Australian Government

Australian Research Council

Detailed Assessor Handbook

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

Industrial Transformation Research Hubs - IH26

Industrial Transformation Training Centres - IC26

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Contents

1. Overview

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

1. Research Hubs (IH26)
2. Training Centres (IC26)

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

The Industrial Transformation Research Program (ITRP) encourages and supports 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 identified by the ARC align with the priority funding areas under the National Reconstruction Fund (NRF). Further detail about the NRF priorities can be found at the National Reconstruction Fund Corporation and formally at the Federal Register of Legislation.

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 two 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 decision maker for funding. In the case of the ITRP scheme, the Minister is the final decision maker for funding.

The Research Management System (RMS) is the online system used for the preparation and submission of research applications, assessments and rejoinders for the ARC. The *RMS User Guide for Assessors* assists **General** and **Detailed** Assessors to navigate the RMS assignment and assessment process. This User Guide is 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 the role of Detailed Assessors are outlined in Section 2.1.

Detailed Assessors' expertise, comments and scores are made available to General Assessors for consideration as part of application assessment.

Detailed Assessors' comments are anonymously made available to Applicants once a scheme opens for rejoinders. Assessor scores and comments are now also available to eligible 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 in your RMS profile will be used to match assessors with applications (excluding any conflicts of interest) 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 Academic Director.

Detailed assessments

Detailed Assessors provide scores and written comments addressing the assessment criteria on each application. Detailed Assessors 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);
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 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 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.

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
2. Excessive use of acronyms
3. Generic comments used in multiple assessments
4. Very brief assessment text
5. Information that identifies researchers named on other applications
6. Advice about their own identity, standing in, or understanding of, the research field covered in the application
7. 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 as soon as a potential issue is identified.
8. Restatement or rephrasing of any part of the application
9. Comments comparing one application with another in this round or in any other round
10. Text that has been copied from a previous assessment
11. Text that appears to be discriminatory, defamatory or distastefully irrelevant (such as gratuitous criticism of a researcher and/or eligible organisation)
12. 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.

13. Text or comments produced by the use of generative Artificial Intelligence technology – please see the *ARC's Policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in the ARC's grants programs* for more information.

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 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 as outlined in the 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 the Appendix and should guide scoring for Detailed Assessors.

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.

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.

National Interest Test (NIT)

Applicants must provide a NIT statement, which outlines the national interest of their research proposal. This statement 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. It is required to 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 NIT 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. Additional information regarding the NIT 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 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.

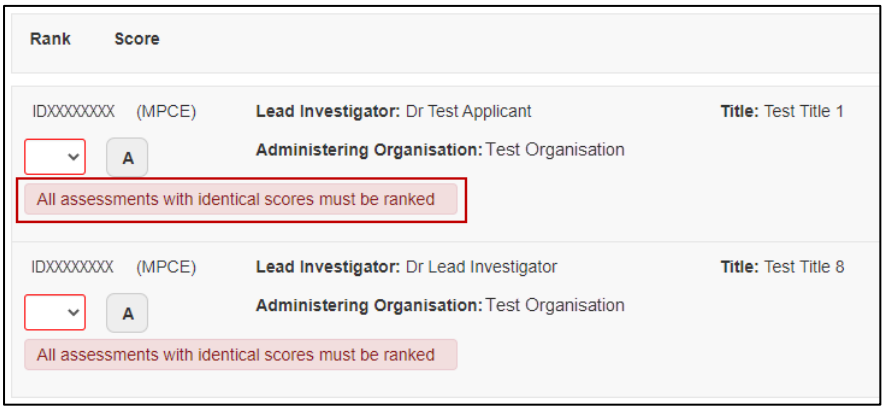
A preprint or comparable resource is a scholarly output that is uploaded by the authors to a recognised publicly accessible archive, repository, or preprint service (such as, but not limited to, arXiv, bioRxiv,

medRxiv, ChemRxiv, Peer J Preprints, Zenodo, GitHub, PsyArXiv and publicly available university or government repositories etc.). This will include a range of materials that have been subjected to varying degrees of peer review from none to light and full review. Ideally, a preprint or comparable resource should have a unique identifier or a DOI (digital object identifier). 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.

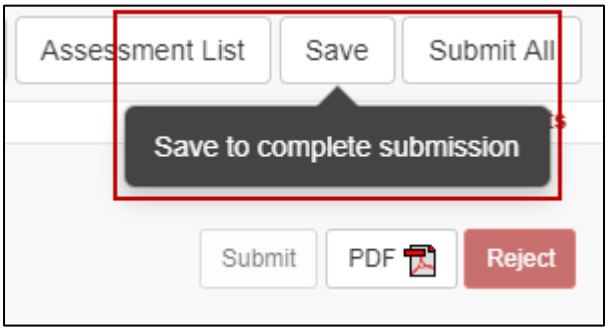
How to submit detailed assessments

If a Detailed Assessor has not assigned a unique rank to each application an error message will appear (below). Once the unique rank is assigned the error message will disappear and the assessments can be submitted.



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 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 COIs.

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.

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), with emphasis added:

The ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy requires that all officials and individuals carrying out ARC business, including assessors and peer reviewers 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) 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).

3.3 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 as soon as possible.

In RMS, Assessors will be asked to indicate their willingness to comply with the above policies before proceeding to assess. They can do this by selecting the 'Accept' button.

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 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.

3.5 Unconscious bias

The ARC is committed to ensuring that applicants to NCGP schemes are not disadvantaged due to unconscious bias in the assessment process. We ask assessors to make every effort to slow down the pace of their automatic judgements and model instead the reflective quality involved in good decision making.

The Royal Society video explaining unconscious bias is available at the following link and we ask all assessors to view it prior to undertaking their assessments: Understanding unconscious bias | The Royal Society.

Examples of unconscious bias include:

- Basing assessment on the gender, age, name or background of the researcher without regard to carefully evaluating the research program proposed
- Halo (positive) and Horns (negative) - allowing one positive or negative quality to drive an entire assessment
- Confirmation bias – picking out information that matches your (low/high) views and expectations
- Conformity bias – changing a view to match that of another group, even when you don't agree (see Royal Society video)
- Affinity bias – favouring researchers or research areas with which you are familiar and may support
- Anchor bias – allowing one (often first) piece of information to form the basis of your decision making.

4. Contact details for queries during the assessment process

For **all** queries relating to assignment, assessment and accessibility, please send an email to ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au with a reference to the scheme round (e.g. Discovery Projects 2020).

Appendix: Scoring Matrix and assessment criteria considerations

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

Linkage Program Grant Guidelines (2024 edition – Variation 1): Industrial Transformation Research Program (available on GrantConnect) and the Scoring Matrices outlined in this handbook. Detailed Assessors should use their judgement and experience to assess the appropriate score within the context of the relevant discipline.

Industrial Transformation Research Hubs (IH26)

Key Dates and Notes

Task	IH26 Dates	Detail
Assessment Period	4 December 2025 – 20 January 2026	Check the application details for any Conflict of Interest 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). Assess each application assigned using an A-E rating scale and give a written report against the assessment criteria. Submit assessments to the ARC on or before this deadline date.

Grant Guidelines

The objectives and assessment criteria below are from the *Linkage Program Grant Guidelines (2024 edition – Variation 1): Industrial Transformation Research Program* 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 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 intended outcomes of the Research Hubs scheme are:

a) growth, productivity and competitiveness within the Industrial Transformation Priorities; and

b) economic, commercial and social transformation.

Scoring Matrix – Industrial Transformation Research Hubs

Assessment criterion	(A) Outstanding Of high quality and the forefront of the research in the field. Approximately 10% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(B) Excellent Of high quality and strongly competitive. Approximately 15% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(C) Very Good Interesting, sound and compelling. Approximately 20% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(D) Good Sound but lacks a compelling element. Approximately 35% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.	(E) Uncompetitive Has significant weaknesses. Approximately 20% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.

Assessment criteria – Industrial Transformation Research Hubs

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
Investigator(s)/ Capability 20%	Describe the: – demonstrated Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) of the proposed team including evidence of: – experience in managing distributed and/or collaborative industrial and end-user focussed research; – significant outcomes on industry related projects; and – experience in and capacity to provide effective supervision, support and mentoring for HDR candidates and postdoctoral researchers over the life of the Research Hub. – appropriateness of the team research track record to achieve the Research Hub's goals; and – time and capacity of the team to undertake and manage the proposed research in collaboration with the Partner Organisation(s).
Project Quality and Innovation 30%	Describe the extent to which the: – aims, concepts, methods and outcomes will drive growth, productivity and competitiveness within relevant sectors; – conceptual/theoretical framework is genuinely integrated, cross-disciplinary, innovative and original; and – project draws together high quality innovative national and international partnership(s) into an integrated Research Hub.
Feasibility and Commitment 20%	Describe the: – extent to which the Research Hub represents value for money; – 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); – proposed level of collaboration to support the research project, including national and international networks and linkages; – high-quality intellectual support provided for the Research Hub by the research environment of the participating organisations; – availability of and access to the necessary facilities required to support the proposed research (physical, technical, access to infrastructure, etc);

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
	– commitment by each Partner Organisation(s) to collaboration in the Research Hub; – adequacy of the budget, including cash and in-kind Contributions pledged by participating organisations; and – extent to which the proposed Research Hub engages, and will continue to engage, meaningfully with the relevant industry experts. If the project involves Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander research, additional criteria include: – 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; – The project's strategy and mechanisms for Indigenous research capacity building within the project; – The project's level of internal leadership of Indigenous research; – The project's adherence to the Australian Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles (2018); and – The project's understanding of, and proposed strategies to adhere to, the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research (2020) and NHMRC's guidelines on Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities (2018).
Benefit 30%	Describe: – the extent to which the research clearly addresses one or more of the Industrial Transformation Priorities; – the economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for relevant Australian research end-users (including relevant industry and manufacturing sectors); – the extent to which the proposed Research Hub supports clearly identified market opportunity(ies) and intended transformation for Australian industry or other end users; – the extent to which the proposed Research Hub will build research capacity in the Partner Organisation(s); – the extent to which there are adequate strategies to encourage dissemination, promotion, and the commercialisation of research outcomes; – the potential contribution of the proposed research to addressing the needs of industries and communities as articulated in Australia's Industrial Transformation Priorities; and – 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.

Industrial Transformation Training Centres (IC26)

Key Dates and Notes

Task	IC26 Dates	Detail
Assessment Period	4 December 2025 – 20 January 2026	Check the application details for any Conflict of Interest 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). Assess each application assigned using an A-E rating scale and give a written report against the assessment criteria. Submit assessments to the ARC on or before this deadline date.

Grant Guidelines

The objectives and assessment criteria below are from the *Linkage Program Grant Guidelines (2024 edition – Variation 1): Industrial Transformation Research Program* 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:

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.

The intended outcome of the Training Centres scheme are:

a. growth, productivity and competitiveness within Industrial Transformation Priorities; and

b. economic, commercial and social transformation.

Scoring Matrix – Industrial Transformation Training Centres

Assessment criterion	**(A) Outstanding** Of high quality and the forefront of the research in the field. Approximately 10% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	**(B) Excellent** Of high quality and strongly competitive. Approximately 15% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	**(C) Very Good** Interesting, sound and compelling. Approximately 20% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	**(D) Good** Sound but lacks a compelling element. Approximately 35% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.	**(E) Uncompetitive** Has significant weaknesses. Approximately 20% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.

Assessment Criteria – Industrial Transformation Training Centres

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details

Investigator(s)/ Capability 20%	Describe the:
	– demonstrated Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) of the proposed team including evidence of:
	  – experience in managing distributed and/or collaborative industrial and end-user focussed research;
	  – significant outcomes on industry related projects;
	  – experience in and capacity to provide effective supervision, support and mentoring for HDR candidates and postdoctoral researchers over the life of the Training Centre;
	– appropriateness of team research track record to achieve the Training Centre's goals; and
	– time and capacity of the team to undertake and manage the proposed research in collaboration with the Partner Organisation(s).

Project Quality and Innovation 30%	Describe the extent to which: – the aims, concepts, methods and outcomes will drive growth, productivity and competitiveness within relevant sectors; – the project builds skills and capacity in end-user focussed research; – the conceptual/theoretical framework is genuinely integrated, cross-disciplinary, innovative and original; and – how the Training Centre has a wide level of collaboration, including the development of national and international networks and linkages.
Feasibility and Commitment 20%	Describe the: – extent to which the proposed Training Centre represents value for money; – practicality of the proposed project objectives, budget and timeframe (including identified risks and mitigation strategies); – proposed level of collaboration to support the research project; – high quality intellectual support provided for the Training Centre by the research environment of the participating organisations; – availability of and access to necessary facilities required to support the proposed research (physical, technical, access to infrastructure, etc); – capacity of each Partner Organisation(s) to support the Training Centre (including the plan for student placements); – extent to which the proposed Training Centre will engage, and will continue to engage, meaningfully with the relevant industry experts; – commitment by each Partner Organisation(s) to collaboration in the Training Centre; and – 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. <u>If the project involves Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander research, additional criteria include</u>:

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
	– 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; – The project's strategy and mechanisms for Indigenous research capacity building within the project; – The project's level of internal leadership of Indigenous research; – The project's adherence to the Australian Indigenous Data Sovereignty Principles (2018); and – The project's understanding of, and proposed strategies to adhere to, the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research (2020) and NHMRC's guidelines on Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities (2018).
Benefit 30%	Describe: – the extent to which the research clearly addresses one or more of the Industrial Transformation Priorities; – the economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for relevant Australian research end-users (including relevant industry and manufacturing sectors); – the extent to which the proposed Training Centre supports clearly identified market opportunity(ies) and intended transformation for Australian industry or other end users; – the extent to which the proposed Training Centre will build the ability to exploit research outcomes in the Partner Organisations; – the extent to which there are adequate strategies to encourage disseminations and promotion of research outcomes; – the potential contribution of the proposed research to addressing the needs of industries and communities as articulated in Australia's Industrial Transformation Priorities; and – 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.