

Collaborative Research Networks (CRN) Program

Frequently Asked Questions

Questions, feedback or comments on the CRN program are welcome and should be submitted by email to CRN@innovation.gov.au.

Questions from institutions participating in the program should be directed through the institution's research office or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) or equivalent.

1. What type of project objectives and major activities should be listed in the expression of interest template?

Advice on completing the CRN expression of interest (EoI) form is provided in section 5.2 of the CRN guidelines as well as on the form itself. Sections 2 and 4 of the guidelines provide information on the overall objectives of the program and on possible uses of the funding. These sections should be used as a guide in determining the objectives and major activities associated with CRN projects.

CRN projects which are focused on developing research capacity in particular fields should identify those fields but there is no requirement to set out the specific research questions being addressed.

2. Are there any minimum or matching funds requirements for the participating institutions' cash and in-kind contributions to CRN projects?

Expressions of interest and full applications are required to show the level of cash and other support provided by the institutions participating in a CRN project (see sections 5.2 and 5.11 of the CRN guidelines), but there are no minimum or matching funds requirements for such contributions. However, such contributions serve as an indication that the institutions are committed to the project. These contributions will be considered along with other criteria in the assessment of proposals (sections 6.2 and 6.3 of the guidelines).

3. Are there any specific performance indicators for CRN projects?

The reporting requirements and key performance indicators for CRN projects will vary between projects. They will be specified by the institutions involved and agreed with the department before a funding agreement is concluded. The reporting requirements will focus on the achievement of some or all of the outcomes described in section 2 of the CRN guidelines. See sections 2.6 and 7.4 of the CRN guidelines.

4. Is there a preference for networks of more than two higher education institutions?

There is no preference for CRN projects of any particular size. CRN projects may involve two higher education institutions, or more. The institution which lodges the application must be an eligible institution as defined in the CRN guidelines, and

partners can include any higher education provider listed in Table A or B of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA). See section 3.4 of the CRN guidelines.

5. *What kind of items/activities can be funded under the program?*

The CRN program is intended to be as flexible as possible. The program has the potential to fund a wide range of expenditures and activities. CRN expressions of interest and applications must include an explanation of how proposed expenditure meets the program objectives and supports both the building of research capacity in the lead institution and the overall missions of the participating institutions. See sections 2.5, 4.2 and 5.2 of the program guidelines.

The program includes some provision for meeting the costs associated with establishing and strengthening collaborations (section 4.7) and for international collaborations (section 3.5) but in both cases the Department would expect to see a strong justification for such expenditure.

The Department also requires all expressions of interest and applications to provide an indication of why the project should be supported through the CRN program, rather than by funding from other sources (section 4.3).

6. *Is CRN intended to support broad programs of research or specific projects?*

CRN funding is available for any purpose which supports research capacity building (see section 2.5 of the guidelines). There is no preference for either broad programs or more focused projects.

CRN projects need not be limited to specific fields of research and may have more than one element. The main requirement is that the project improves the research capacity of the lead institution and how this is best achieved is a decision for the institution.

7. *Can universities be involved in more than one CRN project?*

As noted under question 4, above, any higher education provider listed in Table A or B of HESA can participate as partners in CRN projects, including eligible institutions as defined in the CRN guidelines. There is no limit on the number of CRN projects in which a university can participate as a partner (see section 5.4 of the CRN guidelines).

Institutions which are eligible to apply for CRN funding can submit only one EoI as the lead institution (section 5.3 of the guidelines) and if the proposal is successful would act as the leader of the project. This same institution could also participate as a partner in CRN-funded projects led by other universities.