



## National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy 2025 Guidelines

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<b>Closing date and time:</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
<b>Commonwealth policy entity:</b>	<b>Department of Education</b>
<b>Administering entity</b>	<b>Department of Education</b>
<b>Enquiries:</b>	<b>If you have any questions, contact:</b> <b>Jessica Brosnan</b> <b>Director, National Research Infrastructure Program Management</b> <b>Questions may be sent at any time.</b>
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<b>Type of grant opportunity:</b>	<b>Closed non-competitive</b>

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## 2025 Guidelines process

**The National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives**

This grant opportunity is part of the above grant program which contributes to Department of Education (Education) Outcome 2.6. Education works with stakeholders to plan and design the grant program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024 \(CGRPs\)<sup>1</sup>](#).



**The grant opportunity opens**

These Guidelines implement recommendations of the 2021 National Research Infrastructure Roadmap. They complement earlier NCRIS Guidelines to maximise Australia's research endeavours and support the activities of NCRIS projects from 2024–25 to 2027–28. Eligible parties are invited to submit information on potential grants. We will publish the grant guidelines on [GrantConnect](#)



**You submit information to Education**

You provide information that demonstrates your project's suitability against the assessment criteria. You address all eligibility and other criteria to be considered for a grant.



**We assess all information received**

We assess all data collected during the submission process, which may include advice from sources other than submissions from entities seeking grants. We may seek further information during the submission process.



**We make grant recommendations**

We provide advice to the decision maker on the merits of the funding package based on the merits of each submission.



**Grant decisions are made**

The decision maker decides which submissions are successful.



**We notify you of the outcome**

We advise you of the outcome of your submission if it proposed a grant. We may not notify unsuccessful applicants until grant agreements have been executed with successful applicants.



**We enter into a grant agreement**

We will enter into a grant agreement with you if successful. The type of grant agreement is based on the nature of the grant and will be proportional to the risks involved. If you have been successful in a previous Research Infrastructure Investment Plan, your previous grant agreement may be varied to include this additional grant.



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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-principles-2024.pdf>

**Delivery of grant**

You undertake the grant activity as set out in your grant agreement. We manage the grant by working with you, monitoring your progress and making payments. We may seek to vary the activity following other activities to implement the 2021 and/or future NRI Roadmaps.



**Evaluation of the NCRIS**

We evaluate your specific grant activity and NCRIS as a whole. We base this on information you provide to us and that we collect from various sources.

# 1. Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS) grants to implement actions in response to the 2021 NRI Roadmap<sup>2</sup>.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant program and grant opportunity
- the eligibility and assessment criteria
- how grant submissions are considered and selected
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

## 2 About the grant program

### Objectives

The objectives of the NCRIS are:

- to catalyse and support a national network of research infrastructure projects
- through this network, support high quality research that will drive greater innovation in the Australian research sector and the economy more broadly
- offer seamless access to National Research Infrastructure to empower Australian researchers to address key national and global challenges which have been identified as a Step Change or Priority Area in the 2021 NRI Roadmap
- to support collaboration between researchers and other end users, such as industry both nationally and internationally.

### Context

NCRIS was established by the Government following the March 2004 **Final Report of the National Research Infrastructure Taskforce**. In establishing NCRIS, the Australian Government recognised its role in bringing a more strategic direction to Australia's investment in research infrastructure. In the 2004-05 Budget, the Government announced that NCRIS would be implemented to provide the focus and coordination required in the sector.

NCRIS adopts a principles-based approach. The principles have evolved over time and build on the foundation of previous Roadmaps. In the 2021 NRI Roadmap a new set of NRI Principles were adopted which are complemented by a separate set of NRI Investment Principles to guide funding decisions (Appendix A).

As a result of the NCRIS program, Australia today is the beneficiary of internationally recognised and highly efficient research infrastructure that consistently delivers outstanding returns. It has been developed through the implementation of strategic roadmaps and funded by successive Australian Governments, with support from state and territory governments, universities, and research agencies.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.education.gov.au/national-research-infrastructure/2021-national-research-infrastructure-roadmap>

The 2021 Roadmap found that funding stability since 2017-18 has resulted in the development of a strong suite of NRI that is well-positioned to support research in addressing national priorities, such as the National Reconstruction Fund priority areas and National Science and Research Priorities.

Step Change and Priority Areas identified in the 2021 Roadmap continue to be fundamental to create change in Australian research and innovation capability to address areas of national priority. The Step Change areas for this grant opportunity are:

1. Cutting-edge national digital research infrastructure
2. Research translation infrastructure to drive increased industry investment and sovereign research capability
3. World-leading environmental and climate infrastructure to help protect Australia's unique environment and underpin its response to climate change

The Priority Area for this grant opportunity is:

1. National Research Infrastructure Workforce

Together, these areas will deliver significant value and impact by boosting the ability of NRI to address national priorities, and in particular, Government priorities in specific areas and potentially in new ways.

We administer the program according to the [Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024 \(CGRPs\)<sup>3</sup>](#).

## 2.1 About the NCRIS 2025 grant opportunity

This grant opportunity is to provide funding that builds capability in the Step Change areas and the Priority Area to address national priorities, and in particular, Government priorities as described above in Section 2.

Specific investments for each of these Step Change and Priority Areas will be identified through an investment planning process (Appendix B).

Grants under these Guidelines are additional to grants in the NCRIS 2023 Guidelines and earlier NCRIS Guidelines.

Future grant opportunities may arise through the Government's implementation of Investment Plans expected in 2026.

## 3 Grant amount and grant periods

### 3.1 Grants available

The Australian Government has announced a total of \$4 billion over 12 years for NCRIS. From this amount, for this grant opportunity up to \$435 million is available for the four Priority and Step Change areas described in Section 2 over four years (2024-25 to 2027-28). Further funding may be provided to allow for any necessary, urgent or critical allocations.

- Each application will be funded based on assessment against the criteria.
- The Step Changes and Priority Area associated with this grant opportunity are:
  - National Digital Research Infrastructure
  - Research Translation Infrastructure

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.finance.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/commonwealth-grants-rules-and-principles-2024.pdf>

- Environment and Climate Infrastructure
- National Research Infrastructure Workforce
- Funding may not be fully granted in this opportunity. Funding not granted under this opportunity will be granted in future NCRIS grant opportunities. As mentioned in Section 2, future grant opportunities may arise through the Government’s implementation of Investment Plans expected in 2026.
- Funding is subject to indexation. If, in each financial year after, the appropriation available to pay this grant opportunity is reduced as a result of applying indexation using a method specified by the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth may reduce the Grant payable for that financial year by an amount equal to the effect of the indexation on the Grant payable for that financial year.

There is no set minimum or maximum grant amount, but grants cannot exceed the amount of available funds.

You are required to contribute towards the grant activities and seek other contributions. While there is no required minimum of other contributions to be achieved, it is expected other contributions will at least match the NCRIS grant for each project.

### **3.2 Grant period**

The maximum grant period is four years (i.e., 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2028).

You must complete your grant by 30 June 2028. Following the grant period, a final report is required within six months.

## **4 Eligibility criteria**

### **4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?**

This grant opportunity is a closed, non-competitive selection process. Eligible organisations are therefore those that have previously received funding through either the NCRIS 2018 Guidelines, the NCRIS 2021 Guidelines, the NCRIS 2022 Guidelines and/or the NCRIS 2023 Guidelines to implement NRI facilities, or organisations identified through the investment plan process (Appendix B) who are positioned to meet needs not covered by existing projects. The 2021 Roadmap recommended government provide continuity and long-term funding to NRI. It found that Australia’s current network of national research infrastructure has been extremely successful in supporting national priorities and international collaboration.

## **5 What the grant money can be used for**

### **5.1 Eligible grant activities**

To be eligible your grant activity must, subject to these guidelines:

- be in line with the objectives of NCRIS (see Section 2)
- provide NRI in line with the 2021 Roadmap definition, i.e.
  - “NRI comprises the nationally significant assets, facilities, services and associated expertise to support leading-edge research and innovation. It is accessible to publicly and privately funded users across Australia and internationally”
- provide NRI in line with the 2021 Roadmap Step Changes or Priority Areas listed in Section 2



- be agreed to in writing by Education. This is typically done through the Activity Plan.

## **5.2 Eligible expenditure**

You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure you have incurred on agreed project activities.

Eligible expenditure items are:

- operation, management and governance costs
- salaries and on-costs for staff
- infrastructure maintenance
- new or upgraded infrastructure
- utilities
- rent
- consumables
- travel, engagement and outreach activities
- indirect costs of researchers using NCRIS infrastructure, such as researcher accommodation, where it is necessary for the supervision of research experiments and no reasonable alternative exists, for example the infrastructure is located out of a metropolitan area
- project wind-up for any project identified for defunding
- scoping activities required to effectively investigate potential new projects identified in Investment Plans or as otherwise determined by the Minister for Education
- other, single cost activities that enhance the research infrastructure to be openly accessible by Australian researchers (examples might include international access or membership fees)
- other agreed expenses necessary for the proper functioning of the national research infrastructure project (examples might include software subscriptions).

We may update our definition of eligible and ineligible expenditure from time to time. The version of the Guidelines under which your grant was awarded applies to your grant activity.

Not all expenditure on your project may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may give additional guidance on eligible expenditure if required.

## **5.3 What the grant money cannot be used for**

You cannot use the grant for the following activities:

- to cover costs incurred before the execution of your grant agreement;
- approval, compliance or other activities associated with Commonwealth Property Management Framework and/or Two-Stage-Capital Works processes
- administrative activities that are not directly applicable to, and additionally incurred for, the operation of the project, unless the primary role of your entity is the management of a National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy project
- the same specific, identifiable costs for which you receive funding from another Commonwealth government source. For example, grant money should only meet residual and unmet costs associated with research infrastructure funded in whole or in part by the Australian Research Council's Linkage Infrastructure, Equipment and Facilities program.

## 6 The assessment criteria

Grants under these Guidelines are to extend the NRI available to researchers through NCRIS projects in areas that address national priorities, in particular the National Reconstruction Fund priority areas, the National Science and Research priorities and other Government priorities.

Achieving value with money (as defined in section 14 Glossary) is a prime consideration. Grants as described in your submission are considered against the following criteria, as well as an overall consideration of value with money:

1. Funding will support activities and joint projects that:
  - support national priorities, in particular Government priorities
  - build Australian capability in the Step Change and Priority areas, as described in Section 2.1.Weighting: 30 per cent
2. Funding will support the development of a cohesive suite of NRI that strives to create an ecosystem of seamless services for researchers, which may include
  - how activities proposed by an NCRIS Project or Facility, in conjunction with other activities proposed by an NCRIS Project or Projects (other than Joint applications – see Section 7.2), address national priorities, in particular Government priorities, step changes or priority areasWeighting: 20 per cent
3. Funding will support NRI that facilitates and enhances industry and international engagement  
Weighting: 15 per cent
4. The intended impact of the funded NRI, including
  - scale and scope of benefits to Australian researchers and their international partners, including, but not limited to, enhanced access to existing NRI, access to new NRI, and the expected impacts on the timeliness, quality and scope of research that can be conductedWeighting: 15 per cent
5. Funding will balance the long-term nature of NRI development, together with changes in national priorities and identified gaps in the research and innovation system  
Weighting: 10 per cent
6. Governance arrangements for the Project or Facility  
Weighting: 5 per cent
7. Proportion of co-investment from states and territories, university, public and private sources  
Weighting: 5 per cent

## 7 How to submit information

Eligible applicants will be sent instructions on how to submit information.

You should propose to Education how you will expend grant funding on activities. As well as addressing each of the assessment criteria above, the submission should address:

- the objective of the activity
- anticipated achievements

- key challenges and risks
- duration
- methodology
- key performance indicators and associated targets and dates
- the budget for the activity.

If you were selected to provide information, you are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code 1995](#) and we will investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should contact us immediately at [NCRIS@education.gov.au](mailto:NCRIS@education.gov.au).

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

We will acknowledge that we have received your application within three working days.

### 7.1 Attachments to the application

If you have not previously received funding as described in Section 4.1 but have been invited to submit information we may require the following documents with your application:

- evidence of funding strategy, e.g. financial statements, loan agreements, cash flow documents
- evidence of support from your organisation’s board, CEO or equivalent
- trust deed
- accountant declaration

You must attach supporting documentation to the application form in line with the instructions provided within the form. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

### 7.2 Joint (consortia) project delivery

We recognise that some organisations may want to join together as a group to deliver a project.

In these circumstances, you must appoint a ‘lead organisation’. Only the lead organisation can submit the application form and enter into a grant agreement with the Commonwealth. The application must identify all other members of the proposed group. A joint consortia arrangement does not have any impact on the total grant funds to be allocated or reduce funding for other individual organisations which apply.

You must have a formal arrangement in place with all parties prior to execution of the agreement.

### 7.3 Timing of grant opportunity processes

You must submit an information submission between the opening and closing dates that will be provided as outlined in Section 7. The expected timeframe for processing your submission is outlined in Table 1. We cannot accept late submissions.

Table 1: Expected timing for this grant opportunity

Activity	Timeframe
Assessment of submissions	6 weeks
Approval of outcomes of selection process	2 weeks

Activity	Timeframe
Negotiations and award of grant agreements	4 weeks
Notification to unsuccessful applicants	2 weeks
Earliest start date of projects/activities	Date of execution of your grant agreement or variation on or after 1 July 2024
End date of grant activity or agreement	30 June 2028

#### 7.4 Questions during the submission process

If you have any questions, contact Education by emailing [NCRIS@education.gov.au](mailto:NCRIS@education.gov.au).

Education will endeavour to respond to emailed questions within three working days.

## 8 The grant selection process

### 8.1 Consideration of potential grants

We will assess your submission against the assessment criteria (see Section 6). In considering your submission against the assessment criteria, we may consider the following factors:

- the overall objectives to be achieved in providing the grant
- how the grant will achieve value with relevant money\* (\*as defined in the *Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles 2024*).
- the extent to which the evidence in your submission demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the outcomes/objectives
- how the grant will target support to researchers and research groups in line with national priorities, in particular Government priorities, step changes or priority areas
- how the grant will complement research infrastructure funded through the NCRIS 2022 and NCRIS 2023 Guidelines.

### 8.2 Who will assess submissions?

An assessment committee will assess each submission on its merit before recommending which grant submissions should be awarded a grant. The assessment committee will be made up of an assessment panel that will make recommendations to the Assessment Panel Chairperson:

- Assessment Panel Chairperson – Assistant Secretary, Research Policy and Programs Branch
- Assessment Panel Member – Director
- Assessment Panel Member – Director
- Assessment Panel Member – Assistant Director
- Assessment Panel Member – Assistant Director
- Assessment Panel Member – Policy Officer
- Assessment Panel Member – Program Officer

We may ask any advisory body established to provide advice and guidance to Education, or the Minister for Education, to inform the assessment process.

We may ask external experts/advisors to inform the assessment process. Any expert/advisor, who is not a Commonwealth Official, will be required/expected to perform their duties in accordance with the CGRPs.

The assessment committee may seek additional information about you or your submission. They may do this from within the Commonwealth, even if the sources are not nominated by you as referees. The assessment committee may also consider information about you or your application that is available through the normal course of business.

The assessment committee recommends to the Program Delegate which submissions to approve for a grant.

### **8.3 Who will approve grants?**

The Minister decides which grants to approve taking into account the recommendations of the assessment committee and National Research Infrastructure Advisory Group, and the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program.

The Minister's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

## **9 Notification of grant outcomes**

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing. If you are successful, we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

You can submit a new submission for the same grant, or a similar grant in any future grant opportunities under the program. You should include new or more information to address any weaknesses that may have prevented your previous submission from being successful.

### **9.1 Feedback on your submission**

If you are unsuccessful, you may ask for feedback within one month of being advised of the outcome. We will endeavour to give feedback within one month of your request.

## **10 Successful grant submissions**

### **10.1 The grant agreement**

You must enter into a legally binding grant agreement with the Commonwealth.

Each agreement has general terms and conditions that cannot be changed. Sample grant agreements are available on GrantConnect.

We must execute a grant agreement with you before we can make any payments. We are not responsible for any of your expenditure until a grant agreement is executed. If you choose to start your grant activities before you have an executed grant agreement, you do so at your own risk.

Your grant agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate. We will identify these in the agreement.

The Commonwealth may recover grant funds if there is a breach of the grant agreement.

### **Standard Grant Agreement**

We will use a Departmental Grant Agreement based on the standard grant agreement.

You will have 30 days from the date of a written offer to execute the grant agreement with the Commonwealth ('execute' means both you and the Commonwealth have signed the agreement). During this time, we will work with you to finalise details.

The offer may lapse if both parties do not sign the grant agreement within this time. Under certain circumstances, we may extend this period. We base the approval of your grant on the information you provide in your application.

You may request changes to the grant agreement. However, we will review any required changes to these details to ensure they do not impact the grant as approved by the Program Delegate.

## **10.2 How we pay the grant**

The grant agreement will state the:

- maximum grant amount to be paid
- schedule of payments
- schedule of deliverable milestones
- reporting requirements

We will not exceed the maximum grant amount under any circumstances. If you incur extra costs, you must meet them yourself.

We will make payments according to an agreed schedule set out in the grant agreement. Payments are subject to satisfactory progress on the grant activity.

## **10.3 Grants Payments and GST**

Based on your entity type, your payment may be 'GST Inclusive'. If you are registered for the [Goods and Services Tax \(GST\)](#), where applicable, we will add GST to your grant payment and issue you with a [Recipient Created Tax Invoice](#).

Grants are assessable income for taxation purposes, unless exempted by a taxation law. We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#).<sup>4</sup> We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

# **11 Announcement of grants**

If successful, your grant (or subsequent variations to your grant) will be listed on the GrantConnect website in accordance with the requirements in paragraph 5 of the [CGRPs](#).

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

## 12 How we monitor your grant activity

### 12.1 Keeping us informed

You should let us know if anything is likely to affect your grant activity or organisation.

We need to know of any key changes to your organisation or its business activities, particularly if they affect your ability to complete your grant, carry on business and pay debts due.

You must also inform us of any changes to your:

- name
- addresses
- nominated contact details
- bank account details.

If you become aware of a breach of terms and conditions under the grant agreement, you must contact us immediately.

You must notify us of events relating to your grant and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

### 12.2 Reporting

You must submit reports in line with the grant agreement. We will provide sample templates for these reports as appendices in the grant agreement. We will expect you to report on:

- progress against agreed grant activity milestones and outcomes
- contributions of participants directly related to the grant activity
- expenditure of the grant.

The amount of detail you provide in your reports should be relative to the size, complexity and grant amount.

We will monitor progress by assessing reports you submit and may conduct site visits or request records to confirm details of your reports if necessary. Occasionally we may need to re-examine claims, seek further information or request an independent audit of claims and payments.

#### **Progress reports**

Progress reports must:

- include evidence of your progress towards completion of agreed activities and outcomes
- show the total eligible expenditure incurred to date
- be in the format provided in the grant agreement
- be submitted by the report due date (you can submit reports ahead of time if you have completed relevant activities).

We will only make grant payments when we receive satisfactory progress reports.

You must discuss any reporting delays with us as soon as you become aware of them.

#### **Ad-hoc reports**

We may ask you for ad-hoc reports on your grant. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the grant activity.

#### **Final report**

When you complete the grant activity or project, you must submit a final report.

Final reports must:

- identify if and how outcomes have been achieved
- include the agreed evidence as specified in the grant agreement
- identify the total eligible expenditure incurred
- be submitted within six months of completion in the format provided in the grant agreement.

### **12.3 Audited financial acquittal report**

We may ask you to provide a declaration that the grant money was spent in accordance with the grant agreement and to report on any underspends of the grant money.

We may ask you to provide an independently audited financial acquittal report. A financial acquittal report will verify that you spent the grant in accordance with the grant agreement.

### **12.4 Grant agreement variations**

We recognise that unexpected events may affect your progress. In these circumstances, you can request a variation to your grant agreement. You can request a variation by sending a written request to [NCRIS@education.gov.au](mailto:NCRIS@education.gov.au).

You should not assume that a variation request will be successful. We will consider your request based on provisions in the grant agreement and the likely impact on achieving outcomes.

### **12.5 Compliance visits**

We may visit you during or at the completion of your grant activity to review your compliance with the grant agreement. We will provide you with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

### **12.6 Record keeping**

We may also inspect the records you are required to keep under the grant agreement.

### **12.7 Evaluation**

We will evaluate the grant program to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application and reports for this purpose. We may also interview you or ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

We may contact you up to one year after you finish your grant for more information to assist with this evaluation.

### **12.8 Acknowledgement**

The program logo should be used on all materials related to grants under the program. Whenever the logo is used, the publication must also acknowledge the Commonwealth as follows:

‘NCRIS – an Australian Government initiative’.

If you make a public statement about a grant activity or project funded under the program, we require you to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

‘This activity received grant funding from the Australian Government through the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy.’



## 13 Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRPs.

These guidelines may be changed from time-to-time by Education. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

### 13.1 Enquiries and feedback

Education's Complaint Handling Policy, found at [www.education.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/complaints](http://www.education.gov.au/about-us/contact-us/complaints), applies to complaints about this grant opportunity. All complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing.

Any questions you have about grant decisions for this grant opportunity should be sent to [NCRIS@education.gov.au](mailto:NCRIS@education.gov.au).

If you do not agree with the way Education has handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Education.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072  
Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)  
Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)

### 13.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if Education staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or a member an external panel
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform Education in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the Australian [Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13\(7\)\)](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

### 13.3 Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone else for the primary purpose for which it was collected, unless an exemption applies.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything, which if done by Education would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Act.

### **13.4 Confidential Information**

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without our prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you, or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to non-disclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all of the three conditions below:

1. you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
2. the information is commercially sensitive
3. revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- the National Research Infrastructure Advisory Group, external experts/advisors and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations

- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary, and
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

### **13.5 Freedom of information**

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By email:           Freedom of Information Coordinator  
                          FOI@education.gov.au

## 14 Glossary

Term	Definition
accountable authority	see subsection 12(2) of the <a href="#">Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</a>
administering entity	when an entity is responsible for the administration of part, or all of the grant administration processes
assessment criteria	are the specified principles or standards, against which applications will be judged.
commencement date	the expected start date for the grant activity
completion date	the expected date that the grant activity must be completed, and the grant spent by
co-sponsoring entity	when two or more entities are responsible for the policy and the appropriation for outcomes associated with it
date of effect	can be the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.
decision maker	the person who makes a decision to award a grant
eligibility criteria	refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria will apply in addition to eligibility criteria.
Commonwealth entities	a Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act
<a href="#">Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles (CGRPs)</a>	establish the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework and articulate the expectations for all non-corporate Commonwealth entities in relation to grants administration. Under this overarching framework, non-corporate Commonwealth entities undertake grants administration based on the mandatory requirements and key principles of grants administration.

Term	Definition
grant	<p>for the purposes of the CGRPs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. under which relevant money<sup>5</sup> or other <a href="#">Consolidated Revenue Fund</a> (CRF) money<sup>6</sup> is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and</li> <li>b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.</li> </ul>
grant activity/activities	refers to the project/tasks/services that the grantee is required to undertake
grant agreement	sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant
<a href="#">GrantConnect</a>	is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs
grant opportunity	refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
grant program	a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single Education Portfolio Budget Statement Program.
grantee	the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant
information submission (or application)	proposal made to Education for the grant opportunity.
Minister	The Australian Government Minister for Education

<sup>5</sup> Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

<sup>6</sup> Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money and PGPA Rule section 29 Other CRF money.

Term	Definition
National Reconstruction Fund priority areas	<p><a href="#">the priority areas</a> that the National Reconstruction Fund will drive investments in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• renewables and low emission technologies</li> <li>• medical science</li> <li>• value-add in resources</li> <li>• transport</li> <li>• value-add in agriculture, forestry and fisheries</li> <li>• defence capability</li> <li>• enabling capabilities, such as data science, artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, and quantum.</li> </ul>
National Research Infrastructure Advisory Group (NRIAG)	<p>expert advisory group as defined on Education’s website, <a href="#">The National Research Infrastructure Advisory Group - Department of Education, Australian Government</a>.</p>
National Science and Research Priorities	<p>the revitalised <a href="#">National Science and Research Priorities</a> emphasise the science and research collaborations Australia will need to solve its greatest challenges. The priorities are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transitioning to a net zero future</li> <li>• supporting healthy and thriving communities</li> <li>• elevating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders knowledge systems</li> <li>• protecting and restoring Australia’s environment</li> <li>• building a secure and resilient nation.</li> </ul>
PBS Program	<p>described within the entity’s <a href="#">Portfolio Budget Statement</a>, PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high-level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower levels, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities.</p>
Priority Areas	<p>Identified in Chapter 5 of the 2021 NRI Roadmap</p>
selection criteria	<p>comprise eligibility criteria and assessment criteria.</p>
selection process	<p>the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria.</p>
Step Change(s)	<p>Identified in Chapter 6 of the 2021 NRI Roadmap</p>

Term	Definition
value with relevant money	<p>is a judgement based on the grant proposal representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources and determined from a variety of considerations.</p> <p>When administering a grant opportunity, an official should consider the relevant financial and non-financial costs and benefits of each proposal including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of the project proposal and activities;</li> <li>• fitness for purpose of the proposal in contributing to government objectives;</li> <li>• that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the grantee and government's outcomes being achieved; and</li> <li>• the potential grantee's relevant experience and performance history.</li> </ul>

## Appendix A. Principles

The NRI Principles as set out in the 2021 Roadmap are:

- NRI maximises the capability of the research and innovation system to contribute to economic outcomes, national security, social wellbeing and environmental sustainability
- Research infrastructure is collaborative and planned in a way to provide a network of capabilities that serve the national interest and are aligned to government priorities
- NRI includes people, skills and knowledge, data, processes and equipment
- NRI resources are focused to achieve maximum impact in national priority areas
- NRI is managed to deliver maximum impact as efficiently as possible. Synergies with complementary and related capabilities drive an ecosystem of support for researchers
- NRI is widely accessible to researchers and industry across Australia. Barriers to access are as low as practicable
- NRI enhances participation of researchers in, and provides access to, the international research system
- NRI is respectful to Indigenous cultures and knowledges, and adopts the principles of Indigenous self-determination, leadership, impact and value, and sustainability and accountability as outlined in the AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research

The NRI Investment Principles as set out in the 2021 Roadmap are:

- Funding for investment in NRI is in areas of national significance that can demonstrably support Australia's research and innovation system
- Investment should balance the long-term nature of NRI development, together with changes in national priorities and identified gaps in the research and innovation system
- Investment should produce NRI that facilitates and enhances industry and international engagement
- Investment cases describe the intended impact and reflect the resources and governance needed to develop and manage world-class research infrastructure capability. These include the equipment, processes, data, skills and knowledge needed to deliver maximum value
- Investment encourages and leverages opportunities for co-investment from states and territories, university, public and private sectors
- Investment supports the development of a cohesive suite of NRI that strives to create an ecosystem of seamless services for researchers



## Appendix B. Investment Plan Process

Investment Plans in each Step Change and Priority area as described in Section 2 will be guided by the current NRI Principles and NRI Investment Principles. Experts and advisors will also inform the investment plan process.

The investments identified will:

- position Australia and its research communities as a world leader in key areas of research that rely on that Step Change or Priority area.
- consider whether Australia should make investments that explicitly focus on developing world leading capabilities
- provide a set of investment proposals and the potential impact on Australia's research capacity and outcomes of differing levels of additional NCRIS investment

The investment plan process is outlined below:

### *Initial consultation*

- An open survey focused on key aspects of Australia's existing and potential research infrastructure in the Step Change or Priority Area described in Section 2 of the NCRIS 2025 Guidelines.
- Targeted consultations.

### *Investment needs identified*

- A prioritised set of investment needs identified through the initial set of consultations will be created.
- These requirements will then be shared with eligible applicants identified through the initial consultations.

### *Proposals sought*

- At this stage, the eligible applicants will be invited to put in a proposal to the 2025 NCRIS Guidelines to meet the investment needs identified.

### *Draft investment plan*

- A draft set of investments are proposed. Stakeholder consultation will then be sought on the draft set of investments.

### *Final investment plan*

- Consultation responses considered and final investment plan endorsed by the National Research Infrastructure Advisory Group.
- Minister approval.