



Australian Government

Australian Research Council

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
for Assessors
Industry Fellowships Program
for funding commencing in 2024 (IE24, IM24 and IL24)

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- All assessors should read the IFP Assessor Handbook which provides instructions to Detailed and General Assessors and is available on the ARC website [here](#).
- Detailed Assessors should direct all queries regarding detailed assessments to arc-peer_review@arc.gov.au. General Assessors should direct all queries regarding general assessments to arc.college@arc.gov.au.
- If you require further information or support regarding the Research Management System ([RMS](#)) this is available at the [ARC website](#), or by contacting rmssupport@arc.gov.au for assistance.

Industry Fellowships Program (IFP) Process

1. How does the assessment process work for the Industry Fellowship Program (IFP)?

The key steps in the IFP assessment process are:



Applications are assigned to General Assessors (members of the Selection Advisory Committee drawn from the College of Experts) by ARC Executive Directors

General Assessors assign applications to Detailed Assessors*

General Assessors save preliminary/draft scores

Detailed Assessors submit final scores and assessments

General Assessors revise and submit final scores after considering Detailed Assessor scores and assessments

*For Industry Laureate Fellowships, both General and Detailed Assessors will be assigned by ARC Executive Directors

For further details on each step please read the IFP Assessor Handbook available [here](#) which provides comprehensive information on each step of the assessment process and instructions for both Detailed and General Assessors.

2. How does the Industry Fellowship Program differ from other ARC NCGP schemes and fellowships?

The key difference between IFP schemes and other National Competitive Grants Program (NCGP) Schemes and Fellowships is that the primary goal of the IFP is to create a pathway to support academic researchers in establishing careers in industry, and industry-based researchers to work in university settings, with the aim of increased two-way mobility and skill-building in research collaboration, translation, and commercialisation.

In addition, the IFP schemes also aim to drive research translation and commercialisation outcomes across a range of industry settings. When assessing for the IFP schemes, these differences are reflected in the assessment criteria used for the IFP schemes, which emphasise the integration of the fellow in the industry setting with a focus on the strength of the engagement between the industry fellow and the industry partner/s. Assessors are asked to carefully consider the case applicants make against the assessment criteria for the scheme, which differ from other ARC schemes.

3. Is there a rejoinder process for the Industry Fellowship Program?

The IFP assessment does not include a rejoinder process. Applicants do not have the opportunity to respond to Detailed Assessor comments and the Detailed Assessor reports are only read and used by General Assessors. Therefore, Detailed Assessors should provide high quality, constructive assessments that assist the General Assessors to assess the merits of the application as not all General Assessors are experts in the field of the proposed research. Detailed Assessors must avoid posing questions or seeking clarification from the applicant in their Detailed Assessment text as the applicant will not have the opportunity to respond to these.

4. As an assessor can I contact the applicant or the institution or look for additional information regarding the proposed project/application or publications to inform my assessment?

Under no circumstances should Assessors contact researchers and/or institutions about a submitted application or seek additional information from any sources. When assessing applications Assessors must rely solely on the information provided within the application including referenced publications and preprints and **should not seek additional information from any other sources.** This includes following any hyperlinks that may have been provided in the application.

Accepting and Rejecting Assignments

5. I think I have a conflict of interest with the application I am assigned to assess but I am not sure about it, what should I do?

Any individual who is reviewing material for the ARC must agree to comply with the confidentiality and COI statement outlined in the [ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy](#) 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 applications 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.

If you think you have a conflict of interest but are unsure about it, please email the ARC and the relevant scheme team will provide further guidance to help determine whether or not it is a genuine or perceived conflict of interest. Detailed Assessors should direct all queries to ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au. General Assessors should direct all to ARC.College@arc.gov.au.

6. The application I have been asked to assess is outside my area of expertise. What should I do?

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 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 and update your RMS profile expertise text and FoR codes so that applications we send you to assess match your expertise.

Writing my Assessment(s)

7. Can I use generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools that use algorithms to create new content (such as ChatGPT) to help draft detailed assessments?

Please see the advice to assessors in ARC's *Policy on Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence in the ARC's grants programs* available on the [ARC website](#).

In summary, release of material into generative AI tools constitutes a breach of confidentiality and peer reviewers, including all Detailed and General Assessors, must not use generative AI as part of their assessment activities.

8. As an Assessor, how do I factor the cash and/or in-kind support from the Administering Organisation, the Key Industry Partner or Other Industry Partners into my assessment?

A key focus for Assessors in IFP is the strength of the Fellow's relationship with Industry and the ability of the researcher to achieve significant outcomes as a result. Assessors can therefore take into consideration the cash or in-kind contributions or other commitments and support offered by an Administering Organisation, Key Industry Partner or Other Industry Partner(s) in considering the feasibility of the project and its ability to achieve significant outcomes.

However, there is no minimum cash or in-kind contribution required by Administering Organisations, the Key Industry Partner or Other Industry Partner(s) in the IFP schemes. An Assessor should not assess or rank applications based solely on an Administering Organisation's or partner's (including Key Industry Partner's) cash or in-kind contributions.

9. As an Assessor I don't believe the proposal/application I have been assigned to assess is strongly feasible due to potential impacts of COVID-19. How should I factor this into my assessment?

Assessors should assess all applications 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.

Eligibility, Ethics and Integrity

10. I think the applicant has a conflict of interest with the Industry Partner but has not disclosed this in their application nor have they provided any information on how they will handle the potential conflict of interest. What should I do?

There is nothing precluding a candidate from applying for an IFP fellowship where the candidate is also in the position of owner or Director of the Key Industry Partner. It is not a requirement for applicants to disclose the nature of the potential conflicts of interest and the mitigation strategies that would be put in place to address these in the application.

As part of the application process, applicants declare the potential for conflicts of interest to their Administering Organisation and the DVCR or their delegate certifies to the ARC that all potential conflicts of interest will be managed in accordance with the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research \(2018\)](#), the [ARC Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy](#) and any relevant successor documents. As a General or Detailed assessor, you should not make any assumptions about an Administering Organisation's capacity/ability/mechanisms in place to handle conflict of interests that arise from the proposed projects.

11. Upon reading the application I have been asked to assess, I question whether the candidate has applied for the right Industry Fellowship scheme, based on the length of their research experience (measured in FTE). Is the length of the candidate's research experience an eligibility issue?

No, for Early Career Industry Fellowships and Mid-Career Industry Fellowships, the research experience required for each scheme is a guide to Fellowship level rather than a prescriptive eligibility requirement. When assessing which Fellowship level to apply to, candidates were asked to take into consideration other factors in addition to their research experience measured in FTE, such as their career stage, salary level, academic ranking or professional status, national and/or international research

standing, postgraduate supervision and/or management experience, and proposed research project. As a result, whilst a candidate with 10 years of research experience measured by FTE might be eligible to apply for a Mid-Career Industry Fellowship, applying for an Industry Laureate Fellowship might be more suitable to their career position.

12. Upon reading the application I have been asked to assess, I suspect a potential eligibility, ethical, research integrity breach or research misconduct issue. What should I do?

If, while assessing an application, you have concerns about eligibility, ethics, research integrity or research misconduct associated with an application, **you must not include this information in your assessment.** If your concern is about eligibility or ethics, please send an email highlighting your concerns to **the relevant scheme team via ARC.College@arc.gov.au** (General Assessors) or **ARC-Peer_Review@arc.gov.au** (Detailed Assessors) as soon as possible. If your concern is about a potential research integrity breach or research misconduct, please notify the ARC Research Integrity Office (researchintegrity@arc.gov.au) in accordance with Section 5 of the [ARC Research Integrity Policy](#).

The ARC is responsible for investigating and making decisions on these matters, and General and Detailed Assessors should not conduct independent investigations of potential eligibility, ethics, research integrity or research misconduct issues. Nor should such issues play a role in your assessment. Please complete your assessment based solely on your evaluation of the merits of the application.

13. I am a General Assessor, and I am concerned about the appropriateness of the Detailed Assessor comments. What should I do?

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, they must contact the ARC by sending an email to the relevant scheme team via 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.