



**Australian Government**

**Australian Research Council**

# Assessor Handbook

A guide for both **General** and **Detailed** Assessors on the selection process and assessing applications under the Discovery Program and Linkage Program grant opportunities for

FL23

FT23

DE24

IN24

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## 1. Overview

This Handbook provides instructions and advice for both **General** and **Detailed** Assessors on the assessment process for most grant opportunities under the Australian Research Council's (ARC) [National Competitive Grants Program \(NCGP\)](#).

The NCGP supports the highest-quality fundamental and applied research and research training under 2 grant programs, [Discovery](#) and [Linkage](#).

The specific objectives and assessment criteria for each of the grant opportunities covered in the Handbook are listed in Appendix 1, and are also available in the relevant Grant Guidelines on [GrantConnect](#).

This handbook covers assessment for:

1. Australian Laureate Fellowships
2. Future Fellowships
3. Discovery Early Career Researcher Awards
4. Discovery Indigenous

This handbook does not cover the assessment for the grant opportunities listed below.

Separate handbooks will be made available by the ARC for this purpose when these grant opportunities are offered.

1. ARC Centres of Excellence
2. Industrial Transformation Research Hubs
3. Industrial Transformation Training Centres
4. Early Career Industry Fellowships
5. Mid-Career Industry Fellowships
6. Industry Laureate Fellowships
7. Discovery Projects
8. Linkage Projects
9. Linkage Infrastructure Equipment and Facilities
10. Learned Academies Special Projects
11. Special Research Initiatives
12. Research Grant Services

## 2. The assessment process

Peer review plays a critical role in the assessment of ARC applications and is undertaken by 2 groups of experts known as General and Detailed Assessors. Experts from each group assess applications against the relevant grant opportunity assessment criteria and contribute to the process of scoring and ranking research applications. Detailed Assessors comments should be constructive to both General Assessors and applicants. Detailed Assessors' comments and scores will be considered by General Assessors as part of application assessment, while Detailed Assessors' comments will become the subject of applicants' rejoinders. The objective of the assessment process is to ensure that the highest quality research applications are recommended to the ARC Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for funding. The CEO then makes recommendations to the relevant Minister who decides which projects will be allocated funding under the NCGP.

The [Research Management System \(RMS\)](#) is the web-based computer system used for the preparation and submission of research applications, assessments and rejoinders for the ARC. The [RMS User Guide for Assessors](#), a guide for **General** and **Detailed** Assessors to navigate the RMS assignment and assessment process, is available on the ARC [Assessor Resources](#) page. Here, assessors can also find additional information about the peer review process.

General and Detailed Assessors have different roles in the peer review process. Key aspects of their roles are outlined in Sections 2.1 and 2.2, respectively.

## 2.1 General Assessors

### RMS profile

It is important that General Assessors ensure that their RMS profile is up-to-date and contains the following details:

1. **Expertise text:** Please outline your expertise briefly. The following format is suggested “My major area of research expertise is in a, b, c. I also have experience in research q, r, s. I would also be able to assess in the areas of x, y, z. The research facilities and techniques I use are l, m, n”.
2. **Field of Research (FoR-2020) Codes:** Please include between 6 and 10 FoR codes at the 6-digit level that reflect your key areas of expertise.
3. **Employment History:** Please ensure that your employment history is kept up to date, to enable your organisational conflicts of interests to be identified by RMS.

This information will be used to match assessors with applications and should therefore represent the research expertise. It will not be used in assessing applications submitted by a General Assessor, even though you are asked to update this information in each application, this is to keep it up to date.

### The Selection Advisory Committee

For each grant opportunity, General Assessors are selected to form a Selection Advisory Committee (SAC), who are responsible not only for review of applications, Detailed Assessors' assessments, and applicants' rejoinders but also final deliberations and recommendations to the ARC Chief Executive Officer during SAC meetings. Thus, SAC members form an integral part of the peer review process. SACs may include members from the ARC College of Experts (CoE) and other eminent members of the wider academic community and/or key industry groups. SACs may also be divided into panels of different disciplines depending on the scheme under assessment. SAC members are chosen to provide a combination of relevant expertise and experience to support the objectives of the grant opportunity.

Following the deadline for submission of applications, ARC Executive Directors assign each application to General Assessors. The lead General Assessor (Carriage 1) is usually closely associated with the application's academic field and other General Assessor(s) (Other Carriage) have supplementary expertise. Carriage 1 has primary responsibility for the application, which will include speaking to the application and its assessments and rejoinder at the SAC meeting. Other Carriages have a responsibility to assist Carriage 1 in resolving initial recommendations, often through discussions in advance of the SAC meeting, and adding their evaluation to Carriage 1's during the SAC meeting.

**Note:** *General Assessors are not required to agree on or align their scores for an application, but if the scores are disparate, they need to understand why their opinions differ to facilitate discussion at the SAC meeting.*

Detailed Assessors are assigned by either Carriage 1 or an Executive Director at the ARC depending on the scheme under assessment. The number of Detailed Assessors required to be assigned for each specific grant opportunity, including reserves, is shown on the assignment page in RMS and communicated to General Assessors via email.

If Carriage 1 is required to assign Detailed Assessors, they are asked to select assessors across different genders, academic levels institutions and a variety of types of organisations, nationally and internationally to achieve a balanced and discipline appropriate evaluation of the application.

Please ensure that multiple assessors from the same organisation are not assigned to the same application.

After assigning the required number of assessors in RMS and following the ARC's announcement of assignments, the Carriage 1 may notice that some applications appear to need more assignments. This is due to the previously assigned assessors rejecting the assessment or not responding, but no further action is required from the Carriage 1. The monitoring of assignments, acceptance, rejection and submission is managed by ARC staff. If the assigned Detailed Assessors and reserves become unavailable, an ARC Executive Director will assign additional Detailed Assessors.

## Cross-panel applications

Cross-panel applications are applications with General Assessors on more than one panel assessing the application due to the cross-disciplinary nature of some applications. Cross-panel applications undergo the same assignment and assessment process as all other applications. Cross-panel applications are assessed in the Selection Advisory Meeting where the Carriage 1 is assigned.

General Assessors assigned to a cross-panel application who are not Carriage 1 and are from a different panel (for expertise), will not have access to the application in the RMS Meeting Application, so will not be able to see the final ranking of the application, and will need to ask the Carriage 1 for this information. A cross-panel application will not be automatically tagged for discussion at the SAC meeting unless requested by one of the General Assessors (this can be the General Assessor from the other panel).

Prior to the Selection Advisory Committee meeting, it is important that the General Assessor(s) who are not in the Carriage 1's selection meeting ensure that the Carriage 1 has sufficient information to represent their views in the meeting.

**Note:** it is rare that General Assessors from other panels are brought into the meeting to present their views but can be arranged if any of the General Assessors consider it critical to ensure a fair assessment of the application.

## General assessment process

All General Assessors must declare any conflicts of interest (COI) and reject the assignment as soon as possible if a COI exists. This will assist the ARC with the timely re-assignment of applications (see Section 4.1 for further information). If a General Assessor is unsure of whether a COI exists, they must seek advice from the ARC before proceeding with accepting an assignment by emailing to the relevant grant opportunity team via [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) as soon as possible.

When assessing applications General Assessors must rely solely on the information provided within the application including referenced publications and preprints and should not seek additional information from any sources. This includes following any hyperlinks that may have been provided in the application. The inclusion of webpage addresses/URLs and hyperlinks is only permitted under certain circumstances such as publications (including preprints) that are only available online and letters of support. Webpage addresses/URLs and hyperlinks should not be used to circumvent page limits, nor should they provide information that is not contained in the application. All information relevant to the application must be contained within the application.

## Saving preliminary assessments

Following the assignment process, while the Detailed Assessors are undertaking assessments, General Assessors independently read and assess all their assigned applications against the relevant criteria, based on an [A to E Scoring Matrix](#) (the matrix provides guidance on the expected averages across the entire set of applications, however each application must still be marked on its own merits). These preliminary assessment scores should be saved as drafts in RMS (**but not submitted**).

In the rejoinder process, the comments only and not the scores from Detailed Assessors are provided anonymously to the applicant. The applicant then has an opportunity to provide a rejoinder to address any issues raised by the Detailed Assessors.

After the rejoinder process has closed, General Assessors review the Detailed Assessors' comments and scores and the applicants' rejoinder text. Detailed assessments and rejoinders will inform General Assessors' scores and at this point General Assessors can review and if necessary, revise and save their preliminary scores. General Assessors then ensure that their draft scores are entered in RMS (**but not submitted**) before the preliminary assessment due date determined by the ARC, enabling their co-Carriages to view the scores and to facilitate discussion and ensure that differences in scores are understood by all co-Carriages.

**Note:** If a General Assessor is provided with an extension to enter their preliminary scores due to exceptional circumstances, the ARC will facilitate alternative arrangements for co-Carriages to discuss and address discrepancies.

## Revising and submitting final assessments

For applications that have a difference in scores between the General Assessors, Carriage 1 is responsible for contacting the other Carriage(s) to discuss their scores. General Assessors are not required to agree on or align their scores for an application, but if the scores are disparate, they need to have an understanding of why their opinions differ to facilitate discussion at the SAC meeting. Following this discussion, final scores and ranks should be **submitted in RMS** by the required final due date.

When all final scores are submitted, RMS produces a ranked list of all applications (see [Section 2.3](#) for further information). This list is used at the SAC meeting to assist with the identification of applications that are of sufficient quality to be fundable. The ranking of applications on this list is not final and the meeting process provides several opportunities for the SAC to discuss and review all applications, as outlined below.

## Inappropriate assessments

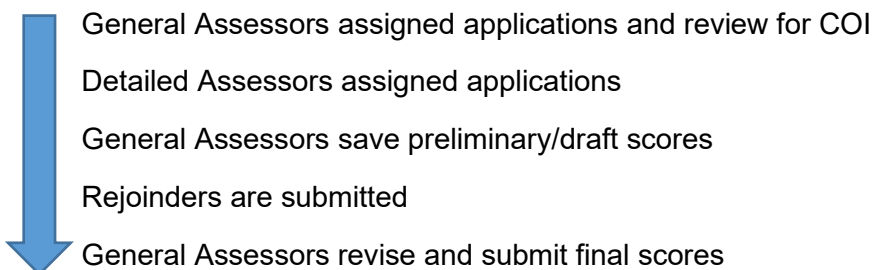
If General Assessors are concerned about the appropriateness of any assessment text or comments that do not match scores from Detailed Assessors, or identify a potential COI, then they **must** contact the ARC by sending an email to the relevant grant opportunity team via [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) as soon as possible. The ARC will investigate the concerns and decide whether an assessment should be amended by the Detailed Assessor or removed from the process. The latter happens only in rare circumstances and requires ARC Senior Executive approval.

If inappropriate assessments are identified early in the assessment process by the ARC or the applicant during the rejoinder stage, the ARC may ask the assessor to amend their assessment to the application or consider removal of an assessment as above.

## Order of the assessment process

The following diagram provides an overview of the General Assessor's assessment process.

### Diagram 1: Overview of the General Assessor Assessment Process



## 2.2 Detailed Assessors

### RMS profile

A Detailed Assessor's RMS profile plays an essential role in the assignment process as information contained in the profile assists with the matching of applications with appropriately skilled Detailed Assessors. It is important that Detailed Assessors ensure that their RMS profile is up-to-date and contains the following details:

- 1. Expertise text:** Please outline your expertise briefly. The following format is suggested "My major area of research expertise is in a, b, c. I also have experience in research q, r, s. I would also be able to assess in the areas of x, y, z. The research facilities and techniques I use are l, m, n."
- 2. Field of Research (FoR-2020) Codes:** Please include between 6 and 10 FoR codes at the 6-digit level that reflect your key areas of expertise.
- 3. Employment History:** Please ensure that your employment history is kept up to date, to enable your organisational conflicts of interests to be identified by RMS.

- 4. Personal Details:** Please ensure your personal details are up to date, including conflicts of interest and personal material interest declarations.

This information will be used to match assessors with applications and should therefore represent the research expertise. It will not be used in for assessing applications submitted by a General Assessor, even though you are asked to update this information in each application, this is to keep it up-to-date.

**Note:** Obligated assessors (those who are participants on an ARC project currently receiving funding) are required to keep their RMS profile up to date and to undertake assessments as required in the relevant Commonwealth grant agreement for their project(s).

### Assignment of applications

Applications are assigned to Detailed Assessors using information from their RMS profile and expert judgement by:

1. a Carriage 1, the lead General Assessor on the Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) for a specific grant opportunity; and/or
2. an ARC Executive Director.

### Detailed assessments

Detailed Assessors provide scores and written comments addressing the assessment criteria on each application and may be assigned a number of applications within their field of research or across a broader disciplinary area on the basis of their RMS profile expertise text and FoR codes. Detailed Assessors are asked to:

- a. Complete in-depth assessments of applications in RMS, providing scores and detailed comments against grant opportunity specific criteria (refer to [Appendix 1 for Discovery Program](#) grant opportunities and [Appendix 2 for Linkage Program](#) grant opportunities)
- b. Identify the merits or otherwise of the application with respect to the assessment criteria set out in the grant guidelines
- c. Assess and score the application for each assessment criterion separately

If a Detailed Assessor identifies a COI with an assigned application this must be declared to the ARC by rejecting the assignment in RMS and no further participation in the assessment process for that application should take place. If a Detailed Assessor is unsure of whether a COI exists, they must seek advice from the ARC before proceeding with accepting an assignment by emailing to the relevant grant opportunity team via [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) as soon as possible. Also, further information and policies about a COI are in [Section 4.1](#).

Detailed Assessors are asked to provide a minimum of 500 characters (approximately 75 words) per assessment criterion and a minimum of 3,500 characters (approximately 525 words) for the overall assessment.

Detailed Assessors' expertise, comments and scores are made available to General Assessors for consideration as part of application assessment, while Detailed Assessors' comments are made available to Applicants anonymously once an application is open for a rejoinder.

Detailed Assessors may receive applications to assess at any stage of the assessment process due to late COIs being declared by other assessors.

### How to ensure high quality detailed assessments

Detailed Assessors can refer to the [ARC Peer Review webpage](#) for **examples** of well-written detailed assessments.

High quality detailed assessments are an integral part of the peer review process. As some General Assessors may not be an expert in the specific field, but they are likely to be an expert in the general field of the proposed research, Detailed Assessors' scores that are justified with constructive comments help

General Assessors to assess the merit of the application. Similarly, Detailed Assessors' comments enable applicants to address any issues identified by Detailed Assessors in the rejoinders.

Detailed Assessors are asked to provide detailed high quality, constructive assessments with the following elements:

1. **Objective** and professional comments
2. **Detailed** comments on the merits or otherwise of the application with respect to the assessment criteria
3. **Sufficient** information to allow applicants to provide a rejoinder to comments about the application, and to allow non-disciplinary expert General Assessors to evaluate the merit of the application (one or 2 sentences is not sufficient, a clear explanation of why it is excellent or there is an issue is beneficial)
4. **Comments that align closely with [scores](#)**—for example, an 'A' score should not be submitted if an application is assessed as being of limited merit against a criterion. Further, if a 'D' score is given, then suitable constructive criticisms and comments justifying the score are required. It is important to remember that applicants see only the comments and the SAC will see both comments and scores. It is essential that your scores and comments are fit for purpose and provide appropriate information for the person using them
5. **Comments that are fair, meaningful and balanced**, addressing only issues relevant to the application in terms of the assessment criteria. Comments should provide a sound, comprehensive account of, and justification for views about the application, while respecting the care with which applications have been prepared
6. **Comments that are free** from platitudes, exaggeration and understatement
7. **Timely submission** via RMS as early as possible is appreciated, and by the ARC deadline is required

Refer to the [ARC Peer Review webpage](#) for **examples** of good quality Detailed assessments. The webpage also provides links to 2 supplementary guides, the [Peer Review](#) and [Disclosure of Interests and Management of Conflicts of Interest](#), supporting implementation of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (the Code).



## How to avoid inappropriate assessments

Detailed Assessors **should not** put the following in their assessment comments, as this may render the assessment inappropriate:

1. Scores which do not align with assessment text
2. Excessive use of acronyms
3. Generic comments used in multiple assessments
4. Very brief assessment text
5. Scores that are included within the assessment text
6. Information that identifies researchers named on other applications
7. Advice about their own identity, standing in, or understanding of, the research field in the application
8. The outcome or status of relevant research by the Chief Investigator's and/or Partner Investigators which is not mentioned by the applicants in the application, unless it contradicts the supplied information, and comments about the potential ineligibility of an application. All queries regarding outcomes of relevant research not mentioned in the application and eligibility should be sent to [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) from General Assessors OR [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) from Detailed Assessors as soon as a potential issue is identified
9. Restatement or rephrasing of any part of the application
10. Comments comparing one application with another in this round or in any other round
11. Text that has been copied from a previous assessment
12. Text that appears to be discriminatory, defamatory or distastefully irrelevant (such as gratuitous criticism of a researcher and/or eligible organisation).
13. Assumptions of the impact of COVID-19 on the proposed research in the application

**Under no circumstances should Detailed Assessors contact researchers and/or institutions about a submitted application or seek additional information from any sources.**

When assessing applications Detailed Assessors must rely solely on the information provided within the application including referenced publications and preprints and should not seek additional information from any sources. This includes following any hyperlinks that may have been provided in the application. The inclusion of webpage addresses/URLs and hyperlinks is only permitted under certain circumstances such as publications (including preprints) that are only available online and letters of support. Webpage addresses/URLs and hyperlinks should not be used to circumvent page limits, nor should they provide information that is not contained in the application. All information relevant to the application must be contained within the application.

## Treatment of inappropriate assessments

Inappropriate assessments compromise the integrity of the peer review process. To be fair to all applicants, the ARC may review and reject assessments with inappropriate or highly subjective comments from Detailed Assessors about any aspect of the application. If General Assessors are concerned about the appropriateness of any assessment text or comments that do not match scores from Detailed Assessors, or identify a potential COI, then they must contact the ARC by sending an email to the relevant grant opportunity team via [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) as soon as possible. The ARC will investigate the concerns and decide whether an assessment should be amended by the Detailed Assessor or removed from the process. The latter happens only in rare circumstances and requires ARC Senior Executive approval.

If inappropriate assessments are identified early in the assessment process by the ARC or the applicant during the rejoinder stage, the ARC may ask the Detailed Assessor to amend their assessment to the application or consider removal of an assessment as above.

The [ARC website](#) contains information for applicants advising how to request that the ARC review an assessment that contains inappropriate elements during the rejoinder period.

## How to submit detailed assessments

If a Detailed Assessor has been assigned multiple applications, RMS will use the **overall application scores** to automatically rank a Detailed Assessor's assessments as these are completed in RMS. Where multiple applications have the same **overall application scores** these applications will be flagged and a Detailed Assessor must assign a unique rank to differentiate equally scored applications.

Once the unique rank is assigned the error message will disappear and the assessments can be submitted.


Rank	Score
IDXXXXXXXX (MPCE)	Lead Investigator: Dr Test Applicant Title: Test Title 1 Administering Organisation: Test Organisation
<input type="text" value=""/>	<input type="text" value="A"/>
All assessments with identical scores must be ranked	
IDXXXXXXXX (MPCE)	Lead Investigator: Dr Lead Investigator Title: Test Title 8 Administering Organisation: Test Organisation
<input type="text" value=""/>	<input type="text" value="A"/>
All assessments with identical scores must be ranked	

If assessments have not been submitted individually the 'Submit All' button will activate at the top right of the screen once all unsubmitted assessments have reached the minimum system requirements.

Rank	Score
IDXXXXXXXX (MPCE)	Lead Investigator: Dr Test Applicant Title: Test Title 1 Administering Organisation: Test Organisation
<input type="text" value="1"/>	<input type="text" value="A"/>
IDXXXXXXXX (MPCE)	Lead Investigator: Dr Lead Investigator Title: Test Title 8 Administering Organisation: Test Organisation
<input type="text" value="2"/>	<input type="text" value="A"/>

To submit all completed assessments, select 'Submit All' and then 'Save' to complete submission.

Close	Assessor Material ▾	Rating Scale	Assessment List	Save	Submit All
Q Search					

Assessment List	Save	Submit All
Save to complete submission		
Submit	PDF 	Reject

**Note:** Once assessments have been submitted a Detailed Assessor will not be able to amend the details, and the 'Submit' button will be greyed out. If you need to change an assessment, please email the relevant contact details provided within the Assessor Handbook before the assessment closing date to have the assessment 'de-submitted'. For further details regarding completing and submitting assessment in RMS refer to *RMS User Guide for Assessors* available on the ARC [Assessor Resources](#) page.

## 2.3 Scoring and ranking assessments – all Assessors

### Scoring

When applying the Scoring Matrix, Assessors should have regard for the specific grant opportunity objectives (see Appendix 1).

Scoring applications against assessment criteria can be a difficult exercise when Assessors might only look at a small sub-set of applications. Bands within the Scoring Matrix ideally represent a distribution across all applications submitted to a grant opportunity.

Only the very best applications should be recommended. As a guide, approximately 10% should fall into the top scoring band ('A'). These would have been assessed as near flawless applications across all assessment criteria.

A Scoring Matrix for the scores A to E is provided in **Table 1** below and should guide scoring by both Detailed and General Assessors.

**Table 1: Example Scoring Matrix**

Score	Criteria	Recommendation
A	<b>Outstanding:</b> Of the highest quality and at the forefront of research in the field. Approximately 10% of applications should receive scores in this band.	<b>Recommended unconditionally</b>
B	<b>Excellent:</b> Of high quality and strongly competitive. Approximately 15% of applications should receive scores in this band.	<b>Strongly support recommendation of funding</b>
C	<b>Very Good:</b> Interesting, sound and compelling. Approximately 20% of applications should receive scores in this band.	<b>Support recommendation of funding with reservation</b>
D	<b>Good:</b> Sound but lacks a compelling element. Approximately 35% of applications are likely to fall into this band.	<b>Unsupportive of recommendation for funding</b>
E	<b>Uncompetitive:</b> Uncompetitive and has significant weaknesses. Approximately 20% of applications are likely to fall into this band.	<b>Not recommended for funding</b>

**NOTE:** This Scoring Matrix is an example only. Please see Appendix 1 for the Scoring Matrix applicable to each individual grant opportunity.

### Ranking

Each application must have a unique rank. Although RMS will use the **overall application scores** to automatically rank an Assessor's assessments as these are completed in RMS, if multiple applications have the same **overall application scores** these applications will be flagged and an Assessor must assign a unique rank to differentiate equally scored applications. Differentiation should be based on how you compare the applications in relation to the Scoring Matrix.

**Note:** RMS will use your scores to automatically rank applications, and then use your rank order to differentiate equally scored applications.

Assessments should be submitted when all applications have been assigned 1) a score and 2) a unique ranking.

Scores submitted by General Assessors are normalised for all grant opportunities except for smaller grant opportunities such as Discovery Indigenous.

## 2.4 Important factors to consider when assessing – all Assessors

### Objectives and assessment criteria

Each grant opportunity has specific objectives and assessment criteria that aim to ensure funded applications achieve the best possible outcomes. Assessors must have regard to both the objectives and the assessment criteria as outlined in the relevant grant guidelines and Appendix 1 of this document.

## National Interest Test (NIT)

Applicants must provide a separate response on the national interest of their research proposal, which is considered by the ARC's CEO before recommendations are made to the Minister.

General and Detailed Assessors will not be able to view the National Interest Test statement for the schemes covered within this Handbook.

## Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)

The ROPE assessment criterion requires all Assessors to identify and consider research excellence relative to a researcher's career and life experiences. It aims to ensure that NCGP assessment processes accurately evaluate a researcher's career history relative to their current career stage and consider whether their productivity and contribution is commensurate with the opportunities that have been available to them.

The required elements of ROPE vary according to the objectives of each grant opportunity. All General and Detailed Assessors should be familiar with the full [ROPE statement](#) located on the ARC website.

## Research Impact

The [Research Impact Principles and Framework](#) provided on the ARC website provides a definition of research impact and examples of where research components fit into an impact pathway. You should evaluate applicants' information about the intended benefit of their project when assessing an application against a feasibility and benefit assessment criterion.

## Interdisciplinary research

The ARC recognises the value of interdisciplinary research and the ARC's commitment to supporting interdisciplinary research is outlined in the [ARC Statement of Support for Interdisciplinary Research](#).

Interdisciplinary research can be a distinct mode of research, or a combination of researchers, knowledge and/or approaches from disparate disciplines. Under the NCGP, examples of interdisciplinary research may include researchers from different disciplines working together in a team; researchers collaborating to bring different perspectives to solve a problem; researchers utilising methods normally associated with one or more disciplines to solve problems in another discipline; and one or more researchers translating innovative blue sky or applied research outcomes from one discipline into an entirely different research discipline.

Assessors are required to assess all research on a fair and equal basis, including applications and outputs involving interdisciplinary and collaborative research. To assist with this, the ARC facilitates consideration of applications by relevant General Assessors with interdisciplinary expertise or where not feasible, applications are allocated to General Assessors who have broad disciplinary expertise regardless of discipline grouping. Interdisciplinary applications should be allocated to Detailed Assessors with specific interdisciplinary expertise or from different disciplines.

## COVID-19 guidance

The ARC has published [Pre Award Guidance for preparing applications: Responding to the impact of COVID-19](#) for applicants on the [ARC website](#).

In the guidance the ARC acknowledges that the future impacts of COVID-19 are difficult for anyone to determine while the pandemic continues to evolve. Hence, the ARC has advised researchers preparing applications during this time, to ensure that application information is accurate and realistic at the time of submission. If an application is successful, a risk management plan will be required before commencement and any changes in circumstances that affect the proposed research project will be managed as a post award issue.

The ARC requests **all ARC Assessors** to continue to assess each application based on the content of that application only and without making assumptions about the impact of COVID-19. Therefore, **assessments should not include scores and comments that make assumptions about the viability of a proposed research project due to the potential impacts of COVID-19.**

The ARC has also advised that we understand that the level of co-contribution pledged above and beyond the minimum threshold is likely to be reduced in applications due to the financial impact of the COVID-19

pandemic. ARC application forms include validations to ensure that minimum contribution requirements are pledged in applications.

The ARC requests **all ARC Assessors** not make assumptions about an Administering Organisation's level of commitment and support of an application solely based on lower levels of pledged additional cash and/or in-kind support than historically provided.

### **Preprints or comparable resources**

Detailed and General Assessors should consider the merit of publications including preprints and comparable resources that are listed in the application. Assessors may access hyperlinks and evaluate if a citation included in the application is a crucial part of the research discourse, the suitability, quality and relevance of the citation and research output to determine the quality and novelty of the proposed research. However, Assessors should not use online search engines to identify or evaluate applicants' publications that are not included within the application.

Preprints or comparable resources can be included in any part of an application. This includes within the Research Outputs list and the body of an application. An application will not be deemed to be ineligible for the citing and listing of preprints or comparable resources.

A preprint or comparable resource is a scholarly output that is uploaded by the authors to a recognised publicly accessible archive, repository, or preprint service (such as, but not limited to, arXiv, bioRxiv, medRxiv, ChemRxiv, Peer J Preprints, Zenodo, GitHub, PsyArXiv and publicly available university of government repositories etc.). This will include a range of materials that have been subjected to varying degrees of peer review from none to light and full review. Ideally, a preprint or comparable resource should have a unique identifier or a DOI (digital object identifier). Any citation of a preprint or comparable resource should be explicitly identified as such and listed in the references with a DOI, URL or equivalent, version number and/or date of access, as applicable.

Inclusion of preprints or comparable resources within the body of the application should comply with standard disciplinary practices for the relevant field.

## **3. General Assessors: Selection Advisory Committee (SAC) meeting preparation**

### **3.1 Roles and responsibilities before the SAC meeting**

After the assessment period has closed General Assessors will:

1. be unable to access applications for a short period whilst ARC staff undertake administrative functions to prepare for the SAC meeting.
2. be advised by the ARC when the RMS Meeting Application (App) opens.
3. have access to all applications allocated to their panel in the RMS Meeting App where they do not have a COI. **Note:** Due to a cross-disciplinary nature of some applications, General Assessors allocated to a different panel than an application they assessed will not have access to its RMS Meeting Application. As such unless a SAC member specifically requests for a cross-panel application to be discussed at the SAC meeting, this application will not be automatically tagged for discussion.
4. be required to attend a pre-meeting videoconference to be updated on the SAC meeting process and relevant information, including uncertainty bands, funding line, and estimated return and success rates if applicable.

### **Carriage 1: Reviewing applications in the RMS Meeting Application**

Prior to the SAC meeting, Carriage 1 should review the Detailed and General Assessors' assessments and scores and consider whether they believe there are applications:

1. in the Fundable Range or Uncertainty Band that should be lower; or
2. below the Uncertainty Band that should be higher; or
3. in the Fundable Range that should/should not be considered for funding.

Particular attention should be given to applications where a ROPE case (see [Section 2.4](#)) has been made that has been neglected by Detailed Assessors, or where an anomalous Detailed assessment may materially affect the ranking of the application. Carriage 1 should identify such applications and prepare a recommendation for consideration by the SAC.

ARC staff will also identify applications with 'disparate' scores and will flag these for the attention of SAC members, noting that these applications are not automatically discussed at the selection meeting. SAC members can request these (or any other) applications to be tagged for discussion at the meeting. Carriage 1 will be expected to lead discussion on these applications.

### **Carriage 1: Preparing a draft budget recommendation**

If an application is in the Fundable Range, the Uncertainty Band or tagged for discussion in RMS as 'To Discuss by SAC', it is Carriage 1's responsibility to recommend a draft budget as a one-line budget amount for each funding year of the application to the SAC (Discovery Fellowships schemes require 2-line budgets to separate salary and project funds). The draft budget recommendation is entered directly into RMS (details are in the section below) prior to the SAC meeting for applications up to the bottom of the uncertainty band.

The draft budget recommended for each year must not exceed the amount requested in the application. Budget recommendations are discussed by the SAC members and the recommended budget is forwarded to the ARC CEO as part of the SAC's funding recommendations.

Carriage 1 may need to discuss or justify their budget recommendation at the SAC meeting and should therefore bring their own notes to the meeting on how they arrived at their final recommended funding amount.

To prepare a one-line budget for each year of funding, Carriage 1 should consider the following:

1. The extent to which specific budget items are well justified
2. Whether the budget items are supported or not supported as outlined in relevant grant opportunity's grant guidelines
3. The minimum/maximum funding amounts relevant to the specific grant opportunity's grant guidelines
4. The costs of any recommended remunerated participants
5. Whether they are satisfied that the project can still be completed with the recommended budget
6. Whether the budget for the application has been considered on merit and at this stage not compared to other applications

### **Carriage 1: Entering draft budgets in RMS Meeting Application before the Selection Meeting**

Following the ARC email confirming that RMS Meeting Application is opened, Carriage 1 can enter the draft budgets directly in RMS.

1. Prepare draft budgets for your Carriage 1 applications that have an overall application rank from 1 to the bottom of the Uncertainty Band (the Uncertainty Band will be tagged in the RMS Meeting application).
2. Prepare a draft budget figure (\$) for each year of funding of your Carriage 1 applications.
3. In RMS, open specific scheme Meeting Application, e.g., DE22.



Scheme Round	Panel	Actions
DE22 Round 1		<a href="#">Open</a>

4. Under 'Carriage' select and filter the Carriage 1 applications and select 'Apply'.

Application Id

Grant Status

Awards

Discipline Groups

Carriage

5. Click on the application to enter the draft budget:

- a) If an application has salary for Fellowship/Award, e.g., FL23, FT23, DE24 and IN24, before you populate budget click on the hyperlink for the Fellowship under 'Personnel'.

Personnel	\$134,300	\$0	\$134,300	\$0	\$134,300	\$0
<a href="#">.(Discovery_Early_Career_Researcher_Award)</a>	\$106,194	\$0	\$106,194	\$0	\$106,194	\$0

- The pop-up window will appear. You must only alter the status on 'Carriage 1 Award Support' to 'Supported/Not supported' the salary for funding. You cannot change the 'Supported Funding as' level.

(Discovery Early Career Researcher Award)

Applied for

Level 1 starting in year 1

Supported Funding as

Level 1 starting in year 1

Carriage 1 Award Support

Not Supported

Close

- If you selected 'Supported' the Fellowship/Award salary (\$) will be automatically populated into the budget table.

**Draft Budget**

Save Draft

**Editing Instructions:**  
Before entering a total budget please address the requested award(s)/fellowship(s) by clicking on the hyperlinked name of the requested awardee or fellowship and select either 'Supported' or 'Not Supported'. Please then update for a total draft budget in the Funded field in the Total line (the top line of the budget) for each applicable year. Only enter in whole dollars to total field per year. Note: A red box will appear if you enter more than the requested amount. A blue box will appear if you enter less than the minimum amount of funding required.

Supported \$778,160 / \$1,015,488 (76%) Requested

Description	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4	
	Requested	Funded	Requested	Funded	Requested	Funded	Requested	Funded
Total	\$253,575	\$194,540	\$252,837	\$194,540	\$254,538	\$194,540	\$254,538	\$194,540
Personnel	\$241,934	\$194,540	\$243,637	\$194,540	\$245,338	\$194,540	\$245,338	\$194,540

The salary will now populate in the funded cells.

- b) Enter the draft budget total for each year, then select 'Save Draft'.

**Draft Budget**

Save Draft

**Editing Instructions:**  
Please enter your draft budget in the Funded field in the Total line (the top line of the budget) for each applicable year. Only enter in whole dollars to total field per year. Note: A red box will appear if you enter more than the requested amount. A blue box will appear if you enter less than the minimum amount of funding required.

Supported \$0 / \$359,997 (0%) Requested

Description	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
	Requested	Funded	Requested	Funded	Requested	Funded	Requested	Funded	Requested	Funded
Total	\$118,306	\$0	\$117,846	\$0	\$123,845	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personnel	\$96,681	\$0	\$98,581	\$0	\$100,510	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Enter a total figure for each year in the top line of the budget table, then select 'Save Draft' at the top left of the budget table.

**Note:**

**Draft Budget**

Save Draft

**Editing Instructions:**  
Please enter your draft budget in the Funded field in the Total line (the top line of the budget) for each applicable year. Only enter in whole dollars to total field per year. Note: A red box will appear if you enter more than the requested amount. A blue box will appear if you enter less than the minimum amount of funding required.

Supported \$274,000 / \$359,997 (76%) Requested

Description	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3	
	Requested	Funded	Requested	Funded	Requested	Funded
Total	\$118,306	\$100,000	\$117,846	\$125,000	\$123,845	\$125,000
Unspecified Funding	\$0	\$100,000	\$0	\$125,000	\$0	\$0

Pink highlighting indicates unsaved changes.

A red box indicates you have entered more than the requested amount, you will need to reduce your draft total for this year.

**All Carriages and SAC members**

Prior to the SAC meeting, all members are advised of the applications within the fundable range that fall into the 'highly ranked' category. These will be identified by a tag in RMS. 'Highly ranked' applications may not require detailed discussion at the SAC meeting. Applications above and within the 'Uncertainty Band' but not tagged as 'highly ranked' will be discussed at the SAC meeting.

SAC members are requested to briefly review their applications that fall below the Uncertainty Band and notify the ARC of any applications that need to be discussed at the SAC meeting.

It is recommended that SAC members read the summary of all applications above and within the Uncertainty Band and those tagged in RMS as 'To Discuss by SAC' (accessible through the RMS Meeting App) as they are expected to contribute to discussions for all applications during the meeting.

**3.2 Roles and responsibilities at the SAC meeting and information on the Selection Meeting**

Each SAC meeting will comprise a Chair, Deputy Chair, SAC members (Carriage 1, Other Carriages and panel members) and ARC Staff. SAC meetings may also be divided into discipline panels, depending on the grant opportunity.

The role of the Chair is to:

1. lead the committee through the process to make a recommendation on the applications
2. call the panel to a vote for applications within the uncertainty band or where there is dissent and
3. ensure the meeting runs in a timely manner

For applications where the Chair is conflicted out of the room or is Carriage on an application, the Deputy Chair will act in the role. Where multiple conflicts arise, other SAC members may be called on to be acting Chair.

When you are Carriage 1 on an application, your role is to:

1. lead discussion for that application giving a brief summary of the strengths and weaknesses, and then making a recommendation to support, not support or vote
2. vote on applications when called by the Chair
3. recommend a one-line budget for applications that are recommended for funding (the draft budget should already be entered in RMS).

All other Carriages and panel members will:

1. contribute to discussions of whether an application should be supported, not supported or voted on
2. vote on applications when called to do so by the Chair



ARC staff are responsible for:

1. providing secretariat support for meetings
2. providing procedural advice to the SAC
3. ensuring that correct administrative procedures are followed
4. ensuring COIs and any potential inappropriate discussions are managed correctly

**Note:** At the SAC meeting, applications assigned to Carriages sitting on different discipline panels are only discussed in the application's home discipline panel, Carriage(s) in other panels should ensure Carriage 1 is aware of and able to represent their position on the application. Please contact the ARC if you have any questions about this.

## 4. Ensuring integrity of process

### 4.1 Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest (COI)

The [ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy](#) is designed to ensure that all COIs are managed in a rigorous and transparent way. It aims to prevent individuals from influencing decisions unfairly and to maintain public confidence in the integrity, legitimacy, impartiality and fairness of the peer review process.

Any individual who is reviewing material for the ARC must agree to comply with the confidentiality and COI statement and must clearly disclose any material personal interests that may affect, or might be perceived to affect, their ability to perform their role.

All Assessors must maintain an up-to-date RMS profile, including personal details, current employment details and previous employment history within the past 2 years. This information will assist the ARC with the identification and management of organisational conflicts of interest.

Assessors reviewing ARC grant application who have identified a conflict of interest must reject the grant application assigned in RMS to assist the ARC in the management of conflicts of interest.

Examples of material personal interests that are considered by the ARC to be COIs include holding funding with a named participant within the past 2 years or having been a collaborator or co-author with a named participant on a research output within the last 4 years. For more information on disclosure of COIs, including material personal interest declarations, please refer to the [Identifying and Handling a Conflict of Interest in NCGP processes](#) document.

**Note:** In RMS, Assessors will be asked to indicate their willingness to comply with this policy before proceeding to assess. They can do this by selecting the 'Accept' button.

### 4.2 Research integrity and research misconduct

If in the course of undertaking an assessment you identify or suspect a potential research integrity breach or research misconduct, please notify the ARC Research Integrity Office ([researchintegrity@arc.gov.au](mailto:researchintegrity@arc.gov.au)) in accordance with Section 5 of the [ARC Research Integrity Policy](#). Please do not mention your concerns in any assessment comments.

The ARC Research Integrity Office will consider whether to refer your concerns to the relevant institution for investigation in accordance with the requirements of the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#). You should provide sufficient information to allow the ARC to assess whether there is a basis for referring the matter to the institution and to enable the relevant institution to progress an investigation into the allegation (if required).

Foreign financial support, foreign affiliations and foreign honorary positions. Participants applying for ARC grants are required to answer questions in their application relating to foreign financial support and foreign affiliations, including current and previous associations. Participants are required to declare:

- foreign financial support (cash or in kind) for research related activities
- current or past associations or affiliations with a foreign sponsored talent program (for the last 10 years)
- current associations or affiliations with a foreign government, foreign political party, foreign state-owned enterprise, foreign military and/or foreign police organisations

If in the course of undertaking an assessment you identify or suspect a potential issue of foreign interference, please send an email highlighting your concerns to the ARC via [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) (General Assessors) or [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) (Detailed Assessors) as soon as possible.

**Note:** In RMS, Assessors will be asked to indicate their willingness to comply with this policy before proceeding to assess. They can do this by selecting the 'Accept' button.

### 4.3 Applications outside an Assessor's area of expertise

The ARC receives applications from many scholarly fields. Occasionally you will be asked to assess an application that does not appear to correspond closely with your area of expertise, particularly if you are a General Assessor. Your views are valuable as they are being sought on the entire application, drawing on your expert knowledge as a researcher. If you are a **General Assessor** and are concerned about a particular application's research area and your ability to provide a robust assessment, **please contact the ARC via [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) before rejecting the assignment.**

If you are a **Detailed Assessor** and believe that the ARC has misunderstood your expertise or has made an error in assigning an application to you, please give **early notice** of your view by rejecting the application/s in RMS and entering a reason in the 'Reject Reason' comment box. It is also important to review your RMS profile expertise text and FoR codes.

### 4.4 Eligibility

If, while assessing an application, you have concerns about eligibility, ethics or other issues associated with an application, **you must not include this information in your assessment.** Please send an email highlighting your concerns to **the relevant scheme team via [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au)** (General Assessors) or [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) (Detailed Assessors) as soon as possible. The ARC is responsible for investigating and making decisions on these matters, and General and Detailed Assessors should not conduct investigations at any point. Please complete your assessment based on the merits of the application without giving consideration to the potential eligibility issue.

In October 2018, RMS functionality was updated to populate research outputs into applications from within a researcher's RMS profile. Researchers will have the flexibility to choose and add which outputs to include in the application. The ARC is aware of some research output display errors that are system issues and cannot be corrected by RMS users. Any applications that are affected will not be deemed to breach eligibility requirements and all General and Detailed Assessors should disregard research output display errors in their assessment of applications. Examples of possible research output display errors include symbols, foreign language characters and subscript/superscript that does not render correctly.

### 4.5 Unconscious bias

Assessors should also be aware of how their unconscious bias could affect the peer review process.

Unconscious biases are pervasive and may relate to perceptions about a range of attributes including:

1. gender and/or sexuality
2. social/cultural background
3. career path
4. institutional employer
5. discipline

The ARC encourages Assessors to recognise their own biases and be aware of them in their assessments. A selection of short, online tests for identifying unconscious biases is available via Harvard University's ['Implicit Social Attitudes' demonstration sites.](#)

## 5. Contact details for queries during the assessment process

For all assignment and assessment, as well as accessibility enquiries, please email the relevant scheme team via [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au) (General Assessors) or [ARC-Peer\\_Review@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au) (Detailed Assessors).

For all questions relating to the SAC and SAC meetings, contact [ARC-College@arc.gov.au](mailto:ARC-College@arc.gov.au).

## Appendix 1: Discovery Program Scoring Matrix and assessment criteria considerations

**Please note:** Assessors assign a score and do not have to consider the weighting of a criterion as this is applied automatically within RMS. The tables below provide ready access to assessment criteria set out in the *Grant Guidelines for the Discovery Program (2021 edition)* (available on [GrantConnect](#)) and the Scoring Matrixes outlined in this handbook. Assessors should use their judgement and experience to assess the appropriate score within the context of the relevant discipline.

### Australian Laureate Fellowships (FL23)

#### Key Dates and Notes

##### Detailed Assessors

Task	FL23 Dates	Detail
<b>Assessment Period</b>	18 November 2022 – 17 January 2023	<p>Check the application details for any <a href="#">Conflict of Interest</a> as soon as the Research Management System (RMS) email containing assignments has been received; then accept or reject assignments in RMS (to allow for timely re-assignment of the rejected assignments).</p> <p>Assess each application assigned using an A-E rating scale and give a written report against the assessment criteria.</p> <p>Submit assessments to the ARC on or before this deadline date.</p>

##### General Assessors

Task	FL23 Dates	Detail
<b>Assessment Period</b>	18 November 2022 – 1 March 2023	<b>Carriages 1, 2, 3 and 4</b> Assess applications independently to determine preliminary and provisional scores and ranking.
<b>Rejoinder</b>	2 February 2023 – 15 February 2023	Applicants to read comments from Detailed Assessors and submit a rejoinder.
<b>Review and finalise assessments</b>	16 February 2023 – 1 March 2023	<b>Carriages 1, 2, 3 and 4</b> Review Detailed assessments and rejoinders. Revise and finalise scores and ranks in RMS.
<b>SAC Selection Meeting</b>	12 April 2023 – 13 April 2023	SAC members discuss shortlist and recommend applications

#### Grant Guidelines

The objectives and assessment criteria below are from the *Grant Guidelines for the Discovery Program (2021 edition)* which are available on [GrantConnect](#).

#### Overview

The Australian Laureate Fellowships scheme reflects the Australian Government's commitment to excellence in research by supporting world-class researchers to conduct research in Australia. The scheme

encourages applications from the highest-quality researchers by providing eligible Australian Laureate Fellows with project funding in addition to salary and salary related (on-cost) support.

The ARC may name two successful Australian Laureate Fellows as the Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate Fellow and the Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellow. The Kathleen Fitzpatrick Australian Laureate Fellowship may be available to a highly ranked female candidate from the humanities, arts and social science disciplines. The Georgina Sweet Australian Laureate Fellowship may be available to a highly ranked female candidate from the science and technology disciplines. Recipients will be provided with additional funding to undertake an ambassadorial role to promote women in research.

## Objectives

The objectives of the **Australian Laureate Fellowships** grant opportunity are to:

- a) support ground-breaking, internationally-competitive basic and applied research;
- b) forge strong links among researchers, the international research community and/or industry and other research end-users;
- c) enhance the scale and focus of research in Australian Government priority areas;
- d) attract and retain outstanding researchers and research leaders of international reputation; and
- e) provide an excellent research training environment and exemplary mentorship to nurture early-career researchers.

## Assessment criteria and Scoring Matrix – Australian Laureate Fellowships

Assessment criterion	(A) <b>Exceptional</b> Of the highest quality and at the forefront of research in the field. Approximately 10% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(B) <b>Outstanding</b> Of high quality and strongly competitive. Approximately 15% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(C) <b>Excellent</b> Interesting, sound and compelling. Approximately 20% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(D) <b>Very Good</b> Sound, but lacks a compelling element. Approximately 35% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.	(E) <b>Good</b> Has significant weaknesses. Approximately 20% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.
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Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
Investigator/ Capability 40%	<p>Describe the Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ outstanding research outputs and achievements taking into account research opportunity</li> <li>▪ evidence for and/or potential to undertake ground-breaking research</li> <li>▪ leadership ability and plans to build world class research capacity and diverse teams and</li> <li>▪ potential to create an enduring legacy.</li> </ul> <p>Extent to which the candidate will build collaborations across research organisations and/or industry and/or with other disciplines both within Australian and internationally.</p>

<p>Project quality and innovation: 25%</p>	<p>Describe the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ contribution to an important gap in knowledge or significant problem</li> <li>▪ novelty/originality and innovation of the proposed research (including any new methods, technologies, theories or ideas that will be developed)</li> <li>▪ clarity of the hypothesis, theories and research questions</li> <li>▪ cohesiveness of the project design and implementation plan (including the appropriateness of the aim, conceptual framework, method, data and/or analyses)</li> <li>▪ extent to which the research has the potential to enhance international collaboration and</li> <li>▪ extent to which the research will be cost-effective and represents value for money.</li> </ul> <p><u>If the project involves research pertaining to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities describe:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the strategies for enabling collaboration with Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities (for example, dialogue/collaboration with an Indigenous cultural mentor)</li> <li>▪ any existing or developing, supportive and high-quality relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities and</li> <li>▪ any personal affiliations with local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities that can facilitate the proposed research.</li> </ul>
<p>Benefit 10%</p>	<p>Describe the potential benefits including the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ new or advanced knowledge resulting from outcomes of the research</li> <li>▪ economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for Australia and international communities and</li> <li>▪ potential contribution to capacity in the Australian Government priority areas.</li> </ul>
<p>Mentoring and capacity building: 25%</p>	<p>Describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Mentoring, including the extent to which the candidate demonstrates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ exceptional ability to supervise and mentor postdoctoral researchers and other early-mid career researchers and</li> <li>○ they will be providing a suitable environment for postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Capacity building, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the extent to which the project will build new teams and create world-class research capacity, collaboration and innovation</li> <li>○ the extent to which the candidate demonstrates exceptional leadership and the organisational ability to ensure the development of scale and focus in research</li> <li>○ evidence of the project's and researchers' potential to attract financial resources to enhance research capacity and</li> <li>○ the extent to which this research builds new international research collaboration or links between research and industry.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Future Fellowships (FT23)

### Key Dates and Notes

#### Detailed Assessors

Task	FT23 Dates	Detail
<b>Assessment Period</b>	16/01/2023 – 27/02/2023	<p>Check the application details for any <a href="#">Conflict of Interest</a> as soon as the Research Management System (RMS) email containing assignments has been received; then accept or reject assignments in RMS (to allow for timely re-assignment of the rejected assignments).</p> <p>Assess each application assigned using an A-E rating scale and give a written report against the assessment criteria.</p> <p>Submit assessments to the ARC on or before this deadline date.</p>

#### General Assessors

Task	FT23 Dates	Detail
<b>Detailed Assessors Assignment Period</b>	19/12/2022 – 13/01/2023	Assign 4 Detailed Assessors and 6 Reserves
<b>Assessment Period</b>	19/12/2022 – 05/04/2023	<b>Carriages 1, 2 and 3</b> Assess applications independently to determine preliminary and provisional scores and ranking.
<b>Rejoinder</b>	15/03/2023 – 28/03/2023	Applicants to read comments from Detailed Assessors and submit a rejoinder.
<b>Review and finalise assessments</b>	29/03/2023 – 05/04/2023	<b>Carriages 1, 2 and 3</b> Review Detailed assessments and rejoinders. Revise and finalise scores and ranks in RMS.
<b>SAC Selection Meeting</b>	11/05/2023 – 12/05/2023	SAC members discuss shortlist and recommend applications

### Grant Guidelines

The objectives and assessment criteria below are from the *Grant Guidelines for the Discovery Program (2021 edition)* which are available on [GrantConnect](#).

#### Overview

Future Fellowships reflects the Australian Government's commitment to excellence in research by supporting excellent mid-career researchers to undertake high quality research in areas of national and international benefit.

#### Objectives

The objectives of the **Future Fellowships** grant opportunity are to:

- support excellent basic and applied research and research training by outstanding mid-career researchers to be recruited and retained by universities in continuing academic positions;
- support national and international research collaboration; and
- enhance the scale and focus of research in Australian Government priority areas.

## Assessment criteria and Scoring Matrix – Future Fellowships

Assessment criterion	(A) <b>Outstanding</b> Of the highest quality and at the forefront of research in the field. Approximately 10% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(B) <b>Excellent</b> Of high quality and strongly competitive. Approximately 15% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(C) <b>Very Good</b> Interesting, sound and compelling. Approximately 20% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(D) <b>Good</b> Sound, but lacks a compelling element. Approximately 35% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.	(E) <b>Uncompetitive</b> Has significant weaknesses. Approximately 20% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.
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Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
Investigator/ Capability 50%	<p>Describe the quality of the candidate as per the relevant section below.</p> <p><b>Future Fellowship Level 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) including record of high-quality research outputs appropriate to the discipline/s</li> <li>▪ evidence of research training, mentoring and supervision</li> <li>▪ evidence of leadership capability and national research standing and</li> <li>▪ capability of the candidate to build collaborations across research organisations, industry and other disciplines both within Australia and internationally.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future Fellowship Level 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) including record of high-quality research outputs appropriate to the discipline/s</li> <li>▪ evidence of research training, mentoring and supervision</li> <li>▪ evidence of leadership capabilities and national and emerging international research standing and</li> <li>▪ capability of the candidate to build collaborations across research organisations, industry and other disciplines both within Australia and internationally.</li> </ul> <p><b>Future Fellowship Level 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) including record of outstanding research outputs appropriate to the discipline/s</li> <li>▪ evidence of experience in initiating and managing large research projects</li> <li>▪ evidence of international research standing</li> <li>▪ evidence of excellence in research training, mentoring and supervision and</li> <li>▪ capability of the candidate to build collaborations across research organisations, industry and other disciplines both within Australia and internationally.</li> </ul>
Project quality and innovation 25%	<p>Describe the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ contribution to an important gap in knowledge or significant problem</li> <li>▪ novelty/originality and innovation of the proposed research (including any new methods, technologies, theories or ideas that will be developed)</li> </ul>

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ clarity of the hypothesis, theories and research questions</li> <li>▪ cohesiveness of the project design and implementation plan (including the appropriateness of the aim, conceptual framework, method, data and/or analyses) and</li> <li>▪ extent to which the research has the potential to enhance international collaboration.</li> </ul>
Benefit 15%	<p>Describe the potential benefits including the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ new or advanced knowledge resulting from outcomes of the research</li> <li>▪ economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for Australia and international communities and</li> <li>▪ potential contribution to capacity in the Australian Government priority areas.</li> </ul>
Feasibility and strategic alignment 10%	<p>Describe the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ cost effectiveness of the research and its value for money</li> <li>▪ extent to which the Future Fellowship candidate aligns with and/or complements the core or developing research strengths and staffing profile of Your organisation</li> <li>▪ availability of the necessary facilities to conduct the research</li> <li>▪ resources You will provide to support the Future Fellowship candidate during her/his Future Fellowship and</li> <li>▪ capacity within Your organisation to transition the candidate at the end of the Future Fellowship to a continuing position.</li> </ul> <p><u>If the project involves research pertaining to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities describe:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the strategies for enabling collaboration with Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities where appropriate (for example, dialogue/collaboration with an Indigenous cultural mentor) and</li> <li>▪ any existing or developing, supportive and high-quality relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities and</li> <li>▪ any personal affiliations with local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities that can facilitate the proposed research.</li> </ul>



# Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DE24)

## Key Dates and Notes

### Detailed Assessors

Task	DE24 Dates	Detail
<b>Assessment Period</b>	31 January 2023 – 14 March 2023	<p>Check the application details for any <a href="#">Conflict of Interest</a> as soon as the Research Management System (RMS) email containing assignments has been received; then accept or reject assignments in RMS (to allow for timely re-assignment of the rejected assignments).</p> <p>Assess each application assigned using an A-E rating scale and give a written report against the assessment criteria.</p> <p>Submit assessments to the ARC on or before this deadline date.</p>

### General Assessors

Task	DE24 Dates	Detail
<b>Detailed Assessors Assignment Period</b>	11 January 2023 – 30 January 2023	Assign 4 Detailed Assessors and 6 Reserves
<b>Assessment Period</b>	11 January 2023 – 3 May 2023	<b>Carriages 1 and 2</b> Assess applications independently to determine preliminary and provisional scores and ranking.
<b>Rejoinder</b>	29 March 2023 – 13 April 2023	Applicants to read comments from Detailed Assessors and submit a rejoinder.
<b>Review and finalise assessments</b>	14 April 2023 – 3 May 2023	<b>Carriages 1 and 2</b> Review Detailed assessments and rejoinders. Revise and finalise scores and ranks in RMS.
<b>SAC Selection Meeting</b>	5 June 2023 – 7 June 2023	SAC members discuss shortlist and recommend applications

## Grant Guidelines

The objectives and assessment criteria below are from the *Grant Guidelines for the Discovery Program (2021 edition)* which are available on [GrantConnect](#).

### Overview

The DECRA grant opportunity provides focused research support for early career researchers in both teaching and research, and research-only positions.

### Objectives

The objectives of the **Discovery Early Career Researcher Award (DECRA)** grant opportunity are to:

- support excellent basic and applied research by early career researchers;
- support national and international research collaboration;
- enhance the scale and focus of research in Australian Government priority areas;
- advance promising early career researchers and promote enhanced opportunities for diverse career pathways; and
- enable research and research training in high quality and supportive environments.

## Assessment criteria and Scoring Matrix – DECRA

Assessment criterion	(A) <b>Outstanding</b> Of the highest quality and at the forefront of research in the field. Approximately 10% of applications should receive scores in this band.	(B) <b>Excellent</b> Of high quality and strongly competitive. Approximately 15% of applications should receive scores in this band.	(C) <b>Very Good</b> Interesting, sound and compelling. Approximately 20% of applications should receive scores in this band.	(D) <b>Good</b> Sound, but lacks a compelling element. Approximately 35% of applications are likely to fall into this band.	(E) <b>Uncompetitive</b> Has significant weaknesses. Approximately 20% of applications are likely to fall into this band.
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Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
Investigator/Capability 50%	Describe the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE) including record of high quality research outputs appropriate to the discipline/s.</li> <li>capability of candidate to build collaborations both within Australia and internationally.</li> </ul>
Project Quality and Innovation 25%	Describe the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contribution to an important gap in knowledge or significant problem;</li> <li>novelty/originality and innovation of the proposed research (including any new methods, technologies, theories or ideas that will be developed);</li> <li>clarity of the hypothesis, theories and research questions;</li> <li>cohesiveness of the project design and implementation plan (including the appropriateness of the aim, conceptual framework, method, data and/or analyses); and</li> <li>extent to which the research has the potential to enhance international collaboration.</li> </ul>
Benefit 15%	Describe the potential benefits including the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new or advanced knowledge resulting from outcomes of the research;</li> <li>economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for Australia and international communities; and</li> <li>potential contribution to capacity in the Australian Government priority areas.</li> </ul>
Feasibility 10%	Describe the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cost-effectiveness of the research and its value for money;</li> </ul>

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ feasibility of the research (including contribution of the project's design, participants and resources to the timely completion of the project);</li> <li>▪ supportive environment for the DECRA candidate and their project, and for HDR students where appropriate; and</li> <li>▪ availability of the necessary facilities to complete the project.</li> </ul> <p><u>If the project involves research pertaining to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities describe:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the strategies for enabling collaboration with Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities (for example, dialogue/collaboration with an Indigenous cultural mentor);</li> <li>▪ any existing or developing, supportive and high-quality relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities; and</li> <li>▪ any personal affiliations with local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities that can facilitate the proposed research.</li> </ul>

## Discovery Indigenous (IN24)

### Key Dates and Notes

#### Detailed Assessors

Task	IN24 Dates	Detail
<b>Assessment Period</b>	22/03/2023 – 11/05/2023	<p>Check the application details for any <a href="#">Conflict of Interest</a> as soon as the Research Management System (RMS) email containing assignments has been received; then accept or reject assignments in RMS (to allow for timely re-assignment of the rejected assignments).</p> <p>Assess each application assigned using an A-E rating scale and give a written report against the assessment criteria.</p> <p>Submit assessments to the ARC on or before this deadline date.</p>

#### General Assessors

Task	IN24 Dates	Detail
<b>Detailed Assessors Assignment Period</b>	09/03/2023 – 21/03/2023	Assign 4 Detailed Assessors and 6 Reserves
<b>Assessment Period</b>	09/03/2023 – 27/06/2023	<b>Carriages 1, 2 and 3</b> Assess applications independently to determine preliminary and provisional scores and ranking.
<b>Rejoinder</b>	30/05/2023 – 13/06/2023	Applicants to read comments from Detailed Assessors and submit a rejoinder.
<b>Review and finalise assessments</b>	14/06/2023 – 27/06/2022	<b>Carriages 1, 2 and 3</b> Review Detailed assessments and rejoinders. Revise and finalise scores and ranks in RMS.
<b>SAC Selection Meeting</b>	24/07/2023	SAC members discuss shortlist and recommend applications

### Grant Guidelines

The objectives and assessment criteria below are from the *Grant Guidelines for the Discovery Program (2021 edition)* which are available on [GrantConnect](#).

#### Overview

The Discovery Indigenous scheme provides grant funding to support research projects led by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander researcher. Discovery Indigenous grants include support for Discovery Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Awards (DAATSIAs) which are fellowships available to eligible Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander researchers.

#### Objectives

The **Discovery Indigenous** scheme objectives are to:

- support excellent basic and applied research and research training by Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander researchers as individuals and as teams;
- support national and international research collaboration;
- enhance the scale and focus of research in Australian Government priority areas; and

- d. support and retain established Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander researchers in higher education institutions.

### Assessment criteria and Scoring Matrix – Discovery Indigenous

Assessment criterion	(A) <b>Outstanding</b> Of the highest quality and at the forefront of research in the field. Approximately 10% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(B) <b>Excellent</b> Of high quality and strongly competitive. Approximately 15% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(C) <b>Very Good</b> Interesting, sound and compelling. Approximately 20% of Applications should receive scores in this band.	(D) <b>Good</b> Sound, but lacks a compelling element. Approximately 35% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.	(E) <b>Uncompetitive</b> Has significant weaknesses. Approximately 20% of Applications are likely to fall into this band.
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Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
Investigator(s)/ Capability: 35%	Describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE)</li> <li>time and capacity to undertake the research</li> <li>evidence of experience in research training, mentoring and supervision (where appropriate) and</li> <li>the capability of the investigator or team to build collaborations both within Australia and internationally.</li> </ul>
Project Quality and Innovation 40%	Describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>contribution to an important gap in knowledge or significant problem</li> <li>novelty/originality and innovation of the proposed research (including any new methods, technologies, theories or ideas that will be developed)</li> <li>clarity of the hypothesis, theories and research questions</li> <li>cohesiveness of the project design and implementation plan (including the appropriateness of the aim, conceptual framework, method, data and/or analyses)</li> <li>extent to which the research has the potential to enhance international collaboration and</li> <li>enhancement of project quality by DAATSIA.</li> </ul>
Benefit: 15%	Describe the potential benefits including the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>new or advanced knowledge resulting from outcomes of the research</li> <li>economic, commercial, environmental, social and/or cultural benefits for Australia and international communities and</li> <li>potential contribution to capacity in the Australian Government priority areas.</li> </ul>

Assessment criteria and weightings	Assessment criteria details
Feasibility 10%	<p>Describe the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ cost-effectiveness of the research and its value for money</li> <li>▪ suitability of the environment for the DAATSIA candidate and their project, and for HDR students where appropriate</li> <li>▪ availability of the necessary facilities to complete the project and</li> <li>▪ extent to which the project's design, participants and requested budget create confidence in the timely and successful completion of the project.</li> </ul> <p>If the project involves research pertaining to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the strategies for enabling collaboration with Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities (for example, dialogue/collaboration with an Indigenous cultural mentor)</li> <li>▪ any existing or developing, supportive and high quality relationships with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities and</li> <li>▪ any personal affiliations with local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities that can facilitate the proposed research.</li> </ul>

### Scoring band for a Discovery Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Award (DAATSIA) candidate

Applications that include a proposed DAATSIA candidate require a numerical score to be entered. There is a separate field (additional to the above criteria) for a score to be entered for the DAATSIA candidate. This field requires a score (0–100) specifically for the DAATSIA candidate, assessing their strength against the DAATSIA scoring bands.

During the assessment of the DAATSIA, please consider subsection D6.1 of the Grant Guidelines which states that a DAATSIA candidate must demonstrate how a DAATSIA would enhance the Project quality and detail the ways in which the additional research time would be used (for example, undertaking sustained Field Research, archival research or laboratory work).

DAATSIA's are not fellowships and cannot be funded/held independently of a Discovery Indigenous Project. Accordingly, DAATSIA scores have no separate weighting in the overall score for an application. A DAATSIA candidate makes up part of the team (they will remain as a CI if the DAATSIA is not awarded), and as such they should also be assessed as part of the team under the 'Investigator(s)/Capability selection criteria, weighted at 35%.

The next table shows appropriate ranges for DAATSIA numerical scores depending on the merits of the DAATSIA candidate.

Scoring band	Criteria	Recommendation
91-100	<b>Outstanding:</b> Will benefit, enhance and expedite the Project, ensuring it is of the highest quality and at the forefront of research activity.	Recommended Unconditionally
86-90	<b>Excellent:</b> Will benefit, enhance and expedite the Project, ensuring high quality research.	Strongly support recommendation of funding
76-85	<b>Very Good:</b> Will benefit, enhance and expedite the Project. Interesting, sound and compelling.	Conditionally support recommendation of funding
51-75	<b>Good:</b> Sound but lacks a compelling element.	Unsupportive of recommending for funding
0-50	<b>Uncompetitive:</b> Uncompetitive and has significant weaknesses.	Not recommended for funding