Assessor Handbook for Detailed Assessors

A guide for Detailed Assessors assessing Proposals for

Australian Laureate Fellowships for funding commencing in 2016 due by 1 February 2016
# Table of Contents

**KEY DATES AND NOTES** ................................................................................................................................. 4

**SPECIAL POINTS TO NOTE WHEN REVIEWING PROPOSALS** ........................................................................... 4

**PART 1—INTRODUCTION** ...................................................................................................................................... 8

  GLOSSARY .......................................................................................................................................................... 8

  OVERVIEW ......................................................................................................................................................... 10

  THE PROCESS IN BRIEF .................................................................................................................................. 10

  CONFIDENTIALITY, ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST ........................................................................... 10

  RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND RESEARCH MISCONDUCT ............................................................................... 12

  PROPOSALS OUTSIDE AN ASSESSOR’S AREA OF EXPERTISE ...................................................................... 13

  ELIGIBILITY ...................................................................................................................................................... 13

**PART 2—ACCEPTING ASSIGNMENTS IN RMS** ....................................................................................................... 14

  RMS Recommended Browser ............................................................................................................................. 14

  Pending Detailed Assignments ............................................................................................................................ 14

  Confidentiality Agreement .................................................................................................................................. 14

  Assignment List .................................................................................................................................................. 15

  Conflict of Interest Check ................................................................................................................................... 15

  Accepting and Rejecting Assignments ................................................................................................................ 15

  Navigating from ‘Assignments’ list to ‘Assessments’ list ..................................................................................... 16

**PART 3—ASSESSING PROPOSALS** .......................................................................................................................... 13

  INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING ASSESSMENTS IN RMS .................................................................. 13

  RATING SCALE .................................................................................................................................................... 14

  Assessment: Text and Score ................................................................................................................................. 14

  ASSESSMENT SUMMARY ................................................................................................................................... 15

    Instructions for Completing Assessments in RMS .......................................................................................... 16

    Special Points to note when reviewing a Proposal .......................................................................................... 19

    Ranking the List and Re-ranking Identical Assessments ................................................................................ 19

    Submitting Assessments in RMS ...................................................................................................................... 20

**PART 4—FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS** .......................................................................................................... 22

  Appendix 1 — Australian Laureate Fellowships ............................................................................................... 23

    Funding Rules .................................................................................................................................................... 23

    Important Changes from last year ..................................................................................................................... 23

    Scheme Contact ............................................................................................................................................... 23

    Scheme objectives ........................................................................................................................................... 23

    Selection Criteria — Australian Laureate Fellowships .................................................................................. 23

    Special Points to note when reviewing Australian Laureate Fellowships Proposals ..................................... 25
KEY DATES AND NOTES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of Proposals Opens</td>
<td>10 December 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|  - Check the Proposal details for any Conflict of Interest as soon as you receive the RMS email containing assignments; accept or reject assignments in RMS (to allow for timely re-assignment of the rejected assignments)  
  - Assess each Proposal assigned to you using an A–E rating scale and give a written report against each of the selection criteria | |
| Closing Date for Submitting Assessments | 1 February 2016 |
|  - Submit assessments to the ARC on or before this deadline | |

SPECIAL POINTS TO NOTE WHEN REVIEWING PROPOSALS

Conflict of Interest – the ARC treats COI very seriously and provides detailed advice in the next section on this matter. Please familiarise yourself with the ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy.

Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)
The ARC is committed to ensuring all eligible researchers have fair access to competitive funding through the NCGP. To this end, we promote and encourage within NCGP those approaches that best recognise research excellence in the context of the diversity of career and life experiences. One key element is that the assessment process takes into account the quality rather than simply the volume or size of the research contribution.

The quality of Participants involved (who meet the eligibility criteria) in Proposals for funding under the NCGP should be assessed on the basis of their ROPE (including consideration of the Participant’s working arrangements, career history, and personal circumstances and acknowledgement of research performance given the opportunities available), and other scheme dependent criteria. The ARC is not prescriptive about what can be included in Proposals, but assessors should be aware of the widely held view that journal impact factors are a poor measure of an individual’s research performance. Please familiarise yourself with the ROPE Statement on the ARC website.

Unconscious Bias
Assessors should be aware of the potential for unconscious bias, particularly with regard to gender, in their assessments and the impact this may have on decision making in the peer review
process. Recognising that everyone is affected by unconscious bias, and questioning their own biases and reasons for decisions, can help all assessors to monitor and attempt to ameliorate against these implicit biases in their assessment.

Data Management Requirements
In line with responsibilities outlined in the *Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research (2007)* and international best practice, the ARC encourages researchers to deposit data arising from research projects in publicly accessible repositories.

The ARC has recently clarified its expectations regarding the management of data through its Funding Rules, Instructions to Applicants and Frequently Asked Questions documents. The revised wording encourages researchers to consider the ways in which they can best manage, store, disseminate and re-use data generated through ARC-funded research.

The ARC is not mandating open data. It is, however, the ARC’s expectation that researchers will take note of current practice within their discipline and consider plans for managing data that will enhance the research outcomes of the Proposal. As a result, Applicants are now required to include a brief discussion of data management specific to each research project in their Project Description. Assessors should take account of data management as part of their holistic assessment of the Proposal.

Keywords
The Research Management System (RMS) has recently been upgraded with improved functionality which allows keywords to be identified by the system by taking into account a number of fields within Proposals to match with the expertise of assessors, including the Proposal summary, Proposal title, impact statement, FoR codes and SEO codes, rather than asking applicants to nominate their key words. This information is used to generate a word cloud and then an algorithm is used to identify appropriate assessors for a Proposal. ARC Executive Directors continue to review the assessors suggested by the algorithm for best matches.

Impact Statement
Research impact is the demonstrable contribution that research makes to the economy, society, culture, national security, public policy or services, health, the environment, or quality of life, beyond contributions to academia. The information provided by Applicants under this heading should be included as part of your assessment of a Proposal. The *Research Impact Pathway* table provided on the ARC website provides examples of where research components fit into the impact pathway and it may be useful as a guide to assess the Impact Statement. Applicants have been particularly advised “to consider indicators from the *Research Impact Pathway* and to ensure that both “outcomes” and “benefits” are included in your statement”.

PDF Formatting
RMS shrinks attached PDFs to fit within a frame in the Proposal PDF. If Participants have adhered to formatting requirements when creating the document to be attached, they will not be penalised for any shrinkage caused by RMS. Some attachments may also have been stretched into the wrong aspect ratio by the system. Some pages may appear as landscape.

Socio-Economic Objective (SEO) question
RMS uses the 2008 SEO codes. If SEO descriptors appear to be repeated it is because the descriptors are identical for some SEO codes. The codes themselves are stored in RMS but do

---

not display on the Proposal form.

**Research Support question**

This table may appear in landscape; column headings may not appear on every page. In the ‘Support Status’ column: R = Requested, C = Current and P = Past.
PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

GLOSSARY

In this Handbook:

**Applicant** means the Administering Organisation submitting the application on behalf of the Participants.

**ARC College of Experts (COE)** means ARC College of Experts members who assess, rank and moderate Proposals under the NCGP, make funding recommendations to the ARC and provide strategic advice to the ARC on emerging discipline and cross-disciplinary developments. In RMS they are referred to as General Assessors.

**ARC website** means www.arc.gov.au.

**Candidate** means a researcher nominated in a Proposal for an Australian Laureate Fellowship.

**Carriage** means a Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) member who has been assigned as a General Assessor to a particular Proposal.

**Carriage 1** means a SAC member that has primary carriage for the Proposal.

**Conflict of Interest (COI)** means any conflict of interest, any risk of a conflict of interest and any apparent conflict of interest arising through a party engaging in any activity, participating in any association, holding any membership or obtaining any interest that is likely to conflict with or restrict that party participating in the Project. The [ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy](http://www.arc.gov.au) is available on the ARC website.

**Detailed Assessors** means experts who provide assessment text and ratings against selection criteria based on an A-E rating scale.

**Discovery Programme** refers to the schemes funded under the Discovery Programme of the NCGP which for the purposes of this document, consists of the *Australian Laureate Fellowships*; *Discovery Early Career Researcher Award*; *Discovery Indigenous*; *Discovery Projects*; *Future Fellowships*; and other schemes as updated from time to time.

**FL** means *Australian Laureate Fellowships*.

**FL16** means the *Australian Laureate Fellowships* scheme for funding commencing in 2016.

**FoR Codes** means Field of Research Codes as defined in the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ *Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC)* (2008).

**Funding Rules** means the [ARC Funding Rules for schemes under the Discovery Programme (2015 edition)](http://www.arc.gov.au) available on the ARC website.

**General Assessors** means the Australian Laureate Fellowships Selection Advisory Committee members, who are referred to in RMS and throughout this handbook as General Assessors.

**NCGP** means the ARC’s *National Competitive Grants Programme*.

**Other Carriage** means the General Assessor(s) with secondary responsibility for the Proposal.

**Participant** means person named as an investigator on a Proposal.

**Proposal** means a request to the ARC for the provision of funding which is submitted in accordance with the Funding Rules.
Research Misconduct includes fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting the results of research, and failure to declare or manage a serious conflict of interest. The ARC Research Integrity and Research Misconduct Policy is available on the ARC website.

RMS means the ARC’s online Research Management System at https://rms.arc.gov.au. Further information on RMS can be found on the ARC website.

ROPE means Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence.

Scheme Contact means Australian Laureate Fellowships Mailbox – AustralianLaureateFellowships@arc.gov.au.

Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) means a group of experts appointed to assist the ARC to evaluate proposals and to provide a recommendation for funding to the ARC.

SEO codes means Socio-Economic Objective codes which are defined in the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC) (2008).
OVERVIEW

This Handbook provides information, instructions and advice to Detailed Assessors on the Assessment process for the Australian Research Council’s (ARC) Australian Laureate Fellowships funding scheme, to help ensure the high quality assessment of Proposals for this scheme.

Peer review plays a critical role in the assessment of ARC Proposals. These reviews assist in the evaluation, selection, recommendation and funding of successful Proposals. The peer review process is based on the assessments completed by you as a Detailed Assessor and by General Assessors. Assessors are assigned to Proposals which they are required to assess and rank in accordance with their individual expertise.

For further information on the Australian Laureate Fellowships scheme, including key dates, selection criteria and scheme objectives, please refer to Appendix 1.

THE PROCESS IN BRIEF

1. Detailed Assessors are assigned a number of ARC Proposals.

2. Detailed Assessors log in to RMS to check their assignments for any Conflicts of Interest and accept or reject the assignment accordingly (see Part 2 of this Handbook).

3. Detailed Assessors provide a written report and an A–E rating against the scheme selection criteria (see Parts 3, 4 and Appendix 1 of this Handbook). Detailed Assessors have no further tasks after this point.

4. The assessment text completed by you as a Detailed Assessor is anonymously provided to the Applicant for rejoinder.

5. General Assessors review their initial assessments and moderate their ratings in the context of the rejoinders submitted by Applicants and the assessments provided by Detailed Assessors.

6. General Assessors meet in order to discuss and recommend the Proposals for funding to the ARC.

CONFIDENTIALITY, ETHICS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Proposals and the information contained within them are confidential. All information regarding proposals and assessments submitted to the ARC is confidential. You must not contact researchers nominated on the proposal to seek clarification or to discuss proposals. You must not discuss any proposal or assessment or any of the information contained within them with others at any stage (other than with ARC staff), or reveal material details about any assessment or proposal before or after the final decisions have been released.

Your identity must also be kept confidential. Please avoid using names or any words that could identify you in your submitted assessment text.

The funding of proposals and information provided by applicants and others, and assessments provided by Assessors or reviewers, are given and received in confidence. Proposals and the information they contain must be handled and treated as confidential material and must be used only for the purposes of ARC business. In order to preserve confidentiality, individuals should not discuss ARC business with any other parties at any stage, unless specifically authorised to do so by the ARC.
In order to comply with ethical standards, material contained in Proposals must only be used or disclosed for the purposes of ARC business. It is unethical and potentially unlawful for individuals to use for other purposes any material, novel idea or invention contained in proposals or information provided to them by the ARC. To protect confidentiality, individuals must destroy all proposals or information provided by the ARC once the purposes for which they were provided have been fulfilled.

Please be aware that if you have a COI with the proposal you should not assess it. Part 2 of this Handbook provides details on how to reject the assignment of a proposal where you have a COI.

Please familiarise yourself with the **ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy**. Key points from these guidelines are summarised below.

**Identifying Conflicts of Interest**

The ARC takes the identification and management of conflicts of interest seriously and has developed the **ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy**. This policy is designed to ensure that all conflicts of interest are managed in a rigorous and transparent way. It aims to prevent individuals from influencing decisions unfairly and maintain public confidence in the integrity, legitimacy, impartiality and fairness of the peer review process.

For the implementation of the policy the ARC distinguishes between organisational and individual conflicts of interest.

**Organisational conflicts of interest**

An individual may be deemed to have a conflict of interest (COI) with an organisation for a number of reasons including, but not limited to, if that individual (or their spouse/family member):

- a) is employed by that organisation
- b) has been employed by that organisation within the past two years
- c) has an arrangement for future employment or is negotiating employment at that organisation;
- d) holds a financial interest in that organisation
- e) holds another appointment with that organisation, but only where the individual would reasonably be perceived to have a COI regarding funding proposals or funded projects involving that organisation. Non-remunerated appointments are not generally considered to give rise to a COI unless other factors arise (such as collaboration or co-authorship, or appointments enabling strategic decisions over research in the organisation) are also present.

**Handling of organisational conflicts of interest**

All individuals involved with any ARC business must update their RMS profile with their current employment and any previous employment within the past two years to assist the ARC with the identification and management of organisational COI.

Individuals participating in ARC funding proposals must declare their organisational COI with participating organisations to the Administering Organisation in accordance with the relevant Funding Rules.

**Individual conflicts of interest**

An individual may be deemed to have a COI with a named Participant on a funding proposal or funded project for a number of reasons including, but not limited to, if that individual (or their spouse/family member):

- a) has a close personal relationship (including enmity) with that named Participant
- b) has a professional relationship with that named Participant including
• currently holds, or has held within the past two years, funding jointly with that named Participant
• has a current application or is negotiating an application for funding with that named Participant
• has been a collaborator or co-author with that named Participant on a research output within the past four years
• has been a co-editor with that named Participant of a book, journal, compendium, or conference proceedings within the past two years
• has been a postgraduate student or supervisor of that named Participant within the past five years
c) could otherwise be perceived to benefit materially from the awarding of funding to the proposal involving that named Participant.

Handling of individual conflicts of interest

Assessors reviewing ARC proposals who have identified a COI must reject the proposal in RMS to assist the ARC in the management of COI.

RESEARCH INTEGRITY AND RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

As specified within the ARC Research Integrity and Research Misconduct Policy, anyone engaged on ARC business, such as ARC College members, Selection Advisory Committee members, Detailed Assessors and contractors, are required to report alleged breaches of research integrity or Research Misconduct issues identified in relation to ARC funded business to the ARC Research Integrity Officer. Concerns regarding potential breaches may also be raised with the Scheme Contact or Discipline Executive Director.

Examples of research integrity breaches or deviations from the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research include but are not limited to:

• fabrication of results
• falsification of misrepresentation of results
• plagiarism
• misleading ascription of authorship (including in an application)
• fraud
• failure to declare and manage a conflict of interest
• falsification or misrepresentation to obtain funding
• conducting research without ethics approval(s) as required (human and/or animal)
• avoidable failure to follow research protocols as approved by a properly constituted research ethics committee
• unreasonably risking the safety of human participants, or the wellbeing of animals or the environment
• deviations from the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research that occur through gross or persistent negligence
• wilful concealment or facilitation of Research Misconduct of others

The policy and contact details for the Research Integrity Officer are available on the ARC website. Should you identify an alleged breach of research integrity or Research Misconduct issue as part of your assessment please notify the ARC Research Integrity Officer. A Notification Form for an Allegation of Research Integrity Breach or Misconduct (Attachment A of the policy) can be used to report the allegation.

The Research Integrity Officer will refer the allegation to the relevant institution for
investigation in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research. Sufficient information should be provided to enable the institution to progress an investigation into the allegation (if required).

PROPOSALS OUTSIDE AN ASSESSOR’S AREA OF EXPERTISE

The ARC receives Proposals from a range of scholarly fields. Many are multi-disciplinary or cross-disciplinary, with assessment generally sought from experts in different fields. Occasionally you will be asked to assess a Proposal that does not appear to correspond fully with your area of expertise. Your views are valuable as they are being sought on the entire project, drawing particularly on your expert knowledge of your field.

If you believe that the ARC has misunderstood your expertise, or has made an error in the assignment of a Proposal to you, please give early notice of your view by rejecting the applicable Proposal/s in RMS and entering a reason in the Reject Reason comment box. This early notice will enable the ARC to seek an alternative assessor.

ELIGIBILITY

If, while assessing a Proposal, you have concerns about eligibility, ethics or other issues associated with a Proposal, it is important that you do not include this information in your assessment.

Please contact the ARC by sending an email to the Australian Laureate Fellowships team (see Appendix 1) as soon as possible. The ARC is responsible for investigating and making decisions on these matters, and Detailed Assessors should not conduct investigations once a matter has been reported to the ARC. Please complete your assessment without giving consideration to the potential eligibility issue.
PART 2 – ACCEPTING ASSIGNMENTS IN RMS

RMS Recommended Browser

RMS is compatible with the latest versions of Google Chrome and Microsoft Internet Explorer. Compatibility with different browsers or older versions of Google Chrome and Microsoft Internet Explorer is not guaranteed.

Before commencing, please ensure that your FoR Codes and Expertise text are current in RMS.

Pending Detailed Assignments

Login to RMS using your email address. For further login information, go to the RMS Information page.

Under the ‘Assignment’ heading, a list of ‘Pending Detailed’ assignments will be displayed. Click on the ‘View’ button to open a list of Proposals assigned to you for this scheme round.

Confidentiality Agreement

All ARC assessors will receive an automatic prompt in RMS that requires them to accept a Confidentiality Agreement. The text of the Confidentiality Agreement is provided below for your information:

“An Assessor must be familiar with and comply with the ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy, the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research, and the Australian Privacy Principles (outlined in the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)) in relation to the management of information.”

These documents can be accessed via the ARC website.

Please indicate that you will comply with these requirements by selecting the ‘Accept’ button.

You must accept the Confidentiality Agreement before you Accept or Assess any Proposals.
Assignment List

A list of Proposals assigned to you will be displayed with the status ‘Announced’. Click on the ‘View’ button to view the details of the selected Proposal, including the title, summary, Investigator and Organisation for the Proposal.

Note: The status ‘Announced’ indicates that the Proposal has been assigned to you by the ARC, but that you have not yet accepted it.

Conflict of Interest Check

Check the Proposal details for any conflicts of interest (COI). It is important that Detailed Assessors check their assigned Proposals for any potential COI as soon as possible. If you are conflicted the ARC must be able to re-assign the Proposal to an alternative Detailed Assessor at the beginning of the assessment process.

Accepting and Rejecting Assignments

If there are no COIs, accept the assignment by selecting ‘Accept’.

If you are unable to participate in the assessment of a Proposal, you must provide a reason for rejecting the assignment. To reject an assignment select ‘Reject’.

You will then be asked to provide a reason for the rejection. Select a rejection reason from the drop down list.

If ‘Conflicted with Proposal’ is selected, you are then required to select people and/or organisations with conflicts from the list relevant to this Proposal. The list will become available when you select this option.
Proposals you have 'rejected' will be removed from your assignment list after saving the selection.

Please note, you can now reject a proposal from the Assessments Page by clicking ‘Reject’. You will still be required to provide a reason as above.

Navigating from ‘Assignments’ list to ‘Assessments’ list

Once you have accepted your assignments, click on the button at the top or bottom of your assignment list which will take you to the ‘Detailed Assessments’ list.
The ‘Detailed Assessments’ list will display the list of Proposals for assessment. You can navigate back to the ‘Assignments’ list by clicking on the ‘Assignments’ button.

**Please note:** if any additional new proposals are assigned to you, you will receive a notification email. You will then need to go to your ‘Pending Detailed Assignments’ section again to accept or reject the new Proposals.
PART 3 – ASSESSING PROPOSALS

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING ASSESSMENTS IN RMS

When using RMS you are periodically asked to confirm that you will comply with the ARC’s confidentiality guidelines. The ARC’s Confidentiality Agreement text can be found at Appendix 2 of this Handbook. If prompted, you must select ‘I Agree’ to access the Assessment page.

For each Proposal, the RMS will provide you with an online Assessment Form divided into the selection criteria components. Please enter assessment text and select your A–E score from the drop down boxes provided for each criterion.

The Assessment Form is primarily for you to point out the merits of the research outlined in a Proposal with respect to the selection criteria set out in the Funding Rules. However, if you wish to offer advice about other aspects of the Proposal, for example, how the Proposal could be improved, you may do so using the ‘Improvements’ or ‘Comments’ fields of the Assessment Form.

The written assessment text provides the sole account of your views about the Proposal. It is used in two ways:

1. Your text, and that of other Detailed Assessors, is made available anonymously to applicants. This provides an opportunity for applicants nominated on a Proposal to offer a rejoinder to the ARC in response to the views expressed in the text of the assessments. This process helps to clarify any misunderstanding or difference of opinion about perceived weaknesses in the Proposal. It also provides an important feedback mechanism that may help applicants in future Proposals.

2. Your text, scores and rank, and those of other Detailed Assessors, are also made available to the General Assessors, along with the rejoinder. General Assessors use the assessment texts and scores to moderate views about the Proposal and to help understand the basis for the ranking and scores that you provided.

Funding Rules specify the selection criteria used in the competitive assessment of Proposals. Each selection criterion has a different weighting and should be assessed separately.

Please refer to Appendix 1 in this handbook for the Funding Rules for schemes under the Discovery Programme (2015 edition) and specific information relevant to the scheme round, in addition to a scheme specific matrix providing additional guidance on which parts of the proposal refer to each of the selection criteria.

It is important to note that for reasons of fairness to Applicants, the ARC cannot use assessments provided if you do not follow the assessment procedures outlined in this handbook.
### Scoring Band | Criteria | Recommendation
--- | --- | ---
A | Exceptional: Of the highest quality relative to other Proposals and at the forefront of research in the field. Approximately 10% of Proposals should receive ratings in this band. | Recommended Unconditionally
B | Outstanding: Of high quality and strongly competitive, relative to other Proposals. Approximately 15% of Proposals should receive ratings in this band. | Strongly support recommendation of funding
C | Excellent: Interesting, sound and compelling but not strongly competitive compared with other Proposals. Approximately 20% of Proposals should receive ratings in this band. | Support recommendation of funding with reservation
D | Very Good: Sound, but lacks a compelling element relative to other Proposals. Approximately 35% of Proposals are likely to fall into this band. | Unsupportive of recommendation for funding
E | Good: The Proposal is uncompetitive relative to other Proposals. Approximately 20% of Proposals are likely to fall into this band. | Not recommended for funding

### Assessment: Text and Score
Enter your assessment text against each selection criterion. It is mandatory that an assessment text is provided for each selection criterion.

**Australian Laureate Fellowships**
- Investigator 40%
- Project/Programme of Research Activity 30%
- Mentoring/Capacity Building 30%

[Appendix 1] of this handbook contains further detail regarding these selection criteria and the relevant parts of the Proposal form to consider.
**ASSESSMENT SUMMARY**

In summary, when preparing and submitting your assessment:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO</th>
<th>DO NOT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Enter (A–E) ratings in the boxes provided. Ensure that the assessment text aligns with the ratings which you have entered. ✓ Note the main weaknesses of the Proposal, even when your assessment is highly favourable. ✓ Write meaningful, objective and comprehensive assessments for the General Assessors. ✓ Provide feedback for the researchers nominated in the Proposal ✓ Make sure that the assessment is submitted by the ARC deadline.</td>
<td>✗ Include your ratings in the text. ✗ Include dashes and/or acronyms only in your assessment text. ✗ Provide only a few words as your assessment text. ✗ Use the same/generic comments for multiple assessments. ✗ Identify yourself, either directly or indirectly, or refer to other nominated researchers or Proposals in a way that can identify them. ✗ Include text that appears to be defamatory or distastefully irrelevant (such as gratuitous criticism of a researcher and/or Eligible Organisation). ✗ Offer advice about your own standing in, or understanding of, the research field in the Proposal or refer to the outcome or status of relevant research not mentioned in the Proposal. ✗ Restate or rephrase any part of the Proposal. ✗ Include comments about the potential ineligibility of a Proposal (this information must be provided to the ARC by email).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assessment text should be written in a fair, meaningful and balanced way, addressing only issues relevant to the Proposal in terms of the selection criteria. It should provide a sound, comprehensive account of, and justification for, the Assessor’s views about the Proposal, while respecting the care with which Proposals have been prepared. Avoid platitudes and the use of exaggeration or understatement, and be objectively critical if appropriate.

As noted earlier, when preparing assessment text you should not reveal identifying details about researchers nominated on other Proposals that you may have seen, particularly when comparing the merits of each Proposal and allocating the scores that are ultimately used to rank them.

**Please note:** Inappropriate assessments compromise the integrity of the peer review process. If the ARC considers an assessment to be inappropriate, the ARC may contact the Assessor to request the assessment be amended or remove the assessment from the process.
Instructions for Completing Assessments in RMS

When using RMS you are periodically asked to confirm that you will comply with the ARC’s confidentiality guidelines. If prompted, you must select ‘I Agree’ to access the Assessment page.

Accessing the Assessment Information

- Click on the ‘Assessments’ link under the Assessment section of the RMS Action Centre.
- Select the Scheme Round from the drop down box to continue.
- The table showing all of the Proposals that you have agreed to assess will be displayed.
- You can access Proposal information by one of the following methods:
  1. Clicking on the ‘Details’ icon for a specific Proposal, which will show the following Proposal details: Proposal Summary; Named Participants and Named Organisations.
  2. Click on the PDF icon for a specific Proposal to display the full Proposal PDF.
  3. Click on the ‘Assessment Package’ at the top right hand side of the screen. This will download a zip file containing the PDFs of all Proposals you are assigned to.
Note: If you wish to use bookmarks in the PDF to review the Proposal:

- Save the Assessment Package to your computer and open the individual PDF file from your computer using Adobe (Right click on the file and choose *Open with Adobe*)
- Click on the bookmark icon 📚 in the top left hand corner of the screen

- Bookmarks for the PDF are displayed. Click on any of these to be taken to that section
Understanding the Assessment page

**Section A** At the Detailed Assessment page you will see headings for Rank and Score.

**Section B** This section provides you with the Proposal ID, the Chief Investigator name and the Proposal Title.

**Section C** Clicking on the ‘Details’ button will provide you with a summary of information on the Proposal.

**Section D** Clicking on the ‘Assess’ button will open the Assessment form.

**Section E** Clicking on the PDF button will open a PDF of the entire Proposal.

**Section F** If necessary, you can reject a Proposal from the Assessments Page by clicking ‘Reject’. Please refer to page 13 (Accepting and Rejecting Assignments) for further instructions regarding rejecting an Assignment.

Understanding the Proposal Summary page

You can view the Proposal Summary by clicking on the ‘Details’ button in Section C of the above image. This will display the following details:

- Proposal Summary
- Named Participants
- Named Organisations

Entering and Saving Assessments

You can enter your assessments for each selection criterion by entering the assessment text in the text box corresponding to the selection criterion and by using the drop-down list provided to enter the score. Once assessment text and ratings have been entered a Save icon will appear at the right side of the Proposal row.

You can save your Proposal assessments individually using the Save icon or save multiple assessments using the Save All Assessments button in the top right hand side of the screen.
Special Points to note when reviewing a Proposal

- Click the ‘Save’ button regularly to save your assessment. It is recommended that you also save your assessment text in a separate document while undertaking your assessments to minimise the risk of losing data at any stage. This information must be destroyed at the completion of the assessment process.

- Enter a maximum of 2500 characters (approximately 400 words) of assessment text for each selection criterion for the Proposal. Click on the ‘Save’ button to save your assessment.

- You may enter additional comments in the ‘Improvements’ and ‘Comments’ fields. This feedback will be seen by the Carriages for the Proposal as well as the Participants and the Administering Organisation. It is not mandatory to provide this feedback.

- Once all the scores have been entered on the form, RMS will automatically calculate/recalculate the overall Proposal ‘Rank’ and ‘Score’ during the saving process. This is based on the selection criteria weightings published in the Funding Rules.

- RMS will help you to identify the selection criterion fields that have not been completed. Please click on the button ‘Show’:

  Please complete assessments Show

Ranking the List and Re-ranking Identical Assessments

If you have been assigned a number of Proposals, a crucial step in your assessment of Proposals is establishing a ranked list. Scores associated with each assessment provide a convenient means for managing this ranked comparison. RMS will use your scores to automatically rank your assessments in order.

However, it is possible to have multiple Proposals with the same scores, and since the Selection Criteria are weighted, it is possible for multiple Proposals to which you have given different criteria scores to have the same final score.

If you have multiple assessments with an identical final score, you will be prompted (‘Please assign ranks to grouped assessments’) to give each assessment a unique rank as a way of differentiating between them. In the example below, two assessments were equally ranked in position one (due to having identical scores), and they need to be given unique ranks from one (1) to two (2).
If you do not understand any of the criteria against which Proposals are assessed, do not leave the score blank, as you will be unable to submit your assessment. Either refer to the Funding Rules for schemes under the Discovery Programme (2015 edition) for information about selection criteria or contact the ARC for clarification.

**Submitting Assessments in RMS**

- To ensure that all the assessments are saved in RMS, click ‘Save All’.
- To submit all of your assessments to the ARC in RMS, click ‘Submit All’.

Please ensure you are happy with your assessment text, scores and ranking before submitting assessments. Once your assessments have been submitted to the ARC you will not be able to adjust these. If you wish to change an assessment, please contact the ARC before the assessment closing date to have your assessment ‘de-submitted’.

Providing ranks:
You can only submit your assessments to the ARC when all of your assessments and rankings have been completed and saved. If, for some reason, you cannot complete a particular assessment, you must reject the assignment. You can reject the assignment either from the link on the Assessment page or by returning to the Assignments link in the Action Centre of RMS. You will not be able to submit if any assessments in your list have not been completed.

Once all assessments and rankings have been completed and saved the following message will appear:

Assessments ready for submission

Click ‘Submit All’.

Assessments have been successfully submitted.
1. **How do I know if I have a COI with the Proposal I am assessing?**

A COI arises where the assessor's other interests or associations could, or could be seen to, improperly influence the performance of their duties as an assessor. Refer to the ‘Conflict of Interest’ section in this Handbook for detailed information about COIs. In most instances, it is easy to ascertain if you have a COI. Typical COIs include: one or more of the named investigators on the Proposal are employees of your institution; you have a close personal involvement (including enmity) with one of the named investigators; you have a professional involvement with one of the named investigators (e.g. you have published with him/her in the last four years; you have supervised his/her PhD in the last five (5) years). If you are uncertain, please contact the ARC.

2. **Although I don’t have a COI with the Proposal, I feel that I cannot provide an impartial assessment (e.g. because I have a problem with the theoretical approach or I don’t have expertise in this field of research). What do I do?**

Advise the ARC immediately by email. The ARC will consider the situation and provide advice regarding whether you can assess the Proposal, or if you should ‘Reject’ the Proposal in the Assignment list.

3. **My RMS login and password appear to be incorrect. What do I do?**

Your login is your email address, and it is not case sensitive. However passwords are case sensitive, so check that your capitalisation is correct and the caps lock is not on. If you have forgotten your password, you can click the ‘Reset Password’ link at the bottom of the login page. If you continue to experience problems, contact the ARC by email to rms@arc.gov.au.

4. **I don’t see the Proposal in its entirety.**

The Proposal PDF can be accessed by clicking on the icon in the same row as the Proposal ID in the Assessments page. You can also request an assessment package containing the PDFs for all Proposals assigned to you by clicking on the ‘Assessment Package’ button at the top right of the Assessments page.

5. **I have finished my assessment of a particular Proposal, but the system will not allow me to submit. Why is this?**

All of your assigned Proposals must be assessed before the system will allow you to submit. Also, if any of the mandatory fields of the individual assessments have not been completed, the system will not allow you to submit. Ensure that a rating and assessment text has been entered for each selection criterion in each individual Proposal.

6. **How do I know if I have successfully submitted my assessments?**

Once you have successfully submitted your assessments, the Assessment Status will show as ‘Assessments are Submitted’ and the ‘Save’ button will be greyed out.

7. **I have submitted my assessments but want to edit or change some. What can I do?**

Once your assessments have been submitted you will not be able to edit any of this information.

If you have submitted your assessments by accident or wish to make changes before the assessments’ submission due date, email the ARC and request that your assessments be de-submitted.

8. **I cannot see any Proposals for assessment when I click on the Assessments link on my RMS Home Page.**

Before you can access Proposals for assessment you must first accept them from within the Assignments page (see Part 2 of this handbook).
The ARC and the Australian research community thank you for your effort and time reading these instructions and undertaking assessments. The ARC would be unable to fulfil its role of supporting excellence in research without your help.
Appendix 1— Australian Laureate Fellowships

Funding Rules

The Funding Rules for schemes under the Discovery Programme (2015 edition)— (the Funding Rules) can be found on the ARC website.

Important Changes from last year

For important changes to the Australian Laureate Fellowships scheme, please refer to the Changes to the Australian Laureate Fellowships Funding Rules for 2016 document on the ARC website.

Scheme Contact

Australian Laureate Fellowships mailbox - ARC-AustralianLaureateFellowships@arc.gov.au.

Scheme objectives

The objectives of the Australian Laureate Fellowships scheme are to:

a. attract and retain outstanding researchers and research leaders of international reputation;

b. support ground-breaking, internationally competitive research;

c. provide an excellent research training environment and exemplary mentorship to nurture early-career researchers;

d. forge strong links among researchers, the international research community and/or industry;

e. expand Australia’s knowledge base and research capability; and

f. enhance the scale and focus of research in the Science and Research Priorities.

Selection Criteria — Australian Laureate Fellowships

Assessors should read the full proposal to be able to provide an accurate assessment against the selection criteria. The following table provides additional guidance on which parts of the proposal refer to each of the selection criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection Criteria</th>
<th>Primary points of reference in Proposal</th>
<th>Secondary points of reference in Proposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investigator – 40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)</td>
<td>Part C – Personnel and ROPE</td>
<td>Part G2 – Statements on Progress for ARC-funded Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- evidence of outstanding research output and achievement taking into account research opportunity;</td>
<td>Part D1 – Project Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- potential to undertake ground-breaking research;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- outstanding leadership ability;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Selection Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selection Criteria</th>
<th>Primary points of reference in Proposal</th>
<th>Secondary points of reference in Proposal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- potential to create an enduring legacy that would be enhanced by the Australian Laureate Fellowship; and - contribution to national and international public policy debates and initiatives.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Time and capacity to undertake the proposed research.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Project/Programme of Research Activity – 30%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(i) Innovation</th>
<th>Part D1 – Project Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Are the project aims and concepts original and innovative, representing the leading edge of research in the field?</td>
<td>Part B1 - Science Research Priorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Will new methods, technologies, theories or ideas be developed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How does the research programme enhance innovation in Australia?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(ii) Approach</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Are the conceptual framework, design, methods and analyses adequately developed, well integrated and appropriate to the aims of the project?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(iii) Significance and national benefit</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Does the research address an important problem?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How will the anticipated outcomes advance the knowledge base?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Is there a major contribution to public policy formulation and debate?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Will the proposed research maximise economic, environmental, social, health and/or cultural benefit to Australia?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Will the proposed research be cost-effective and value for money?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection Criteria</td>
<td>Primary points of reference in Proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is the potential for the research to contribute to the Science and Research Priorities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Will this research build new international research collaboration or links between research and industry?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mentoring/Capacity Building – 30%**

- Does the proposal show how the project will build new teams and create world-class research capacity, collaboration and innovation?

- Does the Australian Laureate Fellowship Candidate:
  - demonstrate exceptional ability to supervise and to mentor postdoctoral researchers and other early-mid career researchers?
  - have a record of successful postgraduate supervision, where applicable?
  - provide evidence in the proposal of a suitable Project Research Environment for postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers?
  - demonstrate exceptional leadership and the organisational ability to ensure the development of scale and focus in research?
  - provide evidence of the potential to attract financial resources to enhance research capacity?

---

**Special Points to note when reviewing Australian Laureate Fellowships Proposals**

**Part E: Project Cost**

Please note that the ‘Total requested budget’ at the top of the first page in Part E- Project Cost of the FL16 Proposal Form is the total amount requested from the ARC, and does not include contributions from Administering/Collaborating/Other Organisations.
Part G: Research Support

In the Support Status column of the Research Support table in Part G1 of the Proposal for FL16 R = Requested, C = Current and P = Past. Additionally, this table may appear in landscape; column headings may not appear on every page.

Other

All attached PDFs – RMS shrinks attached PDFs to fit within a frame in the Proposal PDF. If participants have adhered to formatting requirements when creating the document to be attached, they will not be penalised for any shrinkage caused by RMS. Some attachments may also have been stretched into the wrong aspect ratio by the system. Some pages may appear as landscape.
All ARC Assessors will receive an automatic prompt in RMS that requires them to agree to a Confidentiality Agreement. The text of the Agreement is provided below for information.

An Assessor must be familiar with and comply with the **ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy**, the **Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research**, and the **Australian Privacy Principles** (outlined in the **Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)**) in relation to the management of information. These documents can be accessed via the **ARC website**.

Please indicate that you will comply with these requirements by selecting the ‘Accept’ button.