



Australian Government

**National Health and
Medical Research Council**

N H M R C

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

FUNDING POLICY

FOR FUNDING IN 2011

Applications OPEN: 14 December 2009

Applications CLOSE: 5 February 2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	4
2. Background	4
3. Summary of Changes to the Policy	4
4. Who Should Apply for a Research Fellowship?	5
5. Aims	5
6. Selection Criteria	6
7. Eligibility	6
7.1 Qualifications	6
7.2 Eligible Administering Institutions	6
7.3 Directors of Institutes	6
7.4 Citizenship	6
7.5 Cross Grant Eligibility	6
7.6 Other Funding Sources	7
7.7 Removal of Applications	7
8. Fellowship Packages and Awards	7
8.1 Research Fellowship Levels and Packages	7
8.2 Additional Funding	8
8.2.1 Trans Tasman Joint Initiative Award	8
8.2.2 Support Enhancement Options	8
8.3 Bernie Banton Fellowship	8
8.4 Research Grant Support	9
9. Scope of the Scheme	9
9.1 Categories of Awards	9
9.1.1 Full-time five-year Fellowships	9
9.1.2 Part-time five-year Fellowships	9
9.1.3 Honorary Research Fellowships	9
9.1.4 Howard Florey Emeritus Fellowships	10
9.2 Suspension of Research Fellowships for Family or Personal Reasons	10
9.3 Maternity Leave	10
10. Types of Application	11
10.1 Initial Application at Senior Research Fellow (SRF) Level	11
10.2 Initial Application at Principal Research Fellow (PRF) and Senior Principal Research Fellow (SPRF) Level	11
10.2.1 Exceptional Circumstances	11
10.2.2 Review Processes for Initial Application at PRF and SPRF levels:	12
10.3 Reapplications	12
10.3.1 Sixth Year Extensions	13
10.4 Promotion	13
10.4.1 Reapplication with Promotion	13
10.4.2 Promotions Out of Synchrony	14
10.5 Practitioner Fellows applying for Research Fellowships	14
11. Application Process	14
11.1 How to Apply	14
11.2 Opening and Closing date for Applications	15
11.3 Interviews	15

12. Peer Review Process	16
13. Administration	17
13.1 Deed of Agreement	17
13.2 Financial Management - Payments	17
13.3 Responsible Conduct of Research.....	17
13.4 Privacy of individuals	17
13.5 Use of Personal Information	18
13.6 Confidentiality	18
13.7 Intellectual property	18
13.8 False or Misleading Information.....	18
13.9 Contacting the NHMRC.....	19
14. Reporting	19
14.1 Mid-Term Progress Report	19
14.2 Final Report.....	19
14.3 Trans-Tasman Joint Initiative Award Report.....	20
14.4 Financial Reporting.....	20
15. Open Access Statement	20
16. Objections and Complaints Process	21
16.1 Objections	21
16.2 Formal Complaints to the Commissioner	21
Attachment 1 - Statements of Expectations	22
Attachment 2 - Research Performance Descriptors	24
Attachment 3 - Scoring/Ranking Matrix for Research Fellowships Applications	27
Attachment 4 - Research Fellowships Packages commencing in 2011	28
Attachment 5 - Peer Review Timetable	29

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS FUNDING POLICY

1. Introduction

This document provides a guideline for applicants who are applying for National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Research Fellowships. It should be read in conjunction with the *NHMRC Research Fellowships Advice and Instructions to Applicants* document in the Research Grants Management System (RGMS) Knowledge Store and the *Application Form*, which can be accessed by logging in to RGMS at:

<https://www.rgms.nhmrc.gov.au>

2. Background

NHMRC is committed to identifying and supporting the best research and researchers in Australia. The NHMRC aims to achieve this by supporting the best and most relevant research. This commitment comes from the 2010 - 2012 NHMRC Strategic Plan, Objective 3 to *foster medical research and training and public health research and training throughout Australia*. The Strategic Plan is available on the NHMRC website at: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/nh80syn.htm>

3. Summary of Changes to the Policy

The following changes have been made to the Funding Policy:

1. Aims of the scheme have been revised – Section 5
2. Aims, selection criteria and Scoring/Ranking Matrix have been aligned – Section 6 and Attachment 3
3. References to Initial Appointments, Renewal and Renewal with Promotion have been removed from the policy. Application types are referred to as Application, Reapplication, Reapplication with Promotion and Promotion Out of Synchrony.
4. Position Classification Statements have been replaced by Statements of Expectations – Attachment 1
5. Where applicants are applying for the first time at Senior Research Fellow (SRF) level, the Peer Review Panel (PRP) will decide whether they are to be recommended for SRF A or SRF B – Section 10.1.
6. Current fellows re-applying to the Scheme, who are deemed non-competitive at initial review, will no longer proceed automatically to interview or to further peer review. Current fellows applying for Promotion who are non-competitive at the higher level sought or their current level will also no longer proceed automatically to interview or further peer review – Section 10.3.
7. Current fellows not shortlisted for interview will receive a 6th year, unless the PRP advises the NHMRC of a rating of Fair indicating serious underperformance – Section 10.3.2.
8. Current fellows not shortlisted for interview are ineligible to apply for promotion but may re-apply to the scheme in the 6th year without prejudice – Section 10.3.2.
9. Applicants applying at SPRF level for the first time and reapplications for promotion to SPRF level will no longer be interviewed by a ‘specially convened PRP’ but by the appropriate PRP according to their field of research – Reference to a specially convened PRP has been omitted from Section 10.2.2 of the Policy.
10. Grants-in-Aid (7th years) are no longer part of the Research Fellowships scheme – References to Grants-in-Aid have been omitted from the Policy.

11. The Institution Dean or pro-Vice Chancellor is no longer required to write a separate evaluation for applicants for SPRF – Reference to this requirement has been omitted from the Policy.
12. The ability to suspend a Fellowship for family and personal reasons has been introduced – Section 9.2
13. Twelve weeks paid maternity leave has been introduced - Section 9.3.
14. The Howard Florey Emeritus Fellowship has been introduced for Fellows who have been awarded two consecutive Research Fellowships at SPRF level and who are at or near retirement age – Section 9.1.4
15. The eligibility rule on Directors of Institutes being able to hold a Fellowship has been clarified – Section 7.
16. Honorary Fellowships will be awarded for a maximum of five years – Section 9.1.3
17. Successful initial applications to the scheme are eligible to apply for Honorary Fellowships without having to first take up their Fellowship - Section 9.1.3
18. The review of Exceptional Circumstances for initial application to the scheme at Principal Research Fellow (PRF) or Senior Principal Research fellow (SPRF) level will be conducted by a panel consisting of the Chairs of the Peer Review Panels. The role of the Research Fellowships Portfolio member is no longer specified in this context. – Section 10.2.2.

4. Who Should Apply for a Research Fellowship?

The purpose of the Scheme is to provide support for outstanding health and medical researchers to undertake research that is of major importance in its field and of significant benefit to Australian health and medical research.

Research Fellowships are open to all researchers in Australia who have a sustained track record of significant output as demonstrated in peer-reviewed literature, and a strong commitment to quality research outputs as judged relative to opportunity.

Research Fellowships offered by NHMRC are prestigious, highly competitive, sought after awards for high performing mid-career researchers. Recipients of Research Fellowships are generally in the top 10% of their field and are viewed as ‘pushing the boundaries’ of research.

5. Aims

Significant contributions to health research are made from a diverse community which includes people with additional roles such as teaching and clinical care. NHMRC seeks to enrich this broad spectrum of roles, by providing the opportunity for researchers to be active on a full-time basis, in any discipline, so that the frontiers of our understanding of health and disease are expanded aggressively and with maximum impact. To this end, the NHMRC Research Fellowships Scheme aims to recruit and support Australia’s very best medical and health research talent in full-time research during the most productive years of their research life.

A critical objective of the scheme is to foster an intellectual environment which supports and builds the capacity of Australian research for the future and in so doing, creates knowledge through investment in research which improves health and thus contributes to Australia’s prosperity.

6. Selection Criteria

All applicants will be assessed and ranked against the Selection Criteria listed below and on how well their application meets the aims of the Scheme.

1. Vision for the next five years
2. Intellectual leadership and contribution
3. Quality of Research Output (publications, patents, research translation)
4. National and international profile
5. Success in obtaining grants
6. Research supervision and mentoring

Further advice on how to describe research performance and outcomes can be found in *Research Performance Descriptors* (Attachment 2).

7. Eligibility

7.1 Qualifications

Applicants must hold a PhD or equivalent research qualification.

7.2 Eligible Administering Institutions

Applications must be certified and submitted by an NHMRC Administering Institution. Applicants and institutions intending to submit an application should refer to the NHMRC Administering Institutions Policy, which includes a list of NHMRC Administering Institutions. The policy is available on the NHMRC website at:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/policy/admininst.htm>

7.3 Directors of Institutes

Directors of an NHMRC Accredited Independent Research Institute, a Dean or a Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) Research are ineligible to hold a fellowship. The administrative and financial responsibilities of these roles make them inconsistent with the requirements and full-time nature of a Research Fellowship. A Director of a Centre under university or hospital governance who does not have the same administrative and financial responsibilities may be eligible to hold a Research Fellowship, subject to clarification at interview or at any subsequent time during the life of the Fellowship.

7.4 Citizenship

Applicants must be either an Australian citizen, an Australian Permanent Resident, or a New Zealand citizen. Applicants who have not yet been granted Permanent Resident status may apply provided such status has been sought and is likely to have been attained by the time the Fellowship must be taken up. Evidence that this status has been granted must be provided prior to commencement of the Award. Offers of a fellowship will not be held open beyond the acceptance date in anticipation of permanent residency being granted.

7.5 Cross Grant Eligibility

NHMRC Research Fellows are not able to personally receive benefits from a comparable Fellowship (e.g. Future Fellowship) or full-time academic position in conjunction with their NHMRC Research Fellowship. NHMRC Research Fellows will be required to inform the NHMRC if such situations arise. Where this

occurs, NHMRC will review the fellowship and make recommendations on a case-by-case basis. Applicants should refer to *Honorary Research Fellowships 9.1.3* for further information.

7.6 Other Funding Sources

Applicants are required to declare the source, duration and levels of all research funding held or applied for. NHMRC may liaise with other funding agencies to discuss any overlap between applications in order to avoid duplication of funding.

7.7 Removal of Applications

NHMRC reserves the right, at its absolute discretion, to remove applications from further consideration.

8. Fellowship Packages and Awards

8.1 Research Fellowship Levels and Packages

There are three Research Fellowship levels available in increasing order of experience and seniority.

The three Research Fellowship levels are:

- Senior Research Fellow (SRF A and SRF B)
- Principal Research Fellow
- Senior Principal Research Fellow

Each level provides one-line funding for five years.

Further details on the funding levels and packages are contained in Attachment 3 - *Research Fellowship Packages commencing in 2011*.

An NHMRC Research Fellow is employed by the institution which administers the Fellow's award. The grant to an institution for a Research fellowship is a package provided to assist the Institution to employ the Fellow. The actual level of remuneration received by a fellow is agreed through negotiation between the fellow and the Institution.

NHMRC is aware that there are varying levels of remuneration for Fellows at different institutions. No additional claims may be made on NHMRC over and above the package, including additional claims for salary on-costs (payroll tax, workers compensation, superannuation, long service leave etc), travel or any salary increases associated with enterprise bargaining.

An annual indexation will be applied to the Research Fellowship Package and is based on the Commonwealth Government Wage Cost Index (WCI).

8.2 Additional Funding

Applicants may apply for additional funding as follows:

8.2.1 *Trans Tasman Joint Initiative Award*

NHMRC and the Health Research Council of New Zealand have established the Trans-Tasman Joint Initiative Award to foster the development of collaborative research initiatives between Australian and New Zealand health and medical researchers.

This award provides \$10,000 p.a. in addition to the Research Fellowship Package. It will be awarded to the most highly ranked applicant for this award in that funding cycle. The recipient must provide two reports of up to one page each on the activities undertaken to enhance collaborations with New Zealand researchers. A report should be attached to the Mid Term Progress Report and another to the Final Report. Refer to Section 14 - *Reporting*.

8.2.2 *Support Enhancement Options*

A Support Enhancement Option (SEO) supports the practical application of research outcomes. It strengthens the capacity of the Fellow to translate research outcomes into improved health practice or to commercialise research discoveries. It helps to bridge the gap between health research and health practice or policy, or between health research and commercial or industry developments. For Research Fellowships the SEO is \$15,000 per annum for five years in addition to the base Research Fellowship Package. The funds form part of the total one-line Research Fellowships Package.

SEOs are not a “clinical loading” and may not be used as part of the salary of the Fellow. The SEO may be used, for example, to pay for critical resources such as part-time staff to facilitate development or implementation of health practice or commercial translation activities. An application cannot be made during an existing Fellowship, but only on application for a new five year Fellowship.

Two categories of SEO are available – Health Practice or Industry.

A Health Practice SEO supports the practical application of research outcomes or the identification of health practice issues that need further study. They are available to researchers who have patient responsibilities in all fields of health or clinical practice or who have responsibilities in public health, diagnostic services, or health policy. Applicants need not have medical or dental qualifications.

An Industry SEO is available to Fellows who can show that their activities will result in sustained research and development links with industry in order to strengthen their capacity to translate their research into commercial products or applications. Further details about applications for an SEO are contained in the ***Research Fellowships Advice and Instructions to Applicants*** document which can be accessed at in the RGMS Knowledge Store at:

<https://www.rgms.nhmrc.gov.au>

8.3 Bernie Banton Fellowship

NHMRC has established the Bernie Banton Fellowship as an annual Fellowship to commemorate the life of Bernie Banton through supporting health and medical research related to mesothelioma. To be eligible to apply for this fellowship, an applicant should be working in the field of mesothelioma and asbestosis. The fellowship will be awarded to the most highly ranked applicant for this award in that funding cycle that has

been specifically recommended for funding by the PRP. This award does not provide any additional funding to the Research Fellowships package.

8.4 Research Grant Support

Applicants must either have already obtained financial support for their research activity or have an application pending. Applicants are encouraged to have research grant support from both the NHMRC and other external funding bodies. Research grants support is available through either the Program or Project Grants Schemes. Information is available on the Program or Project Grant pages of the NHMRC website: <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/apply/programs/index.htm>; <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/types/granttype/projects/index.htm>

9. Scope of the Scheme

An NHMRC Research Fellowship is a full time award, available for researchers working in biomedical, clinical, public health and health services research areas. Research Fellows may spend up to 20% of their time on other activities directly related to the research activity including, but not limited to, clinical responsibilities, commercial activities, policy development, and public health activities.

9.1 Categories of Awards

There are four categories of awards as follows:

9.1.1 *Full-time five-year Fellowships*

These are renewable in the fifth year. Fellows may also apply for Promotion Out of Synchrony, in which case a new five year Fellowship will be awarded.

9.1.2 *Part-time five-year Fellowships*

These are awarded only in exceptional circumstances and providing that the request is consistent with the aims of the NHMRC Research Fellowship scheme. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Exceptional circumstances may include:

- parental or carer responsibilities where available work time is reduced
- personal circumstances such as illness
- clinical or public health practitioners whose research is of a highly competitive standard of scientific excellence comparable to full-time researchers.

9.1.3 *Honorary Research Fellowships*

Honorary Research Fellowships are awarded in certain circumstances when an NHMRC Research Fellow (either a current or newly awarded Fellow) accepts an appointment to another prestigious position in health and medical research. The following conditions apply to Honorary Research Fellowships:

- the position must be for the conduct of health and medical research and must be based in Australia during the course of the five year award
- the Fellow must demonstrate that the aims of the non-NHMRC appointment are compatible with the aims of NHMRC Research Fellowships Scheme

- remuneration will not be provided by NHMRC during the term of award of an Honorary Research Fellowship
- if the other research position ceases before the end of the five-year NHMRC Research Fellowship, the Fellow can re-enter the NHMRC Research Fellowships Scheme and remuneration will recommence for the remainder of the Fellowship without any loss of status
- the honorary fellowship will apply for a maximum of five years. Should the duration of the other health research appointment extend beyond the expiration date of the NHMRC Research Fellowship, the recipient will need to apply for reapplication/promotion of their NHMRC Research Fellowship in the final year of the NHMRC Honorary Fellowship. Any such application is to be submitted in the normal way, and it will be reviewed and ranked with all other applicants
- an Honorary Fellow may apply for a promotion in the normal way
- Honorary Fellowships are not open to Fellows who accept remunerated academic positions, institute directorships or equivalent positions where their non-research duties and administrative responsibilities may not be aligned with the aims of the NHMRC Research Fellowships Scheme.

9.1.4 Howard Florey Emeritus Fellowships

Fellows retiring at Senior Principal Research Fellowship (SPRF) level may apply for a Howard Florey Emeritus Fellowship through an application which will be subject to peer review. Applications will be reviewed by the Chairs of the Peer Review Panels.

The title NHMRC Howard Florey Emeritus Research Fellowship shall only be awarded for a period of five years, to SPRFs who are not seeking reapplication to the Scheme and who:

- are at or near normal retirement age
- during their tenure have successfully applied for reapplication at SPRF level at least once. This will normally mean that the Fellow has completed at least one term as an SPRF and at least partially completed a second term as an SPRF.
- have contributed at the highest levels of research and research translation both nationally and internationally
- wish to have a continuing role in research

Fellows in this category will be provided with a Research Allowance of \$5,000 per year to cover such items as subscriptions, internet expenses and conference registration.

9.2 Suspension of Research Fellowships for Family or Personal Reasons

Research Fellows may apply for suspension of their fellowship for family-related or personal reasons, including reasons related to the birth and care of children. The suspension must be for either a full twelve months or two year period and requests to suspend the fellowship will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The fellowship will be extended by a period of time equal to the duration of the suspension i.e. one or two years. Remuneration will not be provided by NHMRC during the period of the suspension.

9.3 Maternity Leave

Maternity Leave is paid in accordance with the arrangements applicable at the fellow's Administering Institution, up to a limit of 12 weeks. Leave taken beyond the 12 weeks is not paid, and the duration of the fellowship will not be extended if the applicant returns to work at the completion of that 12 weeks.

The fellow is eligible to seek up to forty weeks Leave Without Pay (LWOP) in addition to the 12 weeks maternity leave. If the total period of absence is 52 weeks, the fellow may seek to extend the duration of the award by 12 months by application for a suspension of their Research Fellowship (Section 9.2).

If the fellow is granted the 12 weeks maternity leave and a period less than nine months LWOP, no extension to the life of the fellowship can be sought.

10. Types of Application

Details on the types of application are outlined below and also in *Research Fellowships Advice and Instructions to Applicants* document which can be accessed at in the RGMS Knowledge Store at:

<https://www.rgms.nhmrc.gov.au>

Applicants must also carefully read the *Statements of Expectations* (Attachment 1) for details on the three NHMRC Research Fellow levels.

All applicants will be assessed each year in open competition, and the award of a fellowship will be based on merit, consistent with the aims of the Fellowship scheme.

10.1 Initial Application at Senior Research Fellow (SRF) Level

Most initial applications to the Scheme are expected to be made at the level of Senior Research Fellow (SRF). In the case of initial application to SRF, the panel will decide whether an applicant is to be recommended for SRF A or SRF B level. Applicants should justify their case for award of a fellowship at either SRF A or SRF B level in accordance with the *Statements of Expectations* (Attachment 1) and as outlined in the *Research Fellowships Advice and Instructions to Applicants* document which can be accessed at in the RGMS Knowledge Store at:

<https://www.rgms.nhmrc.gov.au>

First time applicants should carefully consider their requested application level and apply at a level commensurate with their research experience and profile. For example, new applicants who are already operating at a professorial level will not normally be considered at SRF level.

10.2 Initial Application at Principal Research Fellow (PRF) and Senior Principal Research Fellow (SPRF) Level

Initial application at Principal Research Fellow (PRF) or Senior Principal Research Fellow (SPRF) levels will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

10.2.1 Exceptional Circumstances

Applicants must:

- clearly demonstrate that there are exceptional circumstances which justify their initial application at this level. Exceptional circumstances include, but are not limited to:
 - moving to a different Institution to conduct research in a full-time capacity
 - loss of a continuing appointment
 - change of employment focus
 - change of the focus or intent of the applicant's research so that a full-time NHMRC Fellowship is warranted

- clearly demonstrate how their award of a fellowship will bring significant new benefit to Australian health and medical research, including the differences between their previous and proposed research plans
- include confirmation as directed in the *Application Form* from the Head of their Institution that:
 - the statement of exceptional circumstances provided by the applicant accurately describes the circumstances of the applicant
 - if successful in obtaining NHMRC PRF or SPRF, the applicant will not be employed by their institution in a continuing or tenured position and
 - acknowledges that the applicant will be assessed in accordance with the level of Research Fellowship requested.

10.2.2 Review Processes for Initial Application at PRF and SPRF levels:

- The following are the processes for review of these applications:
 - The first review of these applications will be conducted at a meeting of the Chairs of Review Panels.
 - At this meeting, applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis in relation to their demonstration of exceptional circumstances.
- The outcomes from this initial review of eligibility will be either that applications:
 - have met the requirements for exceptional circumstances and will proceed to further review and interview or
 - have NOT met the requirements for exceptional circumstances and will be withdrawn from the assessment process or
 - need further clarification of their demonstration of exceptional circumstances and will be reviewed and proceed to interview.

All applicants will be advised of the status of their applications after the initial review is completed.

- Interview processes for those applicants whose statements of exceptional circumstances need further clarification:
 - At the interview of these applicants, the clarification of exceptional circumstances will be addressed as a first consideration.
 - If the applicant is deemed ineligible at interview because they have not clearly established exceptional circumstances, they will not be ranked with other applicants.
 - If, at interview, the applicant successfully establishes the requirements for exceptional circumstances, they will be assessed and ranked by the Panel at PRF or SPRF level in the usual way.
 - Applicants will be provided with reasons in relation to their eligibility as part of the Interview Report of the Panel's decision.

10.3 Reapplications

All reapplications are made on merit on the basis of the applications each year. Current fellows will not automatically be granted an interview.

There is no limit to the number of times a Fellow may re-apply to the Scheme. Reapplications must be requested in the fifth year of a current Fellowship. Note that if reapplication has not been sought within the tenure of the Fellowship, the Fellowship will cease at the end of the fifth year and any further application to the Research Fellowships scheme will be considered to be an initial application.

10.3.1 Sixth Year Extensions

Current Fellows in their fifth year who are unsuccessful either at short-listing or at interview, will automatically be granted a sixth year within the scheme, unless the PRP has rated the application in the 'Fair' category and advised the NHMRC of this serious underperformance. In this case, the Fellow may not be granted a sixth year. Fellows who are granted a sixth year may re-apply without prejudice; however, they may not apply for Promotion. If this reapplication is unsuccessful, the applicant's funding will cease at the end of the sixth year and any subsequent Research Fellowship application will be considered as an initial application to the Scheme.

The employing institution will be advised if NHMRC Research Fellows are unsuccessful in their reapplication to the scheme. Failure to be re-appointed indicates a reduced competitiveness for a Fellowship at the current level. In this event, NHMRC encourages the host institution to provide mentoring and similar support for these researchers with the aim of facilitating the re-establishment of their research competitiveness for a future NHMRC Fellowship application.

10.4 Promotion

Promotion will be made on merit and is usually sought in synchrony with reapplication. Alternatively, Fellows may apply for a Promotion Out of Synchrony once only in either years two or three of their current five year Research Fellowship. Promotions will not be considered in years one or four of a current Fellowship.

Periods of suspension (see 9.2) do not contribute to Fellowship time and cannot be included as part of actual Fellowship time that has elapsed. For example, if a Fellow takes a twelve months suspension at the end of the second year of their fellowship and returns at the beginning of the fourth year, they would be able to apply for Promotion Out of Synchrony. They would be in the third year of their Fellowship, even though four calendar years had elapsed since it commenced.

10.4.1 Reapplication with Promotion

The following outlines the process for reviewing Reapplication with Promotion:

- In the case of an applicant applying for promotion two levels above their current level and deemed, at initial review, to be non-competitive for promotion at the level sought but considered competitive at a lower level, the application will proceed to external assessment and interview as a Reapplication with Promotion at the lower level without prejudice. For example, applicants seeking promotion from SRFA to PRF may be considered for promotion to the SRFB level if not competitive for the higher level. This consideration applies to both Reapplication with Promotion and Promotion Out of Synchrony.
- If the application is deemed to be non-competitive for promotion at the level sought, but is considered competitive at the current level, the application will proceed to external assessment and interview as a reapplication only at the determined level without prejudice.
- If the application is deemed to be non-competitive at the current level, then the application will not proceed to external assessment and interview. The Fellow will automatically be granted a sixth year within the scheme, unless the PRP advises the NHMRC of serious underperformance.
- Applicants will be advised in writing prior to interview of the level at which their application is being assessed.

10.4.2 Promotions Out of Synchrony

The process for reviewing applications for Promotion Out of Synchrony is as follows:

- If, at initial review by the NHMRC, the application is deemed to be not competitive for promotion at any level, it will be removed from the peer review process prior to the allocation of external assessors and therefore no interview will be conducted. The applicant will be advised and their fellowship will continue at the existing level for the duration of their current award.
- In the case of an applicant applying for Promotion Out of Synchrony two levels above their current level and deemed, at initial review, to be non-competitive for promotion at that level but considered competitive at a lower level, the application will proceed to external assessment and interview as a Promotion Out of Synchrony at a level lower than that sought by the applicant.
- If considered competitive for Promotion Out of Synchrony, the application will be externally assessed and ranked with all other applications. To gain promotion, the applicant must be ranked above the funding cut-off for that year.
- Applicants who are successful in gaining Promotion Out of Synchrony will commence a new 5 year award.
- All applications for Promotion must be submitted as part of the annual cycle of Research Fellowship applications (see *Application Process* at Section 11).

10.5 Practitioner Fellows applying for Research Fellowships

Practitioner Fellows may apply for an NHMRC Research Fellowship and should do so at the appropriate level.

A Practitioner Fellow who has completed two five year awards as a Practitioner Fellow is, if he or she wishes, eligible to apply to the Research Fellowships scheme at PRF or SPRF level and is not required to demonstrate exceptional circumstances. In all other ways, Practitioner Fellows who have completed two five year awards will be required to go through the processes as outlined in the Research Fellowships Funding Policy.

11. Application Process

11.1 How to Apply

The *Research Fellowships Advice and Instructions to Applicants* and other important documentation which can be accessed at in the RGMS Knowledge Store at:

<https://www.rgms.nhmrc.gov.au>

The application should contain all information necessary for assessment without the need for further written or oral explanation, or reference to additional documentation. All details included must be current at the time of application, as this will be used as the prime source of information available to the Research Fellowships Peer Review Panel. All NHMRC Grant applications must be submitted through the Research Office of an NHMRC Administering Institution.

NOTE: Applications submitted after the closing date will not be considered by NHMRC. Once submitted to NHMRC, the application will be considered final and no changes will be permitted. Applicants may withdraw their application at any time.

11.2 Opening and Closing date for Applications

Applications for Research Fellowships funding commencing in 2011 will open on 14 December 2009 and close at Midnight AEDST on 5 February 2010. The *Peer Review Timetable* is available with this document (Attachment 4).

NOTE: Late applications will not be accepted.

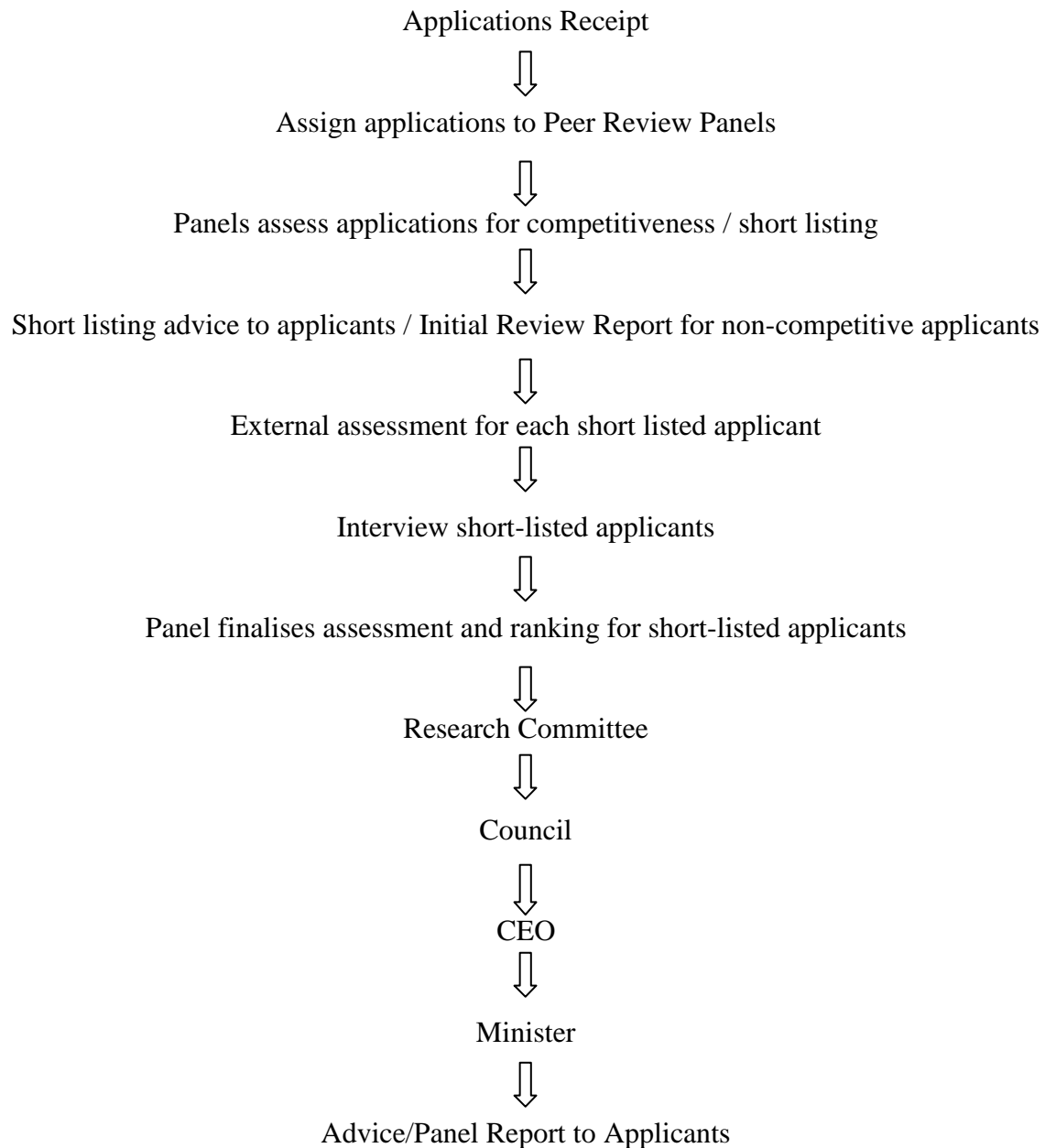
11.3 Interviews

Applicants must make themselves available for an interview at the time and date requested during the interview week. Interviews under this funding round are scheduled from **21 June to 25 June 2010**. In extreme circumstances where the applicant is unable to attend an interview on the specified dates, the applicant should contact the NHMRC on (02) 6217 9134, Fax: (02) 6217 9135 or E-mail research.fellowships@nhmrc.gov.au

12. Peer Review Process

Applications are assessed and evaluated through a peer review process. This process is managed through the Peer Review Panels (PRP), which are appointed by the NHMRC's CEO. The Scoring/Ranking Matrix for Research Fellowships applications is at Attachment 3.

The sequence of events in the peer review process is as follows:



13. Administration

Successful applicants awarded a Research Fellowship will negotiate with the employing institution regarding use of the total package (level of salary, on-costs etc). Institutions are responsible for using the Package funds as set out in the Deed of Agreement for NHMRC Researcher Support Schemes.

If an applicant's employment circumstances change following submission of an application for a Research Fellowship or during the course of a current Fellowship, e.g. change of employer or additional employment responsibilities being undertaken, the NHMRC is to be notified immediately. This is essential so that the NHMRC is able to determine if the ability of the Fellow to undertake the roles and responsibilities of the Fellowship is affected by the change in circumstances. The notification will need to detail the extra financial and administrative implications for the Fellow, and implications of the change on their ability to undertake the roles and responsibilities of the Fellowship. In particular, the NHMRC must be notified of any alteration in the percentages of clinical work and research time.

Any enquiries regarding post award administration should be directed to:

postaward.management@nhmrc.gov.au

13.1 Deed of Agreement

All grants are offered in accordance with the Deed of Agreement between the NHMRC and the Administering Institution through schedules relating to the grant. Details of the Deed of Agreement can be found at:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/funded/manage/policy/deeds.htm>

A grant may not commence, nor grant funds be expended, prior to:

- the Deed of Agreement between the NHMRC and the Administering Institution being in place
- the appropriate Signature Block for Schedules being signed by the signatories to the Deed of Agreement, or an appropriate delegate, and signed and executed by the NHMRC
- all required ethics/biosafety clearances and approvals having been obtained.

13.2 Financial Management - Payments

Subject to appropriations, payment of funds will be made to institutions in regular instalments, in accordance with approved payment arrangements made for assistance provided from the Medical Research Endowment Account. Funds must be used only for purposes approved under the Research Fellowships Scheme and in accordance with the Deed of Agreement.

13.3 Responsible Conduct of Research

Research funded by the NHMRC must comply with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007)*, which can be found at:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/r39syn.htm>

13.4 Privacy of individuals

Documents containing personal information are handled and protected by the NHMRC in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy Act 1988*, which sets standards for the collection, storage, use and disclosure of, and access to, personal information. Personal information is disclosed only with permission of the individual to whom it relates or where the Privacy Act allows.

13.5 Use of Personal Information

Section 95 of the *Privacy Act 1988* (the Privacy Act) provides that the CEO of the NHMRC may, with the approval of the Privacy Commissioner, issue guidelines for the protection of privacy in the conduct of medical research.

Any research involving humans that uses personal information held by Commonwealth agencies where identified information needs to be used without consent from the individual(s) involved should abide by the *NHMRC Guidelines approved under Section 95 of the Privacy Act 1988, 2001* (Section 95 Guidelines). In these situations, the proposed medical research must be approved by a properly constituted Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) in accordance with the Section 95 Guidelines.

NHMRC Guidelines approved under Section 95A of the Privacy Act 1988 (Section 95A Guidelines) are broader than the Section 95 Guidelines and apply to the collection, use and disclosure of health information held by organisations in the private sector for the purposes of research or the compilation or analysis of statistics, relevant to public health or public safety, without the consent of the individual(s) involved. Under the Section 95A Guidelines, an HREC must give approval for the use of this information.

13.6 Confidentiality

Section 80 of the NHMRC Act prevents NHMRC Officers (including staff and members of NHMRC Council and committees) from disclosing commercial-in-confidence information acquired in the course of their duties and relating to matters under consideration by the NHMRC, unless the disclosure is made in the performance of duties under the NHMRC Act. Information which may properly be regarded as *confidential commercial information* should be designated as such.

Information comprising the names of successful grant applicants and their administering institutions, together with the title of the research project and the funding awarded, are published in the NHMRC Annual Report and are available through the NHMRC's website. The NHMRC may also release information about the areas of research of the grant and a brief description of the grant provided by the applicant in response to the question on the application form designated as *Significance – Lay description (suitable for media)*.

13.7 Intellectual property

Applicants must agree to comply with the *National Principles of Intellectual Property Management for Publicly Funded Research (2001)* available at:
<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/policy/ipmanage.htm>

13.8 False or Misleading Information

If an application is incomplete or contains information that is considered misleading, it will be excluded from any further consideration for funding.

Under s136.1 of the Commonwealth Criminal Code, it is an offence to provide false or misleading information to a Commonwealth body in an application for a benefit, punishable by up to 12 months imprisonment.

If the NHMRC believes that omissions or inclusion of misleading information are intentional, it may refer the matter for appropriate legal action.

Examples of false or misleading information in an application include, but are not restricted to:

- providing fictitious track records; or
- falsifying claims in publications records (such as describing a paper as accepted for publication when it has only been submitted).

13.9 Contacting the NHMRC

For further information, the institution's Research Office should be contacted in the first instance. General enquiries about NHMRC grants may be addressed to the GrantNet Help Desk on:

Phone: 1800 500 983

Fax: (02) 6217 9135

E-mail: grantnet.help@nhmrc.gov.au

Specific enquiries relating to Research Fellowships may be addressed to:

Phone: 02 6217 9134

Fax: 02 6217 9135

E-mail: research.fellowships@nhmrc.gov.au

14. Reporting

Research Fellows are required to submit the following reports:

14.1 Mid-Term Progress Report

A one-page executive summary addressing achievements and progress against the aims of the RF Scheme is required by 31 August in the third year of the grant. The purpose is to report on the first 2.5 year period of the grant. In a separate attachment to the executive summary the Fellow should provide detailed lists updating publications, grants, peer recognition, prizes and awards, research translation, commercialisation, clinical activities, public health activities, research training, and contribution to professional activities (refer to *Research Performance Descriptors* - Attachment 2) during the tenure of the current Fellowship. The report is to be prepared with a minimum font size of 10 point and with a serif font such as Times New Roman.

Progress Reports will be submitted to the NHMRC for consideration and any appropriate action could involve a member of NHMRC making personal contact with the Fellow or his/her institution to discuss any concerns.

The mid-term Progress Report form can be downloaded from the NHMRC's website at:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/grants/admin/progreport.htm>

14.2 Final Report

This report enables NHMRC to assess whether the objectives of the award have been achieved and also to gather information that may be useful in NHMRC's internal performance measurement activities.

The final report is to be submitted within six months of completion of a five year Fellowship or termination of the award except where a sixth year of support is provided. In this instance the final report will be required within six months of completion of that additional year of funding.

The final report form, supplementary forms and Instructions for End of Funding Reports can be downloaded from the NHMRC's website at:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/funded/manage/policy/progreport.htm>

In completing the final report, Fellows are required to provide information on research achievements, outputs and outcomes, compliance with terms of Deed of Agreement for funding, certification and a list of publications for the five years of the Fellowship. All sections in the final report form should be addressed.

Failure to provide the Final Report for Research Awards is a breach of the Terms of the Deed of Agreement and may seriously prejudice consideration of further applications for NHMRC funding.

14.3 Trans-Tasman Joint Initiative Award Report

The recipient must provide a one-page report on their collaborative associations with New Zealand researchers. The report is to be attached to the mid-term progress report and final report.

14.4 Financial Reporting

In accordance with NHMRC Deed of Agreement an annual financial statement must be submitted to NHMRC for each year of funding. A final financial statement is to be submitted within six months of completion of a five year award, sixth year if applicable, or termination of the award.

15. Open Access Statement

The Australian Government makes a major investment in research to support its essential role in improving the wellbeing of our society. To maximise the benefits from research, findings need to be disseminated as broadly as possible to allow access by other researchers and the wider community.

NHMRC acknowledges that researchers take into account a wide range of factors in deciding on the best outlets for publications arising from their research. Such considerations include the status and reputation of a journal or publisher, the peer review process of evaluating their research outputs, access by other stakeholders to their work, the likely impact of their work on users of research and the further dissemination and production of knowledge. Taking heed of these considerations, both organisations want to ensure the widest possible dissemination of the research supported by their grants, in the most effective manner and at the earliest opportunity.

NHMRC encourages researchers to consider the benefits of depositing their data and any publications arising from a research project in an appropriate subject and/or institutional repository wherever such a repository is available to the researcher(s). If a researcher is not intending to deposit the data from a project in a repository within a six-month period, s/he should include the reasons in the project's Final Report. Any research outputs that have been or will be deposited in appropriate repositories should be identified in the Final Report.

16. Objections and Complaints Process

The NHMRC policy on complaints can be found at:

<http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/contact/complaint.htm>

16.1 Objections

Applicants may contact the NHMRC seeking clarification on the outcome of their application for funding, or to state an objection to any part of the process. The objection must be lodged in writing through the Administering Institution's Research Office and be received within four weeks of the date on the letter notifying the outcome of the application.

The objection should be directed to the Complaints Officer at:

Complaints Officer
National Health and Medical Research Council
GPO Box 1421
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Or via email to: complaints@nhmrc.gov.au

The NHMRC will provide a written response to all objections.

The *National Health and Medical Research Council Act 1992* (NHMRC Act) provides for the Commissioner not to investigate a complaint where the complainant has not initially approached the CEO for resolution.

If an applicant is not satisfied with the outcome, they may lodge a formal complaint with the NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints, as detailed in Part 8 of the NHMRC Act.

The NHMRC Act may be found at:

[http://www.comlaw.gov.au/ComLaw/Legislation/ActCompilation1.nsf/0/23029FDD3FCC3FD7CA25719C008331D3/\\$file/NatHeaMedResCou1992WD02.pdf](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/ComLaw/Legislation/ActCompilation1.nsf/0/23029FDD3FCC3FD7CA25719C008331D3/$file/NatHeaMedResCou1992WD02.pdf)

16.2 Formal Complaints to the Commissioner

Complaints to the Commissioner should be addressed to:

Dr Kerry Breen
NHMRC Commissioner of Complaints
GPO Box 1421
CANBERRA ACT 2601

The complaint must be in writing, be signed by the complainant, describe the action complained about and specify the nature of and grounds for the complaint.

Complaints can only be considered against administrative process and not the merits of a particular decision. The grounds of Complaint are detailed at section 58 of the NHMRC Act.

Statements of Expectations - Attachment 1

The Statements of Expectations set out broad outline activities, attributes and achievements within the levels of the NHMRC Research Fellowships scheme. In coming to decisions about relative merit of applicants for these positions, assessors will take into account research track record of these baseline activities relative to opportunity. Applicants should note the attached Research Performance Descriptors (Attachment 2) which identify quality of research and associated outcomes. The list of Research Performance Descriptors is meant to be indicative rather than exhaustive.

Applicants for NHMRC Fellowship at all levels will be expected to articulate a vision for their research for the next 5 years and to provide convincing evidence of their intellectual leadership in their field. The quality of their research outputs, including publications, patents and any evidence for translation into practice of their work, will be a primary consideration in the assessment of their application for a fellowship. Similarly, the level of success in obtaining grants funding and their National and International research profile will be major determinants of the outcome of applications for Fellowship. Supervision of research students, mentoring and peer review and research administrative activities will also be factors impacting on the competitiveness of an application.

Senior Research Fellow

SRF A

General Standard: To be competitive for award of a fellowship at SRFA level, an applicant will have provided convincing evidence that he/she has independently conceived and conducted original research and regularly published research findings in high quality peer review international journals, independently or as part of a research team. The Fellow is expected to continue to develop relevant research expertise and research group leadership.

SRF B

General Standard: To be competitive for award of a fellowship at SRFB level, an applicant will have provided convincing evidence that he/she has independently conceived and conducted original research and regularly published research findings in high quality peer review international journals. The Fellow is expected to be making independent and original contributions and to exercise leadership in influencing research directions and outcomes. In addition, the Fellow will be contributing significantly to their profession and to research training.

Principal Research Fellow

General Standard: A Principal Research Fellow is expected to be making substantial and major contributions to research through high quality publication and other communication of their original research findings. In addition, they will be making significant contributions to their profession and discipline and to research training. This level of award recognises marked distinction in the Fellow's research and scholarship. Applicants who are applying at this level for the first time, must also demonstrate exceptional circumstances for their award of a fellowship commensurate with the aims of the Research Fellowships scheme, and clearly demonstrate how Australian health and medical research would derive new benefit from their award of a fellowship.

Senior Principal Research Fellow

General Standard: A Senior Principal Research Fellow will be recognised as a leading authority in a research area and will have made substantial and highly original contributions to the area. The Fellow is expected to exercise special responsibility in providing leadership and in fostering excellence in research. They will play a leading role within their profession or discipline in research training in their organisation or institution and within the scholarly and general community. Applicants who are applying at this level for the first time must also demonstrate exceptional circumstances for their award of a fellowship commensurate with the aims of the Research Fellowships scheme, and clearly demonstrate how Australian health and medical research would benefit from their award of a fellowship.

Research Performance Descriptors - Attachment 2

These descriptors are made available so that applicants can describe their research performance and outcomes. They are indicative rather than exhaustive. Descriptors are listed in decreasing order of significance and, in general, those with lower numerical ranks under a descriptor might be judged as having more impact or have taken higher achievement levels. Evaluation of performance will take into account opportunity, research discipline and be an overall summation of research contributions.

Note: There is no reference to journal impact factors in the Research Fellowships Funding Policy. For an explanation as to why this has occurred, please refer to the NHMRC website:

http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/file/about/senior_staff/articles/journal_impact_factors.pdf

Publications

In describing their research performance and outcomes applicants should consider the categories of publications and specify their contribution to multi-authored publications.

- Seminal contributions with impact beyond the specific (e.g. biomedical publications in top-ranked general scientific journals; publications with objective evidence of paradigm shift/ methodological advance such as citations exceptional for the field; enduring scientific contributions or technical reports that are widely and consistently cited or continue to shape research enquiry in the discipline or published biomedical publications with exceptionally high citations)
- Specialised contributions to knowledge (e.g. biomedical publications in first-rate specialty-based journals; clinical publications that usefully corroborated or extended previous insights to make a unique contribution to Australian knowledge; technical reports describing new approaches to data collection, surveillance, analysis or utilization in public health/health services research, most likely unique to Australia; biomedical publications with high numbers of citations)
- Research sustaining the knowledge base of the discipline (e.g. peer-reviewed publications in local journals describing research of unique importance to Australia but largely derivative of global developments; biomedical publications in lower-ranked journals).

In describing your publications you must:

- Include all authors and the full title. If a member of a clinical trial writing group include all members of the writing group
- You may indicate the number of times each publication has been cited
- Order from the earliest date (i.e., most recent last)
- If relevant, indicate role in multi-author papers (optional)
- Sort into the following research publication sub-categories and number the publications in each of the following categories:
 - Refereed research publication (not including reviews)
 - Review
 - Research book
 - Book Chapter

- Any other publication e.g. letter/note, un-refereed journal article, other contribution to journal etc.
- Conference papers or abstracts (optional).

Show only details of articles that have been accepted or published, or of books that have been published or are in press.

Most Significant Papers

Include brief comments where relevant on up to four of the most significant papers you have published. The reason for including these should be outlined. You are not required to submit these with your application but they should be available on request.

Grants

Applicants should identify their role in obtaining multi-investigator grants and indicate the numbers and categories of grants that support their research.

- Major international grants (e.g. NIH, Howard Hughes, Human Frontiers, WHO etc)
- Major national grants (e.g. NHMRC, CRC or grants from Biotech or Pharma)
- National grants from specialist agencies (e.g. Cancer Council, NHF etc)
- Grants from other sources (e.g. grants from employing institutions).

Peer Recognition: Invitation to Speak

- Plenary Session at Major International Meeting; Chairman of International Policy Group; Member of Editorial Board International top ranked generalist journal
- Invited Speaker at Major International Meeting; Invited member of International Policy Group; Member of Editorial Board International specialist journal
- Invited Speaker at Major National Meeting; Chairman or member of major National Health Policy Advisory Group (e.g. NHMRC); Member of Editorial Board local specialist journal
- Other speaking invitations (e.g. invited seminars), committee or board membership.

Prizes and Awards

- International Prizes
- National Prizes
- State and Institutional Prizes

Research Translation

- Commercialisation
 - IP developed in long-term and major collaboration with Biotech or Pharma or through founding a start-up or interaction with WHO etc
 - IP developed in small-scale collaboration with Biotech or Pharma
 - Consultant, scientific board member etc
 - Patents lodged and maintained, but little evidence of commercial development.

- **Clinical Activities**
 - Leadership of large multi-centre clinical trial, crucial advocate for changes in clinical practice based on clinical trial evidence; initiator through to implementation of clinical practice guidelines; initiator through to completion of major change to evaluation of clinical practice, e.g. national disease register; other recognized national contribution to policy and health services development
 - Key and consistent but not lead role in clinical trial research (less involved in dialogue with health care providers) e.g. state rather than national role; member but not chair of clinical guidelines committee, contributor to health policy and health services development
 - Specific and necessary but minor contribution to design of clinical trial, local advocate and successful change agent for clinical practice audit or other non experimental research designs; emerging profile in prestigious health forums
 - Participation in College, society or health care facility committees; emerging profile in health policy forums.

Public Health Activities

- Leadership role in design, conduct, publication and advocacy for policy and practice of seminal research; key responsibility for changes in concept, practice or priority of research implications, initiator through to implementation of a new system of data collection and organizational feedback, e.g. population-based data collections, other recognised national contribution to policy and public health practice, constructive and effective change agent in public health discipline
- Key but not lead role in design, conduct, publication and advocacy of the implications of seminal research; key and consistent but not lead role in reform of public health policy/practice
- Consistent contribution to health policy and practice but not necessarily in own recognised research field; emerging profile in prestigious public health policy forums
- Advocacy of public health evidence into policy/practice; local practitioner; modest participation in local public or private sector governance.

Research Training

- Primary supervision of PhD candidates or equivalent with successful completions
- Jointly supervised PhD candidates or equivalent with successful completions
- Supervision, joint supervision of PhD candidates
- Successful completions of Honours research and other research project higher degree candidates
- Training of postdoctoral staff
- Training of general research staff.

Professional Activities

- Major peer review committee Chair
- Member of peer review committee or panels or similar
- Review of grant, and other research applications
- Professional societies (senior office bearer or meeting organiser, editorial board responsibility).

Scoring/Ranking Matrix for Research Fellowships Applications - Attachment 3

Selection Criteria	Score Outstanding 4.5–5.0 Excellent 3.5–4.0 Very Good 2.5–3.0 Good 1.5–2.0 Fair 0.5-1.0	Weights	Weighted Score (rounded up)
Vision for the next five years. Intellectual leadership		20% (multiply score by 1.2)	Score X 1.2
Quality of research output (publications, patents, research translation) Success in obtaining grants National and international profile (impact and significance)		65% (multiply score by 3.9)	Score X 3.9.
Research supervision, mentoring, peer review and research administration	5 or 2	15% (multiply score by 0.9)	Score X 0.9
Total Weighted Score (maximum weighted score = 30)			

The weighted scores from each panel member will be combined i.e. a mean score determined and added to the list of scores for all applicants to provide a provisional ranked list. This list is designed to be preliminary in nature and to be used as a guide rather than as the final determinant of rankings i.e. its purpose is to assist the panel in arriving at its final decisions regarding applicant rankings.

Written Comments

Comments re Promotion (if applicable)

Research Fellowships Packages commencing in 2011 - Attachment 4

Destination Lowest to highest designation	Package Level	Package Provision \$ Per Annum
SRF A	RF Package 1	114,128
SRF B	RF Package 2	126,101
PRF	RF Package 3	138,074
SPRF	RF Package 4	156,161

Peer Review Timetable - Attachment 5

Research Fellowships & Practitioner Fellowships Commencing in 2011

Research and Practitioner Fellowship applications open	14 December 2009
Closing Date for RF/PF applications	5 February 2010
First Review of RF/PF applications – all Review Panels meet.	19/20 April 2010
External Assessment of applications	May/June 2010
Scheduling and notification of interview and advice to non-competitive applicants.	21 May 2010
Fellowships Interviews	21-25 June 2010 Panel Briefing - evening of 20 June 2010
Final ranking of applications	25 June 2010
Recommendations to NHMRC	August 2010
Recommendations to Minister	Sept/Oct 2010
Advice to Applicants	late Oct/ early Nov 2010

Prepared by the
National Health and Medical Research Council
Revised December 2009