



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 Centres of Excellence 2026

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Contents

1. Overview	3
2. The assessment process	3
2.1 Detailed Assessors	3
2.2 Scoring and ranking assessments	6
2.3 Important factors to consider when assessing	7
3. Ensuring integrity of process	9
3.1 Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest (COI)	9
3.2 Research integrity and research misconduct	10
3.3 Applications outside the Detailed Assessor's area of expertise	10
3.4 Eligibility	10
3.5 Unconscious bias	10
4. Contact details for queries during the assessment process	11
Appendix: Centres of Excellence Scoring Matrix and assessment criteria considerations	12
Centres of Excellence Expressions of Interest 2026 (CEEI26)	12
Centres of Excellence (CE26)	14

1. Overview

This Handbook provides instructions and advice for **Detailed Assessors** on the assessment process for Centres of Excellence 2026.

This scheme is part of the Linkage Program of the Australian Research Council's (ARC) [National Competitive Grants Program \(NCGP\)](#).

The ARC Centres of Excellence grant opportunity facilitates significant collaboration at scale which enables the complementary resources of universities, other research organisations, governments and businesses, not for profit organisations to support outstanding pure basic, strategic basic and/or applied research in all fields (except medical research). The ARC does not fund experimental development.

The ARC Centres of Excellence are prestigious focal points of expertise through which high-quality researchers collaboratively maintain and develop Australia's international standing in research areas of national priority.

The specific objectives and assessment criteria for the grant opportunity 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 Accountable Authority for funding. The Minister for Education is the accountable authority for the Centres of Excellence scheme.

The Centres of Excellence scheme utilises Detailed and General Assessors at both the EOI and Full Application stages. Approximately 20% of applications will be invited from the EOI stage to submit a Full Application. Shortlisted EOIs recommended to proceed to Full Application will be approved by the ARC Board.

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. 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 comments, scores and ranks will be anonymously made available to eligible applicants once grant outcomes are announced in RMS.

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 in 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.

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

For Centres of Excellence, applications are assigned to Detailed Assessors using information from their RMS profile and expert judgement by 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:

- Complete in-depth assessments of applications in RMS, providing scores and detailed comments against grant opportunity specific criteria (refer to the [Appendix](#))
- Identify the merits or otherwise of the application with respect to the assessment criteria set out in the Grant Guidelines.
- 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](#).

For EOIs – Detailed Assessors are asked to provide a minimum of 500 characters (approximately 75 words) for each assessment criterion and a minimum of 2000 characters (approximately 300 words) for the overall assessment.

For Full Applications – 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. 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 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. 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.
14. 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 and ranking assessments

Scoring

When applying the Scoring Matrix, Detailed Assessors should have regard for the specific grant opportunity objectives as outlined in the [Appendix](#) and assessment criteria.

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 by both Detailed and General 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 the 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 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. 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 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.

Rank	Score
IDXXXXXXXX (MPCE)	Lead Investigator: Dr Test Applicant Title: Test Title 1 Administering Organisation: Test Organisation
<input type="text" value=""/>	<input type="text" value="A"/>
All assessments with identical scores must be ranked	
IDXXXXXXXX (MPCE)	Lead Investigator: Dr Lead Investigator Title: Test Title 8 Administering Organisation: Test Organisation
<input type="text" value=""/>	<input type="text" value="A"/>
All assessments with identical scores must be ranked	

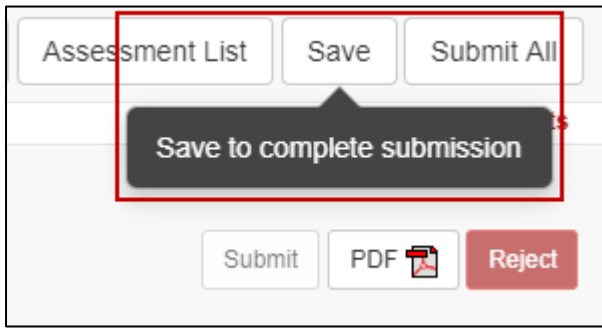
Once the unique rank is assigned the error message will disappear and the assessments can be submitted.

Rank	Score
IDXXXXXXXX (MPCE)	Lead Investigator: Dr Test Applicant Title: Test Title 1 Administering Organisation: Test Organisation
<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="A"/>
IDXXXXXXXX (MPCE)	Lead Investigator: Dr Lead Investigator Title: Test Title 8 Administering Organisation: Test Organisation
<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="A"/>

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.

Close	Assessor Material ▼	Rating Scale	Assessment List	Save	Submit All
<input type="text" value="Search"/>					

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 conflicts of interest.

Assessors reviewing ARC grant application 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):

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) 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-College@arc.gov.au as soon as possible.

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 the Detailed 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 **the relevant scheme team** via ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au as soon as possible. The ARC is responsible for investigating and making decisions on these matters, and 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

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 ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au.

Appendix: Centres of Excellence 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. Assessors should use their judgement and experience to assess the appropriate score within the context of the relevant discipline.

Grant Guidelines

The objectives and assessment criteria below are from the *Linkage Program Grant Guidelines: ARC Centres of Excellence (2024 edition)* which are available on [GrantConnect](#).

Objectives

The ARC Centres of Excellence schemes objectives are to:

- undertake internationally innovative, collaborative and transformational interdisciplinary research to address the most challenging and significant research problems, advance knowledge, and deliver knowledge impact;
- synergise Australian research strengths, create new national and international networks and research programs to ensure that Australian research builds critical mass, is globally connected and has the capacity to work on large-scale problems over an extended period of time;
- build capacity and a diverse and inclusive Australian research workforce by attracting and retaining, from within Australia and abroad, established researchers of high international standing as well as high potential early and mid-career researchers and research students;
- develop an exemplary research culture that provides high-quality career development opportunities for research students and early and mid-career researchers and promotes a diverse, equitable and inclusive research environment;
- establish research programs that lead to significant knowledge impact and end-user impact through the delivery of outcomes for partners including industry (private sector, not-for-profits, community groups, and/or government and government agencies); and
- create new knowledge and understanding that is value for money, with the potential to enhance the scale and focus of research in Australian Government priority areas and deliver economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for Australia.

Scoring Matrix

Assessment criterion	(A) Exceptional Of the highest quality and at the forefront of research in the field. Approximately 10% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(B) Outstanding Of high quality and strongly competitive. Approximately 15% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(C) Excellent Interesting, sound and compelling. Approximately 20% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(D) Very Good Sound, but lacks a compelling element. Approximately 35% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.	(E) Good Has significant weaknesses. Approximately 20% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.
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Centres of Excellence Expressions of Interest 2026 (CEEI26)

Key Dates and Notes

Detailed Assessors

Task	CEEI26 Dates	Detail
Assessment Period	27/09/2024 – 29/10/2024	<p>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).</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>

Assessment criteria – Centres of Excellence Expressions of Interest 2026 (CEEI26)

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
Research Program – Quality and Innovation: 70%	<p>Demonstrate how the Centre will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – undertake innovative and transformational research at the leading edge internationally; – synergise Australian research strengths and build critical mass with enhanced capacity for interdisciplinary, collaborative approaches to address the most challenging and significant research problems and advance knowledge; and – build high quality new national and international networks and research programs to ensure that Australian research is globally connected and has the capacity to work on large-scale problems over longer periods of time. <p><u>If the project involves Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander research additional criteria include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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).
Investigators – Capability and Alignment: 30%	<p>Demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – how the Centre Director, CIs and PIs have appropriate capability and skills, to conduct and deliver the proposed Research Program, taking into account Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE); – the capacity of the Investigators to develop a diverse and inclusive Australian research workforce; and

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the capability of the Investigators to realise knowledge impact and/or end user impact in the fields aligned to the proposed Research Program.

Centres of Excellence (CE26)

Key Dates and Notes

Detailed Assessors

Task	CE26 Dates	Detail
Assessment Period	02/04/2025 – 30/04/2025	<p>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).</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>

Assessment criteria – Centres of Excellence (CE26)

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
Research Program – Quality and Innovation: 20%	<p>Demonstrate how the Centre will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – undertake innovative and transformational research at the leading edge internationally; – synergise Australian research strengths and build critical mass with enhanced capacity for interdisciplinary, collaborative approaches to address the most challenging and significant research problems and advance knowledge; and – build high quality new national and international networks and research programs to ensure that Australian research is globally connected and has the capacity to work on large-scale problems over longer periods of time. <p><u>If the project involves Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander research additional criteria include:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 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

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
	<p>NHMRC's guidelines on Ethical conduct in research with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and communities (2018).</p>
Investigators – Capability and Alignment: 20%	<p>Demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – how the Centre Director, CIs and PIs have appropriate capability and skills, to conduct and deliver the proposed Research Program, taking into account Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE); – the capacity of the Investigators to develop a diverse and inclusive Australian research workforce; and – the capability of the Investigators to realise knowledge impact and/or end user impact in the fields aligned to the proposed Research Program.
Governance, Leadership and Institutional Support: 20%	<p>Demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the appropriateness of the organisational structure of the Centre, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership: The ability and vision of the Centre Director and leadership team, including their capacity for strategic planning and management ▪ Roles and responsibilities: the suitability of the governance structure for the management of dispersed teams and the appropriateness of the allocation of roles and their associated reporting arrangements for delivery of Centre objectives ▪ Operational organisation: suitability of specified milestones, strategic and research translation plans and design of financial systems for achievement of objectives and delivery of outputs, outcomes and benefits – alignment and relevance of draft key performance indicators to the proposed Centre's objectives, project outputs, outcomes and benefit; and – how the combined level of support and commitment from the Administering Organisation, Other Eligible Organisations and Partner Organisations will be sufficient for the proposed Centre.
Research Environment, Mentoring and Culture: 20%	<p>Demonstrate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the quality of the Centre's plans to promote equity, diversity and inclusion within a supportive and vibrant research environment, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the development of research and professional skills for research students ▪ career development of early and mid-career researchers through the provision of leadership and professional skills training, mentoring, as well as opportunities to lead research projects and supervise research students – contribution of the Centre to developing good practice in Responsible Research through appropriate training in research integrity, ethics, reproducibility, open research strategies and data management; and – the quality of the Centre's plans for public engagement and outreach.
Outcomes and Linkages: 20%	<p>Demonstrate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the proposed research program articulates pathways to knowledge impact that delivers benefit to Australia;

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="351 219 1449 286">– partners and end-users are strongly engaged in the proposed research program through clear strategies for knowledge exchange (and co-creation); <li data-bbox="351 309 1474 376">– the supporting organisational arrangements and plans relating to ownership, mobilisation of intellectual property and commercialisation of research are mature; <li data-bbox="351 398 1401 465">– the proposed research program delivers effective outcomes for its requested resources; and <li data-bbox="351 488 1439 555">– the proposed research program will develop high level international linkages to achieve the program’s research, training, and translation and impact outcomes.