



2018 RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS SCHEME-SPECIFIC PEER REVIEW GUIDELINES FOR FUNDING COMMENCING IN 2019

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INTRODUCTION

The following sections provide additional information about the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Research Fellowships scheme including scheme-specific objectives, critical dates, assessment criteria, eligibility rules and funding details, and must be read in conjunction with the following supporting documents:

- the *2018 Guide to NHMRC Peer Review*
- the *2018 NHMRC Funding Rules*, incorporating the *2018 Research Fellowships Scheme-Specific Funding Rules*
- the *2018 Advice and Instructions to Applicants*, incorporating the *2018 Research Fellowships Advice and Instructions to Applicants*
- the [NHMRC Funding Agreement](#).

It is recommended that you read the *2018 NHMRC Funding Rules* **before** reading these scheme-specific rules.

This is the final year that the NHMRC Practitioner Fellowships scheme will be offered. New grant funding opportunities will be available through NHMRC's new grant program for funding commencing from 2020.

1. OVERVIEW OF THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Applications Open	6 December 2017
Peer Review Panels appointed	December 2017
Applications Close	31 January 2018
Eligibility check of applications	February 2018
Assessment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applications	February/March 2018
Assign applications to Panels (Chairs to approve)	9 February 2018
General Briefing Teleconference	21 February 2018
Panel Members' Conflicts of Interests due	21 February 2018
Allocation of Spokespersons	8 March 2018
Applicants to advise NHMRC of any special circumstances for interviews (webform)	14 March 2018
Spokespersons scores due into RGMS for Initial Review	28 March 2018
Initial Review Teleconference	11 – 12 April 2018
Notification of Initial Review outcomes available in RGMS	April 2018*
Applicants deadline to provide interview contact details	8 May 2018
Interviews	21 – 25 May 2018
Funding approvals process (Research Committee (RC), Council, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Minister)	June 2018*
Final notification outcomes	July/August 2018*

**Dates are subject to change*

2. KEY CHANGES TO THE PEER REVIEW PROCESS

Assessors who have previously participated in Research Fellowships peer review should note the following changes to the peer review of Research Fellowships applications:

- *Section 4.8* – The NFFC process business rules have been amended for applicants of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent (see *section 4.8*)
- *Section 4.8* – NHMRC may identify applications for discussion at the Initial Review teleconference.
- *Attachment B* – New guidance document added: *Guidance for Assessor to assess applications against the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria*.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities of those participating in the Research Fellowships peer review process are identified in the Research Fellowships Peer Review Participants table below. These take precedence over the general descriptions in *section 6* of the *2018 NHMRC Guide to Peer Review*.

Research Fellowships Peer Review Participants Table

Roles	Responsibilities
Research Committee (RC) Members	<p>Members of RC may support the peer review process by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying and advising the NHMRC of all real or potential Conflicts of Interest (ColS) they have with applications • Chairing Peer Review Panel (PRP) meetings as an independent non-scoring Chair.
Assigners Academy Members	<p>Members of the NHMRC Assigners Academy may support the peer review process by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • confirming Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research applications have at least 20% of the research effort or building capacity related to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.
Community Observer	<p>The PRP may have an independent Community Observer present during the meetings. Community Observers will be briefed on the peer review process. They will not participate in the discussion of any applications.</p> <p>The primary duties and responsibilities of a Community Observer are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and advise the NHMRC of all real or potential ColS they may have with the applications • monitor procedural aspects of the PRP • provide feedback to NHMRC on the consistency of procedures across all PRPs.

<p>Peer Review Panel (PRP) Chair</p>	<p>PRP Chairs are appointed to be independent of the review of applications, and must manage the process of peer review in accordance with these guidelines. A PRP Chair will not be an applicant in the current application round. The primary duties and responsibilities of the PRP Chair are to ensure NHMRC's procedures are adhered to and that a fair and equitable consideration is given to every application being reviewed by the PRP. Chairs may be responsible for the conduct of the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • familiarise themselves with documentation relevant to the funding scheme • identify and advise the NHMRC of all real or potential Cols they have with applications to be reviewed by the PRP • participate in the peer review process as a non-scoring Panel Chair of their allocated panel • ensure appropriate action is taken in relation to declared Cols • ensure applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions • ensure PRP address applications with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander focus • Chair the PRP meetings including interviews if relevant • ask members to declare any associations between panel members (e.g. current and previous collaborations) so that other panel members are aware of these associations • keep discussion on time and focused • ensure procedures are followed • ensure PRPs address applications that have requested a Translation Advancement Incentive (TAI) • assist PRP members in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities • promote good engagement by Spokesperson and PRP members • ensure that discussion leads to an outcome where the application is scored against the assessment criteria • ensure that PRP members declare reasons for voting two or more away from the Primary Spokesperson (1SP) score for any of the assessment criteria at the interviews • provide PRP members with an opportunity to identify any applications that should be revisited at the end of each day to ensure equity between applications • record and notify NHMRC of any requests for clarification or advice.
<p>PRP Member</p>	<p>The primary duties and responsibilities of a PRP member are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • familiarise themselves with documentation relevant to the funding scheme • identify and advise the NHMRC of all real or potential Cols they have with applications on their PRP • provide a fair, impartial and scientific assessment of applications against assessment criteria in a timely manner • read and have a thorough understanding of all applications including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research external assessments being assessed by the PRP (excluding those for which they have a Col), paying particular attention to those for which they may be Spokesperson • provide a score against the assessment criteria for each application reviewed by the PRP, where a high Col does not exist • act as a Spokesperson for applications in their broad research area • confirm not-for-further-consideration (NFFC) applications and nominate applications from the NFFC list for discussion at the initial review meeting • prepare for and participate in panel discussion for each application to the best of their ability • when discussing research achievement, consider relative to opportunity including any career disruption.

<p>Primary Spokesperson (1SP)</p>	<p>The primary duties and responsibilities of a1SP in addition to that of a PRP member are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review and score each allocated application in the prescribed timeframe • ensure that their assessments are accurate and honest, and all claims are capable of being verified • formulate questions to be addressed by the applicants at interview and ensure that these are addressed at interview • lead the PRP meeting discussion/interview on the competitiveness of the applicant and the significance and merit of the proposed research against the aims, objectives and assessment criteria of the funding scheme • ensure that productivity relative to opportunity and career disruption considerations highlighted in the application are considered • where applicable, bring strengths/weaknesses highlighted by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander external assessor report to the attention of the panel • in the pre-interview discussion, flag whether the applicant holds the position of Institute Director (or equivalent).
<p>Secondary Spokesperson (2SP)</p>	<p>The primary duties and responsibilities of a 2SP in addition to that of a PRP member are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review and score each allocated application in the prescribed timeframe • formulate questions to be addressed by the applicants and ensure that they are addressed at interview • support the application discussion on the competitiveness of the application in accordance with the assessment criteria.
<p>Senior NHMRC Staff</p>	<p>NHMRC staff with doctoral degrees or extensive research expertise will be involved in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing allocations of applications to panels and Spokespersons • establishing the peer review panels • reviewing sensitive career disruptions • assisting and advising on the peer review process • acting as an independent chair when the PRP Chair has a high Col with the application under consideration.
<p>NHMRC Staff</p>	<p>Under direction from the CEO, NHMRC staff will be responsible for overall administration of the peer review process and may be responsible for the conduct of the following specific activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • approach potential PRP members • make preliminary assignment of applications to PRPs • make preliminary assignment of spokespersons to applications • provide the following administrative support and advice to the Chair and members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ facilitate use of RGMS; ○ maintain accurate records of Cols ○ ensure that the Chair and panel members are aware of all Cols declared by members ○ provide advice on the treatment of declared Cols • provide policy advice to the PRP Chair and members • ensure that all PRP members and assessors are provided with the necessary information to review each application • ensure that Community Observers are fully aware of the names and affiliations of the applicants under discussion to ensure Col guidelines are followed • prepare a list of non-competitive applications (NFFC) for consideration by the

	<p>Chair and/or PRP members as appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare the order in which applications will be assessed during PRP meetings according to business rules that apply to order of review such as level of application and distribution of each Spokesperson's applications • maintain scoring records for each application • record outcome of PRP recommendations • act as the first point of contact for PRP members • record and notify NHMRC Senior Staff of any requests for clarification or advice.
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4. PEER REVIEW PROCESS

The NHMRC peer review process is designed to provide a rigorous, fair, transparent and consistent assessment of the merits of each application according to the [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#), to ensure only the highest quality, value for money research is recommended for funding (see *section 11.2, 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules*).

All applications are assessed against the Assessment Criteria as set out in the *2018 Research Fellowships scheme-specific Funding Rules for funding commencing in 2019 (section 4)*, using the *Category Descriptors at Attachment A*. Applications that are accepted by NHMRC as relating to the improvement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health are also assessed against the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* as set out in *section 6.3 of the 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules*.

Applications are assessed relative to opportunity, taking into consideration any career disruptions (see the *2018 NHMRC Funding Rules, section 6.2*).

An overview of the Research Fellowships peer review process can be found at section 1 of this document. Further detail about each step is provided below.

4.1. Receipt and Initial Processing of Applications

NHMRC staff will verify that Research Fellowship applications meet eligibility criteria.

4.2. Assessment of applications with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health focus

Applications relating specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' health will be identified by information provided in the application. NHMRC Assigners Academy members with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health expertise will confirm that these applications have a least 20% of their research effort and/or capacity building focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

For applications confirmed as relating specifically to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health, NHMRC will endeavour to obtain at least one Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander researcher or relevant expert to take on the role of External Assessor.

The External Assessor's review will have particular focus on the *Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (2018 NHMRC Funding Rules, section 6.3)*. The assessment is to be considered by PRP members when scoring.

The *Guidance for Assessor to assess applications against the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria when scoring applications* is available at [Attachment B](#).

4.3. Assignment of Applications to Panels

As there are multiple Peer Review Panels (PRP) or streams, applicants have been asked to indicate which specific field of research or particular stream best fits their application. Based on this information, senior NHMRC Staff will allocate applications to the most appropriate PRP.

Peer Review Panels are established to review all Research Fellowship applications in fields of research as outlined below.

Panel	Includes the fields of:
A	Biochemistry, Immunology, Virology, Oncology/Cancer Biology, Gastroenterology, Cellular and Developmental Biology, Microbiology, Parasitology, Infectious Diseases and Genetics
B	Physiology, Reproductive Medicine/Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Neuroscience/Vision Sciences, Pharmacology/Respiratory Medicine, Endocrinology/Diabetes (includes obesity) and Cardiovascular Disease.
C	Epidemiology/Population Health, Health Services Research, Applied Statistics and Clinical Sciences.

Current Research Fellowship applicants are not permitted to participate in the assessment process as panel members.

4.4. Identification of Col

Panel members will be provided access, via NHMRC's Research Grants Management System (RGMS) to the Snapshot Summary Report of each application assigned to the PRP, and will declare their Col in accordance with the guidance on the management of Col. Refer to *2018 Guide to NHMRC Peer Review section 4.3*.

Panel members will be given access to the full application only if they have no or a low Col. Where panel members declare they have a high Col, they will not be granted access to the full details of the application.

Some members may have a Col for which they require a ruling. In these circumstances, NHMRC will assess the information declared and specify in RGMS the level of participation applicable. Panel members are requested to ensure they include sufficient detail in their declaration to ensure an accurate Col assessment can be made.

All Col declarations and rulings will be made available to the Panel Chair and members to review. If the Panel Chair or member is uncomfortable with a ruling level, they can raise this with NHMRC staff and request a review.

Cols must be declared at the beginning of the peer review process. However Cols may be declared at any stage of the peer review process if new conflicts become apparent.

Col guidelines also apply to Community Observers and they must be aware of their obligations under NHMRC's guidance for management of Col. Community Observers must advise NHMRC of any real or potential Cols they may have with an application.

4.5. Allocation of Spokespersons

Panel members will indicate their ability to act as a Spokesperson on particular applications based on the closest match with their expertise. NHMRC staff will allocate Spokespersons to each application based on the indicated suitability and declared conflicts of interest of each panel member. Panel members will be notified of their allocations accordingly.

4.6. Briefing

NHMRC will conduct a panel briefing teleconference shortly after applications have closed to discuss panel member duties and responsibilities associated with peer review. Any changes to the scheme for the current application round will also be highlighted and discussed as necessary.

NHMRC will hold a panel briefing prior to PRP meetings and interviews to outline the process and roles and responsibilities of all participants.

4.7. Initial Scoring

Category Descriptors specifically aligned to the assessment criteria can be found at [Attachment A](#). These guidelines describe the assessment criteria and key attributes that an application must meet to receive a specific score on a seven point scale. PRP members must refer closely to these descriptors when assessing and scoring applications. They should also use the *Statement of Expectations* ([Attachment C](#)) as a guide when assessing the level of application submitted.

For applications with an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research focus the assessment should take into consideration the External Assessment against the NHMRC Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria (*section 6.3, 2018 NHMRC Funding Rules*), where applicable.

Spokespersons will provide scores against each of the assessment criteria for applications they have been assigned.

4.8. Removing Less Competitive Applications – Not For Further Consideration (NFFC)

Applications deemed less competitive may be removed from further consideration based on initial scoring against the assessment criteria by two or more peer review panel members. This is called the NFFC process.

Applications from researchers of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent, achieving a notional overall score within category 5 or higher after initial assessment will be excluded from the NFFC list.

The Spokespersons' scores will determine the identification of applications considered to be the least competitive of those assessed by the PRP. At least 50% of the lowest ranked applicants will be included on the NFFC list.

A NFFC list, catering for conflicts of interest, will be provided to panel members prior to the initial review teleconference meeting. If a panel member feels strongly that an application warrants rescuing from the NFFC list (and should proceed to interview), they have an opportunity to nominate one application only for consideration by the panel. NHMRC may at its discretion identify applications for discussion at the assessment confirmation teleconference.

Prior to the teleconference, a list will be circulated to each panel member, adjusted for Cols, of the applications that will be discussed at the teleconference. These will include the applications nominated by panel members for rescue and those applications on the NFFC list that have received an overall score from the spokespersons which are two or more points away from each other. The applications on this list will be the only applications discussed at the teleconference.

Applications not appearing on the NFFC list will automatically proceed to interview.

If the panel is satisfied that the most suitable applications are proceeding to interview, no applications have been nominated for rescue, or no application has received an overall score with a difference of two or more, the initial review teleconference will not be required. The Panel Chair will confirm in writing that no initial review meeting is required because the panel is satisfied that the most suitable applications are proceeding to interview.

4.9. Process for the Initial Peer Review Teleconference

Each panel will meet, via teleconference, to discuss any applications from the NFFC list which have been nominated for rescue and any application identified as having overall scores where the variation between the spokesperson scores is two or more.

Any panel member with a high Col will be put on hold from the teleconference before discussion of that application begins. Panel members who have nominated an application for rescue will speak to the application and provide a justification for the application to proceed. The 1SP and 2SP will then speak to the application and recommend if the application should proceed or not. For an application to be rescued from the NFFC list the entire panel must be in agreement. The panel must decide on no more than two applications to proceed to interview.

At the initial review stage, the decision as to whether an applicant who has applied for an "Initial Application" at Senior Research Fellow (SRF) General should be selected for interview is based on whether the applicant is competitive at SRF A. The decision on whether a fellowship is to be awarded at SRF A or SRF B will be made post interview based on final rankings.

Where an applicant has applied for a "Reapplication with Promotion", the decision to proceed to interview is based on whether an applicant is competitive at their current level. The promotion request will be addressed at interview and the level to be funded will be determined post interview based on final rankings.

Applications for "Promotion out of Synchrony" (POS) will be assessed at the level of promotion. POS applicants are not assessed at their current level. If the Panel's final decision is that the application should not be supported at the promoted level, they will be removed from further peer review. The applicant will continue at their existing level for the remainder of their current fellowship.

4.10. Peer Review Panel Meeting with Interviews

Interviews for Research Fellowships will be conducted by telephone. The PRP will convene face to face and will be briefed by NHMRC staff prior to interviews to outline the process, and roles and responsibilities of all participants.

A quorum of more than 50% of panel members must be involved for an application to be reviewed and scored by a PRP.

A total of 40 minutes has been allocated for the discussion and interview of each application:

- 10 minutes for a pre interview panel discussion,
- 20 minute interview with the applicant
- 10 minutes post-interview for panel discussion and scoring.

The purpose of the interview is for both the applicant and panel members to identify optimum evidence to warrant funding for an application. Panel members will be assessing how well an application meets the assessment criteria and are expected to encourage and assist applicants to present their case as best they can. They should not be confrontational, negative or accusatory, nor put applicants in a position where they feel they have to defend what they have done or are proposing to do.

Panels are expected to be direct and obvious in what they ask, so applicants should be able to respond equally clearly and not be looking for deception or hidden aspects to questions.

They are expected to explore aspects of an application where they require clarification or confirmation. However, applicants should view such enquiries as opportunities to emphasise the worth of the case they are making, and not as criticisms.

A guide for applicants and panel members, "What to Expect at a Research Fellowship Interview" is provided at [Attachment D](#).

All interviews will follow the Research Fellowships Interview Run Sheet ([Attachment E](#)) to ensure procedural consistency is maintained.

After each interview, the application will be discussed by the panel and scored with the assistance of the *Category Descriptors* ([Attachment A](#)), the *Guidance for Assessor to assess applications against the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria* ([Attachment B](#)), and the *Statement of Expectations* ([Attachment C](#)) as required. Where applicable, the PRP should make a recommendation for the award of a Translation Advancement Incentive (TAI). Refer to *section 8.3.1* of the *Scheme-Specific Funding Rules*.

Panel members must also inform the panel secretariat if the applicant holds a Directorship, Dean or Deputy Vice –Chancellors (or equivalent) role. NHMRC will follow up on this information to ensure that applicants comply with *section 5.3 Other Appointments* of the *Scheme-Specific Funding Rules*.

It is important that the PRP consider the merits of the application in relation to the scoring category descriptors rather than whether the applicant is considered fundable.

Panel members will score each applicant on a seven point scale against each assessment criterion. Scores will be provided via secret ballot after the 1SP has declared their scores to the panel. All secret ballot sheets will be destroyed once scores are accurately transcribed to the scoresheet.

An average panel score is determined for each criterion and the relevant weighting applied. Each weighted panel score is combined to provide an overall score for the applicant.

Dual ranking of applications is required for the following categories:

- Initial Application applying at the general level of SRF must be ranked at SRF A and SRF B levels
- Reapplication with Promotion must be ranked at the applicant's current level and the requested promoted level.

Note: It is NHMRC policy to protect the identity of researchers who serve on NHMRC review panels. Consequently, applicants will not be provided with a list of panel members on their panel.

4.11. Confirmation of Scores

To ensure that equity is maintained between applicants in relation to time spent discussing each application, only applications interviewed that day may be revisited. Panel members will have an opportunity at the end of each day to flag any application from that day only for further discussion. To nominate an application for discussion, the panel member must inform the Panel Secretariat in confidence so that CoIs can be managed.

If a panel member has a high CoI with an application flagged for discussion, they will be asked to leave the room before any discussion begins. If the panel agrees to reassess an application, the panel must re-score the application via secret ballot. This process is essential to ensure the transparency and integrity of peer review.

After the interviews, applicant scores are normalised across all panels. These normalised final scores are used as the base for producing a final ranked list for all Research Fellowship applicants interviewed, which will be used in preparing the funding recommendations for RC. RC then recommends those applications to be funded through NHMRC Council to the CEO who submits them for approval to the Minister with portfolio responsibility for NHMRC.

Applicants are funded at the highest ranked fellowship level above the funding line. The funding line is determined each year by the schemes budget allocation from the Medical Research Endowment Account (MREA) as approved by RC.

4.12. Peer Review Panel Documentation

PRP members must retain their speaking notes and any other notes they make of the peer review process until the outcomes of the panel's deliberations are finalised. For PRP meetings, this is when all interviews are finished and the confirmation of scores has taken place. After this time, notes, both hard copy and electronic, should be disposed of appropriately.

4.13. Notification of Outcomes

Numerical feedback will be provided to applicants in the form of an Application Assessment Summary. Applicants who were not shortlisted (*section 4.8*) will receive an Application Assessment Summary after the list of applications proceeding to interview has been finalised.

For further information about outcome notifications, refer to the *2018 NHMRC Funding Rules, section 11.6*.

5. ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Research Fellowships Category Descriptors

Attachment B – Guidance for Assessor to assess applications against the Indigenous Research Excellence Criteria

Attachment C – Statement of Expectations

Attachment D – What to expect at a Research Fellowships Interview

Attachment E – NHMRC Research Fellowships Interview Run Sheet

ATTACHMENT A – RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS CATEGORY DESCRIPTORS

Assessing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Contributions

NHMRC recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants often make additional valuable contributions to policy development, clinical/public health leadership and/or service delivery, community activities and linkages, and are often representatives on key committees. If applicable, these contributions should be considered when assessing research output and track record.

Score	Criterion 1	Criterion 2	Criterion 3
	<p>VISION Vision for the next 5 years (in alignment with the aims of the scheme).</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Weight 25%</p>	<p>RESEARCH OUTPUT AND LEADERSHIP Quality of Research Output (with particular emphasis on the past five years and demonstrating an upward trajectory) and intellectual leadership, including success in obtaining grants, translational activities, and national and international profile.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Weight 60%</p>	<p>CONTRIBUTION TO RESEARCH Contribution to research through research supervision, mentoring, peer review and research administration.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Weight 15%</p>
<p>The following scoring descriptors are to be used as a guide to score an application against each of the assessment criteria. The descriptors are indicative rather than exhaustive. Evaluation of performance will take into account opportunity, research discipline and be an overall summation of research contribution.</p>			
<p>7</p> <p>An exceptionally strong application which clearly supports the aims of the scheme and meets all the assessment criteria, with essentially no weaknesses.</p> <p>It is expected that only the top 2% of applications would be ranked in this category.</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a proposed body of research that is highly innovative, transformative and achievable within the term of the Fellowship. • Presents a proposed body of research that addresses an issue of utmost importance to human health and will have a very significant impact. • Demonstrates a clear vision which will advance the field and expand Australia's research capacity in this area. • Presents a vision that is in alignment with the aims of the Research Fellowship scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is highly recognised, or has emerging high recognition internationally for their contribution to their field of research. • Has consistently published research that is highly influential. • Has a demonstrated clear, rapid and continuing upward trajectory for research output. • Has demonstrated a multidisciplinary and strong collaborative approach to research. • Has had consistent success in obtaining major international and/or national grants as Chief Investigator A (CIA). • Has demonstrated major transformational contributions to research translation either via registration of patents, commercialisation, improvements to 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has extensive evidence of primary supervision and mentoring of PhD candidates (or equivalent) with successful completions. • Has had extensive involvement in the peer review of grants both nationally and internationally. • Has extensive experience in the review of publications, including editorial roles in top international journals. • Holds leadership positions in highly regarded international scientific or professional societies. • Has demonstrated clear evidence of key contributions to the profession, including public communication/advocacy; government advisory roles and clinical practice. • Has a significant leadership role

		<p>clinical practice, improvements to public health or fundamental changes to health policy or system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has given several key plenary presentations at major international meetings. • Has received major international recognition for research outcomes. 	<p>within a Departmental Centre or Institute.</p>
<p>6</p> <p>A very strong application which supports the aims of the scheme and meets the assessment criteria, with only some minor weaknesses.</p> <p>It is expected that the top 3-5% of applications would be ranked in this category or above.</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents an innovative proposal that has the potential to be transformative and is likely to be achieved within the term of the Fellowship. • Presents a proposed body of research that addresses an issue of major importance to human health and will have a strong impact. • Demonstrates a vision which is likely to advance the field and expand Australia's research capacity in this area. • Presents a vision that is in alignment with the aims of the Research Fellowship scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has an established national and growing international reputation for their contribution to their field of research. • Has published research that is highly influential. • Has a demonstrated upward trajectory for research output. • Has demonstrated a multidisciplinary approach to research with good collaborations. • Has had success in obtaining major international and/or national grants as CIA. • Has made major contributions to research translation either via registration of patents, commercialisation, improvements to clinical practice, improvements to public health or fundamental changes to health policy or system. • Has been an invited speaker at several major international meetings. • Has received major national recognition for research outcomes. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has strong evidence of primary supervision and mentoring of PhD candidates or equivalent with successful completions. • Has had major involvement in the peer review of grants nationally, and some internationally. • Has very good experience in the review of publications, including editorial roles in discipline specific journals. • Holds leadership positions in well regarded scientific or professional societies. • Has demonstrated evidence of key contributions to the profession, including public communication/advocacy. • Has a leadership role within a Departmental Centre or Institute.

<p>5</p> <p>The application meets the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria but has identified weakness requiring additional consideration by the panel.</p> <p>May be considered for interview</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a proposed body of research that has at least one innovative idea but may not be achieved within the term of the Fellowship. • Presents a proposed body of research that addresses an issue of considerable importance to human health and may have some impact. • Demonstrates a vision which may advance the applicants field of endeavour. • Presents a vision that is in alignment with the aims of the Research Fellowship scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a good national and emerging international reputation for their contribution to their field of research. • Has published research that is influential. • Has demonstrated the beginnings of an upward trajectory for research output. • Has demonstrated a good collaborative approach to research. • Has had success in obtaining major national grants as CIA • Has made contributions to research translation either via registration of patents, commercialisation, improvements to clinical practice, improvements to public health or fundamental changes to health policy or system. • Has been an invited speaker at major national meetings. • Has received national recognition for research outcomes. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has evidence of primary supervision and some mentoring of PhD candidates or equivalent with successful completions. • Has had considerable involvement in the peer review of grants nationally and occasionally internationally. • Has very good experience in the review of publications but with no editorial roles identified. • Holds minor role(s) in professional societies (senior office bearer or meeting organiser, editorial board responsibility).Has demonstrated some evidence of key contributions to the profession, including public communication/advocacy. • Has an emerging leadership role within a Departmental Centre or Institute.
<p>4</p> <p>The application only partly meets the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria. Should not proceed to further peer review.</p> <p>Not recommended for Interview (not considered a fundable proposal)</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a proposed body of research that has some novel aspects, but predominately extends existing knowledge. • Presents a proposed body of research that addresses an issue of some importance to human health and may have some impact. • Has a developing vision of their contribution to their field of endeavour. • Presents a proposed body of research that only partly aligns with the aims of the Research Fellowship scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a growing national reputation for their contribution to their field of research. • Has published research that makes specialised contributions to knowledge. • Has demonstrated the potential to have an upward trajectory in research output. • Has demonstrated emerging collaborative activities. • Has had some success in obtaining major national grants but not necessarily as CIA or grant funding is primarily from specialist agencies. • Has made minor contributions to research translation either via registration of patents, 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has some evidence of primary supervision and joint supervision of PhD candidates or equivalent with successful completions. • Has had some involvement in the peer review of grants nationally. • Has good experience in the review of publications but with no editorial roles identified. • Holds membership of professional societies or other evidence of emerging professional activities. • Has demonstrated little evidence of other key contributions to the profession, including public communication/advocacy. • Has a leadership role within a department.

		<p>commercialisation, improvements to clinical practice, improvements to public health or fundamental changes to health policy or system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has presented orally at national meetings but not as an invited speaker. • Has received some recognition for research outcomes. 	
<p>3</p> <p>The application does not meet the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria. Should not proceed to further peer review.</p> <p>Not recommended for Interview</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a proposed body of research that has relatively little novelty and is not particularly innovative. • Proposed a proposed body of research that addresses an issue of some concern to human health and may have some impact. • Plays an important role in the research but is not a driver for the project vision. • Presents a vision that is not in alignment with the aims of the Research Fellowship scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is developing a national reputation for their contribution to their field of research. • Has published research that sustains the knowledge base of the discipline. • Has little evidence of potential to have an upward trajectory. • Has little evidence of collaborative activities outside of their institution. • Has had some success in obtaining national grants from specialist agencies (e.g. Cancer Council, National Heart Foundation (NHF) etc. • Has little evidence of involvement in research translation activities. • Has limited evidence for oral presentations at national meetings. • Has received little recognition for research outcomes. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has some evidence of involvement in joint supervision of PhD candidates or equivalent with successful completions. • Has emerging evidence of involvement in the peer review of grants nationally. • Has some experience in the review of publications. • Holds membership of professional societies. • Has demonstrated little evidence of other key contributions to the profession, including public communication/advocacy. • Has a leadership role within a research laboratory.

<p>2</p> <p>The application does not meet the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria. Should not proceed to further peer review.</p> <p>Not recommended for Interview</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a proposed body of research that follows previously well documented and studied concepts. • Proposed a proposed body of research that addresses an issue of only marginal concern to human health and is unlikely to yield a significant impact. • Is key but not necessarily the lead in the vision of the research proposal which is not in alignment with the aims of the scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has demonstrated little evidence of a developing reputation for their contribution to their field of research. • Has published research that has had some contribution to the knowledge base of the discipline. • Has no evidence of potential to have an upward trajectory. • Has received grants funding primarily from local institutional sources rather than competitive grant funding. • Has little or no evidence of involvement in research translation activities. • Has little or no evidence for oral presentations at meetings. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has some evidence of minor involvement in supervision of PhD candidates or equivalent. • Has had little involvement in the peer review of grants nationally. • Has little experience in the review of publications. • Holds membership of some professional societies. • Has a leadership role within a research team.
<p>1</p> <p>The application does not meet the aims of the scheme or assessment criteria. Should not proceed to further peer review.</p> <p>Not recommended for Interview</p>	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents a proposed body of research that is not innovative or significant. • Proposed a proposed body of research that does not address an issue of concern to human health. • Demonstrated little or no evidence of a research vision that is not in alignment with the aims of the scheme. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not have a reputation for their contribution to their field of research outside their institution. • Has published some research that has had little impact on the knowledge base of the discipline. • Has little evidence of research independence. • Has received minimal grant funding from local institution sources rather than competitive grant funding. • Has no evidence of involvement in research translation activities. • Has no evidence of presentations at meetings. 	<p>Relative to opportunity the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has evidence of some involvement in supervision of Honours research and other higher degree candidates. • Has no evidence of involvement in the peer review of grants. • Has no evidence of involvement in the review of publications. • Holds membership of a small national professional society. • Has no evidence of leadership roles.

ATTACHMENT B – GUIDANCE FOR ASSESSOR TO ASSESS APPLICATIONS AGAINST THE INDIGENOUS RESEARCH EXCELLENCE CRITERIA

Panel members should consider the following when assessing applications that have a focus on the health of Indigenous Australians. The following points below should be explicit throughout the application and not just addressed separately within the Indigenous criteria section.

Community Engagement

- Does the proposal clearly demonstrate thorough and a culturally appropriate level of engagement with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community or health services prior to submission of the application?
- Is there clear evidence that the level of engagement throughout the project will ensure the feasibility of the proposed study?
- Has the application demonstrated evidence that any of the methods, objectives or key elements of the proposed work have been formed, influenced or defined by the community?
- Were the Indigenous community instrumental in identifying and inviting further research into the health issue and will the research outcomes will directly benefit the 'named' communities?
- Is there a history of working together with the 'named' communities e.g., co-development of the grant, involvement in pilot studies or how the 'named' communities will have input/control over the research process and outcomes across the life of the project?

Sustainability and Transferability

- Does the proposal:
 - Provide a convincing argument that the outcomes will have a positive impact on the health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, which can be maintained after the study has been completed?
 - Have relevance to other Indigenous communities?
 - Clearly plan for and articulate a clear approach to knowledge translation and exchange?
 - Demonstrate that the findings are likely to be taken up in health services and/or policy?
- Will the outcomes from the study make a lasting contribution to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their wellbeing?

Benefit

- Does the proposal clearly outline the potential health benefits (both intermediate and long term, direct and indirect) to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?
- Does the proposal demonstrate that the benefit(s) of the project have been determined or guided by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, communities or organisations themselves?

Building Capacity

- Does the proposal outline how Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and/or communities will benefit from capability development?
- Does the proposal outline how researchers and individuals/group associated with the research project will develop capabilities that allow them to have a greater understanding/engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples?
- Is there opportunity for two-way Chief Investigator/Associate Investigator capacity development for both non-Indigenous and Indigenous investigators?

ATTACHMENT C – STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

The Statement of Expectations sets out a broad outline of activities, attributes and achievements within the levels of the Research Fellowships scheme. In coming to decisions about the relative merits of applicants for these positions, assessors will consider research output relative to opportunity. Applicants should note the attached Category Descriptors ([Attachment A](#)) which identify quality of research and associated outcomes. The list of descriptors is meant to be indicative rather than exhaustive.

Senior Research Fellow (SRF)

SRF A - General Standard: To be competitive for the award of Fellowships at SRF A level, applicants will have provided convincing evidence that they have independently conceived and conducted sound and original research. They will also demonstrate that they have regularly published research findings in high quality peer reviewed international journals, specific to their fields of research, independently or as part of a research team. They are expected to be adept in leadership and mentoring and show capacity for future significant research achievement, including potential for translation of their work into practice. They will have demonstrated an established national and a developing international profile. Fellows will provide evidence of continuing development in relevant research expertise, research group leadership and contribution to their fields of research.

SRF B - General Standard (compared with SRF A level): To be competitive for the award of Fellowships at SRF B level, applicants will demonstrate marked distinction in their research and leadership compared with SRF A level. SRF B Fellows will have provided convincing evidence that they are making substantial, original and independently conceived major contributions to research as demonstrated by dissemination of their research findings through influential publications and other communication means. Fellows are expected to demonstrate significant research achievements, strong potential for outputs and translation of their work into practice and effective research leadership, supervision and mentoring. They will have demonstrated an established national and international profile. They will already be making significant contributions to their profession and discipline rather than just showing the potential to do so.

Principal Research Fellow (PRF)

General Standard: Principal Research Fellows will be recognised as leading authorities in their research area and will have made substantial and highly original contributions that are of major benefit to health and medical research and research translation. They will play a leading role within their profession or discipline in research supervision, mentoring and training, both in their organisation, and within the scientific community, demonstrating a commitment to building and leading excellence in research.

Senior Principal Research Fellow (SPRF)

General Standard: Senior Principal Research Fellows will be recognised as leading international authorities in their research area. Fellows will demonstrate world class standards of achievement in research, research translation, expertise, vision, supervision and mentoring. They will have made significant and highly original contributions that are of major importance, influence, and of significant benefit to health and medical research. Fellows are expected to lead research teams and collaborative networks of the highest quality, demonstrating a commitment to leading and exemplifying excellence in research.

ATTACHMENT D – WHAT TO EXPECT AT A RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS INTERVIEW

Applications will be assessed against the specified aims of the scheme and the assessment criteria. The Category Descriptors and Statement of Expectations provide guidance for the panel while assessing and scoring an application. Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with these documents in preparation for their interview.

Forty minutes have been allocated for each interview, of which 20 minutes will be dedicated to a discussion with the applicant. During this discussion, the panel will explore aspects of an application which may need clarification. Panel members are expected to encourage and assist the applicant to present their case in the best light.

Panel members with a high level conflict of interest will not be present in any discussions/interviews relevant to the identified application.

The panel will hold a 10 minute pre interview discussion where the primary spokesperson will summarise the application, identifying any concerns to be addressed with the applicant and will highlight any relative to opportunity and career disruptions to be considered during the assessment of the application. The secondary spokesperson, followed by the rest of the panel, is provided with the opportunity to highlight strengths or raise issues they feel should also be considered.

Interview Process

The applicant is welcomed to the interview by the Panel Chair who will introduce the Panel Members.

The Panel Chair will ask the applicant to give a three minute summary of their application and vision for the next five years. It is important for applicants to be mindful of time, if an applicant goes over time it may restrict opportunities for the panel to explore other issues important to the assessment of the application. The Panel Chair will warn applicants when the time limit is approaching.

Applicants may choose to highlight

- the expected outcomes at the end of the five year fellowship
- the quality of their research output (publications, patents, research translation)
- their national/international recognition (publications, invitations etc)
- their intellectual leadership
- their mentoring, training and supervision of Post doctorates and PhD/Research students and the achievements of these students
- their peer review activities, involvement in professional societies and the community.

The primary spokesperson will lead the discussion with the applicant, with the support of the secondary spokesperson, followed by the rest of the panel. All questions will address the assessment criteria:

- Vision
- Research Output and Leadership
- Contribution to Research.

At the end of the interview, the Panel Chair will ask the applicant to provide a brief summary statement which should include any important issues the applicant considers has not been addressed during the interview.

Once the applicant has left the interview, 10 minutes will be allocated for the panel to evaluate the application and interview, evaluate the TAI application (where applicable) and provide a score against the assessment criteria via secret ballot.

Please note: Additional information pertaining to the application will not be accepted nor provided to the panel after the interview has concluded.

ATTACHMENT E – NHMRC RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS INTERVIEW RUN SHEET

Pre-Interview Discussion (10 Minutes)

- Chair to introduce the application details (App ID, Name, Institute and Level to be interviewed)
- Chair to announce declared conflicts of interest
- Chair to ask for any newly identified conflicts of interest
- Highly conflicted panel members leave the room
- Chair to identify 1SP and 2SP
- Chair to remind the panel if applicant has applied for a Translation Advancement Incentive (TAI)
- Chair to remind the panel if applicant has Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health research focus
- Chair to remind the spokespersons to identify any relative to opportunity considerations or career disruptions
- 1SP to present a summary of the application strengths and weaknesses
- 2SP to raise any additional concerns
- All Panel members given opportunity for open discussion
- 1SP to clarify who will raise specific issues during the interview

Applicant Interview (20 minutes)

- Chair to dial the contact number provided by the applicant
- Chair to welcome the applicant and determine if applicant is ready for interview
- Chair to ask panel members to identify themselves
- Chair to confirm sound clarity with applicant
- Chair to ask applicant to provide a three minute summary of their vision for the next five years and include any cv updates they wish to highlight to the panel
- Spokespersons to ask questions relevant to assessment criteria and in line with pre-interview discussion
- All panel members given opportunity to ask questions relevant to assessment criteria
- Chair to ask applicant to provide a summary statement including any issues considered important by the applicant which were not addressed by the panel
- Chair to ask applicant to confirm connection was clear

Post interview discussion and Scoring (10 minutes)

- Spokespersons to provide final comments on interview and application in relation to the assessment criteria
- Chair to invite other panel members to comment if required
- 1SP to declare their score for each assessment criterion
- Chair to invite panel to address any concerns with the 1SP score (especially if scoring two or more away from 1SP score)
- Panel members to clearly record their scores for each assessment criterion in-confidence on the ballot slip provided
- Secretariat to collect ballot slips from panel members and enter scores into score sheet
- Panel members to make a recommendation on the award of a TAI where applicable