

ARC Assessment Cycle

Funding Rules

- Funding Rules are approved by Minister
- Published on the ARC website
- Sector is advised of availability

Proposals

- Instructions to applicants, sample application form and FAQs are published on ARC website
- Applications are submitted by Eligible Organisations by the relevant scheme closing date

Assessment

- Proposals are considered against eligibility criteria and compliance with the Funding Rules
- Proposals are assessed by independent assessors in initial assessment
- Applicants may be given the opportunity to respond to assessors' written comments
- Proposals are assessed by the ARC College of Experts or a Selection Advisory Committee

Selection

- The ARC College of Experts or Selection Advisory Committee considers all proposals, ranks each proposal relative to other proposals in the same discipline cluster, and recommends budgets for the highly ranked proposals

Approval of funding

- ARC CEO provides recommendations to the Minister with proposals to be approved for funding, proposals not recommended for funding, and the level of funding and duration of projects
- Minister considers recommendations and approves and announces funding outcomes

ARC Assessment Process 1

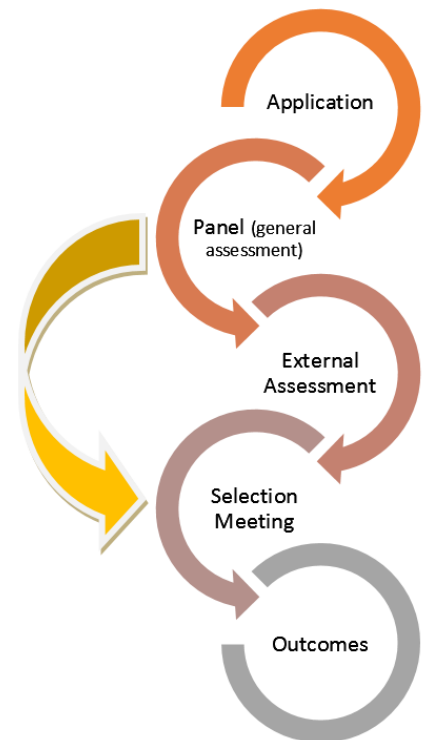
Proposal assessment—overview

- All proposals are assessed against the selection criteria, and in accordance with the weightings for that scheme

Proposals are generally assigned to two types of assessors:

- at least two General assessors (usually College of Experts members), and
- at least two Detailed assessors

ARC staff assess eligibility etc., but do not decide which proposals should be funded.



General assessment

General assessors are members of

- the College of Experts or
- a Selection Advisory Committee

(NB: expanded College—not all members sit on all panels)

General assessors

- assign their own ratings against the relevant scheme selection criteria
- consider the proposal, the ratings and comments provided by Detailed assessors, and the applicant's rejoinder

Once all assessments submitted to the ARC, Detailed and General assessments and Rejoinders are considered by the panels at the final selection meeting (more on this later).

Forming selection panels

- The ARC recognises the need to have a flexible approach to suit volume and disciplinary spread in each scheme
- The number of discipline panels varies by scheme. (Funds are apportioned according to demand)
For example, Discovery Projects typically has five panels:
 - BSB (Biological Sciences and Biotechnology)
 - EMI (Engineering, Mathematics and Information sciences)
 - HCA (Humanities and Creative Arts)
 - PCE (Physics, Chemistry and Earth Sciences)
 - SBE (Social, Behavioural and Economic Sciences)
- However, proposals can be assigned across two panels to ensure appropriate expertise, and assigned to a breadth of detailed reviewers.
- Some other schemes use a single multi-disciplinary panel (e.g. Australian Laureate Fellowships, ITRP).

Detailed Assessment (External Assessor)

- Detailed assessors are drawn from the Australian and international research community ($\approx 25\%$)
- Detailed assessors complete in-depth assessments of proposals by providing scores and comments against the scheme specific selection criteria
- These assessments are then taken into consideration by General assessors in the later stages of the peer review process (more on this later).

How are assessors assigned?

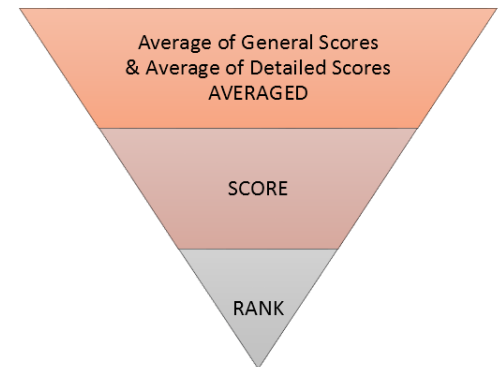
- RMS generates a “word cloud” of a proposal based on:
 - Proposal summary
 - Proposal title
 - Impact statement
 - FoR codes
 - SEO codes
- RMS generates assessor suggestions based on assessor codes, expertise and history—make sure your RMS profile is up to date
- No assignments are made ‘automatically’. This information is provided to ARC Executive Directors and College of Experts/SAC members to inform their judgment.
- Factors considered by an assigner may include (all things being equal):
 - Breadth of perspectives
 - Institutional spread
 - Gender balance
 - Assessor experience
- For fellowship/award schemes, applicants in that round cannot assess others
- As with assessors, RMS makes a suggestion about the broad discipline panel for each proposal, but these suggestions are reviewed and can be changed.

Rejoinder

- Where the ARC seeks Detailed assessments, applicants are often given the opportunity to submit a rejoinder to respond to comments made by Detailed assessors
- Rejoinders are not viewed by the Detailed assessors but are considered by the **General assessors**
- The ARC prefers not to interfere in the assessment process. Only rarely will they agree to requests to remove assessments.
- General assessors view all Detailed assessments and consider the rejoinder carefully
- General assessors confer with each other to finalise scores
- General assessors submit their final scores and ranks for their group of proposals
- General assessors’ scores in large schemes are then normalised to reduce the impact of different ‘marking styles’
- Proposals are then ranked within the discipline panel (where relevant—some schemes have a single panel).

Proposal Score/Rank Calculation

- 'Grouped Average' of all submitted assessments for the proposal - this calculation results in a 'Proposal Score'
- Proposal ranks are derived for each panel
- Any proposals (within same panel) with equal Proposal Scores will have equal ranks.



Before a Selection Meeting

- Panels are given access to final scores and rankings, and can review all (non-conflicted) proposals, not just those they have had carriage of
- Panel members are encouraged to note any issues they believe may have skewed the assessment/ranking of a particular proposal, or are noteworthy for panel discussion
- Members are also invited to closely scrutinise ROPE issues
- Panel members' attention is drawn particularly to proposals around the likely funding cut-off, as these will need detailed discussion.

At the Selection Meeting

- Panels meet in person to finalise recommendations
- Proposals are considered in the light of the calculated ranks, but noteworthy/skewed proposals are discussed, regardless of ranking
- Contentious proposals or proposals around the 'fundable line' are resolved by anonymous voting
- Panel concludes its recommendations to the ARC regarding fundable proposals and budgets
- ARC CEO provides these recommendations to the Minister, with whom the final decision rests under the ARC Act.