

NCMAS Anonymisation

In 2021, 2022 and 2023, NCMAS took part in the [National Trial of Anonymising Grant Proposals](#) from the [Office of the Women in STEM Ambassador](#). The aim of the Trial was to assess whether the anonymised review of allocation proposals reduced unconscious bias in STEM grant programs. As such, applications for NCMAS 2021, 2022 and 2023 were required to be written in an anonymous third-person style (A3P). The assessment process was also adjusted to cater for the focus on anonymised review.

The data analysis from the National Trial is still ongoing. The anonymous review process, first adopted in the 2021 grant round, will continue in the current NCMAS 2024 round.

The anonymous third-person style is not optional and is required by ALL applications.

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Anonymous Third-Person (A3P) Writing Style Guidelines and Examples

The anonymous third-person style is not optional and applies to ALL applications.

Applications found to blatantly disregard the anonymising guidelines, or to clearly reveal the identities of the applicants, will be considered noncompliant, and be withdrawn from further consideration.

All applicants will need to take steps to anonymise their Proposal and Computational Details sections before they are submitted. New applicants should pay particular attention to these guidelines.

Only the Proposal and Computational Details sections need to be in A3P style.

Guidelines and examples are provided below to assist applicants in preparing their applications to comply with A3P.

It may take some effort to anonymise your submissions. As the guidelines below show, to comply with A3P, you may need to change the grammar and sentence structure from pre-2021 round submissions.

Allow time to prepare your application, and take care in editing, especially if you plan to resubmit a proposal from a previous cycle or from another grant scheme.

The core requirements of an NCMAS application have not changed – the change to A3P writing style should only mean a change to the way it is presented.

To be competitive, applications should still include:

- A clear discussion of research aims, methods, and anticipated outcomes
- Descriptions of anticipated advances on previous work in the next 12 months, and how this proposal will improve, build-upon, or complete that past work

Applicants are encouraged to review the sample proposals provided on the [NCMAS website](#).

These illustrate the appropriate way to respond to the A3P requirements.

Top 11 things to AVOID in your [Proposal](#) and [Computational Details](#):

1. Your name
2. Your institution's name
3. Your project code
4. Gendered pronouns
5. Self-referencing
6. Previous allocation
7. References to named partners
8. Direct references to grant schemes/funding
9. Specific details of team/funding/previous NCMAS or partner allocation
10. Specific details of team make-up
11. Career length

1	Your name (or the names of your team members or collaborators)	In titles
		In headers/footers
		In watermarks
		In captions for Figures and Tables
		On your title page
		In the name of your file/doc
2	The name (or acronym/initialism) * of your institution, organisation, agency or university *This also includes any logos	In titles
		In headers/footers
		In watermarks
		In captions for Figures and Tables
		On your title page
		In the Storage section of Computational Details
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use anonymised language such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Archival data will be stored on home institution server." ○ "Surplus storage requirements will be met by partner facilities." ○ "...from our institution's managed data storage."
		When naming the license holder for software <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use "partner license is available." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Instead of "Licence is available on University of Melberra's supercomputer."
3	Project code The combination of letters and numbers that identifies your project at a facility – e.g. at NCI these look like xx00 or xx0)	In titles
		In headers/footers
		In watermarks
		In captions for Figures and Tables
		On your title page
		In referring to previous allocations
		In the name of your file/doc

4	Gendered pronouns (his/her)	<p>Replace with 'their'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "...applicant and his team..." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ should be "applicant and their team" • "...Professor Jones and her team..." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ should be "Professor Jones and their team"
5	Self-referencing	<p><i>"We have recently demonstrated the feasibility of our proposed combination of super lasers and quantum lenses*, (11) with a speed-up of nearly 4 orders of magnitude possible in the process."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be replaced with something like <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"A recent study has demonstrated the feasibility of the same combination of super lasers and quantum lenses that we propose(11), with a speed-up..."</i> <hr/> <p><i>"Here, we will extend our earlier work on polarity interference with copper* [10] to investigate multiple metals, either simultaneously or sequentially."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be reworded to something like <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"We plan to extend existing work on copper polarity interference* [10] to investigate..."</i> <hr/> <p>Be careful of identification through naming another groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"To date, we are aware of only one other similar project (Jones et al 2019)..."</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This implies that you are not Jones et al, which could be identifiable. <p>Remove this sentence, or reword to something like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"With this project we aim to contribute to the field of superlaser projection, following the work of Jones et al (2019)."</i> <hr/> <p>Terms like 'submitted' or 'preliminary' imply knowledge of the publication status of a paper, which could in turn imply you are an author</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"...a further paper 'Molecular movement in monotremes' has just been submitted to Nature..."</i> <p>The exception to this would be if the paper is available and searchable online in pre-publication state.</p>

6	Previous allocation – do not include amount and/or usage statistics	<p>Previous utilisation data will be provided by facilities in a normalised format</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not include previous NCMAS allocation <p><i>"We have fully utilised our allocations in 2021 and produced a lot of data for climate systems."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider instead using the 'Resources' section of the application form (A3P NOT required) If you wish to provide more details on your 2021 use as justification for the 2022 request <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Utilisation of Current Allocation' and/or 'Justification for Requested Amount' <p><i>"These reasonable requirements can also be reflected by our usage of NCMAS allocations in 2021."</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not reference any NCMAS grants as supporting previous work – as this implies a previous/current NCMAS grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This includes statements that refer to 'ongoing' support – as this implies current support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e.g., <i>"To guarantee success, ongoing NCMAS support is needed..."</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove 'ongoing'
7	References to named partners	<p>Remove names of specific government/industry/university partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instead consider the type of partner and refer in a general non-identifiable way It is acceptable to refer to <i>"experimental collaborating researchers at partner universities"</i> or similar. <p><i>"This project supports existing frameworks of several existing nationally supported initiatives."</i></p> <p>Remove these specific affiliations and refer to more general previous experience and current support from government initiatives/programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Resources' section of the form, including the 'Justification for Requested Amount' (A3P not required) can be used to provide specific identifiable details of funding/support Within the 'HPC Experience' section you can also state the other projects that are the baseline for some of the work you propose to do (A3P not required) <p>Or, within the 'Funding' section you can use the free text box to describe the specific (named) support of the project (A3P not required)</p>

8	Direct references to grant schemes/funding	<p>Try instead to refer to 'national grants', 'industry partnerships', 'government initiatives/programs'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't name government agencies or departments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. BoM/CSIRO/GA/DoD • Don't name the specific grant scheme OR grant number <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ e.g. ARC LP/ARC FT/ARC DP/NHRMC • Don't use the name/acronym of industry/commercial partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ E.g. BHP, Ford, Amazon, Telstra <p>You can name specific partners in the 'Additional Funding' text box in the 'Funding' section of the Application Form (A3P not required).</p>
9	Specific details of team/funding/previous NCMAS or partner allocation	<p>Remove reference to previous allocation amount (e.g. "26 MSU in 2021") You are permitted to say that you have tested code on a particular HPC system, as long as you are not specific about how you gained access.</p> <p>Remove reference to partner schemes e.g., "Intersect previously provided resourcing for this project" should be reworded as "Partner share previously provided resourcing for this project"</p> <p>Remove reference to specific facility schemes e.g., "...conducted simulations on the code on Gadi using resources through an NCI Director's Share..." should be replaced with "...conducted simulations on the code on Gadi."</p>
10	Specific details of team make-up	<p>You are permitted to state you have a "large team" or that "our team has grown through industry partnerships"</p> <p>Remove specific details of the number of researchers at each level <i>"This project will involve six PhD students and two RAs ... The proposed projects will provide excellent opportunities for at least four Honours students."</i></p>
11	Career length	<p>Do not mention your year of PhD – the anonymised track record metric of m-index is being used to obscure CI career length</p> <p>Do not include CI history "...I have been a CI since 2010..." – this implies career length</p>

Examples of the kinds of changes required:

Example text from a sample proposal	<p>Over the last five years, we have used infrared photometry from 2MASS to compile a census of nearby ultracool M and L dwarfs (Cruz et al, 2003; 2006). We have identified 87 L dwarfs in 80 systems with nominal distances less than 20 parsecs from the Sun.</p> <p>We propose to target the remaining sources <i>via</i> the current proposal.</p>
Reworded text, following the anonymising guidelines	<p>Over the last five years, 2MASS infrared photometry has been used to compile a census of nearby ultracool M and L dwarfs (Cruz et al, 2003; 2006). 87 L dwarfs in 80 systems have been identified with nominal distances less than 20 parsecs from the Sun.</p> <p>We propose to target the remaining sources <i>via</i> the current proposal.</p>
Example text from a sample proposal	<p>In Rogers et al. (2014), we concluded that the best explanation for the dynamics of the shockwave and the spectra from both the forward-shocked ISM and the reverse-shocked ejecta is that a Type Ia supernova exploded into a pre-existing wind-blown cavity. [...] If our model from Rogers et al. (2014) is correct, then the single-degenerate channel for SNe Ia production must exist. We propose here for a second epoch of observations which we will compare with our first epoch obtained in 2007 to measure the proper motion of the shock wave.</p>
Reworded text, following the anonymising guidelines	<p>Rogers et al. (2014) concluded that the best explanation for the dynamics of the shockwave and the spectra from both the forward-shocked ISM and the reverse-shocked ejecta is that a Type Ia supernova exploded into a pre-existing wind-blown cavity. [...] If the model from Rogers et al. (2014) is correct, then the single-degenerate channel for SNe Ia production must exist. We propose here for a second epoch of observations which we will compare with a first epoch obtained in 2007 to measure the proper motion of the shock wave.</p>

Things that you CAN (and should) include:

In anonymised sections of the application – Proposal and Computational Details:

A	<p>Scalability testing on Gadi/Magnus/MASSIVE</p> <p>Scalability data on NCMAS facilities is useful to the committee</p>	<p>Scaling data does not come from just one source of compute – and is therefore not identifiable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e.g. compute access can come from start-up grant/NCMAS/partner share - it is not immediately identifiable or associated with specific access.
B	<p>Project codes for large well-used data sets are acceptable</p>	<p>The following are commonly accessed datasets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ERA5 (rt52, zz93) CMIP5 (al33, rr3) CMIP6 (oi10, fs38) Bureau of Meteorology NWP products (lb4, wr45) Bureau of Meteorology Seasonal Hindcast model output (ub7, ux62) GA’s Landsat Collection (rs0, fk4, xu18, jw04)
C	<p>Anonymised justification for your request within the <u>Computational Details</u></p>	<p>Provide details on requirements for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large scale parallel jobs High throughput workflows Data-intensive workflows using large data sets <p>(You do not need to mention previous usage stats)</p>
D	<p>Detail the resource estimates required for your job in a way that complies with A3P in the Computational Details.</p>	<p>This means all Stage 1/anonymised views of your application will see a thorough explanation of your request.</p> <p>You can use the ‘Justification for Requested Amount’ under ‘Resources’ to state “refer to the <u>Computational Details</u>”.</p>

In identifiable sections of the application – Form fields with A3P not required:

E	Details on your 2021 use as justification for the 2022 request	<p>Use the A3P-not-required sections of the form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources and/or • Utilisation of Current Allocation and/or • Justification for Requested Amount <p>This could be for an increase or a decrease</p>
F	<p>Evidence or specific details of funding providers or partners.</p> <p>Use the following parts (A3P not required) of the form to describe these:</p>	<p>Resources section of the form, including the Justification for Requested Amount can be used to provide <i>specific identifiable</i> details of funding/support</p> <p>HPC Experience section can be used to state the other projects that are the baseline for some of the work you propose to do</p> <p>Funding section can be used to describe the specific (named) support of the project</p>
G	Justification of your resource request that needs identifiable aspects of your team/project	<p>If there is a justification you would like to provide that references an <i>identifiable</i> aspect of your project/team, the Resources section provides for this option.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This would be the place to highlight specific increased funding or changes to circumstances
H	Substantial changes to your research group size that cause a dramatic increase or reduction to your resource request	<p>Include the specific staff available to support the resource request in the Justification for Requested Amount part of the Resources section of the application form</p> <p>“Due to COVID travel restrictions, our team was not the 24 researchers we thought it would be for 2021. Twelve researchers could not get to Australia and so we were only able to use 60% of our allocation. We therefore request the same amount as last year, as we have since been able to find replacement staff and we are back at full capacity – 24 researchers.”</p>

Merit Assessment Review Process

Review Stage 1 – Anonymised and Mandatory for Assessors

Team information will be captured (as previously) through the MyNCI system. Investigator metrics will be derived from the combined team record and presented to assessors in an anonymised summary form.

In the primary/mandatory stage, assessors will be presented with an anonymised summary of track record along with the anonymous third-person Proposal and Computational Details components of the applications. They will be required to submit a score based on this information.

Only after submission of this first stage score will reviewers have the option to proceed to the second/identifiable stage. Reviewers will provide a justification to proceed to the second stage.

Anonymised Track Record

Reviewers will see a summary containing the following information:

- M-index for each CI:
 - M-index = H-index divided by the CI's years of service
 - Years of service = Number of years since first publication minus career interruptions
 - [Career interruptions](#), e.g. medical, carer responsibilities
 - Note – [NHMRC](#) has adjusted their [Relative to Opportunity policy](#) to include the pandemic – NCMAS will do the same
 - The order that the M-indices are presented to reviewers will be randomised
- Research FTE percentage for each CI:
 - In next year
 - In previous 5 (five) years
- Journals published in and frequency for each journal (for active years – not counting career interruptions as defined above):
 - In current year to date
 - In previous calendar year
 - and in previous 5 (five) years
- Category 1 grants, as defined by [Department of Education](#):
 - number of grants active at time of application and during award period (calendar year 2023)
 - number of grants awarded in previous 5 (five) calendar years.
- Category 2 grants, as defined by the [Department of Education](#):
 - number of grants active at time of application and during award period (calendar year 2023)
 - number of grants awarded in previous 5 (five) calendar years.
- Number of refereed journal publications in previous 5 (five) years
- Number of refereed conference publications in previous 5 (five) years
- Number of other significant publications, e.g. books
- The total number of **active** people in the research group.
 - This may help to determine the capacity of the group to use the requested resources.
 - Examples of **not currently active** group members that **should not be included** in the total:
 - Members no longer using resources, but have papers under review.
 - Members no longer working on the project but hold potential for further/future collaboration.
- Awards and Honours – number
 - University Research Awards
 - Professional Society Awards/Medals (e.g. AIP, RACI)
 - ARC Fellowships

Review Stage 2 – Identifiable and Optional for Assessors

This second stage gives assessors the option to reveal the identifiable track record of a team. They will also be able to see previous use of NCMAS allocated resources if applicable, or previous HPC Experience at other facilities/through other schemes, which will contain identifiable details of previous HPC/D use.

Assessors will have the option to adjust the score for the application based on the identifiable information. If a reviewer wants to change their score based on this additional information, they will provide a justification.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why continue with anonymisation?

The NCMAS facilities are committed to initiatives that increase diversity and inclusion in STEM. Until the results of the WISA study are published, we are unable to assess the effectiveness of this anonymisation push. Therefore, we are avoiding further disruption and a potential step-back in diversity support by maintaining the existing anonymisation process.

How are applicants supported to change?

The Secretariat will support applicants through the transition to writing in A3P, offering multiple training opportunities, information sessions and example proposals.

What has changed for the NCMAS Committee/reviewers?

Applicants' identities are now concealed from committee members/reviewers in Review Stage 1.

The anonymous review does not mean applications will be accepted from anonymous sources. As with previous cycles, applicants must still enter the names and affiliations of all investigators into the submission portal. The NCMAS Committee will not be able to view names or affiliations in the applications in the primary/mandatory review stage.

What if I accidentally include identifying details in my proposal?

If you include obvious identifying details such as you or your collaborators' names, project code, institution or grant IDs, your proposal will be considered non-compliant. To ensure a robust and transparent process, it is important for the assessment process to be equally strict on all applications.