

LIEF Grant Guidelines Changes

Consultation

Feedback from stakeholders was considered in the drafting of these grant guidelines. Key stakeholders have been engaged, particularly members of the Australasian Research Management Society (ARMS).

PROCESSES

1. Updates to Flow Chart

Updated words under “We make grant recommendations” to capture relevant considerations more clearly. The sentence now reads: “The CEO will make grant recommendations to the Minister that are peer assessed for research excellence, satisfy the National Interest Test and which are eligible for funding.”

ASSESSMENT

2. Alignment with ‘Australian Government Priority Areas’

- The grant guidelines have been updated to reflect the alignment of the LIEF scheme with ‘Australian Government Priority Areas’.

Guidelines reference: throughout as relevant.

- Reference added under Objectives to the Minister’s request (in the [letter of expectation](#) dated 6 December) that “no less than 70% of the recommended Linkage Program grants will be aligned with the National Manufacturing Priorities.”

Guidelines reference: 2.4

- A definition for ‘Australian Government priority areas’ has also been added to the Definitions section.

Guidelines reference: 15.2

3. Due Diligence Updates

There are several updates in the grant guidelines to clearly outline the due diligence activities undertaken through the assessment process, and the responsibilities of the applicant in ensuring appropriate due diligence has been undertaken ahead of submitting an application. Changes include:

- **Processes** – Inclusion of any advice on national security risks in ‘We make grant recommendations’ and ‘Grant decisions are made’
- **7.3e How to apply** clause amended to reference having regard to the *Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector*.
- **7.9 How to apply** clause amended to note revisions to the application prior to approval may be invited by the ARC.
- **8.3-8.4 The grant selection process** added new clauses:
 - We may seek advice on national security or other matters from Commonwealth agencies in relation to the application.
 - We may seek information from You regarding due diligence activities in relation to the application.
- **8.12 The assessment process:** amended clause to “During the assessment process We may request additional information, which does not change the nature of Your application”.

- **8.28, 8.30 Who will approve grants** clause amended to specify that: The CEO and the Minister may seek advice on national security or other matters from Commonwealth agencies before making recommendations.
- **12.15 Grant agreement variations** amended clause to reflecting due diligence occurring in relation to changes that may occur following approval of a grant.

4. Assessment Criteria

- New wording has been added under the 'Feasibility and strategic alignment' criterion regarding research with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Addition of "extent to which the project aligns with Australian Government priority areas" under criterion c ('Feasibility and strategic alignment') and "capacity to contribute to Australian Government priority areas" under criterion d ('Benefit') to better align scheme with Government priorities.

Guidelines reference: 6.3

5. Who will assess applications

Updated Whole of Government clause about College of Experts and SAC members who are not Commonwealth Officials, requiring them to perform their duties in accordance with the Commonwealth Grants Rules and Guidelines.

Guidelines reference: 8.25

6. Who will approve applications

There is a new clause, which reflects the existing process whereby appeals can only be brought for administrative reasons and there is no ARC appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

Guidelines reference: 8.33

ELIGIBILITY

7. Eligible Organisation

Avondale University has been added as an Eligible Organisation to apply for and receive ARC funding. Following an assessment by the Tertiary Education, Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Avondale University has been registered as an Australian University in line with the new Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 which came to effect on 1 July 2021.

Guidelines reference: 4.8

8. General

- There is a new clause, which reflects the existing process whereby the ARC may refuse applications involving researchers who have breached the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)*.

Guidelines reference: 4.19

- New sub clause added to allow applicants to "nominate none, one or more Partner Investigators (PIs)" to reflect a change in RMS recognising that some applications may not include partner investigators.

Guidelines reference: 4.1b

9. Participants

- The Project Leader must be employed by the Administering Organisation for at least 20% of Full Time Equivalent (0.2 FTE).

Guidelines reference: 4.21

- Based on feedback identifying that the definition of an 'honorary academic appointment' was unclear and being inconsistently applied across the sector, it has been moved from the glossary into the body of the Guidelines and changed to note that a researcher is not eligible to be a Chief Investigator using their honorary academic appointment if they are employed by an organisation other than an eligible organisation for more than 0.2 FTE.
- Guidelines reference: 4.22b
- Increased clarity has been included around what is meant by 'predominantly' for the purposes of assessing Chief and Partner Investigators' Australian residency: "more than 50% of the project activity period."
- Guidelines reference: 4.23, 4.28
- Greater clarity has been provided about timing of named participants meeting eligibility criteria. Named participants must meet eligibility requirements at the grant commencement date, unless otherwise specified. If the application is successful, eligibility criteria must continue to be met for the project activity period and any changes, including those relating to employment, must be submitted as a post-award variation request.
- Guidelines reference: 4.22, 4.26
- To reflect Whole of Government requirements, no named organisation may be included on the National Redress Scheme's website on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme' (www.nationalredress.gov.au).

Guidelines reference: 4.9a; 4.12a

- Additional sentence: "We reserve the right to change project and application limits in future grant opportunities."

Guidelines reference: 4.34

- Additional clause to provide greater detail about the expectations and circumstances of Partner Investigators.

Guidelines reference: 4.28

OTHER

10. National Interest Test

Additional text has been provided on the National Interest Test, to support applicants to clearly articulate the potential of the project to support Australia's national interests.

Guidelines reference: 8.15

A reference to the National Interest Test Statement has been included in the How to Apply section.

Guidelines reference: 7.3c

11. Requests not to assess

- The timeframe to submit a RNTA form on RMS has been clarified to indicate that the form must be received by the ARC “in RMS two weeks prior to the grant opportunity closing date” as opposed to the “application submission date”.

Guidelines reference: 8.17

12. Timeframes

- The timeframe to execute a Grant Agreement and the timeframe to make an appeal have both been changed from 28 days to 30 days, reflecting Whole of Government practice.

Guidelines reference: 10.3 and 13.4

13. Research policies and practices

There are several updates in the grant guidelines to clearly outline requirements about research policies and practices. Changes include:

- Reference added to the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* and the codes, guidelines, practices and policies on the [ARC website](#).
- An ethics plan must be in place prior to the commencement of the project in line with the grant agreement.
- A data management plan must be developed prior to the commencement of the project in line with the grant agreement.

Guidelines reference: 10.5-10.10

14. Mid-Term progress reports

The requirement to “submit a progress report in year three of a four or five year project” has been removed. Progress reporting instructions can be found on the ARC website.

Guidelines reference: 12.8

15. Definitions

- The Acronym and Definition of ROPE has been deleted as this term does not appear in the LIEF Grant Guidelines.

Guidelines reference: 15.1, 15.2

- New definitions have been added:
 - o Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Person
 - o Australian Government Priority Areas
 - o National Manufacturing Priorities
 - o preprints
 - o research outputs

Guidelines reference: 15.2