Australia's Economic Accelerator

**Program Administrative Guidelines
2025 AEA Ignite**

Version 2.0 last updated July 2025

Contents

1. About the AEA program

Australia's Economic Accelerator (AEA) supports collaboration between university research teams and industry to take research results closer to commercial reality. It is administered by the Department of Education (department) and will focus on university-led projects with commercial potential which address at least one of the Australian Government identified priority areas of the economy, outlined in the *National Reconstruction Fund Corporation (Priority Areas) Declaration 2023*.

AEA is a program established under Part 2-3 of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA). These Program Administrative Guidelines (Guidelines) should be read in conjunction with Division 42 of HESA, Chapter 5 of the Other Grants Guidelines (Research) 2017 (OGGRs) and any conditions imposed on grant funding by the Minister for Education's delegate under subsection 41-25(2) of HESA (Conditions of Grant). HESA, the OGGRs and any Conditions of Grant (CoG) are the primary source of requirements for AEA with which providers must comply and set out additional detail about AEA.

AEA is different from most university research grant schemes. It is exclusively targeted at the experimental development end of the research and development spectrum and growing university-industry collaboration. The AEA is designed to shift the research and development dial by supporting translation and commercialisation of Australia's world-class university research.

AEA has 2 stages, Ignite and Innovate. AEA Ignite is explained in section 1.4 of these guidelines.

AEA Innovate provides mid-stage research commercialisation grants of up to $5 million and up to 24 months, for universities, in partnership with businesses, to build prototypes and pilot systems to establish proof-of-scale. Proof-of-scale is the point at which a prototype has been demonstrated to work, at a pre-commercial scale, in an operational environment.

AEA Ignite and Innovate are independent streams, and funding for AEA Innovate is not dependent on having received funding for AEA Ignite.

These Guidelines apply to AEA Ignite grant applications. The purpose of the Guidelines is to set out the rules that govern the department's administration of AEA Ignite, including the requirements for applications, eligibility selection processes to be followed and the selection criteria that will be used to recommend grant funding.

Defined terms used in these Guidelines are listed in the Glossary.

1.1 AEA Ignite grant process

Australia's Economic Accelerator (AEA) is designed to achieve Australian Government objectives for commercialisation of university research. This competitive grant opportunity is part of the AEA which contributes to the department's Outcome 2.6 to increase Research Capacity: *Increase production, use and awareness of research knowledge and to improve collaboration between government, industry and the research sector in the production of research knowledge.*

Step 1 - Grant round opens
The department publishes the Program Administrative Guidelines (Guidelines) on the AEA website. AEA Ignite applications will be accepted in rounds and assessments of applications will be made between round closing dates.

Step 2 – Applications submitted
The Lead Organisation completes the application and addresses all the eligibility and selection criteria to be considered for a grant. Applications are submitted online through the Research Management System (RMS)

Step 3 - Administrative check
The department checks that all applications contain mandatory information per these Guidelines. Applications that do not include all mandatory information will not proceed to further assessment.

Step 4 - Assessment
Projects will be scored against the selection criteria per section 5.1 of these Guidelines by 2 independent assessors from a technical expert panel.

Step 5 - Moderation
Assessed applications are moderated to ensure total round outcomes are calibrated effectively.

Step 6 - Decision
Recommendations on funding are provided to the Program Delegate for decision.

Step 7 - Notification
The Lead Organisation (LO) will receive notification of the outcome of their application through RMS.

Step 8 - Conditions of Grant (CoG) executed
Following notification, the department will liaise with successful LO's regarding the CoGs. The Program Delegate executes the CoGs.

Step 9 - Delivery of project
The Lead Entrepreneur leads the completion of the grant activity in partnership with the LO.

Step 10 - Evaluation of AEA Ignite
The department will periodically evaluate AEA in terms of its efficiency, impact and continued need.

1.2 Program objectives

The objectives of AEA are to:

- support higher education providers to bridge the divide between basic research activities and commercialisation outcomes, through closer engagement with industry partners,
- support research activities aligned to government identified priority areas, undertaken by higher education providers,
- boost the research capability of higher education providers to conduct research with high commercialisation potential,
- foster a culture of collaboration between universities and industry, including greater job mobility and career development opportunities within both sectors,
- encourage industry engagement with university research, boosting research capability in areas with the greatest potential for economic impact.

1.3 Program outcomes

AEA is expected to realise the following outcomes.

Short-to-medium term:

- increased confidence in the university and industry sectors to collaborate and invest in research and development, and commercialisation,
- an increased uptake in applied research pathways and career opportunities, with researchers gaining commercial and entrepreneurial skills in addition to building strong commercial and industry relationships,
- increased numbers of research projects proceeding towards commercialisation, and
- increased job mobility between the university and private sectors.

Medium-to-long term:

- an uplift in commercial outputs from Australian university research, increasing Australia's sovereign capability,
- increased collaboration between universities and industry, leading to better-targeted innovation,
- increased business investment in research and development, and competitiveness in the government identified priority areas, and
- an Australian economy which is stronger, more complex, and more resilient.

1.4 About the AEA Ignite grant opportunity

AEA Ignite grants are designed to support early-stage research commercialisation through competitive grants of up to $500,000 for a maximum period of 12 months. These grants are available for researchers at Australian universities to complete basic research, laboratory testing and establish proof-of-concept in an industry-relevant environment.

The program is administered by the Department of Education (the department) and is available for eligible projects with research translation and commercial potential that address at least one of the government identified priority areas outlined in section 2.7 of these guidelines.

It is expected the vast majority of the project activities and funding expenditure will occur in Australia. There may be some rare cases where components of a project may be undertaken overseas if the activity cannot be undertaken in Australia and is critical to the successful completion of the project. Any overseas components will need to be agreed by the Program Delegate prior to funding being awarded.

The program supports projects that **commence** at Technology Readiness Level[1] (TRL) 3 to 5. There is no requirement for AEA Ignite applications to move to a higher classification of TRL by completion. However, if a project does not expect to increase the anticipated TRL, the project must demonstrate progress within the existing TRL of the project. Where projects are above TRL 5, Lead Organisations should consider applying for an AEA Innovate grant opportunity.

The total grant amount awarded will be determined by the Program Delegate following assessment and moderation of all applications in each round. Applicants are encouraged to bid for a specific amount of funding between the minimum of $50,000 and maximum of $500,000 of grant funding per project. Over time, multiple grants may be awarded for different phases of a single project up to a maximum amount of $500,000.

It is important to note that any AEA Seed funding previously awarded to projects will count towards the total $500,000 project cap on AEA Ignite grants. Funding awarded under AEA Ignite is eligible for inclusion as research income in the Higher Education Research Data Collection.

1.5 Important dates

The opening and closing dates for applications for AEA Ignite rounds will be published on the AEA website. Applications must be submitted after the designated opening date and before the closing date and time. Late submissions will not be accepted. Unless otherwise specified, grant rounds will open at 9am AEST or ADST and close at 5pm AEST or ADST.

Lead Organisations that have commenced but did not submit an application for an AEA Innovate round before that round closed will need to begin their application again when the next relevant AEA Innovate round opens.

1.6 Grant period

Project activity **must** be completed between 3 to 12 months from the project's agreed start date as stipulated in the CoG. After this period, the successful Lead Organisation will be expected to report on the final outcomes of the grant.

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[1] https://www.dst.defence.gov.au/sites/default/files/basic_pages/documents/TRL%20Explanations_1.pdf

2. Eligibility criteria

Applications must satisfy all the eligibility criteria outlined in these guidelines in order to progress to an assessment against the selection criteria. The department cannot waive the eligibility criteria under any circumstances. The Program Delegate makes the final decision about whether an application meets the eligibility criteria.

To be eligible for funding under the program, grant activities must at a minimum:

- include one, and only one, Lead Organisation from the Table A and Table B providers listed in HESA or bodies corporate that are in the 'University College' provider category listed in the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*
- demonstrate alignment with one of the national priority areas as outlined in the OGGRs section 2.7.
- demonstrate alignment to TRL 3, 4 or 5, and progress within the TRL during the life of the project.
    - There is no expectation that all projects will progress to a higher TRL by completion of the grant activity
- Include one, and only one, Lead Entrepreneur employed by the Lead Organisation that commits to work on the project for a minimum of 0.5 FTE over the grant period
- Include a minimum contribution of at least 10 per cent of the total grant funding requested in cash and/or in-kind support from the combined participating organisations included in the application.
- If seeking $200,000 or more in grant funding, must identify and cost at least 2 phases of work and provide a description in the Budget Explanation of the application form in RMS (further information on this can be found in the *Applicant's Guide*)
- be completed within 3 to 12 months of the project's commencement date (note: this only applies to the primary project activity).

Note: Applications will not be considered eligible for funding if they do not meet all the above criteria.

2.1 Eligible organisations

Only the Lead Organisation is eligible to apply for grants under AEA Ignite. To be eligible for funding under the program a *Lead Organisation* must be:

- a provider listed in Table A or Table B of HESA; or
- a body corporate that meets the 'University College' provider category listed in the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*

There is no limit to the number of applications submitted per Lead Organisation.

2.2 Lead Organisations and Collaborating Organisations

The organisation that submits the application is the **Lead Organisation**. The Program Delegate will approve grants to, and impose grant conditions on, the Lead Organisation.

Applications must be submitted by an office bearer of the Lead Organisation who is authorised to do so on behalf of the Lead Organisation – for example, a Bursar, senior officer of a Research Office,

senior officer of a Technology Transfer Office, or senior officer of an Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research). Prior to submitting their application, the Lead Organisation must ensure that they have sought relevant research commercialisation advice and review from their organisation.

All other Table A and Table B providers, and other eligible bodies corporate, named on the application will be considered **Collaborating Organisations**. Applications may include multiple Collaborating Organisations. Collaborating Organisations are not required, but their inclusion may improve an application's performance against the selection criteria. Collaborating Organisations are encouraged to contribute at least one Collaborating Entrepreneur to carry out the responsibilities specified in the application.

2.3 Partner Organisations

A **Partner Organisation** is any participating and contributing organisation that does not fit the criteria of a Lead or Collaborating Organisation. For example, a Partner Organisation could be a business, body, or agency with an interest in the success of the project. Multiple Partner Organisations may be included in an application. Partner Organisations are encouraged to contribute at least one Partner Entrepreneur to carry out the responsibilities specified in the application.

Partnerships are encouraged to ensure the proposed research is of relevance to industry and end users, and to support translation of research outcomes into practice. Inclusion of Partner Organisations should be used to strengthen the commercialisation potential of the project and be clearly explained in the application. Partner Organisations are not mandatory, however, applications with established investment partners will be prioritised.

Each Partner Organisation must:

- be an Australian business entity that is a corporation; a proprietary limited company; or a non-profit organisation with an Australian Business Number (ABN) or Australian Company Number (ACN)
- operate in Australia
- participate in the project within the grant period
- provide evidence of new or on-going collaboration directly with the Lead Organisation and Collaborating Organisations, where appropriate
- include a signed letter of support in the application (using the Partner Organisation Declaration in Appendix C)
- demonstrate that they are not part of the excluded category listed below by providing the last 2 years' worth of financial records or other equivalent documents for each Partner Organisation as part of the application. This could include:
  - o current and historical company information, and
  - o roles and relationship extract, and
  - o current Capitalisation (CAP) table showing, as a minimum, a list of shareholders and percentage of shares held.

An organisation cannot be a Partner Organisation if it is:

- a Lead or Collaborating Organisation
- an intellectual property (IP) holding company or university Technology Transfer Office (or equivalent)

Partner Organisation cash contributions cannot be sourced from funds awarded or appropriated by the Commonwealth for the purposes of research, including the Research and Development Tax Incentive (R&D Tax Incentive or R&DTI), nor from funds previously used to leverage government research or research infrastructure funding.

Where a Partner Organisation is a start-up and/or spin-out company controlled by any of the organisations or participants listed in the application, those involved in the proposed activities must act with the highest standards of probity in disclosing and managing conflicts of interest in this area. Each individual or organisation with an actual, potential, or perceived financial or non-financial interest or role in the spin-out or start-up company must disclose their conflict of interest and provide strategies on how this conflict will be managed in the application.

2.4 Types of named participants

Named participants are the individuals nominated for key roles identified in the AEA Ignite application. These are:

- Lead Entrepreneurs (LE)
- Collaborating Entrepreneurs (CE), and
- Partner Entrepreneurs (PE).

Lead Organisations must nominate one, and only one, LE to lead the project. Other participating Entrepreneurs from the Lead Organisation must be nominated as CEs.

All named participants in an application must satisfy the eligibility criteria for the role they are to perform and take responsibility for the authorship and intellectual content of the application.

Limits on the number of applications and projects per named participant

This section only applies to LE, CE and PE involved in a project and is designed to ensure that named participants have the capacity to undertake each project in which they are involved.

It is the responsibility of the Lead Organisation to determine if applying for funding for a project under AEA Ignite will affect the Lead Entrepreneur's ability to carry out their regular duties whilst leading an AEA Ignite grant.

The Program Delegate may decide not to provide a grant to Lead Organisations in circumstances where the department assesses that the named participants in the project will be unable to carry out their duties as specified in the application.

Lead Entrepreneurs (LEs) must:

- make a commitment to work on the project for a minimum of 0.5 FTE over the grant period, which can be funded from AEA Ignite grant funds
- take significant intellectual responsibility for the conception and implementation of the project and for any strategic decisions required in its pursuit and the communication of results
- ensure effective supervision, support and mentoring at all times of project personnel, and
- be engaged by the Lead Organisation at the commencement date of the grant and for its duration.

Individuals engaged by the Lead Organisation may be employees, contractors, PhD students, or hold another position such as a statutory appointment or honorary position. If the Lead Organisation

intends for the Lead Entrepreneur to be a PhD student, it is essential for the Lead Organisation to ensure that they remain compliant with other requirements relating to PhD students, such as those in the guidelines made for the purposes of Part 2-4 of HESA, currently the *Commonwealth Scholarship Guidelines (Research) 2017,* and the Lead Organisation's RTP Scholarship Policy if one exists.

LEs are not required to be engaged by the Lead Organisation at the point of submission of the application. However, they must have a contractual or other formal relationship (that meets the requirements listed above) with the Lead Organisation by the commencement of the project. The LE cannot be a PE or CE or sign letters of support on behalf of Partner Organisations or Collaborating Organisations.

Collaborating Entrepreneurs (CEs) must:

- take significant intellectual responsibility for the conception and conduct of the project and for any strategic decisions required in its pursuit and the communication of results
- ensure effective supervision, support and mentoring at all times of project personnel, and
- be engaged by a Lead or Collaborating Organisation at the commencement date of the grant and for its duration.

Partner Entrepreneurs (PEs) must:

- take significant intellectual responsibility for the conception and conduct of the project and for any strategic decisions required in its pursuit and the communication of results, and
- be employed by a Partner Organisation.

2.5 Who is not eligible?

An application will not be eligible to be considered for an AEA Ignite grant if any of the following apply to any participating organisation – including Lead Organisation, Collaborating Organisation or Partner Organisation – mentioned in the application:

- the organisation is named as a person or entity on the following list: https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/security/sanctions/consolidated-list
- the organisation is included on the National Redress Scheme's website on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme' (www.nationalredress.gov.au)),
- the organisation is named as an organisation that has not complied with the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (Cth), or
- the organisation does not comply with all relevant legislation, policies or industry standards listed in section 8.3.

The department cannot provide a grant if the Lead Organisation has funding from another Commonwealth source for the same stages of development as in their Ignite application. The application must specify the government funding the application has or will receive, and the TRL stage of development to which this funding contributes.

2.6 Technology Readiness Level (TRL)

Projects receiving AEA Ignite funding must aim to show proof of concept for a new technology and to work towards developing and testing a prototype of the technology/product in an operational

environment, which may include integrating components to develop a working system and trying that out in a simulated context that represents the intended commercial use of the technology.

Applications for AEA Ignite must demonstrate alignment to TRL 3, 4 or 5. As a guide, applicants can use the descriptions of TRLs in Appendix A. Projects which anticipate progressing beyond TRL 5 by the end of the grant period will be eligible if they are between TRL 3 to 5 at the commencement of the project.

2.7 Alignment with government identified priority areas

To be eligible, projects must at a minimum be aligned to at least one of the national priorities set out in the OGGRs. More information on these can be found at the National Reconstruction Fund website. These are:

- value-add in the resources sector
- value-add in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors
- transport
- medical science
- renewables and low emissions technology
- defence capability
- enabling capabilities (such as data science, artificial intelligence and robotics).

The Lead Organisation will be expected to articulate how their application would contribute towards achieving that priority.

Within the above priorities, individual rounds of AEA Innovate may prioritise projects that align with particular focus areas.

For Round 2 (July 2025), AEA focus areas are (further detail on AEA focus areas is available on the AEA website):

- Critical and Strategic Minerals Processing
- Sustainable Fuels
- Agriculture and Food Technology
- Space
- Renewable energy
- Quantum
- Artificial intelligence
- Advanced manufacturing

Eligible applications for projects outside these 8 focus areas will be accepted but may be considered after those in focus areas.

2.8 Intellectual Property (IP)

Lead Organisations must provide details of IP arrangements in their applications. This includes both the use of IP in the project and the proposed ownership rights to IP created by the project.

The Lead Organisation must offer to use the Higher Education Research Commercialisation Intellectual Property Framework (HERC IP) when entering into agreements with third parties for

activities related to the project funded by the Ignite grant and indicate to such third parties the successful Lead Organisation's preference to use the HERC IP Framework.

The Lead Organisation and their project partners must negotiate arrangements and procedures for using and handling all IP created through the project, in a manner that maximises the benefits to Australia and the partners. These arrangements may include the allocation of IP rights, or of the income from IP, between the Lead Organisation and their partners.

The Lead Organisation must warrant their ownership of and access to, or the beneficial use of, any IP necessary to carry out the project. The department does not claim ownership of any IP in an application or in any research arising from a project.

3. What the grant money can be used for

3.1 Eligible expenditure

The Lead Organisation can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure incurred on an agreed project as defined in CoG. Not all expenditure spent on the Lead Organisation's project may be eligible for grant funding. The Program Delegate makes the final decision on what is eligible expenditure and may provide additional guidance on eligible expenditure where required.

Budgets should be realistic, accurate and feasible in relation to the nature of the project. To be eligible, expenditure must be:

- a direct cost of the project, or
- incurred for required project audit activities.

Eligible expenditure items may include:

a. **Personnel,** including:

- salaries and on-costs for personnel directly employed for the project activities (this should be calculated on a pro-rata basis relative to their time commitment using the formula detailed below). The Lead Organisation may increase eligible salary costs by an additional 30 per cent allowance to cover on-costs such as employer paid superannuation, payroll tax, workers compensation insurance, and overheads such as office rent and the provision of computers
- paying assistance to research students for the duration of the grant
- backfilling (teaching relief) costs for academic staff who are assigned to the project
- Lead Organisations should make clear the intention to supplement project staff salaries through grant funding including intended ratio.
    - Lead Organisations should calculate eligible salary costs using the formula below: $Eligible\ Salary\ Costs = Annual\ Salary\ Package \times \frac{Weeks\ Spent\ on\ Project}{52\ Weeks} \times Percentage\ of\ Time\ Spent\ on\ Project$

b. **Expert services** of a third party directly related to and essential for the project, but only where it is not reasonable for similar services to be provided by inhouse capability of the participating organisation, for example:
- business development and knowledge transfer costs
- design costs associated with constructing, assembling, installing and/or commissioning plants or prototypes
- advice required to obtain relevant regulatory approvals
- access to and use of specialist equipment
- use of manufacturing facilities to manufacture prototypes or components.

c. **Travel** costs essential to the project, including economy travel costs for domestic and/or international travel and accommodation, for example to access specialised expertise. Eligible overseas activity expenditure (including international travel) is limited to 10 per cent of the total eligible expenditure unless prior written approval is given by the Program Delegate.

d. **Verifiable Plant and Equipment** costs, proportional to the time used for the project:
- running costs for new or pre-existing plant
- hire, rental, or leasing costs

- where new equipment is purchased, the eligible costs claimed must be proportional to the time used for the project. Disposal (i.e., sale) of the equipment should be at a fair market value, unless it is fully depreciated.
- purchasing of materials, equipment or services from overseas

e. **Other** costs directly relevant to the project, which may include:
- staff development and training that supports the achievement of project outcomes
- IP protection expenditure, such as costs associated with patenting
- acquisition of new and leading-edge technology where adaptation to that technology will contribute directly to the success of the project. Where new technology is purchased, the eligible costs claimed must be proportional to the time used for the project. Disposal (i.e., sale) of technology (equipment) should be at a fair market value, unless it is fully depreciated
- participation of lead or named participants in business or research Accelerator or Incubator programs available in Australia
- costs of materials and consumables used to develop the projects that were fully utilised during the project period
- costs of independent audit of project expenditure.

The successful Lead Organisation must incur the expenditure on their grant activities between the start and end dates of their grant period for it to be eligible.

3.2 Ineligible expenditure

The grant cannot be used for the following activities:

a. basic research or research activity that is not conducted for the purpose of showing or validating a function of the technology that will be important for the commercial outcome
b. activities unaligned to a priority of the government identified priority areas
c. basic facilities that should normally be provided by a Lead Organisation, Collaborating Organisation, or Partner Organisation
d. costs associated with research undertaken at TRLs 1 and 2
e. capital works and general infrastructure costs
f. attendance at conferences
g. costs not directly related to the project, including but not limited to visas, relocation costs, insurance, mobile phones (purchase or call charges) and other indirect costs
h. paying fines or penalties
i. overseas expenditure beyond that described in section 3.1
j. depreciation costs of the plant and equipment used for the project.

Grants cannot be used to cover costs incurred outside of the project timeline. These include retrospective costs and assistance to PhD students beyond 12 months.

The department may update this guidance on eligible and ineligible expenditure and in-kind contributions from time to time. If the Lead Organisation's application is successful, the version in place when the Lead Organisation submitted their application applies to their project and is what will be included in the successful Lead Organisation's CoG.

The successful Lead Organisation must ensure they have adequate funds to meet the costs of any ineligible expenditure associated with the project.

4. The selection criteria

The Lead Organisation must address all the selection criteria in their application.

The Lead Organisation should provide evidence to support their answers. The amount of detail and supporting evidence provided in the application should be relative to the scale, complexity and requested grant amount. It is important to note that claims made by Lead Organisations, specifically claims made regarding potential impact or benefit of the project, should be quantified (where possible) to strengthen the application.

The application form includes character, word, and page limits. These are clearly outlined where relevant in the AEA Ignite application form on the ARC's Research Management System.

4.1 Ignite application selection criteria

Applications for AEA Ignite will be assessed against the following weighted criteria:

4.1.1 – Application: Impact of AEA Project grant and project outcomes (30%)

Demonstrated through identifying:

1.1 Alignment with at least one of the government identified priority areas and one of the 8 focus areas articulated at 2.7 of these guidelines.
1.2 Extent to which the proposal builds on and supports other Whole-of-Government initiatives, if applicable.
1.3 The impact of the AEA grant funding regarding scale and timing of the project, and the likelihood it would proceed without the grant.
1.4 Where the solution aims to be at the project endpoint if successful, including the Technology Readiness level and description of next steps (technical and commercial) upon project completion.

4.1.2 – Application: Capacity, capability, and resources to deliver project (20%)

Demonstrated through identifying:

2.1 Achievable and realistic overview of steps in project, including risks and appropriate risk management.
2.2 Adequate time dedicated to project, including overview of time commitments from team members across functional areas.
2.3 Excellent composition and strength of team – evidence of investment in research talent pool as well as in personnel with skills/experience required for the project other than research commercialisation.
2.4 Sound project budget with overview of required and/or currently available resources.

4.1.3 – Application: Commercial potential and market opportunity (25%)

Demonstrated through identifying:

3.1 What are the addressable and serviceable target markets (or quantifiable public good equivalent), both domestic and international, that the solution seeks to address including their estimated size and value?
3.2 What is the novelty and unique selling point of the project outcome, along with its competitive advantage?

3.3 Overview of the research and development completed to date, project momentum and substantiation of current Technology Readiness Level.

3.4 Likelihood of a successful project outcome, including why the potential solution will move towards commercial success.

4.1.4 – Application: Commercialisation pathway and engagement with industry and/or commercial partners (25%)

Demonstrated through identifying:

4.1 Strength of commercial partner engagement OR commercialisation pathway with needs from end users.

4.2 Overview of resources and/or support which partner/s will provide.

4.3 Evidence of fit for purpose intellectual property (IP) management, include existing intellectual property (IP) or new IP expected to be developed.

4.4 Team experience in commercialisation accelerator programs or hands-on activities.

5. How to apply

Before applying, Lead Organisations must read and understand these Guidelines and supporting material, Chapter 5 of the OGGRs and all AEA Ignite supporting material on the AEA website.

To apply, the Lead Organisations:

- Must complete an online AEA Ignite application in RMS including:
  o providing all the information requested
  o addressing all eligibility criteria and selection criteria
  o including all requested and necessary attachments
  o submitting the application/s by the closing date and time outlined on the AEA website.

Lead Organisations are responsible for ensuring applications are complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the *Criminal Code Act 1995*. The department will investigate any false or misleading information, which may exclude the Lead Organisation's application from further consideration.

Once the Lead Organisation's application is submitted through the RMS, the Lead Organisation may be contacted regarding any errors or missing information that may be detected in their application. However, the department can refuse to accept any additional information from the Lead Organisation that would change the submission after the closing date.

If the Lead Organisation finds an error in their application after submitting it, the Lead Organisation should contact the department immediately via Accelerator@education.gov.au. The department does not have to accept any additional information, nor requests from the Lead Organisation, to correct their application after the closing time.

If the department identifies a non-eligibility related error or missing information, a request for clarification or additional information from the Lead Organisation may be made.

The Lead Organisation should keep a copy of their application and any supporting documents.

The department will acknowledge receipt of the Lead Organisation's application through a system-generated email.

The same Lead Organisation may choose to submit more than one AEA Ignite application at the same time, provided they are substantively different.

If Lead Organisations need further guidance on the application process or are unable to submit an application, they may contact the department at Accelerator@education.gov.au.

If Lead Organisations need technical support for RMS, they may contact the Australian Research Council (ARC), which manages RMS:

RMS Support Desk Phone:	(02) 6287 6789
RMS Support Desk Email:	RMSSupport@arc.gov.au

There is also information about RMS on the ARC website – Research Management System (RMS) Information and on the RGS website – General Information about RMS.

5.1 Facilitation and application development

The department, the AEA Executive Director or the AEA Priority Managers, may engage with Lead Organisations or potential Lead Organisations and their partners prior to application periods opening.

The department may also facilitate collaboration between Lead Organisations with similar or complementary applications, or between Lead Organisations and other organisations or funding bodies.

Any such facilitation of collaboration, including the release of confidential information to another Lead Organisation or individual, will only be made following receipt of the Lead Organisation's consent.

When facilitating collaborations, the department is not responsible or liable for any comments, consultation or assistance provided by the department, its staff or any consultants, and the facilitation must not be taken to imply that the department will offer funding for the project.

The department recommends that the Lead Organisation seek their own independent legal, technical and financial advice before proceeding with departmental facilitation of their application.

6. The grant assessment process

6.1 Assessment of grant applications

6.1.1 Administrative review

The department will conduct an administrative review of eligible applications against the eligibility and selection criteria to ensure all mandatory requirements are provided by Lead Organisations. When conducting eligibility checks, the department may request further information from a Lead Organisation regarding their project, Collaborating Organisation or Partner Organisations. Applications that do not meet all the eligibility criteria will not progress to the merit assessment stage.

6.1.2 National Security and Due Diligence

Australia's Economic Accelerator (AEA) program attracts research proposals from Australian universities aiming to develop cutting-edge technology, with an emphasis on building Australia's sovereign capability in research translation and commercialisation and facilitating economic growth.

Australia's world-class performance and reputation in research is intrinsically linked with the globally engaged and open nature of Australian universities. While international collaboration is permitted, and can be essential to advancing research, it may also include risks with the potential to compromise research and scientific development critical to Australia's social and economic prosperity.

The department recognises that, due to the critical importance of the government identified priority areas to Australia's interests, the risks associated with inadvertent transfer of research, expertise or data counter to those interests must be mitigated.

In addition to each university's obligations to exercise due-diligence and manage foreign interference risks (refer section 8.3 of these guidelines), the department will conduct a national security due diligence check as part of the administrative review stage.

Every application will undergo a due diligence process designed to assist the AEA Program Teams and Priority Managers to identify and flag any potential concerns. Completion of a due diligence check **will not** preclude an application from progressing through to the merits assessment.

The due diligence process is a risk mitigation strategy to ensure that applications meet the objectives of the AEA Program especially in view of potential Intellectual Property (IP), National Security or Organised Crime risks.

The process was informed by lessons learned from the AEA Seed pilot along with a range of national security policy frameworks from across Government including:

- The University Foreign Interference Taskforce (UFIT) Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector 2019
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) sanctions regime
- The Foreign Arrangements Scheme
- Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme
- Defence Export Controls

- Critical Minerals Strategy 2023–2030, and
- Critical Technologies in the National Interest.

6.1.3 Merits Assessment

Applications will undergo an assessment process by technical assessors facilitated by the department. This is a competitive merit-based assessment.

The application will be considered on its merits, based on:

- how well it meets the selection criteria
- how it compares to other applications
- whether it provides value with relevant money.

The department may use external Expert Advisors to inform the assessment process. Any Expert Advisor who is not a Commonwealth Official will be required to perform their duties in accordance with HESA, the OGGRs and these Guidelines.

All applications will then be moderated to ensure value with relevant money, high impact and alignment with the program objectives.

When assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, the department will have regard to the:

- overall objective/s to be achieved in providing the grant
- relative value of the grant sought
- extent to which the evidence in the application demonstrates that it will contribute to meeting the program objectives, and
- anything identified during the due diligence process conducted in relation to the application.

Once applications are moderated a recommendation is then made to the Program Delegate to inform the final decision as to which applications to approve for a grant.

The Program Delegate will consider the recommendations and risks regarding applications as identified during the assessment processes, including but not limited to national interest, national security, financial viability or any other risks identified.

6.1.4 Weighting

Participation from Regional, First Nations and Female identified researchers in the AEA Seed pilot rounds were lower than other cohorts.

As part of the department and AEA's commitment to helping uplift research translation and commercialisation activity on a national scale, all Ignite applications received from the following cohorts will be eligible to receive additional points **after assessment and rating of the whole application field.**

Additional points will be awarded to projects per the following:

- Regionally headquartered Universities = 5 points
  - Central Queensland University
  - Charles Darwin University
  - Charles Sturt University

- Federation University
- James Cook University
- University of New England
- Southern Cross University
- University of Southern Queensland
- University of Tasmania
- Other universities partnering with the above universities = 5 points
- Female identified Lead Entrepreneurs = 5 points
- First Nations' identified Lead Entrepreneurs = 5 points

How it works

All applications will be assessed and benchmarked as a group. Once benchmarked, all applications from regional universities (per above), and/or with First Nations and/or female lead entrepreneurs with a benchmarked **score between 70-80** will have additional points added to their overall score – additional points are **capped at 10 per application**.

The cap will ensure that the weighting system does not inadvertently push out overall strong applications.

6.2 Who will approve grants?

The Program Delegate has the authority to approve grants under HESA.

The Program Delegate decides which grants to approve, considering recommendations of the AEA Executive Director and Priority Managers, and the availability of grant funds for the purposes of the grant program.

The Program Delegate's decision is final in all matters, including the:

- approval of the grant
- the grant funding amount to be awarded
- the conditions imposed on the grant.

7. Notification of application outcomes

The department will advise the Lead Organisation of the outcome of their application in writing. A notification will also be available to Lead Organisation on RMS.

If the Lead Organisation is unsuccessful, feedback will be provided on why applications were not successful.

The Lead Organisation can submit a new application for the same project (or a similar project) in any future grant opportunities under AEA Ignite. It is advisable for Lead Organisations to include new or more information to address any feedback that the Lead Organisation received regarding their previously submitted application.

8. Successful grant applications

The Program Delegate will impose conditions on the grant, which will be provided to the successful Lead Organisation in writing. The Lead Organisation will not receive grant funding, nor be able to incur eligible expenditure, until the conditions are imposed, and any other conditions set by the Program Delegate are met.

The Program Delegate may decide to fund only some aspects of the project and the Lead Organisation can decide to apply again for further funding.

8.1 Project Plan

Project Plans submitted as part of the application should demonstrate meaningful outcomes at each stage or milestone as these plans will be used to inform assessment as well as development of project milestones imposed through the CoG. This is important as the Program Delegate has the discretion to partially fund applications. The Project Plan should include:

- a clear implementation timetable and tangible **research translation milestones**
- a comprehensive budget and financial management strategy, including additional cash and in-kind contributions
- a clear approach to tracking, assessing, and reporting on progress
- a risk plan identifying any risks and mitigation strategies.

The department will work with successful applicants on utilising the Project Plan for inclusion in the CoG.

8.2 Conditions of Grant (CoG)

The CoG include key performance indicators and milestones appropriate to each project. The details of the CoG, including the payment schedule and milestones, will be informed by the grant application including the Project Plan. The department will use the standard CoG template available on its website.

The CoG will include, at minimum, the following:

- the name and details of the successful Lead Organisation
- total funding for the grant activity, including if payments are to be made upfront or by agreed milestones
- commitment of cash and/or in-kind contributions from organisations in the application
- a description of activities to be undertaken and milestones to be met
- agreed performance indicators and outcomes for the project, and
- reporting requirements, including the frequency of, and information required in, reports.

Projects should commence as soon as CoGs have been executed by the Program Delegate and no later than 6 weeks after the CoGs are executed.

Projects that have a delayed start date of more than 6 weeks from the execution of CoGs must contact the department as soon as practicable as this may affect the timeliness of milestone payments.

Subject to the operation of Part 2-5 of HESA, the Minister for Education may seek to reduce or recover a specified amount of a successful Lead Organisation's grant should the project fail to meet

key milestones or deliver key objectives as specified in the CoG. The department will engage with the Lead Organisation prior to this occurring to find solutions.

The department reserves the right to audit any evidence on which an application is based.

Successful Lead Organisations may transfer AEA funding to one or more Collaborating or Partner Organisations to undertake eligible project activities. The funding arrangements for AEA Ignite grants must be reflected in a legally binding partnership agreement with participating organisations.

A CoG document is a mechanism for the Minister (or their delegate) to unilaterally impose conditions on a grant that the Commonwealth is providing under Part 2-3 of HESA. As the Minister or their delegate imposes such conditions unilaterally, successful Lead Organisations are not required to sign the CoG, and they accept the conditions imposed on the grant when they accept the grant.

For the purposes of AEA Ignite, draft CoG will be shared with successful Lead Organisations in advance of execution by the Program Delegate.

Acceptance of AEA Ignite CoGs by Lead Organisations will be time limited. The successful Lead Organisation will have a specified period to agree to the CoG from when it is issued by the department. The offer may lapse if Lead Organisations do not agree to the CoG within the specified timeframe.

For the purposes of AEA Ignite, CoGs will not be negotiable.

If a successful Lead Organisation does not agree to be bound by the CoG, a grant will not be made by the Program Delegate, and they will not receive the grant funding.

8.3 Legislation, policies and industry standards

The Lead Organisation, and all other participating organisations, must comply with all relevant laws, regulations and Australian Government policies in undertaking their project including HESA, the OGGRs and any CoG. The Lead Organisation, and all other participating organisations, must also comply with the specific legislation/policies/industry standards that follow. It is a condition of the grant funding that the Lead Organisation meet these requirements.

Lead Organisations are required to be compliant with all relevant laws and regulations, and may be requested to demonstrate compliance with the following legislation and policies:

- Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research
- National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research
- Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector
- The Foreign Arrangements Scheme[2]
- Foreign Influence Transparency Scheme[3]
- Defence Export Controls[4]
- *Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018* and the National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020-2025
- The National Redress Scheme[5]
- *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth)*

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[2] https://www.foreignarrangements.gov.au/
[3] https://www.ag.gov.au/integrity/foreign-influence-transparency-scheme
[4] https://www.defence.gov.au/business-industry/export/controls
[5] Home | National Redress Scheme

- The Commonwealth Child Safe Framework
- All relevant ethics codes and guidelines adopted by the Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, and all other relevant regulatory agencies operating in Australia and in any place in which the research is being conducted.

8.4 Grant Payments and GST

All amounts referred to in these guidelines are exclusive of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), unless expressly stated otherwise. The Lead Organisation is responsible for all financial and taxation implications associated with receiving grant funds.

All AEA grant payments are executed through scheduled payments in the Unipay system. The schedule of payments is available in the draft CoG each recipient is provided. The Unipay system has set timeframes in which funding is made available on a monthly basis. Lead Entrepreneurs should liaise with their institutions internal finance team regarding disbursement of grant funding to projects.

Invoices are not required to be submitted. Any invoices received by the department for an AEA grant will be returned to the Lead Organisation.

The department will make an initial payment at the start of the agreed grant period. The department will make subsequent payments in advance, based on the Lead Organisation's forecast eligible expenditure and adjusted for unspent amounts from previous payments. Payments are subject to satisfactory progress. Grants under AEA Innovate may be approved by the Program Delegate in stages, and the approval of the next stage of grant funding may be subject to the achievement of milestones set out in the CoG.

The department will set aside, at minimum, 10 per cent of the total grant funding for the final payment. The department will pay this when Lead Organisations submits a satisfactory final report demonstrating they have completed all outstanding obligations, and it is accepted by the department.

9. Announcement of grants

Approved grants will be announced by the department on the AEA website, and via the Australian Research Council's Data Portal. A public announcement may also be made by the Minister for Education. Information that is likely to be in the public announcement includes:

- named participants and professional titles
- Lead Organisation and the State or Territory of that organisation
- Collaborating and Partner Organisation(s)
- funding awarded
- project ID
- summary of the project
- project duration.

The Lead Organisation should ensure that information contained in the project title and summary descriptions will not compromise any obligations they have related to confidentiality and IP.

The Lead Organisation will be notified in writing prior to any announcement.

10. How the department monitors the Lead Organisation's grant activity

10.1 Keeping the department informed

The successful Lead Organisation must advise the department:

- if anything is likely to or will affect their project or organisation
- of changes to their organisation or business activities where they affect their application, affect their ability to complete the project, carry on business and pay debts due
- immediately if they become aware of a breach of the CoG
- of public or promotional events relating to their grant and provide an opportunity for the Minister or their representative to attend.

10.2 Acknowledgements

If the successful Lead Organisation makes a public statement or produces promotional material about a grant or project funded under AEA, the department will require them to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

> **'This [name of grant activity or project/services] received grant funding from the Australian Government.'**

10.3 Reporting

The successful Lead Organisation must submit reports consistent with the reporting requirements as specified in the CoG.

The department may require and request reports within the course of a project, which will function as reviews on achievement of milestones and performance indicators. These may be used to determine whether the department makes a milestone payment at the designated time, or if a project requires a variation to its CoG.

At a minimum, the successful Lead Organisation will be required to submit a progress report and a final report on:

- project outcomes, including achievements such as patents, trademarks or Plant Breeders Rights awarded; joint researcher/industry publications; spin-out and start-up companies established; jobs created; options and assignments on IP taken up; and movements of personnel between universities and businesses
- total eligible expenditure incurred
- contributions of participants directly related to the project
- progress towards achievement of milestones and project outcomes as specified in CoG
- any significant obstacles or challenges
- lessons learned in undertaking the project.

The amount of detail the successful Lead Organisation provides in their reports should be relative to the size, complexity, and grant amount.

The successful Lead Organisation must discuss any potential or actual reporting delays with the department as soon as they become aware of them.

The department may ask successful Lead Organisations for ad-hoc reports on their grant. This may be to provide an update on progress, or any significant delays or difficulties in completing the project within the agreed grant timeframes.

The department may visit the successful Lead Organisation during or at the completion of their grant activity to review their compliance with the CoG. The department will provide the successful Lead Organisation with reasonable notice of any compliance visit.

The department may also inspect the records the successful Lead Organisation is required to keep under the CoG.

10.4 Financial declaration and audit

At the end of the project activity period, the Lead Organisation will be required to provide an audited financial acquittal report as part of the final report submission. The acquittal should confirm that the grant funds were spent in accordance with the CoG and to report on any unspent grant funds.

An audited financial acquittal report must be prepared by a suitably qualified individual. It must include an income and expenditure statement for the grant audited by a:

- registered Company Auditor under the *Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)*
- member of CPA Australia
- member of the Institute of Public Accountants in Australia, or
- member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia.

10.5 CoG variations

The CoG will require that the successful Lead Organisation must not make any substantial changes to the activities, Lead Entrepreneur or Partner Organisation, timeline, or budget of the project without the prior written approval of the Program Delegate.

Generally, such changes will require a variation to the CoG. Requests to vary the CoG must be made in writing and addressed to the Program Delegate specified in the CoG. Requests must include the nature and reason for the variation, the likely impact of the variation on the project (including elements such as progress, achievement of outcomes, time, budget, and resources), and supporting information or evidence.

Approval of variations to the CoG is at the discretion of the Program Delegate.

For further guidance or enquiries relating to possible variations to CoG please email: Accelerator@education.gov.au.

10.6 Evaluation

The department will evaluate the AEA from time to time to determine how well it is being delivered and how well expected outcomes and objectives are being achieved. Information from successful Lead Organisations' applications and reports may be used for this purpose. The department may also interview the successful Lead Organisation or ask them for more information on their views of the AEA, their suggestions for improvement, or what the impact of the grant was from their perspective.

The successful Lead Organisation and their collaborators may be contacted up to 7 years after the successful Lead Organisation grant finishes, for information to assist with evaluation.

11. Probity and Decision-making framework

The department will make sure that the grant decision making process is fair, according to these published Guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities, and other inappropriate conduct, and is consistent with HESA and the OGGRs.

11.1 Enquiries, complaints, and review

Enquiries and feedback

Enquiries can be directed to the AEA mailbox

Applicants should consult the Frequently Asked Questions and Applicant Guide in the first instance. Any further questions from potential Lead Organisations should be directed through the Lead Organisation's research office or Technology Transfer Office in the first instance.

The department will aim to respond to enquiries within 5 working days.

Complaints

The department's complaints process applies to complaints about this grant opportunity. For information on the process and how to lodge a complaint see the department's Complaints website page.

If a Lead Organisation does not agree with the way the department has handled their complaint, they may lodge a complaint to the Commonwealth Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will not usually investigate a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the department.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

> Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072
> Email: ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au
> Website: www.ombudsman.gov.au

Review

A decision by the Program Delegate to not approve an AEA Ignite grant under section 41-20 of HESA is a reviewable decision under HESA. Unsuccessful Lead Organisations have 28 calendar days after being notified of the decision to seek a review. Request for review of AEA Ignite decisions must be lodged in writing and directed to the AEA Ignite Program Manager at:

> AEA Ignite Program Manager
> Department of Education
> LOC: C50MA7
> GPO Box 9880
> CANBERRA ACT 2601
> Australia
> Email: Accelerator@education.gov.au

11.2 Conflicts of Interest

Actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may involve departmental staff, the AEA Executive Director, AEA Priority Managers, any member of the AEA Advisory Board, or members of the Lead Organisation will be managed.

Conflicts could include:

- professional, commercial, or personal relationships with a party who can influence the application assessment selection process, such as an Australian Government officer, AEA Priority Manager or Expert Advisor
- relationships with or interests in, an organisation, that is likely to interfere with or restrict the Lead Organisations from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently
- relationships with, or interests in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the AEA.

As part of the application process, Lead Organisations must provide conflict of interest disclosures and management strategies. This includes all actual or perceived conflicts of interest pecuniary or otherwise; both within and outside Australia relating to the proposed project.

Each individual or organisation named in an application must declare any actual or perceived conflict of interest that exists, is likely to arise, or does arise in relation to any aspect of the application or project to the Lead Organisation for inclusion in the application.

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*. Any member of a committee, the AEA Advisory Board and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

If Lead Organisations later identify any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, both within and outside Australia, they must inform the department in writing immediately and take any steps that the department requires to resolve or address the conflict.

11.3 Confidentiality

Disclosure and use of Australia's Economic Accelerator program information ('AEA program information') is managed under Division 181 of HESA. The Department will manage and use Lead Organisations' information consistently with these provisions.

As set out in section 181-10 of HESA, AEA program information is any information that was obtained or created by an officer for the purposes of the AEA.

Under Division 181, an officer who discloses, copies or records AEA program information other than in the course of official employment, commits an offence if the information is personal information, or the officer's actions are likely to cause competitive detriment to a person or found an action for breach of confidence. An officer is an employee of, or somebody who performs services for or on behalf of, the Commonwealth, a higher education provider, Open Universities Australia, or a Tertiary Admission Centre (see section 179-15). This would include Departmental employees working on the program, the AEA Executive Director and other Priority Managers. This offence is set out in section 181-15 and has a maximum penalty of imprisonment for 2 years unless an exception in the division applies.

Relevant exceptions set out in the division are:

- if the person to whom the information relates has consented to the disclosure, or to the making of the copy or record (subsection 181-15(2))
- if the disclosure, or the making of the copy or record, is required by a law of the Commonwealth (subsection 181-15(4))
- if the disclosure is to the Minister for Education or their staff (section 181-20); and

- if the disclosure relates to information of a general nature, such as the name of a researcher, description of a field, or amount of a grant, and is being made publicly available by the Minister (section 181-25).

As set out in section 181-5 of HESA, the object of Division 181 is to give confidence that personal information and other sensitive information provided in relation to an application and the program will be dealt with appropriately.

Lead Organisations are encouraged to engage with the AEA Ignite team in relation to any concerns regarding information provided as part of the application process or post-grant management process that may fall under a 'Commercial -in-Confidence' classification.

11.4 Freedom of Information

The department is subject to the _Freedom of Information Act 1982_ (FOI Act). The objective of the FOI Act is to make available information about the operations of departments, to create a general right of access to information in the possession of Ministers, departments, and public authorities and also to create a right for people to amend records containing personal information that is incomplete, incorrect or misleading.

Anyone can make a freedom of information (FOI) request. Any individual applying under FOI is not obligated to state a reason for their request, nor can the department ask for a reason.

All documents held by the department can be subject to a FOI request, however, in some cases exemptions from disclosure may apply.

A valid request is one which is in writing, states that it is a request for the purposes of the FOI Act, provides enough information about a requested document to enable its identification, gives details on how notices under the FOI Act may be sent to the applicant (the return address may be a physical, postal or electronic address) and must be sent to the department either by post, email or fax or delivered in person.

All requests should be made directly to the FOI Coordinator: foi@education.gov.au.

11.5. Privacy

The department is bound by the AEA program information management provisions in Division 181 of HESA. The department will only manage and use AEA program information consistent with these provisions. These provisions also bind the AEA Executive Director and other Priority Managers. The relevant requirements and exceptions are set out in the Confidentiality section at 11.3.

The department is bound by the Australian Privacy Principles in the _Privacy Act 1988_ (Privacy Act). The department uses and discloses personal information only for the purposes for which it was provided, or for a secondary purpose if an exception applies.

The exceptions include where:

- the individual has consented to a secondary use or disclosure
- the individual would reasonably expect the department to use or disclose their personal information for the secondary purpose, and that purpose is related to the primary purpose of collection, or, in the case of sensitive information, directly related to the primary purpose
- the secondary use or disclosure is required or authorised by law
- a permitted general situation exists in relation to the secondary use or disclosure, and

- it is reasonably necessary for the enforcement of the criminal law or of a law imposing a pecuniary penalty, or for the protection of public revenue.

In this situation, the department is collecting any personal information for the purposes of AEA.

For the purposes of administering the AEA and assessing applications, the department may:
- provide personal information contained in the application to third parties for the purposes of assessment for potential other funding opportunities
- copy, modify and otherwise deal with information contained in the application for the purpose of conducting the funding round
- share the personal information contained in the application with other government departments and agencies for the purposes of the AEA.

Personal information may be collected from the Lead Organisation, and other individuals involved in the project, for the purposes of the AEA and will be used by the department, the AEA Board, and Priority Managers for the purposes of the program.

The department takes all reasonable measures to ensure that personal information it collects is accurate, up to date and complete. These measures include updating and maintaining personal information when the department is advised by individuals that information has changed.

The department also takes all reasonable steps to ensure that the personal information it holds is protected against loss, unauthorised access, use, modification or disclosure and other misuse.

Any individual may contact the department to obtain information about how to request access to or changes to the information the department holds about them.

Access may be given unless the department considers that there is a sound reason under the Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information Act 1982 or other relevant law to withhold the information.

The department's Privacy Policy contains more information about the way in which the department will manage personal information, including information about how individuals may access and seek correction of their personal information held by the department. The Privacy Policy also contains information on how individuals can complain about a breach of privacy and how the department will deal with such a complaint.

For the department's Privacy Policy, go to https://www.education.gov.au/about-department/resources/department-education-complete-privacy-policy.

Lead Organisations submitting an application for AEA Ignite should be aware that any personal information on their RMS profile (including information that does not appear in the pdf and is hidden from assessors) is visible to other users of RMS, including Commonwealth staff and other Registered Organisations.

All requests for access to personal information should be made to the Privacy Officer: privacy@education.gov.au, or in writing to:

Privacy Officer
Legal Services
Department of Education
LOC: C50MA10
GPO Box 9880
Canberra ACT 2601

11.6 Indigenous Status

To complete a profile within the RMS, participants are requested to respond to a question about their First Nations status. It will be visible to other users of RMS. It will also be used as part of the department's evaluation of AEA.

11.7 Third Party Personal Information

Lead Organisations that include third-party personal information in the Project Summary of the application form must obtain consent from the third-party individuals, prior to the publication of that information.

11.8 Privacy Requirements for Lead Organisations

Lead Organisations must ensure that:

- If any personal information in an AEA application submitted through RMS has not been provided directly by the individual to which the information relates to (named or unnamed participant), the individuals named in the application must have consented to that information being used and disclosed in accordance with these Guidelines.
- They obtain the consent of participants to the publication of their names, fields of research and institution provided in an AEA application.
- They notify individual participants (including from Collaborating or Partner Organisations) involved in the AEA application, that if their application is successful, their name, field of research and institution may be published by the ARC, the department and/or the Minister in accordance with section 9 of these Guidelines.

12. Glossary

Term	Definition
AEA Advisory Board	The Board appointed by the Minister under Subdivision 42-B of HESA. Board members provide advice the Minister on that topic as well as on the program's objectives, conditions of eligibility and CoGs.
AEA Executive Director	The senior Priority Manager engaged by the Secretary for the purposes of section 42-75 of HESA. The AEA Executive Director is a highly qualified, experienced, and motivated business and technology specialist, who will also work with Lead Organisations to foster connections and formal collaboration arrangements with industry partners. The other Priority Managers will support the AEA Executive Director by providing technical expertise within the government identified priority areas.
AEA focus areas	For Round 2, the AEA focus areas are (further detail on the AEA focus areas is available on the AEA website): • Critical and strategic minerals processing • Sustainable fuels • Agriculture and Food Technology • Space • Renewable energy • Quantum • Artificial intelligence • Advanced manufacturing
Application	A request for funding submitted through RMS by a Lead Organisation seeking grant funding under the AEA Ignite grant program. It includes the specifics of a proposed grant activity as well as the administrative information required to determine the eligibility of the application. The application must include the information required by these Guidelines and the OGGRs.

Term	Definition
Australian Government identified priority areas (AEA national priority areas set out in OGGRs)	1. Value-add in resources 2. Value-add in agriculture, forestry and fisheries 3. Transport 4. Medical science 5. Renewables and low emission technology 6. Defence capability 7. Enabling capabilities such as data science, artificial intelligence and robotics
Collaborating Organisation	The organisation referred to in section 2 of these Guidelines.
Commencement date	The expected start date for the grant activity.
Commonwealth	The Commonwealth of Australia, also referred to as the Australian Government.
Conditions of Grant (CoG)	The document in which the Program Delegate has imposed conditions on the AEA Ignite grant made to the successful Lead Organisation, under subsection 41-25(2) of HESA.
Department of Education or department	The Commonwealth Government agency responsible for administering the AEA.
Department's website	The website approved by the department as its official website: https://www.education.gov.au
Eligibility criteria	Refers to the mandatory criteria which must be met to be eligible for a grant, set out in section 2 of these Guidelines and Chapter 5 of the OGGRs.
Expert Advisors	Individuals with technical and/or subject matter expertise within a government identified priority area that may provide input into suitable projects.
Grant	A grant made under the AEA Ignite stream of the AEA as specified in Chapter 5 of the OGGRs.
Grant activity/activities	Refers to the project/tasks/services that the Lead Organisation is required to undertake.
Grant opportunity	Refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to successful Lead Organisations. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted and will reflect the relevant grant selection process.
GST	Has the meaning as given in section 195-1 of the *A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999*.

Term	Definition
HERC IP Framework	Higher Education Research Commercialisation Intellectual Property Framework A framework to assist IP management and negotiation in university-led research commercialisation. HERC IP provides standardised IP licensing and contractual agreements as well as education and guidance materials to establish a common and clear starting point to negotiations.
HESA	The *Higher Education Support Act 2003.*
In-kind contribution	In-kind contributions are non-monetary resources used on the project where no cash has been transferred to the Lead Organisation's account(s) for the project. A contribution of goods, services, materials and/or time to the project from an individual, business or organisation. Values should be calculated based on the most likely actual cost, for example, current market, preferred provider, or internal provider rates/valuations/rentals/charges (that is in the financial year of the date of the application) of the costs of labour, workspaces, equipment and databases. The calculations covering time and costs should be documented by the Lead Organisation. The department may require these calculations to be audited. For further guidance see Appendix B.
Intellectual Property (IP)	Refers to creations of the mind. It could include a brand, logo, invention, design or artistic work, or new plant variety.
Lead Entrepreneur (LE)	The person referred to in section 2 of these Guidelines.
Lead Organisation	The organisation referred to in section 2 of these Guidelines.
Minister for Education or the Minister	The Minister responsible for the administration of HESA.
Named participants	The persons described in section 2 of these Guidelines.
National Reconstruction Fund (NRF)	The NRF will provide finance for projects that diversify and transform Australia's industry and economy and target its funding at priority areas that leverage Australia's natural and competitive strengths. Find out more at www.NRF.gov.au
On-costs	Includes workers' compensation insurance, employer contributions to superannuation, recreation and sick leave, long service leave accrual and payroll tax.
OGGRs	The *Other Grants Guidelines (Research) 2017*, an instrument made by the Minister under section 238-10 of HESA.

Term	Definition
Participants	All named participants on an application (as described in section 2.5 of these Guidelines, and all unnamed participants such as postdoctoral research associates and postgraduate researchers working on a project.
Partner Organisation	The organisation referred to in section 2 of these Guidelines.
PhD student	A student undertaking a PhD as defined in the OGGRs.
Priority Manager	A person: • engaged by the Secretary of the department for the purposes of section 42-75 of HESA, or • otherwise engaged by the department not for the purposes of section 42-75 of HESA who performs a role similar to that of Priority Manager engaged under section 42-75. Priority Managers provide technical and specialist research commercialisation advisory services, including brokering research/industry partnerships and assisting with the assessment of AEA grant applications.
Project	A project described in an application for grant funding under the AEA.
Program Delegate	The person who has been delegated the power to make AEA Ignite grants under part 2-3 of HESA by the Minister.
Program Manager	The person/s within the department responsible for the day-to-day administration of the AEA.
Regional Universities	• Charles Darwin University • Charles Sturt University • Central Queensland University • Federation University • James Cook University • Southern Cross University • University of New England • University of Southern Queensland • University of Tasmania
Research	Has the same meaning as in the OGGRs.
Selection criteria	The criteria described in section 4 of these Guidelines.
Selection process	The method used to select successful Lead Organisations as described in section 6 of these Guidelines.

Term	Definition
Technology Readiness Level (TRL)	A globally accepted benchmarking tool for tracking progress and supporting development of a specific technology through the early stages of the innovation chain, from blue sky research (TRL 1) to actual system demonstration over the full range of expected conditions (TRL 9). There are various TRL rating scales that may be applicable to various technologies. For the purposes of this Program, the department uses the Department of Defence TRL scale. Further TRL information is available at Appendix A.
Unipay	The payment system used by the department to provide funding to universities.
Value with money	Value with money in this document refers to 'value with relevant money' which is a judgement based on the grant application representing an efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public resources, and determined from a variety of considerations. When assessing the extent to which the application represents value with relevant money, the department will have regard to the: • the quality of the application and proposed activities • fitness for purpose of the application in contributing to AEA objectives • that the absence of a grant is likely to prevent the successful Lead Organisation's and government's outcomes being achieved, and • the potential successful Lead Organisation's relevant experience and performance history.

Appendix A. Technology Readiness Levels

Explanatory note:

For the purposes of AEA, the department refers to the definition of Technology Readiness Level utilised by the Department of Defence here and extracted below.

Technology Readiness Level Definition

TRL 1 *Not Eligible*	**Basic Research:** Initial scientific research has been conducted. Principles are qualitatively postulated and observed. Focus is on new discovery rather than applications.
TRL 2 *Not Eligible*	**Applied Research:** Initial practical applications are identified. Potential of material or process to solve a problem, satisfy a need, or find application is confirmed.
TRL 3 *Eligible*	**Critical Function or Proof of Concept Established:** Applied research advances and early-stage development begins. Studies and laboratory measurements validate analytical predictions of separate elements of the technology.
TRL 4 *Eligible*	**Lab Testing/Validation of Alpha Prototype Component/Process:** Design, development and lab testing of components/processes. Results provide evidence that performance targets may be attainable based on projected or modelled systems.
TRL 5 *Eligible*	**Laboratory Testing of Integrated/Semi-Integrated System:** System Component and/or process validation is achieved in a relevant environment.
TRL 6 *Consider AEA innovate*	**Prototype System Verified:** System/process prototype demonstration in an operational environment (beta prototype system level).
TRL 7 *Consider AEA innovate*	**Integrated Pilot System Demonstrated:** System/process prototype demonstration in an operational environment (integrated pilot system level).
TRL 8 *Consider AEA innovate*	**System Incorporated in Commercial Design:** Actual system/process completed and qualified through test and demonstration (pre-commercial demonstration).
TRL 9 *Consider AEA innovate*	**System Proven and Ready for Full Commercial Deployment:** Actual system proven through successful operations in operating environment, and ready for full commercial deployment.

Appendix B. Sample AEA Ignite Partner Organisation Declaration

To whom it may concern

I am writing on behalf of *[Partner Organisation]* to provide our support for the funding application: *[AEA Ignite Application Number] [AEA Ignite Application title].*

[Please use up to 2 pages to provide the details of:

- *the Partner Organisation*

- *an overview of how the Partner Organisation will work with the other participating organisation/s to successfully complete the project.*

- *an outline of the relevant experience and/or expertise the Partner Organisation will bring to the project]*

Total partner contributions over the Project funding term listed below and are consistent with the total contributions listed in the application:

Contribution Type	Amount
Cash ($AUD) for grant period	$
FTE (to 2 decimal points) for funding term (in-kind)	
FTE ($AUD) for funding term (in-kind)	$
Non-staff in-kind ($AUD) for funding term	$

Declaration

On behalf of *[insert Partner Organisation]* I declare that, should this application be successful, the Partner Organisation:

- Is aware of the requirements related to Partner Organisations under these AEA Ignite 2024 Program Administrative Guidelines.
- Will support and actively participate in the proposed AEA Ignite project.
- Will contribute the staff, funds and other resources indicated in the application and has obtained, or will obtain, the necessary authorisations to do so.
- Confirms that cash contributions are not sourced from Commonwealth Government funds for the purposes of research, including the Research and Development Tax Incentive (R&D Tax Incentive or R&DTI).
- Will comply with and require that its subcontractors and independent contractors comply with, all applicable laws.
- Information contained in this application, together with any statement provided, is to the best of my knowledge, true, accurate and complete. I also understand that the giving of false or misleading information is a serious offence.
- Acknowledges that if the department is satisfied that any statement made in an application is incorrect, incomplete, false or misleading, the department may, at its absolute discretion, take appropriate action.

- Understands that they may be requested to provide further clarification or documentation to verify the information supplied in this form and that the department may, during the application process, consult with other government agencies, including State and Territory government agencies, about the Lead Organisation's claims and may also engage external technical or financial advisers to advise on information provided in this form and the application.
- Provides consent to be contacted by the department to discuss the particulars of the partner's commitment to the proposed Ignite project.
- Approves of the information in this form being communicated to the department in electronic form.

Signing

By signing below, I agree that I am authorised to sign and submit this declaration on behalf of the Partner Organisation and confirm all of the above statements to be true.

Partner (organisation name):	
Partner ABN/ACN:	
Authorised representative (name):	
Position/role:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Signature:	
Date:	