ARC Centres of Excellence Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2014

Australian Research Council Act 2001

I, CHRIS BOWEN, Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research, having satisfied myself of the matters set out in section 59 of the Australian Research Council Act 2001, approve these Funding Rules under section 60 of that ARC Act.

Dated 19 March 2013

Chris Bowen
Minister for Tertiary Education, Skills, Science and Research
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Key Dates
Please refer to the Important Dates page on the ARC website for key dates and updates relevant to these Funding Rules at www.arc.gov.au/media/important_dates.htm.

Contacts
Researchers should direct requests for information to the Research Office within their organisation in the first instance.

ARC Contacts:
by mail to: by courier to:

Centres Scheme Coordinator
Australian Research Council
GPO Box 2702
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Email: centres@arc.gov.au
Phone: 02 6287 6600
Fax: 02 6287 6638
Web: http://www.arc.gov.au

Appeals must be addressed and sent to:
by mail to: or by courier to:

The Appeals Officer
Australian Research Council
GPO Box 2702
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Or by email to: appeals@arc.gov.au

Other:
RMS Support Team:
Email: rms@arc.gov.au

Post-award enquiries and report submission:
Email: ARC-postaward@arc.gov.au
1. Name of Funding Rules

These Funding Rules are the Australian Research Council *ARC Centres of Excellence* Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2014.

2. Commencement

The Funding Rules shall take effect upon registration on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments.

3. Definitions

In these Funding Rules, unless the contrary intention appears:

**Adjunct or Emeritus Appointment** or equivalent means that an Eligible Organisation has a formal agreement with a researcher which establishes an ongoing association with the Eligible Organisation, of the nature of an emeritus or honorary academic or visiting fellow. The ARC may seek documentary evidence of such an association if it is considered necessary.

**Administering Organisation** means an Eligible Organisation which submits a Proposal for funding under the *ARC Centres of Excellence* scheme and which will be responsible for the administration of the funding if the Proposal is approved for funding.

**Applicant** means the Administering Organisation. Funding under the *ARC Centres of Excellence* scheme is provided to Administering Organisations, not individual researchers.

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

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

**ARC Award** means a named Award within any ARC scheme where the salary is funded wholly or partly by the ARC, and includes *Discovery Outstanding Researcher Award*, *Discovery Indigenous Award* or *Discovery Early Career Researcher Award*.

**ARC Research Centres Program** means a research centre wholly or partly funded by the ARC and includes *ARC Centres of Excellence*, Co-funded Centres and specific ARC *Special Research Initiatives* (excluding Initiatives providing funding for Synchrotron Science and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Researchers’ Network).

**ARC Fellowship** means a named Fellowship position within any ARC scheme where the salary is funded wholly or partly by the ARC.

**ARC Website** is [http://www.arc.gov.au](http://www.arc.gov.au).

**Centre Director** means the person appointed to direct the programs of a Commonwealth-funded Research Centre.

**Chief Investigator** means a researcher who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a Chief Investigator under these Funding Rules.

**Collaborating Organisation** means an Eligible Organisation which is not the Administering Organisation but which is identified in the Proposal as a contributor to the Program.

**Commonwealth** means the Commonwealth of Australia.

**Commonwealth-funded Research Centre** means a research centre established under a competitive Commonwealth scheme and includes the ARC Research Centres Program, Cooperative Research Centres and the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Program Grants and Centres of Clinical Research Excellence.
Conflict of Interest means any conflict of interest, any risk of a conflict of interest and any apparent conflict of interest arising through a party engaging in any activity, participating in any association, holding any membership or obtaining any interest that is likely to conflict with or restrict that party participating in the Program.

Consultancy means the provision of specialist advice, analysis, assistance, services or products to another organisation(s), generally where the consultancy services are for the sole or preferred use of that other organisation(s).

Eligible Organisation means an organisation listed in Appendix A.

Expression of Interest means a preliminary request to the ARC for a research Program which is submitted in accordance with Funding Rules approved by the Minister.

Funding Agreement means the agreement entered into by the ARC and the Administering Organisation when a Proposal from that organisation is approved for funding.

GST has the meaning as given in section 195-1 of the A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999.

In-kind Contributions means a contribution of goods, services, materials and/or time to the Program from an individual, business or organisation.

Key Performance Indicators means a set of quantifiable measures that ARC Centres of Excellence use to monitor and reporting on progress of research outcomes.

Medical and Dental Research means research and/or training primarily and substantially aimed at understanding or treating a human disease or health condition, and as defined on the ARC website at www.arc.gov.au/applicants/md_research.htm.

Minister means the Minister responsible for the administration of the ARC Act, or the Minister’s delegate.

National Research Priorities means priority research areas identified by the ARC and advertised on the ARC Website and updated from time to time.

NCGP means the National Competitive Grants Program.

Partner Investigator means a researcher who satisfies the eligibility criteria for a Partner Investigator under these Funding Rules.

Partner Organisation means an organisation which is not an Eligible Organisation, but which is identified in the Proposal as a contributor to the Program.

Program means a Centre Proposal approved by the Minister to receive funding from the ARC in accordance with these Funding Rules.

Proposal means a request to the ARC for the provision of funding in accordance with Funding Rules.

Research Impact means the demonstrable contribution that research makes to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, beyond academia.

Research Office means a business unit within an organisation that is responsible for administrative contact with the ARC regarding Proposals and Programs.

RMS means the ARC’s online Research Management System.
Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) means a group of experts appointed to assist the ARC to evaluate each Expression of Interest and Proposal and to provide a recommendation for funding to the ARC.

Special Condition means a special condition specified in a Funding Agreement which governs the use of the funding provided by the ARC.

Specified Personnel means the named personnel required for the Program and includes roles such as the Centre Director, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Investigators or Partner Investigators in the Program.

4. Introduction

4.1 Overview

4.1.1 These Funding Rules are a legislative instrument, current as at the date of signing by the Minister, and have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the ARC Act in force then.

4.1.2 The ARC Centres of Excellence scheme is a scheme funded under the ARC National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) Linkage Program. The Centres are prestigious foci of expertise through which high-quality researchers collaboratively maintain and develop Australia’s international standing in research areas of national priority.

4.1.3 For the purposes of these Funding Rules, research is defined as the creation of new knowledge and/or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it is new and creative.

4.1.4 This definition of research is consistent with a broad notion of research and experimental development (R&D) as comprising ‘creative work undertaken on a systematic basis in order to increase the stock of knowledge, including knowledge of man [human-kind], culture and society, and the use of this stock of knowledge to devise new applications’.

4.2 ARC Centres of Excellence

4.2.1 ARC Centres of Excellence involve significant collaboration which will allow the complementary research resources of universities, publicly funded research organisations, other research bodies, governments and businesses to be concentrated to support research in all fields of research (except Medical and Dental Research).

4.2.2 The objectives of the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme are to:

a. undertake highly innovative and potentially transformational research that aims to achieve international standing in the fields of research envisaged and leads to a significant advancement of capabilities and knowledge;

b. link existing Australian research strengths and build critical mass with new capacity for interdisciplinary, collaborative approaches to address the most challenging and significant research problems;

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c. develop relationships and build new networks with major national and international centres and research programs to help strengthen research, achieve global competitiveness and gain recognition for Australian research;
d. build Australia’s human capacity in a range of research areas by attracting and retaining, from within Australia and abroad, researchers of high international standing as well as the most promising research students;
e. provide high-quality postgraduate and postdoctoral training environments for the next generation of researchers;
f. offer Australian researchers opportunities to work on large-scale problems over longer periods of time; and
g. establish Centres of such repute in the wider community that they will serve as points of interaction among higher education institutions, governments, industry and the private sector generally.

4.2.3 *ARC Centres of Excellence* will be selected through a competitive three-stage process. An Expression of Interest (EOI) must be submitted to the ARC in the first instance. Full Proposals will be invited by the ARC after assessment and shortlisting of all EOIs. Full Proposals will be assessed and shortlisted, and the Applicants of shortlisted Proposals will be invited to participate in interviews with the Selection Advisory Committee (SAC).

### 4.3 Selection criteria

4.3.1 All *ARC Centres of Excellence* EOIs which meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed and merit ranked using selection criteria A, B and C as listed below. Criteria weightings for the EOI are the first percentage figure noted against criteria A, B and C.

4.3.2 All *ARC Centres of Excellence* Proposals which meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed and merit ranked using all selection criteria listed below. Criteria weightings for the Proposal are the second percentage figure noted against criteria A to E.

#### A. Research program – quality and innovation (45%) (20%)

1. The extent to which the proposed research program addresses the objectives of the *ARC Centres of Excellence* scheme.
2. The innovative and potentially transformational nature of the proposed research program, and its capacity to lead to a significant advancement of knowledge, expertise and technologies.
3. The extent to which the proposed research builds effective collaboration and critical mass across groups of researchers.
4. The extent to which the proposed conceptual framework, design, human resource commitments, methods and analyses, project structures, budget planning and risk mitigation strategies are assembled into an effective and integrated research program.
5. The likelihood that the proposed Centre will attain an international standing in the fields of research.
B. Investigators

1. The capacity, suitability and contribution of the Centre Director, Chief Investigators and Partner Investigators to the proposed research program.

2. Inclusion of investigators relevant to the conduct and delivery of the proposed research program, with consideration given to Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE).

C. Institutional support

1. The alignment of the proposed Centre with the research focus and strategic direction of the Administering Organisation.

2. The level of support and commitment, both in cash and/or In-kind, for the proposed Centre from the Administering, Collaborating and Partner Organisations.

D. Governance, leadership and mentoring

1. The appropriateness of the organisational structure of the proposed Centre;
   a. adequacy of proposed management arrangements and responsibilities (including reporting arrangements both internally and externally and management of dispersed teams);
   b. financial systems and business and strategic plans (draft performance indicators, milestones for achievement of objectives and delivery of outputs and outcomes).

2. The Director’s capacity to perform the responsibilities of the role and demonstrated capability for leadership, vision, management and strategic planning.

3. The relevance of the performance measures listed in the application to the Centre’s objectives, project outputs and outcomes, and their appropriateness for assessing the Centre’s performance.

4. The potential contribution of the Centre to research training at the Honours, postgraduate and postdoctoral level.

5. The potential value of the education programs in professional and technical training and outreach programs in engagement.

E. Outcomes and linkages

1. The participation of end-users and partners in strategic research planning and Centre governance.

2. The adequacy of plans and strategies for translation of research outcomes including: knowledge transfer, knowledge application, and if applicable, technology transfer, including fostering a culture of innovation and outcomes focus.
3. The adequacy of organisational arrangements and plans relating to ownership and potential exploitation of intellectual property and/or utilisation or commercialisation of research.

4. The extent to which the proposed research is likely to expand Australia’s knowledge base and research capability and to enhance Australia’s international reputation and competitiveness.

5. The extent to which the proposed research is likely to make a significant contribution to the National Research Priorities and the National Innovation Priorities.

6. The potential impact of the research in terms of delivering outcomes of economic, cultural, public policy or services, health, environmental and/or social benefit for Australia.

7. The potential of the proposed research program to deliver effective outcomes commensurate with the request for appropriate resources (value for money).

8. The potential of the Centre to develop and enhance international linkages that will benefit the research, training and knowledge transfer programs.

9. The planned links with Australian researchers in universities, other research organisations and strategic agencies working in, and applying the outcomes of, the proposed research.

5. Funding

5.1 Level and period of funding

5.1.1 All amounts referred to in these Funding Rules are to be read as exclusive of GST (if any), unless expressly stated otherwise.

5.1.2 The minimum level of ARC funding for an ARC Centre of Excellence is $1 million per calendar year. The maximum level of ARC funding for an ARC Centre of Excellence is $4 million per calendar year.

5.1.3 To maximise the impact of ARC funding, participants must obtain commitments for additional financial contributions from a variety of sources including the Administering Organisation, Collaborating Organisation(s) and Partner Organisation(s). Financial contributions from these sources can take the form of cash contributions and/or In-kind Contributions.

5.1.4 Funding may be payable under these Funding Rules for ARC Centres of Excellence in respect of financial year 2013-14 and any subsequent years to which the ARC Act applies. Funding for approved ARC Centres of Excellence will commence with effect 1 January 2014, unless other arrangements are approved by the Minister.

5.1.5 ARC Centres of Excellence may be applied for and awarded funding for up to seven years, subject to sufficient funding being available for the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme, the provisions of the ARC Act, and continued satisfactory progress of the Centre.

5.1.6 The ARC reserves the right to recommend levels and duration of ARC funding which may differ from those requested in the Proposal.
5.2 **Budget items supported**

5.2.1 Budget items that directly support the research program of an *ARC Centre of Excellence* may be funded, including:

a. salaries and up to 28% on-costs for Centre personnel who perform research or activities that support the research, including Research Associates, Research Assistants, a Centre Manager or Chief Operations Officer, technicians and laboratory assistants but excluding the Centre Director, Chief Investigators, and Partner Investigators. Salary support must be requested at an appropriate level for the Administering or Collaborating Organisation(s);

b. stipends for postgraduate students, in whole or in part, at an appropriate level for the Administering or Collaborating Organisation(s);

c. equipment used for the Centre research program;

d. maintenance and consumables required for the Centre research program but excluding that deemed to be for broad general use;

e. access to workshop services linked to the Centre research program;

f. publication and dissemination of Centre outputs and outreach activity, including the development and maintenance of the Centre’s website;

g. general domestic and international travel costs (economy) for Centre personnel where this is related to the research program or to support fieldwork essential to the research program (including research, technical and logistical support, local travel and accommodation costs); and

h. domestic and international travel costs (economy) for visitors to the Centre where this is related to the research program or Centre governance.

5.2.2 The ARC encourages *ARC Centres of Excellence* to support Australian industry as appropriate in the supply of goods and services. *ARC Centres of Excellence* requesting $20 million or more in funding over the seven-year funding period should be aware of the requirements of the Australian Industry Participation Plans for Commonwealth grants (http://www.innovation.gov.au/industry/australianindustryparticipation/pages/aipplansforcommonwealthgovernmentgrants.aspx).

5.2.3 *ARC Centres of Excellence* must comply with the ARC’s Open Access policy on the dissemination of research findings, which is available on the ARC Website. The ARC strongly encourages the depositing of data arising from *ARC Centres of Excellence* in an appropriate publicly accessible subject and/or institutional repository. These outputs from *ARC Centres of Excellence* should also be considered in the context of Research Impact.

5.2.4 All budget items must be justified in the Proposal to the satisfaction of the ARC.

5.3 **Budget items not supported**

5.3.1 The ARC will not provide funding for the following budget items:

a. salaries and/or on-costs for the Centre Director, Chief Investigators or Partner Investigators;

b. capital works and general infrastructure costs, in whole or in part;
c. research support for Partner Investigators, apart from short-term project support for investigators visiting from overseas and domestic and international travel associated with the Centre;

d. fees for international students or the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) and Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP) liabilities for students;

e. bench fees or similar laboratory access fees levied by the institution;

f. teaching relief;

g. direct development of products and other commercialisation activities;

h. investigations that are more appropriately undertaken by way of a Consultancy; or

i. costs not directly related to the Centre research program, including but not limited to professional membership fees, professional development courses, fees for patent application and maintenance, equipment for live music or drama performances, visas, relocation costs, insurance, and mobile phones (purchase or call charges).

5.3.2 The ARC will not provide funding for indirect costs, including basic facilities and equipment, organisational overheads and/or infrastructure costs.

5.3.3 The Administering Organisation, Collaborating Organisation(s) and Partner Organisation(s) must agree to provide and fund the following basic facilities where required:

a. accommodation (for example, laboratory and office space, suitably equipped and furnished in standard ways);

b. access to film or music editing facilities;

c. access to a basic library collection;

d. bench fees or similar laboratory access fees;

e. provision of basic computing facilities such as desk top computers, portable computer devices, printers, word processing and other standard software;

f. standard reference material or funds for abstracting services; and

g. use of photocopiers, telephones, mail, fax, email and internet services.

5.3.4 The ARC may, in its absolute discretion, determine whether any project costs involve any of the items not permitted under sections 5.3.1, 5.3.2 and 5.3.3. If such a determination is made, then the ARC may, in its absolute discretion, decide to not recommend part or all of the Proposal for funding.

5.4 Research/activities not supported

5.4.1 Except where such activities meet the definition of research in section 4.1.3, the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme does not support production of:

a. compilation of data, computer programs, research aids and tools

b. descriptive data compilations, catalogues or bibliographies;

c. teaching materials;
d. activities leading solely to the creation or performance of a work of art, including visual art, musical compositions, drama, dance, film, broadcasts, designs and literary works; or

5.4.2 The ARC Centres of Excellence scheme does not support Medical and Dental Research.

6. Governance structure and arrangements

6.1.1 Administrative operations of an ARC Centre of Excellence must be established within the academic, administrative and financial governance structures of the Administering Organisation.

6.1.2 An ARC Centre of Excellence may comprise networked nodes, or operate as a ‘virtual Centre’, or adopt any other appropriate approach to research management, provided that it meets the objectives and selection criteria and is not contrary to the Funding Agreement.

6.1.3 An ARC Centre of Excellence must implement appropriate governance structures to ensure strategic alliances and collaboration with researchers, industry and stakeholders.

6.1.4 An ARC Centre of Excellence must have an expert Advisory Committee that provides broad representation of the research and end-user communities. Within the governance structures of the Administering Organisation, the Advisory Committee will provide advice and a strategic focus on the research activities for the Centre, its structure and general operating principles, and intellectual property and commercialisation management. The Advisory Committee will have a Chair who will champion the Centre and provide advice to the Centre Director.

7. Organisational types, contributions, role and eligibility

7.1 Eligible Organisations

7.1.1 An EOI or a Proposal may only be submitted by an Eligible Organisation listed at Appendix A, through its Research Office.

7.1.2 Eligible Organisations may be involved in more than one EOI or Proposal but must consider their capacity to contribute in the event that all Proposals are successful.

7.1.3 The Eligible Organisation which submits the Proposal will be considered to be the Administering Organisation which will receive and administer ARC funding if the Proposal is successful. All other Eligible Organisations listed on the Proposal will be Collaborating Organisations.

7.1.4 The Administering Organisation must demonstrate its key role with a significant contribution of cash, In-kind Contributions and/or other material resources, having regard to the total cost of the Centre and the relative contribution of each Chief Investigator.

7.2 Collaborating Organisations

7.2.1 An EOI or a Proposal may identify one or more Collaborating Organisations to be involved with the proposed Centre.

7.2.2 Proposals involving one or more Collaborating Organisations must demonstrate a significant contribution of cash, In-kind Contributions and/or other material resources from the Collaborating Organisation(s), having regard to the total cost of the Centre and the relative contribution of each Chief Investigator.
7.3 **Partner Organisations**

7.3.1 To be eligible as a Partner Organisation, an organisation cannot be:

a. an Eligible Organisation as listed in Appendix A;

b. a controlled entity of any Eligible Organisation; or

c. an entity (for example a joint venture) where more than 50 per cent is owned by one or more Eligible Organisations.

7.3.2 An EOI or a Proposal may identify one or more Partner Organisations to be involved with the proposed Centre.

7.3.3 Proposals involving one or more Partner Organisations must demonstrate a significant contribution of cash, In-kind Contributions and/or other material resources from the Partner Organisation(s), having regard to the total cost of the Centre and the relative contribution of each Partner Investigator.

8. **Roles and eligibility for researchers**

8.1 **Researcher roles and general eligibility**

8.1.1 Roles that may be undertaken by researchers at an *ARC Centre of Excellence* are:

a. Centre Director;

b. Chief Investigator (CI); or

c. Partner Investigator (PI).

The Centre Director and all CIs and PIs nominated in an EOI or a Proposal must satisfy the eligibility criteria for the role they are to perform.

8.1.2 An EOI or a Proposal must nominate a Centre Director and at least one researcher as a CI.

8.1.3 A researcher nominated as the Centre Director, a CI or a PI must take significant intellectual responsibility for the proposed Centre, its conception, and any strategic decisions called for in its pursuit and the communication of results. The researcher must have the capacity to make a serious commitment to the Centre and cannot assume the role of a supplier of resources for work that will largely be placed in the hands of others. The ARC reserves the right to determine whether a person has the requisite capacity to perform the role.

8.1.4 A researcher undertaking undergraduate studies or a higher degree by research is not eligible to be the Centre Director, a CI or a PI for *ARC Centres of Excellence*.

8.1.5 If the ARC considers that a researcher nominated in an EOI as a Centre Director, CI or PI does not meet the eligibility criteria for the role which that researcher is to perform, the EOI will not be recommended for shortlisting.

8.1.6 If the ARC considers that a researcher nominated in a Proposal as a Centre Director, CI or PI does not meet the eligibility criteria for the role which that researcher is to perform, the Proposal will not be recommended for funding.

8.1.7 At the time of the submissions of a Proposal, all obligations regarding previously funded projects involving the nominated CIs on the Proposal must have been fulfilled to the satisfaction of the ARC. Such obligations include the provision of satisfactory Progress and Final Reports.
8.2 Eligibility criteria for Centre Directors

8.2.1 The Centre Director must meet the eligibility criteria for a CI. He/she should be employed by the Administering Organisation at the commencement of the Centre and for the full term of her/his participation in the Centre. The Centre Director will be responsible for implementing the strategic direction of the Centre, managing the research program, and coordinating the research effort and overseeing the reporting structures across the participating Organisations.

8.2.2 The first-named CI on an EOI or a Proposal will be considered the Centre Director.

8.2.3 The Centre Director is expected to have a minimum time commitment of 70 per cent (0.7 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)) on the activities of the Centre. If a Centre Director is unable to meet this undertaking, the ARC may, in its absolute discretion, decide not to recommend the Proposal for funding.

8.2.4 A Centre Director may be nominated for this role on one EOI or Proposal only. A person nominated as Centre Director may be nominated as a CI on no more than one additional EOI or Proposal. The CI role must be relinquished should both Proposals be successful.

8.2.5 If a Proposal has been approved for funding and the Centre Director is at any time during the life of the Centre no longer able to undertake this role for any period greater than two months, the Centre may be continued under a replacement Centre Director provided that:

   a. approval is obtained from the ARC for the change in Centre Director; and
   b. a replacement Centre Director meets the eligibility criteria for a Centre Director and those for a CI at the time of her/his nomination and for the full term of her/his participation in the Centre.

8.3 Eligibility criteria for Chief Investigators

8.3.1 A researcher nominated on an EOI or a Proposal as a CI must meet at least one of the following criteria at the commencement of the Centre and for the full term of her/his participation in the Centre:

   a. be an employee for at least 50 per cent (0.5 FTE) at an Eligible Organisation; or
   b. be a holder of an Emeritus, Adjunct or equivalent appointment at an Eligible Organisation and not be employed more than 50 per cent (0.5 FTE) at another organisation that:
      i. is outside the higher education sector, and
      ii. engages in research which is funded predominantly from State/Territory or Commonwealth Government funding sources.

8.3.2 The CI must reside predominantly in Australia for the full life of the Centre. The CI may seek approval from the Administering Organisation to undertake fieldwork, or study leave, directly related to the Centre research program. Such absences should not total more than two years during the Centre funding period. Where total absences for a CI during the funding period will exceed two years, ARC approval of the absences exceeding the two year limit will be required in advance. Any periods of absence must not exceed a total of six months in any 12 month period.
This six month period may be taken at one time or spread across a 12 month period.

8.3.3 Subject to section 8.2.4, a CI may be nominated on a maximum of two EOIs or Proposals.

8.3.4 If a Proposal has been approved for funding and a CI is at any time no longer able to work as proposed on the Centre, a replacement CI may be appointed provided that:

a. approval is obtained from the ARC for the change in CI; and

b. a replacement CI meets the eligibility criteria for a CI at the time of her/his nomination and for the full term of her/his participation in the Centre.

8.4 Eligibility criteria for Partner Investigators

8.4.1 A researcher nominated on an EOI or a Proposal as a PI must not meet the eligibility criteria for a CI at the commencement of the Centre, and for the full term of her/his participation in the Centre.

8.4.2 A PI must secure cash. In-kind Contributions and/or other material resources from her/his Partner Organisation, having regard to the total cost of the Centre and her/his relative contribution to the Centre.

8.4.3 If a Proposal has been approved for funding and a PI is at any time, no longer able to work as proposed on the Centre, a replacement PI may be appointed provided that:

a. approval is obtained from the ARC for the change in PI; and

b. a replacement PI meets the eligibility criteria for a PI at the time of her/his nomination and for the full term of her/his participation in the Centre.

9. Number of Proposals and cross-scheme eligibility

9.1 Number of Expressions of Interest and Proposals

9.1.1 Eligible Organisations may submit one or more EOIs for ARC Centres of Excellence in this funding round.

9.1.2 Eligible Organisations may be invited to submit Proposals following the conclusion of the selection process for EOIs.

9.1.3 The ARC will only consider Proposals preceded by a shortlisted EOI; that is, an EOI must have been submitted and shortlisted, and a full Proposal subsequently invited by the ARC.

9.2 Cross-scheme eligibility

9.2.1 Researchers should note the eligibility criteria for access to other funding schemes, as expressed in the funding rules for those schemes. The ARC reserves the right to change these criteria in future funding rounds. Funding rules for all ARC schemes may be found on the ARC Website.

9.2.2 The ARC acknowledges that researchers nominating for an ARC Centre of Excellence may hold funded grants/Fellowships/Awards or have submitted Proposals through other ARC funding schemes. For the purposes of the ARC Centres of Excellence for funding commencing in 2014, all grants/Fellowships/Awards held or Proposals submitted through other ARC
funding schemes may be retained until the outcome of the *ARC Centres of Excellence* Proposal is known.

9.2.3 The Centre Director and CIs on successful *ARC Centres of Excellence* Proposals will be required to relinquish ARC-funded grants/Fellowships/Awards which would result in the researcher exceeding limits on the number of grants/Fellowships/Awards able to be held (as stated in scheme funding rules) as at 1 January 2014. The ARC reserves the right to determine which grants/Fellowships/Awards are to be relinquished.

9.3 Proposal eligibility and duplication

9.3.1 The ARC will not duplicate funding for research, including infrastructure, funded by the Commonwealth as at 1 January 2014. Participants on successful *ARC Centres of Excellence* Proposals funded in this round must relinquish any ARC funding that would result in duplication as at 1 January 2014.

9.3.2 The Proposal must list all current funding and requested funding for the Centre Director, the CIs and PIs under any ARC scheme or any other Commonwealth funding scheme.

9.3.3 Subject to sections 9.2 and 9.3.1, the Centre Director and CIs named on a successful Proposal may retain their current overlapping ARC projects provided that:

a. the Proposal clearly demonstrates and explains, to the satisfaction of the ARC, the overlap between the proposed Centre research program and the research program of the existing non-Centre grant; and

b. funding for the overlapping aspect of the Centre research program is not requested in the Proposal budget for the duration of the existing non-Centre grant.

9.3.4 The ARC will assess whether an EOI or Proposal meets the eligibility requirements in these Funding Rules and may recommend that an EOI or Proposal that does not meet the requirements be deemed ineligible.

9.3.5 A decision under section 9.3.4 may be made by the ARC at any stage during assessment of the EOI or the Proposal and may result in non-progression of the EOI or the Proposal to the next level of assessment.

9.4 Conflict of Interest

9.4.1 All parties involved in or associated with an EOI or a Proposal must declare at the date of submission any Conflict of Interest that exists or is likely to arise in relation to any aspect of the EOI or the Proposal.

9.4.2 The ARC’s Conflict of Interest policy and management practices are available on the ARC Website.

9.4.3 If a Conflict of Interest exists or arises, the Administering Organisation must have documented processes in place for managing the Conflict of Interest for the duration of the Centre. Such processes must comply with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research* (2007) and any relevant successor document.

9.4.4 A researcher cannot participate as a Centre Director or CI on an EOI or a Proposal if they hold a position as a Director, Board member and/or have a major financial
interest (salary, contract or equity) in a proposed Partner Organisation for the Centre as at the commencement date for funding of the Centre.

10. Submission of Expressions of Interest

10.1 Expression of Interest

10.1.1 An EOI must be submitted as a comprehensive summary of the proposed ARC Centre of Excellence. The EOI must contain all the information necessary for its assessment without the need for explanatory documentation. The ARC can request further documentation as part of the selection process. Such explanation or documentation may be used by the ARC and/or the Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) to inform its deliberations.

10.1.2 All details in the EOI must be current at the time of submission.

10.1.3 In submitting an EOI, the Administering Organisation and the Centre Director, CIs and PIs nominated in the EOI are consenting to the EOI being assessed under the ARC’s peer assessment procedures and agreeing to the release of the EOI to third parties for assessment.

10.2 Submission of Expressions of Interest in RMS

10.2.1 The Administering Organisation must submit EOIs through RMS unless otherwise advised by the ARC.

10.2.2 All EOIs must meet the format and content requirements, including certification, as set out in the RMS form and the Instructions to Applicants.

10.2.3 EOIs may be withdrawn but additions, deletions and modifications will not be accepted after the closing date for submission, unless invited by the ARC. To withdraw the EOI, the Administering Organisation must notify the ARC in writing. The ARC will consider the request to withdraw an EOI but may choose not to give effect to such a request.

10.3 Closing time for submission of Expressions of Interest

10.3.1 The online form completed within RMS must be submitted by the closing date on the Important Dates page on the ARC website at www.arc.gov.au/media/important_dates.htm.

10.3.2 Researchers must note that Administering Organisations may have internal closing times which precede ARC closing times.

10.4 Certification in RMS

10.4.1 The Administering Organisation must certify an EOI online in RMS. Research Offices should ensure that the Research Office delegate role is authorised in the RMS to certify and submit EOIs.

10.4.2 The ARC reserves the right at any point in the process to seek evidence from the Administering Organisation to support the certification of EOIs.

11. Assessment and selection process for Expressions of Interest

11.1 Expressions of Interest – first stage of assessment

11.1.1 Assessment of EOIs is undertaken by the ARC, which reserves the right to make recommendations based on any number of expert assessments or solely on the basis of its expertise.
11.1.2 For each EOI, the ARC will:
   a. consider if an EOI satisfies the eligibility criteria and complies with the Funding Rules;
   b. merit rank each EOI against the selection criteria relative to the others on the basis of the EOI; and/or
   c. shortlist EOIs and call for full Proposals from Administering Organisations for those shortlisted EOIs.

11.1.3 The ARC may exclude EOIs at any time during the selection process. Grounds for exclusion include, but are not limited to:
   a. not meeting the eligibility criteria set out in these Funding Rules; or
   b. providing incomplete, inaccurate or misleading information.
Excluded EOIs cannot be shortlisted.

11.1.4 The ARC reserves the right to invite a single consolidated Proposal where the research programs of two or more EOIs demonstrate significant synergy, overlap or duplication. The Administering Organisations may choose to give effect to the ARC’s invitation. Should the invitation be accepted, the Administering Organisations of the EOIs will be responsible for negotiating with the Centre Directors, researchers and organisations in relation to the coordination, preparation and submission of a single consolidated Proposal.

11.1.5 The Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) may assist the ARC with the assessment of EOIs against the EOI Selection Criteria (see Section 4.3). The ARC has procedures for managing organisational and personal conflicts of interest experienced by members of the SAC, the ARC College, members of other ARC committees, ARC staff, and other assessors, and for enabling individuals to withdraw from the assessment process for particular EOIs where any actual or perceived conflict may exist.

12. Submission of Proposals

12.1 Proposals

12.1.1 Proposals for the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme may be submitted only when invited by the ARC. The ARC may invite Proposals from one or more Administering Organisations.

12.1.2 A Proposal must be submitted as a mature research plan presenting the proposed ARC Centre of Excellence ready for implementation. The Proposal must contain all the information necessary for its assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation, or reference to additional documentation unless requested by the ARC.

12.1.3 All details in the Proposal must be current at the time of submission.

12.2 Submission of Proposals in RMS

12.2.1 Administering Organisations must submit Proposals through RMS unless otherwise advised by the ARC.

12.2.2 All Proposals must meet the format and content requirements, including certification, as set out in the RMS form and the Instructions to Applicants.
12.2.3 Proposals may be withdrawn but additions, deletions and modifications will not be accepted after the closing date for submission, unless invited by the ARC. To withdraw the Proposal, the Administering Organisation must notify the ARC in writing. The ARC will consider the request to withdraw a Proposal but may choose not to give effect to such a request.

12.2.4 Letters of support from Collaborating Organisation(s) and Partner Organisation(s) must be uploaded into the Proposal. These letters must specify financial commitments (both cash and/or In-kind Contributions) and the participation of researchers named on the Proposal, and be signed by a senior representative (Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or equivalent) of the organisation. In providing and signing these letters, the organisations are certifying the support to, and researcher participation in, the proposed Centre.

12.3 Closing time for submission of Proposals

12.3.1 The online form completed within RMS must be submitted by the *ARC Centres of Excellence* scheme closing date on the Important Dates page on the ARC website at [www.arc.gov.au/media/important_dates.htm](http://www.arc.gov.au/media/important_dates.htm).

12.3.2 Researchers must note that Administering Organisations may have internal closing times which precede ARC closing times.

12.4 Certification in RMS

12.4.1 The Administering Organisation must certify Proposals online in RMS. Research Offices should ensure that the Research Office delegate role is authorised in the RMS to certify and submit Proposals.

12.4.2 The ARC reserves the right at any point in the process to seek evidence from the Administering Organisation to support the certification of Proposals.

13. Assessment, selection and approval process for Proposals

13.1 Proposals – second and third stages of assessment

13.1.1 Assessment of Proposals is undertaken by the ARC, which has the right to make recommendations for funding to the Minister based on any number of assessments or solely on the basis of its expertise.

13.1.2 For each Proposal, the ARC will:

a. consider if a Proposal satisfies the eligibility criteria and complies with the Funding Rules;

b. assign Proposals to independent assessors from a range of organisations, who will assess and report, and may provide written comments, on the Proposal against the selection criteria; and

c. merit rank each Proposal relative to the others on the basis of the Proposal, any assessors’ reports and any rejoinder and shortlist Proposals;

13.1.3 At the third stage of assessment when Proposals have been shortlisted, Applicants will be advised by the ARC when they are required to participate in interviews. The interview format, including required participants, will be advised at the same time. The ARC will not fund interviewee participation. For each shortlisted Proposal, the ARC will then:

a. interview representatives of the Centre for those shortlisted Proposals; and
b. merit rank and allocate a budget for recommended Proposals, relative to other Proposals, on the basis of the Proposal, any assessors’ reports, any rejoinder and the interview.

13.1.4 The ARC may exclude Proposals at any time during the selection process. Grounds for exclusion include, but are not limited to:
   a. not meeting the eligibility criteria set out in these Funding Rules; or
   b. providing incomplete, inaccurate or misleading information.

Excluded Proposals will not be recommended for funding.

13.1.5 The Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) may assist with the assessment of Proposals against the Proposal Selection Criteria (See Section 4.3). The ARC has procedures for managing organisational and personal conflicts of interest experienced by members of the SAC, the ARC College, members of other ARC committees, ARC staff, and other assessors, and for enabling individuals to withdraw from the assessment process for particular Proposals where any actual or perceived conflict may exist.

13.2 Rejoinder

13.2.1 The Administering Organisation may be given the opportunity for a rejoinder to assessors’ written comments, and to provide any additional information requested by the ARC. Names of assessors will not be provided to the Administering Organisation.

13.3 Request not to assess

13.3.1 Administering Organisations may name any person or persons whom they do not wish to assess a Proposal on a ‘Request not to Assess’ form. The notification must be sent to the email address advised under Contacts on page 4 of these Funding Rules two weeks prior to the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme closing date for Proposals. The ARC will consider the justification put forward to exclude any persons as an assessor, but may choose not to give effect to such a request.

13.4 Recommendations and offer of funding

13.4.1 In accordance with the ARC Act, the ARC Chief Executive Officer will submit funding recommendations to the Minister for consideration. The Minister will determine which Proposals will be approved and the amount and timing of funding to be paid to Administering Organisations for approved Proposals.

13.4.2 Under the ARC Act, the Minister must not approve for funding any Proposal that fails to meet the eligibility criteria set out in these Funding Rules.

13.4.3 All Administering Organisations will be notified of the outcomes of their EOI and Proposals, including EOI and Proposals not recommended for funding. Administering Organisations whose Proposals are approved will be notified in a letter of offer that will indicate the funding to be offered, and provided with a copy of a Funding Agreement for signing. Outcomes, funding allocations and other relevant information about successful Proposals will be published on the ARC Website.

13.4.4 The Minister may vary the funding approval if the ARC recommends that the particular circumstances of the Centre warrant variation. Any variation or change
will accord with the *ARC Centres of Excellence* Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2014 and the Funding Agreement.

13.4.5 If the ARC funding approved for a Centre varies from the amount requested, pro rata adjustments may be made to the Administering, Collaborating and/or Partner Organisation contributions.

13.4.6 *ARC Centres of Excellence* must commence as required by the Funding Agreement. Failure to do so will result in termination of funding for the Centre.

14. **Appeals process**

14.1.1 Applicants for funding under the schemes of the NCGP are able to submit an appeal against administrative process issues. The appeals process is designed to ensure that the Applicant has been treated fairly and consistently in the context of the selection procedures.

14.1.2 Appeals will be considered only against administrative process issues and not against committee decisions, assessor ratings and comments or the assessment outcome.

14.1.3 Appeals must be submitted by the Administering Organisation on the ARC Appeals Form to the address stated under Contacts on page 4 of these Funding Rules, authorised by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), Chief Executive Officer or equivalent. Appeals must be received within 28 days of the date of the ARC notification to the Administering Organisation of the outcome of Proposals.

14.1.4 Applicants for funding may at any time seek to appeal ARC decisions using available external appeal options. Regarding available options for external appeal, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal does not have general power to review ARC decisions.

15. **Reporting requirements**

15.1 **Reporting**

15.1.1 Administering Organisations must submit reports to the ARC concerning the Centre, in the format and by the due dates detailed in the Funding Agreement or as amended from time to time. End of Year Reports and Audited Financial Statements will be required for financial reporting. Annual Reports and Final Reports will be required for research progress reporting. Details of ARC reporting requirements can be found on the ARC website at [http://www.arc.gov.au/applicants/reported_requirements.htm](http://www.arc.gov.au/applicants/reported_requirements.htm).

15.1.2 The Centre will be required to report on a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) common to all *ARC Centres of Excellence*, targets for which will be approved by the ARC and specified in the Funding Agreement. The Centre will also be required to report on a range of Centre-specific KPIs, targets for which are to be developed within the first six months of Centre operation and approved by the ARC for subsequent inclusion in the Funding Agreement.

15.1.3 The Centre will be required to submit Annual Reports to the ARC covering both their financial operations and their research performance.

15.1.4 If the ARC is not satisfied with the progress of any Centre, further payment of funds will not be made until satisfactory progress has been made on the Centre. If satisfactory progress is still not achieved within a reasonable period of time, the
funding may be terminated and all outstanding funding will be recovered by the ARC.

15.2 Performance reviews
15.2.1 Each ARC Centre of Excellence will undergo a rigorous and comprehensive external performance review arranged by the ARC in its fourth year of operation. Continuation of funding for the remaining years of operation will be dependent on the outcome of the review.

15.2.2 ARC Centres of Excellence funded in this selection round will not be eligible to apply for funding in future ARC Centres of Excellence selection rounds until the scheduled fourth-year review is completed.

15.2.3 Ad hoc reviews of ARC Centres of Excellence may be held at any time. A review will be triggered in special circumstances including, but not limited to:

a. a change of Centre Director; or

b. proposed transfer of the Centre to a new Administering Organisation.

15.2.4 Outcomes and feedback arising from the performance reviews as outlined above may inform future evaluations of the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme.

16. Fundamental principles of conducting research

16.1 Ethics and research practices
16.1.1 All EOIs, Proposals and ARC-funded research Programs should conform to the principles outlined in the following or their successor documents:

a. NHMRC/ARC/UA Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007);

b. as applicable, NHMRC/ARC/UA National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007);

c. as applicable, AIATSIS Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies (2011); and

d. as applicable, codes on animal research promulgated by the NHMRC.

If there is any conflict between a successor document and its predecessor, then the successor document prevails to the extent of any inconsistency.

16.2 Applicable law
16.2.1 The ARC is required to comply with the requirements of the Privacy Act 1988 and the Freedom of Information Act 1982.

16.3 Confidentiality
16.3.1 The ARC will treat information contained in an EOI or Proposal as confidential. However, the ARC may disclose information contained in an EOI or Proposal, or otherwise provided to the ARC, to the extent that the information is:

a. disclosed by the ARC to its advisers (including external assessors), officers, employees or other third parties in order to assess, evaluate or verify the accuracy or completeness of an EOI or Proposal;

b. disclosed to ARC personnel to enable effective management or auditing of the ARC Centres of Excellence scheme or any Funding Agreement;
c. disclosed by the ARC to the Minister;
d. shared by the ARC within the ARC’s organisation or with another
Commonwealth Department or agency, where this serves the
Commonwealth’s legitimate interests;
e. authorised or required by law to be disclosed;
f. disclosed in accordance with any other provision of these Funding Rules or the
Funding Agreement; or
g. in the public domain.

16.3.2 Where information contained in an EOI or Proposal is made available to third
parties for evaluation or assessment purposes the ARC will require the third parties
to maintain the confidentiality of the material.

16.3.3 Notwithstanding the above, and in addition to the exemptions listed in section
16.3.1, the ARC may publicise and report offers or awards of funding, including
information about the proposed research; the name of nominated Centre Directors,
CIs and/or PIs and their organisations; the name of the Administering Organisation
and any other parties involved in or associated with the Centre; the title and
summary descriptions of the Centre and its intended outcomes including the
national/community benefits that are expected to arise from the research; and the
level and nature of funding from the ARC. Administering Organisations should
ensure that information contained in the Centre title and summaries would not, if
released, compromise their own requirements for confidentiality (such as future
protection of intellectual property).

16.3.4 In making public information about a Proposal that has been approved for funding,
the ARC may use a project description, including title and summary, which may
differ from that provided in the Proposal.

16.4 Intellectual property

16.4.1 The ARC does not claim ownership of any intellectual property in an EOI or a
Proposal.

16.4.2 The Administering Organisation must adhere to an Intellectual Property policy,
approved by the Administering Organisation’s governing body, which has as one
of its aims the maximisation of benefits to Australia arising from research. Unless
otherwise approved by the Commonwealth, the Administering Organisation’s
Intellectual Property policy must comply with the National Principles of
Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research as amended from
time to time.

16.5 Incomplete or misleading information

16.5.1 It is a serious offence to provide false or misleading information to the
Commonwealth.

16.5.2 If the ARC considers that an EOI or Proposal is incomplete, inaccurate or contains
false or misleading information, the ARC may in its absolute discretion decide to
recommend that the EOI or Proposal not be shortlisted or approved for funding.

16.5.3 A decision under section 16.5.2 may be made by the ARC at any stage during
assessment of the EOI or Proposal and may result in non-progression of the EOI or
Proposal to the next level of assessment.
16.5.4 Examples of misleading information and misconduct include:

a. providing fictitious research opportunity and performance evidence;
b. plagiarism;
c. making false claims in publications records (such as describing a paper as accepted for publication when it has only been submitted);
d. making false claims in relation to qualifications and/or appointments;
e. making false certifications in the RMS certification; or
f. failing to disclose to the ARC the existence, and nature, of actual or potential Conflicts of Interest of any of the parties involved in the Proposal/Program (such as any affiliations or financial interest in any organisation that has a direct interest in the matter or outputs of the Program).
Appendix A. Eligible Organisations

The organisations listed below are eligible to apply for funding under these Funding Rules.

New South Wales
Australian Catholic University
Charles Sturt University
Macquarie University
Southern Cross University
The University of New England
The University of New South Wales
The University of Newcastle
The University of Sydney
University of Technology, Sydney
University of Western Sydney
University of Wollongong

Victoria
Deakin University
La Trobe University
MCD University of Divinity
Monash University
Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University)
Swinburne University of Technology
The University of Melbourne
University of Ballarat
Victoria University

Queensland
Bond University
Central Queensland University
Griffith University
James Cook University
Queensland University of Technology
The University of Queensland
University of Southern Queensland
University of the Sunshine Coast

Western Australia
Curtin University of Technology
Edith Cowan University
Murdoch University
The University of Notre Dame Australia
The University of Western Australia

South Australia
Flinders University
The University of Adelaide
University of South Australia
Tasmania
University of Tasmania

Northern Territory
Charles Darwin University
Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education

Australian Capital Territory
The Australian National University
University of Canberra