to transform Australian industries.

Interdisciplinary research is expected of Training Centre or Research Hub. Interdisciplinary research can be a distinct mode of research, or a combination of researchers, knowledge and/or approaches from disparate disciplines. Under the NCGP, examples of interdisciplinary research may include:

- researchers from different disciplines working together in a team,
- researchers collaborating to bring different perspectives to solve a problem,
- researchers utilising methods normally associated with one or more disciplines to solve problems in another discipline, and
- one or more researchers translating innovative blue sky or applied research outcomes from one discipline to an entirely different applied research discipline.

Assessors are required to assess all research on a fair and equal basis, including applications and outputs involving interdisciplinary and collaborative research. To assist with this, the ARC facilitates consideration of applications by relevant General Assessors with interdisciplinary expertise or where not feasible, applications are allocated to General Assessors who have broad disciplinary expertise regardless of discipline grouping. Interdisciplinary applications should be allocated to Detailed Assessors with specific interdisciplinary expertise or from different disciplines as well.

## Data Management Requirements

In line with responsibilities outlined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018) and international best practice, the ARC encourages researchers to deposit data arising from research projects in appropriate publicly accessible repositories.

The Project Description section of either a Research Hub or Training Centre application requires researchers to briefly outline their plans for the specific management of data generated through the proposed Research Hub or Training Centre. Researchers are not asked to include extensive detail of the physical or technological infrastructure. However, a general compliance response is not helpful. Assessors must consider how the research team plans to make data as openly accessible as possible for the purposes of verification and for others' future research. Where it is inappropriate to disseminate or re-use data, assessors must consider the validity and timeliness of any justification provided.

## COVID-19 guidance

The ARC requests all ARC assessors continue to assess each application based on the content of that application only and without making assumptions about the impact of COVID-19. Therefore, assessments must not include scores and comments that make assumptions about the viability of a proposed Training Centre or Research Hub due to the potential impacts of COVID-19. An assessment that includes assumptions about the impact of COVID-19, could be considered an [inappropriate assessment](#). The ARC will investigate a potential inappropriate assessment and decide whether an assessment should be amended or removed from the process.

The ARC has advised the research sector that we understand 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. ARC application forms include validations to ensure that minimum contribution requirements are pledged in applications. The ARC requests that all Detailed and General assessors not make assumptions about an Administering Organisation and Other Eligible Organisations' level of commitments or support for an application based solely on lower levels of pledged additional cash and/or in-kind support than provided historically for previous Training Centres or Research Hubs.

For reference the ARC has published [Pre Award Guidance](#) document for preparing applications entitled Responding to the impact of COVID-19 for applicants on the ARC website for the Australian research community. In the guidance the ARC acknowledges that the future impacts of COVID-19 are difficult for anyone to determine while the pandemic continues to evolve. Hence, the ARC has advised researchers preparing applications during this time, to ensure that application information is accurate and realistic at the time of

submission. If an application is successful, but circumstances have changed since the time of submission, the ARC will manage variations to the proposed research as a post award issue.

## Industrial Transformation Priorities

The ITRP schemes encourage and support university-based researchers and industry to work together to address a range of strategic government priorities to transform Australian industries. The current Industrial Transformation Priorities are:

- Advanced Manufacturing;
- Cyber Security;
- Food, Beverage and Agribusiness;
- Medical Technologies and Pharmaceuticals;
- Mining Equipment, Resources Technology and Services, Critical Minerals Processing;
- Oil, Gas and Energy Resources;
- Recycling and Clean Energy;
- Defence; and
- Space.

An application must address one or more of the current Industrial Transformation Priorities.

## Engagement by Applicants

Advice may be sought from Industry Growth Centres for ITRP applications. ITRP applicants may also seek to communicate with other agencies relevant to the Industrial Transformation Priority areas to source information and new network connections.

## Preprints or comparable resources

Preprints or comparable resources can be included in any part of an application. This includes within the Research Outputs list and the body of an application.

An application will not be deemed to be ineligible for the citing and listing of preprints or comparable resources. Recognising that their citation can be a crucial part of research discourse, the suitability and relevance of citations and research outputs are best considered by the assessors and panels in determining the quality and novelty of the proposed research.

A preprint or comparable resource is a scholarly output that is uploaded by the authors to a recognised publicly accessible archive, repository, or preprint service (such as, but not limited to, arXiv, bioRxiv, medRxiv, ChemRxiv, Peer J Preprints, Zenodo, GitHub, PsyArXiv and publicly available university of 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). Any citation of a preprint or comparable resource should be explicitly identified as such and listed in the references with a DOI, URL or equivalent, version number and/or date of access, as applicable.

Inclusion of preprints or comparable resources within the body of the application should comply with standard disciplinary practices for the relevant field.

## 3. General Assessors: Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) Meetings Preparation

### 3.1 Roles and Responsibilities before the SAC Meetings

After the initial assessment period has closed General Assessors will:

- be unable to access applications for a short period whilst ARC staff undertake administrative functions to prepare for the SAC meeting
- be advised, by the ARC, when the RMS Meeting Application (Meeting App) opens and access to assigned applications reappears

- have access to all applications in the Meeting App where they do not have a COI.
- be required to attend a pre-meeting videoconference to be updated on the SAC meeting processes and relevant information.
- 

## **Reviewing Applications in the Meeting App**

Prior to the SAC meeting, all Carriages should review the Detailed and General Assessors' assessments and scores.

- At the SAC Meeting all Carriage members will be expected to contribute to discussions about the applications they have assessed, noting that Carriage 1 leads the discussion. All other SAC members will also participate in these discussions.
- In addition to applications that SAC members are already assigned to, all other SAC members should read critical sections of other applications (e.g. the Project Description etc) which will allow them to constructively participate in the final deliberations for recommendations.
- The SAC will meet virtually before the Selection Meeting, at which they will be provided detailed information on the Selection Meeting process.
- For ITRP schemes all applications are to be discussed at the SAC meeting.

## **Feedback to Applicants**

Unsuccessful ITRP applications will receive written feedback from the ARC as well a meeting with ARC staff if requested. The feedback on the application will be provided by the SAC to the ARC. Suggested standard feedback text will be made available to SAC members prior to each meeting for reference. While Carriages will be primarily responsible for determining feedback, all SAC members may provide appropriate feedback on those applications they have considered during the Meeting.

## **Carriage 1: Reviewing applications in the RMS Meeting App**

Prior to the SAC meeting, Carriage 1 should review the Detailed and General Assessors' assessments and scores, and consider whether they believe there are any applications:

1. in the Fundable Range or Uncertainty Band that should be lower; or
2. below the Uncertainty Band that should be higher; or
3. in the Fundable Range that should/should not be considered for funding.

Particular attention should be given to applications where a ROPE case (see [Section 2.5](#)) has been made that has been neglected by Detailed Assessors, or where an anomalous Detailed Assessment may materially affect the initial ranking of the application. Carriage 1 should identify such applications and prepare a recommendation for consideration by the SAC.

All ITRP applications are discussed at the SAC meeting. Carriage 1 should review all assigned Training Centre and Research Hub applications, and prepare notes on a recommendation for consideration by the SAC.

## **Carriage 1: Prepare a budget recommendation**

If an application is recommended for funding, it is Carriage 1's responsibility to recommend an overall, one-line budget amount for each funding year of the application to the SAC. The budget recommendation is provided at the SAC meeting by Carriage 1.

The budget recommended for each year must not exceed the amount requested in the application. Budget recommendations are discussed by the SAC members and the recommended budget is forwarded to the ARC CEO as part of the SAC's funding recommendations.

Carriage 1 may need to discuss or justify their budget recommendation at the SAC meeting and should therefore bring their own notes to the meeting on how they arrived at their final recommended funding amount.

To prepare a one-line budget for each year of funding, Carriage 1 should consider the following:

1. The extent to which specific budget items are well justified
2. Whether the budget items are supported or not supported as outlined in relevant grant opportunity's grant guidelines



3. The minimum/maximum funding amounts relevant to the specific grant opportunity's grant guidelines
4. The costs of any recommended remunerated participants
5. Whether they are satisfied that the project can still be completed with the recommended budget. To enable the Grant Holders to successfully deliver the scheme objectives, the ITRP scheme generally supports successful applications with a high return rate.
6. Whether the budget for the application has been considered on merit and at this stage not compared to other applications.

## 3.2 Roles and Responsibilities at the SAC and information on the Selection Meeting

Detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of SAC members for each assessment stage of the ITRP schemes will be provided to SAC members prior to the meeting. At least one videoconference will be held during the scheme round process and written documentation will be supplied.

Each SAC meeting will comprise a Chair, Deputy Chair, SAC members (Carriage 1, Other Carriages, and other General Assessors) and ARC Staff.

The role of the Chair is to:

1. lead the committee through the process to make a recommendation on the applications
2. call the panel to a vote for applications and
3. ensure the meeting runs in a timely manner.

For applications where the Chair is conflicted out of the room, the Deputy Chair will act in the role. Where multiple conflicts arise, other SAC members may also be called on to be acting Chair.

When you are Carriage 1 on an application, your role is to:

1. lead discussion for the application and making a recommendation to shortlist, and fund/not fund
2. vote on applications when called by the Chair
3. recommend shortlisting an application or not, and a one-line budget for applications that are recommended for funding later.

All other Carriages and panel members will:

1. participate in discussions of whether or not an application should be shortlisted and later if an application be recommended for funding
2. vote on applications when called to do so by the Chair.

ARC staff are responsible for:

1. providing secretariat support for meetings
2. providing procedural and probity advice to the SAC
3. ensuring that correct administrative procedures are followed
4. ensuring COIs and any potential inappropriate discussions are managed correctly.

## 4. Ensuring Integrity of Process

### 4.1 Confidentiality and conflict of interest (COI)

The [ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy](#) is designed to ensure that all COIs are managed in a rigorous and transparent way. It aims to prevent individuals from influencing decisions unfairly and to maintain public confidence in the integrity, legitimacy, impartiality, and fairness of the peer review process.

Any individual who is reviewing material for the ARC must agree to a confidentiality and COI statement, and must clearly disclose any material personal interests that may affect or might be perceived to affect, their ability to perform their role.

All assessors must maintain an update-to-date RMS profile, including personal details, current employment details and previous employment history within the past two years. This information will assist the ARC with the identification and management of organisational COI.



Assessors reviewing ARC grant applications who have identified a COI must reject the grant application assigned in RMS to assist the ARC in the management of COIs.

Examples of material personal interests that are considered by the ARC to be COIs include holding funding with a named participant within the past 2 years or having been a collaborator or co-author with a named participant on a research output within the last 4 years. For more information on the timeframes that apply for common COIs, please refer to the [Identifying and Handling a Conflict of Interest in NCGP processes](#) document.

**Note:** In RMS, assessors will be asked to indicate their willingness to comply with this policy before proceeding to assess. They can do this by selecting the 'Accept' button.

## 4.2 Research integrity and research misconduct

If, in the course of undertaking an assessment, you identify or suspect a potential research integrity breach or research misconduct, please notify the ARC Research Integrity Office ([researchintegrity@arc.gov.au](mailto:researchintegrity@arc.gov.au)) in accordance with Section 5 of the [ARC Research Integrity and Research Misconduct Policy](#). Please do not mention your concerns in your assessment comments.

The ARC Research Integrity Office will consider whether to refer your concerns to the relevant institution for investigation in accordance with the requirements of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#). You should provide sufficient information to allow the ARC to assess whether there is a basis for referring the matter to the institution; and to enable the relevant institution to progress an investigation into the allegation (if required).

### Foreign financial support, foreign affiliations and foreign honorary positions.

Participants applying for ARC grants are required to answer questions in their application relating to foreign financial support and foreign affiliations, including current and previous associations. Participants are required to declare:

- foreign financial support (cash or in kind) for research related activities
- current or past associations or affiliations with a foreign sponsored talent program (for the last 10 years)
- current associations or affiliations with a foreign government, foreign political party, foreign state-owned enterprise, foreign military and/or foreign police organisations

If in the course of undertaking an assessment you identify or suspect a potential issue of foreign interference, please send an email highlighting your concerns to the ARC via [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) (General Assessors) or [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) (Detailed Assessors) as soon as possible.

**Note:** In RMS, assessors will be asked to indicate their willingness to comply with this policy before proceeding to assess. They can do this by selecting the 'Accept' button.

## 4.3 Applications outside an assessor's area of expertise

The ARC receives applications from many scholarly fields. Occasionally you will be asked to assess an application that does not appear to correspond closely with your area of expertise, particularly if you are a General Assessor. Your views are valuable as they are being sought on the entire application, drawing on your expert knowledge as a researcher and familiarity with large research investments or large research groups. If you are a **General Assessor** and are concerned about a particular application's research area and your ability to provide a robust assessment, **please contact the ARC via [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) before rejecting the assignment.**

If you are a **Detailed Assessor** and believe that the ARC has misunderstood your broad expertise or has made an error in assigning an application to you, please give **early notice** of your view by rejecting the applicable application/s in RMS and entering a reason in the Reject Reason comment box. It is also important to review your RMS profile expertise text and FoR codes.

## 4.4 Eligibility

If, while assessing an application, you have concerns about eligibility, ethics or other issues associated with an application, **you must not include this information in your assessment.** Please email the ARC via [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) (General Assessors) or [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) (Detailed Assessors) outlining your concern as soon as possible. The ARC is responsible for investigating and making decisions on these matters,

and General and Detailed Assessors should not conduct investigations at any point. Please complete your assessment based on the merits of the application without giving consideration to the potential eligibility issue.

## Display Errors in Research Outputs

The ARC is aware of some research output display errors that are system issues and cannot be corrected by RMS users. Any applications that are affected will not be deemed to breach eligibility requirements and all General and Detailed Assessors should disregard research output display errors in their assessment of applications. Examples of possible research output display errors include symbols, foreign language characters and subscript/superscript that does not render correctly.

## 4.5 Unconscious bias

Assessors should also be aware of how their unconscious bias could affect the peer review process. Unconscious biases are pervasive and may relate to perceptions about a range of attributes including:

- gender and/or sexuality
- social/cultural background
- career path
- institutional employer
- discipline

The ARC encourages Assessors to recognise their own biases and be aware of them in their assessments. A selection of short, online tests for identifying unconscious biases is available via Harvard University's ['Implicit Social Attitudes' demonstration sites](#).

## 5. Contact details for queries during the assessment process

For **all** assignment and assessment as well as accessibility enquiries please email **the ARC via** [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) (General Assessors) or [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) (Detailed Assessors).

For all questions relating to the SAC and SAC meetings, contact [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au)

## Appendix 1 – ITRP Research Hubs 2023

### Grant Guidelines

The objectives and assessment criteria below are from the Linkage Program Grant Guidelines (2021 edition) for ITRP23 are available on [GrantConnect](#).

### Overview

Research Hubs engage Australia's best researchers to develop collaborative solutions to the strategic priorities. The focus is on building capability for the industry sector – the creation of industry and academic partnerships working together on research and development projects to create innovative and transformative solutions for industry.

### Objectives

The Research Hubs scheme objectives are to:

- support collaborative research projects between universities and organisations outside the Australian higher education sector that involve cutting-edge research on new technologies; and
- leverage national and international investment in targeted industry sectors, including from industry and other research end-users.

### Assessment criteria and Scoring Matrix – Research Hubs

Assessment criteria	(A) Outstanding Of the highest quality and at the forefront of research in the field.	(B) Excellent Of high quality and strongly competitive.	(C) Very Good Interesting, sound and compelling.	(D) Good Sound, but lacks a compelling element.	(E) Uncompetitive Has significant weaknesses.
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All Research Hubs applications, which meet the eligibility criteria, will be assessed and merit ranked using assessment criteria 'a', 'b', 'c' and 'd' as listed below.

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
a. Investigator(s) /Capability 20%	<p>Describe the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– demonstrated Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) of the proposed team including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– evidence of experience in managing distributed and/or collaborative industrial and end-user focussed research</li><li>– evidence of significant outcomes on industry related projects</li><li>– 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.</li></ul></li><li>– appropriateness of the team research track record to achieve the Research Hub's goals</li><li>– time and capacity of the team to undertake and manage the proposed research in collaboration with the Partner Organisation(s).</li></ul>

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
b. Project Quality and Innovation 30%	<p>Describe the extent to which the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– aims, concepts, methods and outcomes will drive growth, productivity and competitiveness within relevant sectors</li> <li>– conceptual/theoretical framework is genuinely integrated, cross-disciplinary, innovative and original</li> <li>– project draws together high quality innovative national and international partnership(s) into an integrated Research Hub.</li> </ul>
c. Feasibility and Commitment 20%	<p>Describe the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– extent to which the Research Hub represents value for money</li> <li>– 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)</li> <li>– proposed level of collaboration to support the research project, including national and international networks and linkages</li> <li>- high-quality intellectual support provided for the Research Hub by the research environment of the participating organisations</li> <li>– availability of and access to the necessary facilities required to support the proposed research (physical, technical, access to infrastructure, etc)</li> <li>– commitment by each Partner Organisation(s) to collaboration in the Research Hub</li> <li>– adequacy of the budget, including cash and in-kind Contributions pledged by participating organisations</li> <li>– extent to which the proposed Research Hub engages, and will continue to engage, meaningfully with the relevant industry experts including Industry Growth Centres.</li> </ul> <p>If the project involves research pertaining to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the strategies for enabling collaboration with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities (for example, dialogue/collaboration with an Indigenous cultural mentor)</li> <li>– any existing or developing, supportive and high-quality relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities</li> <li>– any personal affiliations with local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities that can facilitate the proposed research.</li> </ul>
d. Benefit 30%	<p>Describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the extent to which the research clearly addresses one or more of the Industrial Transformation Priorities</li> <li>– the economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for relevant Australian research end-users (including relevant industry and manufacturing sectors)</li> <li>– the extent to which the proposed Research Hub supports clearly identified market opportunity(ies) and intended transformation for Australian industry or other end users</li> <li>– the extent to which the proposed Research Hub will build research capacity in the Partner Organisation(s)</li> <li>– the extent to which there are adequate strategies to encourage dissemination, promotion, and the commercialisation of research outcomes</li> </ul>

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the potential contribution of the proposed research to addressing the needs of industries and communities as articulated in Australia's Industrial Transformation Priorities</li> <li>– 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.</li> </ul>

## A high-level summary of what to look for when assessing a Research Hub application

An assessor should consider:

- Research Hubs are research entities with a highly integrated research program. They are not a network or loose grouping of smaller projects.
- Does the application meet the **scheme objectives** and explain how these are being met?
- The **appropriateness** of the team's research track record to achieve the Research Hub's goals. Are there any critical personnel or groups missing?
- if the participants are demonstrating their **commitment** to the research program?
- if the participants are creating a collaborative and **integrated team**?
- whether the proposed Research Hub is genuinely **integrated, cross-disciplinary, innovative and original**?
- The extent to which the Research Hub represents **value for money**.
- The extent to which the research clearly addresses one or more of the **current Industrial Transformation Priorities**.

### Note for assessors

Only Key Personnel are required to complete all relevant questions in Part F (Participant Details) in the application form. This includes questions related to ROPE. Each application will list up to five Key Personnel, including the Research Hub Director. These participants are listed at the top of the participant list and have answered 'Yes' to the Key Personnel Question in Part F.

Other participants who are not Key Personnel will complete a sub-set of questions in Part F. A number of these questions will appear blank on the application form PDF. Please note that this is not an error.

You must assess all participants based on the information contained in the application form, which may include information in form parts other than Part F, such as information on their roles/responsibilities as outlined in Part D (Project Description) and Part E (Project Cost).

## Additional Notes When Assessing Applications

### Assessment of PIs and their roles

The ARC recognises that in some cases a proposed Partner Investigator (PI), from a Partner Organisation, may not be a researcher or have an academic background. All ARC assessors must pay close attention to the role and contribution described in the project description when assessing investigators' track record. It is expected that the nature of a satisfactory or strong track record may vary depending on the role the proposed PI is undertaking. Research Hub applications requires at least one PI from every Partner Organisation.

### Important points of reference in the application

<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<b>Primary points of reference in the application</b>	<b>Secondary points of reference in the application</b>
<b>Investigator(s)/Capability</b>	Part D2	Part A2
<b>Project Quality and Innovation</b>	Part D2	Part A4
<b>Feasibility and Commitment</b>	Part D2	Parts E1 and G2
<b>Benefit</b>	Part D2	A4

## Appendix 2 – ITRP Training Centre 2023

### Grant Guidelines

The objectives and assessment criteria below are from the Linkage Program Grant Guidelines (2021 edition) for the ITRP23 which are available on [GrantConnect](#).

### Overview

Training Centres foster close partnerships between university-based researchers and industry, through creating and delivering innovative Higher Degree by Research (HDR) and postdoctoral training. The focus is on building capacity (a future research workforce) – to develop researchers with capability in end user research that is vital to Australia's future. In delivering this training, Training Centres focus the researchers on developing solutions relevant to the Industrial Transformation Priorities.

### Scheme objectives

The Training Centres scheme objectives are to:

- c. support collaborative research projects between universities and organisations outside the Australian higher education sector that involve cutting-edge research on new technologies; and
- d. support research collaboration between universities and organisations outside the Australian higher education sector; and
- e. strengthen the capabilities of industry and research end-users in identified Industrial Transformation Priority areas.

### Assessment criteria and Scoring Matrix – Training Centres

Assessment criteria	(A) Outstanding Of the highest quality and at the forefront of research in the field.	(B) Excellent Of high quality and strongly competitive.	(C) Very Good Interesting, sound and compelling.	(D) Good Sound, but lacks a compelling element..	(E) Uncompetitive Has significant weaknesses..
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All Training Centre applications which meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed and merit ranked using assessment criteria 'a', 'b', 'c' and 'd' as listed below.

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
a. Investigator(s) /Capability 20%	Describe the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– demonstrated Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) of the proposed team including:</li><li>– evidence of experience in managing distributed and/or collaborative industrial and end-user focussed research</li><li>– Evidence of significant outcomes on industry related projects</li><li>– Evidence of experience in and capacity to provide effective supervision, support and mentoring for HDR candidates and postdoctoral researchers over the life of the Training Centre</li><li>– appropriateness of team research track record to achieve the Training Centre's goals</li></ul>



Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– time and capacity of the team to undertake and manage the proposed research in collaboration with the Partner Organisation(s).</li> </ul>
b. Project Quality and Innovation 30%	<p>Describe the extent to which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the aims, concepts, methods and outcomes will drive growth, productivity and competitiveness within relevant sectors</li> <li>– the project builds skills and capacity in end-user focussed research</li> <li>– the conceptual/theoretical framework is genuinely integrated, cross-disciplinary, innovative and original</li> <li>– how the Training Centre has a wide level of collaboration, including the development of national and international networks and linkages.</li> </ul>
c. Feasibility and Commitment 20%	<p>Describe the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– extent to which the proposed Training Centre represents value for money</li> <li>– practicality of the proposed project objectives, budget and timeframe (including identified risks and mitigation strategies)</li> <li>– proposed level of collaboration to support the research project</li> <li>– high quality intellectual support provided for the Training Centre by the research environment of the participating organisations</li> <li>– availability of and access to necessary facilities required to support the proposed research (physical, technical, access to infrastructure, etc)</li> <li>– capacity of each Partner Organisation(s) to support the Training Centre (including the plan for student placements)</li> <li>– extent to which the proposed Training Centre will engage, and will continue to engage, meaningfully with the relevant industry experts including Industry Growth Centre(s)</li> <li>– commitment by each Partner Organisation(s) to collaboration in the Training Centre</li> <li>– 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.</li> </ul> <p>If the project involves research pertaining to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the strategies for enabling collaboration with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities (for example, dialogue/collaboration with an Indigenous cultural mentor)</li> <li>– any existing or developing, supportive and high-quality relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities</li> <li>– any personal affiliations with local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities that can facilitate the proposed research.</li> </ul>
d. Benefit 30%	<p>Describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the extent to which the research clearly addresses one or more of the Industrial Transformation Priorities</li> <li>– the economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for relevant Australian research end-users (including relevant industry and manufacturing sectors)</li> <li>– the extent to which the proposed Training Centre supports clearly identified market opportunity(ies) and intended transformation for Australian industry or other end users</li> <li>– the extent to which the proposed Training Centre will build the ability to exploit research outcomes in the Partner Organisations</li> </ul>

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
	<p>the extent to which there are adequate strategies to encourage disseminations and promotion of research outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the potential contribution of the proposed research to addressing the needs of industries and communities as articulated in Australia's Industrial Transformation Priorities</li> <li>– 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.</li> </ul>

### A high-level summary of what to look for when assessing a Training Centre application

An assessor should consider:

- Training Centres are research entities with a highly integrated research and research training program. They are not a network or loose grouping of smaller projects.
- Does the application meet the **scheme objectives** and explain how these are being met?
- The **appropriateness** of the team's research track record to achieve the Training Centre's goals. If there are any critical personnel or groups missing?
- If the participants are demonstrating their **commitment** to the research and research training program?
- If the participants are creating a collaborative and **integrated team**?
- Whether the proposed Training Centre is genuinely **integrated, cross-disciplinary, innovative and original**?
- The extent to which the Training Centre represents **value for money**.
- The extent to which the research clearly addresses one or more of the current **Industrial Transformation Priorities**.

### Note for assessors

Only Key Personnel are required to complete all relevant questions in Part F (Participant Details) in the application form. This includes questions related to ROPE. Each application can list up to five Key Personnel, including the Training Centre Director. These participants are listed at the top of the participant list and have answered 'Yes' to the Key Personnel Question in Part F.

Other participants who are not Key Personnel will complete a sub-set of questions in Part F. A number of these questions will appear blank on the application form PDF. Please note that this is not an error.

You must assess all participants based on the information contained in the application form, which may include information in form parts other than Part F, such as information on their roles/responsibilities as outlined in Part D (Project Description) and Part E (Project Cost).

## Additional Notes When Assessing Applications

### Assessment of PIs and their roles

The ARC recognises that in some cases a proposed PI, from a Partner Organisation, may not be a researcher or have an academic background. All assessors must pay close attention to the role and contribution described in the project description when assessing investigators' track record. It is expected that the nature of a satisfactory or strong track record may vary depending on the role the proposed PI is undertaking. Training Centre applications requires at least one PI from every Partner Organisation.

### Important points of reference in the application

<b>Selection Criteria</b>	<b>Primary points of reference in the application</b>	<b>Secondary points of reference in the application</b>
<b>Investigator(s)/Capability</b>	Part D2	Part A2
<b>Project Quality and Innovation</b>	Part D2	Part A4
<b>Feasibility and Commitment</b>	Part D2	Parts E1 and G2
<b>Benefit</b>	Part D2	A4

## Appendix 3 – Glossary

**Applicant** means the Administering Organisation submitting the application on behalf of the participants.

**Application** means a request for funding submitted through RMS by an Administering Organisation seeking grant funding under the Industrial Transformation Research Program. It includes the specifics of a proposed grant activity as well as the administrative information required to determine the eligibility of the application.

**ARC** means the Australian Research Council, as established under the ARC Act.

**ARC Act** means the *Australian Research Council Act 2001*.

**ARC College of Experts (CoE)** means a 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 [ARC website](#) provides information on who is a member of the College of Experts.

**ARC website** means the website accessed using <https://www.arc.gov.au/>

**Carriage 1** means the General Assessor with the primary responsibility for the application.

**Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** 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 (CI)** means participant who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a CI under these grant guidelines.

**Conflict of interest (COI)** is a situation in which someone in a position of trust has competing professional or private interests. Such competing interests could make it difficult for an individual to fulfil his/her duties impartially and could improperly influence the performance of their official duties and responsibilities.

The ARC [Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy](#) is available on the ARC website at [www.arc.gov.au](http://www.arc.gov.au).

**Detailed assessment** means an assessment process completed by the Detailed Assessor which involves an in-depth assessment of applications. A Detailed assessment provides scores and comments against the scheme specific selection criteria. The Detailed assessment is then taken into consideration by General Assessors (i.e. CoE or SAC members) in the later stages of the peer review process.

**Detailed Assessors** means assessors that are drawn from the Australian and international research community and are assigned applications to review for their specific expertise in a field of research. A Detailed Assessor completes in-depth assessments of applications by providing scores and comments against the scheme specific selection criteria.

**Eligibility Criteria** means the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.

**For Codes** means Field of Research Codes as defined in the Australian Bureau of Statistics' *Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification* (ANZSRC) (2008 and 2020).

**Fundable Range** refers to applications that are highly ranked and are above the uncertainty band.

**Funding Line** is the estimated point in the ranked list of applications at which grant opportunity funding would be completely allocated.

**General Assessment** means a review process completed by the General Assessor(s), taking into consideration the scores and comments provided by Detailed Assessors and the applicant Rejoinder. Scores on each of the relevant scheme selection criteria are provided as part of the General Assessment.

**General Assessors** means the assessors appointed to a Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) for each scheme round, which may be drawn from the ARC College of Experts. General Assessors contribute knowledge of their discipline 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.

**GrantConnect** is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRGs.

**Grant Guidelines** are Legislative Instruments, required by the ARC Act and approved by the Minister, outlining information for the relevant scheme/s relating to eligibility criteria, application process, assessment process, and any other additional accountability requirements that the ARC considers necessary.

**IC23** means Industrial Transformation Training Centre commencing in 2023.

**IH23** means Industrial Transformation Research Hub commencing in 2023.

**Industrial Transformation Priorities** means targeted research areas identified by the ARC based on relevant government priorities and updated from time to time on the ARC website.

**ITRP** means ARC Industrial Transformation Research Program.

**ITRP23** means ARC Industrial Transformation Research Program commencing in 2023.

**Linkage Program** means the grant opportunities funded under the Linkage Program of the NCGP which consists of: Linkage Projects, Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities, Research Hubs, Training Centres, Special Research Initiatives, the ARC Centres of Excellence, Learned Academies Special Projects, Supporting Responses to Commonwealth Science Council Priorities and other grant opportunities as announced from time to time under the Linkage Program.

**Named participants** means individual researchers nominated for particular roles in an application.

**Obligated Assessor** means a participant on an ARC project currently receiving funding.

**Other Carriage** means the General Assessor with secondary or tertiary responsibility for the application.

**Participant** means all named participants on an application (i.e. CIs, PIs, Directors); and all unnamed researchers such as postdoctoral research associates and postgraduate researchers working on a project.

**Partner Investigator (PI)** a named participant who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a PI under the relevant grant guidelines

**Rejoinder** means a process by which applicants are given an opportunity to respond to assessment comments made by external (Detailed) assessors via a written submission. Rejoinders are not viewed by external assessors but are considered by an ARC SAC during the moderation and recommendation process.

**Research Hub Director** means a participant who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a Research Hub Director as per the Grant Guidelines for the ITRP23 (2021 edition).

**RMS** means the ARC Research Management System at <https://rms.arc.gov.au>. Further information on RMS can be found at <http://www.arc.gov.au/rms-information>.

**RMS Meeting App** refers to the RMS meeting application available to SAC members in preparation for/and at the selection meeting.

**Scoring Matrix** refers a set of rating guidelines provided to assessors on the degree of merit associated with particular matrix in relation to the relevant grant opportunity assessment criteria

**Selection Advisory Committee (SAC)** means a group of experts from industry and/or academia appointed to assist the ARC to evaluate applications and to provide a recommendation for to the CEO. A SAC may be drawn from the ARC College of Experts.

**Training Centre Director** means a participant who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a Training Centre Director as per the Grant Guidelines for the ITRP23 (2021 edition).

**Uncertainty Band** refers to applications ranked within a defined range above and below the notional Funding Line. The number of applications in this band will vary depending on the size of the grant opportunity.

## Appendix 4 – Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. How do I know if I have a conflict of interest (COI) with the application I am assessing?

A COI arises where the assessor's other interests or associations could, or could be seen to, improperly influence the performance of their duties as an assessor. Refer to the '[Conflict of Interest](#)' section in this Handbook for detailed information about COIs. In most instances, it is easy to ascertain if you have a COI. Typical COIs include: one or more of the named investigators on the application are employees of your institution; you have a close personal involvement (including enmity) with one of the named investigators; you have a professional involvement with one of the named investigators (e.g. you have published with them in the last four years; you have supervised their PhD in the last 5 years). If you are uncertain, please contact the ARC.

### 2. What if I'm not sure if I have a conflict of interest or not?

The [ARC's Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy](#) provides guidance on conflicts. Further guidance is provided through [Identifying and Handling Conflicts of Interest in NCGP processes](#). Where there is still doubt, assessors should email the relevant scheme team via [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) (General Assessors) or [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) (Detailed Assessors).

### 3. Although I don't have a COI with an application, I feel that I cannot provide an impartial assessment (e.g. because I have a problem with the theoretical approach, or I don't have expertise in this field of research). What do I do?

Advise the ARC immediately by email. The ARC will consider the situation and provide advice regarding whether you can assess the application, or if you should 'Reject' the application in the assignment list.

### 4. My RMS login and password appear to be incorrect. What do I do?

Your login is your email address, and it is not case sensitive. However, passwords are case sensitive, so check that your capitalisation is correct and the caps lock is not on. If you have forgotten your password, you can click the "Reset Password" link at the bottom of the page. If you continue to experience problems, contact the ARC by email to [ARC-Systems@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Systems@arc.gov.au).

### 5. Why do I have to keep changing my password for RMS?


The Australian Research Council (ARC) is a Government entity and as such, our systems must comply with the whole of government security policy.

These policies are put in place to protect the information within Australian Government systems, including personal information relating to our ARC assessors. The increasing use of technology as a way of doing our business requires us to strengthen our information security.

### 6. What if I pick up eligibility issues as part of my assessment?

Eligibility is managed as a separate process to the peer review process. Any eligibility issues should be emailed to the relevant scheme team via [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) (General Assessors) or [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) (Detailed Assessors) for investigation. Assessments should be completed based on the merit of the application. It is important not to include potential eligibility issues in assessments.

### 7. I don't see the application in its entirety

The application PDF can be accessed by clicking on the  icon in the same row as the application ID in the assessments page. You can also request an assessment package containing the PDFs for all applications assigned to you by clicking on the 'Assessment Package' button at the top right of the Assessments page.

**8. I have finished my assessment of a particular application, but the system will not allow me to submit. Why is this?**

You will not be able to submit any assessments until all of your assessments have been rated and ranked. Once completed the 'Finalise' button will appear, and you will be able to submit your assessments for your assigned applications to the ARC.

**9. How do I know if I have successfully submitted my assessments?**

Once you have successfully submitted your assessments, the information in the Assessments page will appear greyed out.

**10. I have submitted my assessments but want to edit or change some. What can I do?**

Once your assessments have been submitted you will not be able to edit any of this information.

If you have submitted your assessments by accident or wish to make changes before the closing date, email the ARC and request that your assessments be de-submitted.

**11. I cannot see any applications for assessment when I click on the Assessments link on my RMS Home page.**

Before you can access applications for assessment, you must first accept them from within the Assignments page.

**12. Should I discuss my final scores with the other Carriages assigned to an application?**

No. You should not discuss your scores for applications with other Carriages until you have submitted your scores in RMS, and you should not allow their scores to influence yours. Unlike some other ARC schemes, we want you to make your assessment independently of other Carriages. It does not matter if there is discrepancy between the scores of various assessors. There will be opportunity for discussion on the applications at the selection meetings.

**13. Why have I lost the assessments I have been working on?**

The most common reason for assessments to be lost is when an assessor has two sessions of RMS open at the same time. It is best practice to only have one session of RMS open at a time and to ensure you save your assessments regularly. RMS runs best with Google Chrome.

**14. As a General Assessor when do I submit my assessments?**

General Assessors should not submit any assessments until after the Detailed Assessments have been completed and Rejoinders have closed.

**15. As a General Assessor why can't I see the Detailed Assessments and Rejoinders?**

You will not be able to view the Detailed Assessments or Rejoinders until those modules have been closed in RMS. You will be notified when you have access to the Detailed Assessments and Rejoinders.



## Appendix 5 – RMS Profile

Detailed Assessors' RMS profiles play an essential role in the assignment process as they assist with the matching of applications with appropriately skilled Detailed Assessors. It is important that Detailed Assessors ensure that their RMS profile is up to date and contains the following details:

- **Expertise text:** Please outline your expertise briefly. The following format is suggested “My major area of research expertise is in a, b, c. I also have experience in research q, r, s. I would also be able to assess in the areas of x, y, z.”
- **Field of Research (FoR) Codes:** Please include between six and ten 6-digit FoR codes that reflect your key areas of expertise.

Note: Obligated Assessors (those who are participants on an ARC Project currently receiving funding) are required to keep their RMS profile up to date and to undertake assessments as required in the relevant Grant Agreement for their project.

**The ARC and the Australian research community thank you for your effort and time reading these instructions and undertaking assessments. The ARC would be unable to fulfil its role of supporting excellence in research without your help.**