



**Australian Government**

**Australian Research Council**

# Detailed Assessor Handbook

A guide for **Detailed** Assessors on the selection process and assessing of applications under the **Linkage Program** grant opportunities for

ITRP Research Hubs - IH24

ITRP Training Centres - IC24

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# 1. Overview

This Handbook provides instructions and advice for **Detailed** Assessors on the assessment process for:

1. Research Hubs (IH)
2. Training Centres (IC)

These schemes are part of the Linkage Program of the Australian Research Council's (ARC) [National Competitive Grants Program \(NCGP\)](#).

The ARC's Linkage funding schemes aim to encourage and extend cooperative approaches to research and improve the use of research outcomes by strengthening links within the innovation system in Australia and internationally.

Linkage promotes national and international research partnerships between researchers and business, Industry, community organisations and other publicly funded research agencies.

The specific objectives and assessment criteria for each of the grant opportunities covered in the Handbook are listed in the Appendix, and are also available in the relevant Grant Guidelines on [GrantConnect](#).

## 2. The assessment process

Peer review is the method used to assess ARC applications and is undertaken by 2 groups of experts known as General and Detailed Assessors. Experts from each group assess applications against the relevant grant opportunity assessment criteria and contribute to the process of scoring and ranking research applications. Detailed Assessors comments should be useful for both General Assessors and applicants. Detailed Assessors' comments and scores are considered by General Assessors as part of their assessment of applications, while Detailed Assessors' comments are treated in applicants' rejoinders. The objective of the assessment process is to ensure that the highest quality research applications are recommended to the ARC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for funding. The CEO then makes recommendations to the relevant Minister who decides which projects will be allocated funding under the NCGP.

The [Research Management System \(RMS\)](#) is an online system used for the preparation and submission of research applications, assessments and rejoinders for the ARC. The [RMS User Guide for Assessors](#), guides for **General** and **Detailed** Assessors to navigate the RMS assignment and assessment process, are available on the ARC [Assessor Resources](#) page. Here, assessors can also find additional information about the peer review process.

General and Detailed Assessors have different roles in the peer review process. General Assessors are members of the Selection Advisory Committee for specific grant schemes. General Assessors may include members from the ARC College of Experts (CoE) and other eminent members of the wider academic community and/or key industry groups. They utilise knowledge of their disciplinary areas, broad understanding of intellectual and methodological issues and expertise in good research planning to assess applications. They also draw on your comments and scores as Detailed Assessors to inform and moderate their assessments. Key aspects of Detailed Assessors role are outlined in Section 2.1 of this document.

Assessor scores and comments are now available to unsuccessful applicants once grant outcomes are announced in RMS. Detailed Assessors should keep in mind the importance of aligning their scores and comments so that at the rejoinder stage applicants have a clear sense of issues they need to address. Similarly, if applicants are unsuccessful the correlation between scores and comments can assist applicants to identify areas for improvement in potential resubmissions to the scheme.

## 2.1 Detailed Assessors

### RMS profile

A 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:

1. **Expertise text:** Please outline your expertise briefly. The following format is suggested "My major area of research expertise is in a, b, c. I have additional research experience in q, r, s. I would also be able to assess in the areas of x, y, z. The research facilities, techniques and methodologies I use are l, m, n".
2. **Field of Research (FoR-2020) Codes:** Please include between 6 and 10 FoR codes at the 6-digit level that reflect your key areas of expertise.
3. **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.
4. **Personal Details:** Please ensure your personal details are up to date, including conflicts of interest and personal material interest declarations.

This information will be used to match assessors with applications and should accurately represent your research 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 Commonwealth grant agreement for their project(s).

### Assignment of applications

Applications are assigned to Detailed Assessors using information from their RMS profile and expert judgement by:

1. a Carriage 1, the lead General Assessor on the Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) for a specific grant opportunity; and/or
2. an ARC Executive Director.

### Detailed assessments

Detailed Assessors provide scores and written comments addressing the assessment criteria on each application and may 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:

- a. Complete in-depth assessments of applications in RMS, providing scores and detailed comments against grant opportunity specific criteria (refer to the [Appendix for ITRP](#) grant opportunities)
- b. Identify the merits or otherwise of the application with respect to the assessment criteria set out in the grant guidelines
- c. Assess and score the application for each assessment criterion separately.

If a Detailed Assessor identifies a conflict of interest (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 is unsure of whether a COI exists, they must seek advice from the ARC before proceeding with accepting an assignment by emailing [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) as soon as possible. Further information and policies about a COI are in [Section 3.1](#).

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

Detailed Assessors' expertise, comments and scores are made available to General Assessors for consideration as part of application assessment, while Detailed Assessors' comments are made available to Applicants anonymously once a scheme opens for rejoinders.

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 well-written detailed assessments. The webpage also provides links to 2 supplementary guides, the [Peer Review](#) and [Disclosure of Interests and Management of Conflicts of Interest](#), which support implementation of the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (the Code).

High quality detailed assessments are crucial for the integrity of the peer review process. As General Assessors may not be an expert in the specific field of an application, but are likely to have expertise in the general field of the proposed research, Detailed Assessors' scores that are justified with constructive comments help General Assessors assess the merit of an application. Similarly, Detailed Assessors' comments enable applicants to address potential criticisms in their rejoinders.

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

1. **Objective** and professional comments.
2. **Detailed** comments on the merits or otherwise of the application with respect to the assessment criteria.
3. **Sufficient** information to allow applicants to provide a rejoinder addressing assessor comments about the application, and to allow non-disciplinary expert General Assessors to evaluate the merit of the application (1 or 2 sentences is not sufficient, a clear explanation of why it is excellent or why the assessor considers there is an issue with the project is required.)
4. **Comments that align closely with [scores](#)**—for example, an 'A' score should not be submitted if an application is assessed as being of limited merit against a criterion. If a 'D' score is given, then suitable constructive criticisms and comments justifying the score are required. It is important to remember that applicants only see the comments at the rejoinder stage 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.
5. **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.
6. **Comments that are free** from platitudes, exaggeration or understatement.
7. **Timely submission** via RMS as early as possible is appreciated, and by the ARC deadline is required.

## How to avoid inappropriate assessments

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

1. Scores which do not align with assessment text.
2. Excessive use of acronyms.
3. Generic comments used in multiple assessments.
4. Very brief assessment text.
5. Scores that are included within the assessment text.
6. Information that identifies researchers named on other applications.
7. Advice about their own identity, standing in, or understanding of, the research field covered in the application.
8. The outcome or status of relevant research by the Chief Investigators and/or Partner Investigators which is not mentioned by the applicants in the application, unless it contradicts the supplied information, and comments about the potential ineligibility of an application. All queries regarding outcomes of relevant research not mentioned in the application and eligibility should be sent to [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) as soon as a potential issue is identified.
9. Restatement or rephrasing of any part of the application.
10. Comments comparing one application with another in this round or in any other round.
11. Text that has been copied from a previous assessment.
12. Text that appears to be discriminatory, defamatory or distastefully irrelevant (such as gratuitous criticism of a researcher and/or eligible organisation).
13. Assumptions about the impact of COVID-19 on the proposed research in the application
14. Text that appears to be judging a National Interest Test (NIT) statement, for example, suggesting that a NIT is satisfactory or needs revision. An assessor may, however, refer to information provided in a NIT in their comments when justifying the rationale for their assessment.
15. Text or comments produced by the use of generative Artificial Intelligence technology.

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

When assessing applications Detailed Assessors must rely solely on the information provided within the application including referenced publications and preprints 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 (including preprints) that are only available online 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 may review and reject assessments with inappropriate or highly subjective comments from Detailed Assessors about any aspect of the application. If General Assessors are concerned about the appropriateness of any assessment text or comments that do not match scores from Detailed Assessors, or identify a potential COI, they will contact the ARC. The ARC will then investigate the concerns and decide whether an assessment should be amended by the Detailed Assessor or removed from the process. The latter happens only in rare circumstances and requires ARC Senior Executive approval.

If inappropriate assessments are identified early in the assessment process by the ARC or the applicant during the rejoinder stage, the ARC may ask the Detailed Assessor to amend their assessment to the application or consider removal of an assessment as above.

The [ARC website](#) contains information for applicants advising how to request that the ARC review an assessment that contains inappropriate elements during the rejoinder period.

## 2.2 Scoring, ranking and submitting assessments

### Scoring

When applying the Scoring Matrix, Assessors should have regard for the specific grant opportunity objectives (see Appendix) and assessment criteria for the Scheme they are assessing.

Scoring applications against assessment criteria can be a difficult exercise when Assessors might only look at a small sub-set of applications. Bands within the Scoring Matrix ideally represent a distribution across all applications submitted to a grant opportunity.

Only the very best applications should be recommended. As a guide, approximately 10% should fall into the top scoring band ('A'). These would have been assessed as near flawless applications across all assessment criteria.

A Scoring Matrix for the scores A to E is provided in **Table 1** below and should guide scoring for Detailed Assessors.

**Table 1: Example Scoring Matrix**

Score	Criteria	Recommendation
A	<b>Outstanding:</b> Of the highest quality and at the forefront of research in the field. Approximately 10% of applications should receive scores in this band.	<b>Recommended unconditionally</b>
B	<b>Excellent:</b> Of high quality and strongly competitive. Approximately 15% of applications should receive scores in this band.	<b>Strongly support recommendation of funding</b>
C	<b>Very Good:</b> Interesting, sound and compelling. Approximately 20% of applications should receive scores in this band.	<b>Support recommendation of funding with reservation</b>
D	<b>Good:</b> Sound but lacks a compelling element. Approximately 35% of applications are likely to fall into this band.	<b>Unsupportive of recommendation for funding</b>
E	<b>Uncompetitive:</b> Uncompetitive and has significant weaknesses. Approximately 20% of applications are likely to fall into this band.	<b>Not recommended for funding</b>

**NOTE:** This Scoring Matrix is an example only. Please see the Appendix for the Scoring Matrix applicable to each individual grant opportunity.

### Ranking

Each application must have a unique rank. Although RMS will use the **overall application scores** to automatically rank an Assessor's assessments as these are completed in RMS, if multiple applications have the same **overall application scores** these applications will be flagged and an Assessor must assign a unique rank to differentiate equally scored applications. Differentiation should be based on how you compare the applications in relation to the Scoring Matrix.

**Note:** RMS will use your scores to automatically rank applications, and then use your rank order to differentiate equally scored applications.

Assessments should be submitted when all applications have been assigned 1) a score and 2) a unique ranking.

## 2.3 Important factors to consider when assessing

### Objectives and assessment criteria

Each grant opportunity has specific objectives and assessment criteria. Assessors must have regard to both the objectives and the assessment criteria as outlined in the relevant Grant Guidelines and the Appendix of this document.



To reduce duplication, the Application Forms for each of the Linkage Program grant schemes have been streamlined. When a question from the assessment criteria is covered in multiple sections of the application form, it has been removed as a separate heading in the Project Description question. Some sections of the forms may have been moved around.

For example, the 'Participant Details including ROPE' assessment criteria is now in Part B, with some questions removed. Some new questions have been added that only need to be answered by individuals identified as 'Key Personnel' only (questions B11 to B16). Other changes include Project Description (Part C) and 'Classifications and Other Statistical Information' (Part E). There is also change in how participants need to input data into financial tables (single entry per row except when addressing Personnel).

## **National Interest Test (NIT)**

Applicants must provide a separate response on the national interest of their research proposal, which is provided with other elements of an application recommended for funding for final consideration by the Minister.

The NIT statement provided by the researcher is part of their application, will be certified by the DVCR and will be available to all assessors. It should be considered as part of the assessment of the application. The National Interest Test is to be used with the rest of the information in the application to inform an assessor's assessment of the Assessment Criteria as included in the Appendix.

The ARC will accept the DVCR's certification as final and will not review or make requests for changes to a NIT. The ARC will include the NIT with the other elements of an application recommended for funding for final consideration by the Minister. Additional information regarding the National Interest Test is available on the [ARC Website](#).

## **Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)**

The ROPE assessment criterion requires all Assessors to identify and consider research excellence relative to a researcher's career and opportunities for research. It aims to ensure that NCGP assessment processes accurately evaluate a researcher's career history relative to their current career stage and consider 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.

## **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](#).

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 into an entirely different 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 to Detailed Assessors from the different disciplines covered in the application.

## **Preprints or comparable resources**

Detailed Assessors should consider the merit of publications including preprints and comparable resources that are listed in the application. Assessors may access hyperlinks and evaluate if a citation included in the application is a crucial part of the research discourse, and evaluate the suitability, quality and relevance of



the research output to help them determine the quality and novelty of the proposed research. However, Assessors should not use online search engines to identify or evaluate applicants' publications that are not included within the application.

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.

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.

## How to submit detailed assessments

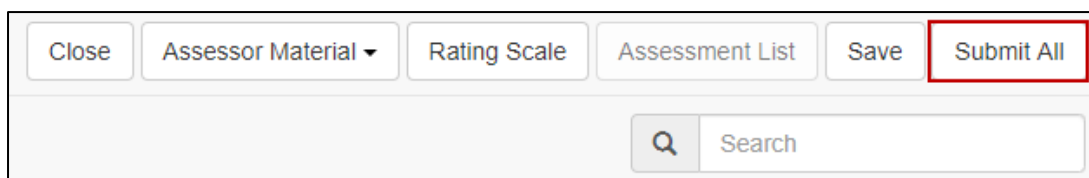
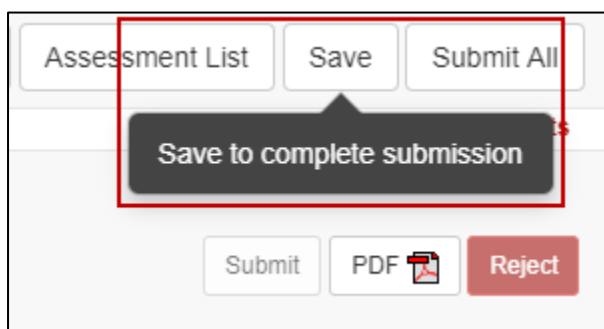
If a Detailed Assessor has been assigned multiple applications, RMS will use the **overall application scores** to automatically rank a Detailed Assessor's assessments as these are completed in RMS. Where multiple applications have the same **overall application scores** these applications will be flagged and a Detailed Assessor must assign a unique rank to differentiate equally scored applications.

Once the unique rank is assigned the error message will disappear and the assessments can be submitted.

Rank	Score
IDXXXXXXXX (MPCE)	Lead Investigator: Dr Test Applicant Title: Test Title 1 Administering Organisation: Test Organisation
<div><div>▼</div><div>A</div></div>	
All assessments with identical scores must be ranked	
IDXXXXXXXX (MPCE)	Lead Investigator: Dr Lead Investigator Title: Test Title 8 Administering Organisation: Test Organisation
<div><div>▼</div><div>A</div></div>	
All assessments with identical scores must be ranked	

Rank	Score
IDXXXXXXXX (MPCE)	Lead Investigator: Dr Test Applicant Title: Test Title 1 Administering Organisation: Test Organisation
<div><div>1 ▼</div><div>A</div></div>	
IDXXXXXXXX (MPCE)	Lead Investigator: Dr Lead Investigator Title: Test Title 8 Administering Organisation: Test Organisation
<div><div>2 ▼</div><div>A</div></div>	

If assessments have not been submitted individually the 'Submit All' button will activate at the top right of the screen once all unsubmitted assessments have reached the minimum system requirements.



To submit all completed assessments, select 'Submit All' and then 'Save' to complete submission.

**Note:** Once assessments have been submitted a Detailed Assessor will not be able to amend the details, and the 'Submit' button will be greyed out. If you need to change an assessment please email [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) before the assessment closing date to have the assessment 'de-submitted'. For further details regarding completing and submitting assessment in RMS refer to *RMS User Guide for Assessors* available on the ARC [Assessor Resources](#) page.

### 3. Ensuring integrity of process

#### 3.1 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 comply with the 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 up-to-date RMS profile, including personal details, current employment details and previous employment history within the past 2 years. This information will assist the ARC with the identification and management of organisational conflicts of interest.

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

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 disclosure of COIs, including material personal interest declarations, 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.

**Extract from the ARC [Policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in the ARC's grants programs](#) (July 2023):**

The [ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy \(2020\)](#) requires that all officials and individuals carrying out ARC business, including assessors and peer reviewers, are required to preserve the principles of confidentiality outlined in the policy. **Release of material into generative AI tools constitutes a breach of confidentiality and peer reviewers, including all Detailed and General Assessors, must not use generative AI as part of their assessment activities.**

Assessors are asked to provide detailed high quality, constructive assessments that assist the Selection Advisory Committees to assess the merits of an application. The use of generative AI may compromise the integrity of the ARC's peer review process by, for example, producing text that contains inappropriate content, such as generic comments and restatements of the application.

### 3.2 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 Policy](#). Please do not mention your concerns in any 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-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) 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.

### 3.3 Applications outside an Assessor's area of expertise

If you believe that the ARC has misunderstood your expertise or has made an error in assigning an application to you, please give **early notice** of your view by rejecting the 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.

### 3.4 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 send an email highlighting your concerns to [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) as soon as possible. The ARC is responsible for investigating and making decisions on these matters, 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.

RMS has functionality and was updated to populate research outputs into applications from within a researcher's RMS profile. Researchers will have the flexibility to choose and add which outputs to include in the application. 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 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.

### **3.5 Unconscious bias**

Detailed 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:

1. gender and/or sexuality
2. social/cultural background
3. career path
4. institutional employer
5. 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](#).

## **4. Contact details for queries during the assessment process**

For **all** assignment and assessment, as well as accessibility enquiries, please email **the relevant scheme team** via [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au)

## Appendix: ITRP Program Scoring Matrix and assessment criteria considerations

**Please note:** Detailed Assessors assign a score and do not have to consider the weighting of a criterion as this is applied automatically within RMS. The tables below provide ready access to assessment criteria set out in the *ITRP Program Grant Guidelines (2023 edition)* (available on [GrantConnect](#)) and the Scoring Matrixes outlined in this handbook. Detailed Assessors should use their judgement and experience to assess the appropriate score within the context of the relevant discipline.

### ITRP –Training Hubs (IH24)

#### Key Dates and Notes

Task	IH24 Dates	Detail
<b>Assessment Period</b>	6 December 2023 – 13 February 2024	<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 the assessment criteria.</p> <p>Submit assessments to the ARC on or before this deadline date.</p>

#### Grant Guidelines

The objectives and assessment criteria below are from the *ITRP Grant Guidelines - (2023 edition)* which are available on [GrantConnect](#).

#### Overview

Research Hubs engage Australia's best researchers to develop collaborative solutions to the Industrial Transformation Priorities. The focus is on the creation of industry and academic partnerships working together on research and development projects to create innovative and transformative solutions for industry.

#### Objectives

The **ITRP Research Hubs** 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.

The intended outcomes of the Research Hubs scheme are:

- growth, productivity and competitiveness within the Industrial Transformation Priorities; and
- economic, commercial and social transformation.

## Scoring Matrix

Assessment criterion	(A) <b>Outstanding</b> Of high quality and the forefront of the research in the field. Recommended unconditionally.  Approximately 10% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(B) <b>Excellent</b> Of high quality and strongly competitive. Strongly support recommendation.  Approximately 15% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(C) <b>Very Good</b> Interesting, sound and compelling. Support recommending without reservation.  Approximately 20% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(D) <b>Good</b> Sound, but lacks a compelling element. Unsupportive of recommendation.  Approximately 35% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.	(E) <b>Uncompetitive</b> Has significant weaknesses. Not recommended.  Approximately 20% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.
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## Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
Investigator/ Capability 20%	Describe the: <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; and</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; and</li> <li>– time and capacity of the team to undertake and manage the proposed research in collaboration with the Partner Organisation(s).</li> </ul>
Project quality and innovation: 30%	Describe the extent to which the: <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; and</li> <li>– project draws together high quality innovative national and international partnership(s) into an integrated Research Hub.</li> </ul>
Feasibility and Commitment 20%	Describe the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– extent to which the Research Hub represents value for money;</li> </ul>

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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; and</li> <li>– extent to which the proposed Research Hub engages, and will continue to engage, meaningfully with the relevant industry experts.</li> </ul> <p><u>If the project involves Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander research, additional criteria include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The project’s level of collaboration, engagement, relationship building and benefit sharing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and First Nations Organisations and Communities;</li> <li>– The project’s strategy and mechanisms for Indigenous research capacity building within the project;</li> <li>– The project’s level of internal leadership of Indigenous research;</li> <li>– The project’s adherence to the Australian Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles; and</li> <li>– The project’s understanding of, and proposed strategies to adhere to, the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research and NHMRC’s guidelines on Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities.</li> </ul>
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; and</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>

## Training Centres (IC24)

### Key Dates and Notes

Task	IC24 Dates	Detail
<b>Assessment Period</b>	6 December 2023 – 13 February 2024	<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 the assessment criteria.</p> <p>Submit assessments to the ARC on or before this deadline date.</p>

### Grant Guidelines

The objectives and assessment criteria below are from the *ITRP Grant Guidelines - (2023 edition)* 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. Training Centres are to develop researchers with capability in end user research that is vital to Australia's future. In delivering this training, the Training Centre focuses its researchers on developing solutions relevant to the Industrial Transformation Priorities.

### Objectives

The **Training Centres** scheme objectives are to:

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

The intended outcome of the Training Centres scheme are:

- growth, productivity and competitiveness within Industrial Transformation Priorities; and
- economic, commercial and social transformation.

## Scoring Matrix

Assessment criterion	(A) <b>Outstanding</b> Of high quality and the forefront of the research in the field. Recommended unconditionally	(B) <b>Excellent</b> Of high quality and strongly competitive. Strongly support recommendation	(C) <b>Very Good</b> Interesting, sound and compelling. Support recommending without reservation.	(D) <b>Good</b> Sound, but lacks a compelling element. Unsupportive of recommendation	(E) <b>Uncompetitive</b> Has significant weaknesses. Not recommended.
	Approximately 10% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	Approximately 15% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	Approximately 20% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	Approximately 35% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.	Approximately 20% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.

## Assessment criteria

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
Investigator/ 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 Training Centre;</li> </ul> </li> <li>– appropriateness of team research track record to achieve the Training Centre's goals; and</li> <li>– time and capacity of the team to undertake and manage the proposed research in collaboration with the Partner Organisation(s).</li> </ul>
Project quality and innovation 30%	<p>Describe 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>– project builds skills and capacity in end-user focussed research;</li> <li>– conceptual/theoretical framework is genuinely integrated, cross-disciplinary, innovative and original; and</li> <li>– how the Training Centre has a wide level of collaboration, including the development of national and international networks and linkages.</li> </ul>

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
<p>Feasibility and strategic alignment 20%</p>	<p>Describe the potential benefits including 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;</li> <li>– commitment by each Partner Organisation(s) to collaboration in the Training Centre; and</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><u>If the project involves Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander research, additional criteria include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The project's level of collaboration, engagement, relationship building and benefit sharing with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and First Nations Organisations and Communities;</li> <li>– The project's strategy and mechanisms for Indigenous research capacity building within the project;</li> <li>– The project's level of internal leadership of Indigenous research;</li> <li>– The project's adherence to <u>the Australian Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles</u>; and</li> <li>– The project's understanding of, and proposed strategies to adhere to, the <u>AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research</u> and <u>NHMRC's guidelines on Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities</u>.</li> </ul>
<p>Benefit 30%</p>	<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
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the extent to which there are adequate strategies to encourage disseminations and promotion of research outcomes;</li> <li>– the potential contribution of the proposed research to addressing the needs of industries and communities as articulated in Australia's Industrial Transformation Priorities; and</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>