



# Feedback from Investigator Grant Assessors on Key Characteristics of Investigator Grant Applications

Investigator Grant Assessors were asked to provide NHMRC with advice on common characteristics of high scoring and low scoring applications. Below is a summary of key themes against the criteria. The advice is based on feedback from assessors only, and not informed by overall scores or separated by leadership level.

## Characteristics of High Scoring Investigator Grant Applications

### Clarity of Responses to the Criteria

- Addressed criteria questions clearly, followed applicant guidance correctly
- Well written, easy to read, no errors
- Clear and concise statements

### Track Record, Relative to Opportunity

- A strong publications track record, relative to opportunity, including first/last authorship
- Consistent high quality research outcomes/outputs, relative to opportunity
- Clear evidence of upward career trajectory
- Strong statements for top five publications
- Research Impact was clearly described and evidenced
  - Used tangible examples to illustrate the change (impact) that occurred as a result of the research;
  - Clearly identified an impact beyond the initial research finding;
  - Included evidence that the impact had significant and far reaching benefits;
  - Clearly described and evidenced how the applicant's research program contributed to the reach and significance of the impact; and
  - Clearly described and evidenced how the applicant contributed to the research program that led to the research impact.
- Evidence of a leadership role in their Field of Research or Institution

### Knowledge Gain

- A well written and well evidenced research program/proposal that was well reasoned and ambitious
- Program of research, not disparate projects

- Clear statements on:
  - What the research might achieve
  - How the proposed research is a significant progression on current activities, with a clear trajectory
- No assumed knowledge, proposed research described in a way that is understandable to someone not directly in the field

## Characteristics of Low Scoring Investigator Grant Applications

### Clarity of Responses to the Criteria

- The application was poorly constructed or poorly written
- Did not follow the instructions provided in applicant guidance
- Incorrect use of sections
  - using sections to provide additional personal track record, instead of providing what was asked
- The application appeared 'rushed' or less prepared

### Track Record, Relative to Opportunity

- Fewer publications than expected, relative to opportunity and declared career disruptions
- Few publications where the candidate was a lead author, relative to opportunity
- Did not effectively convey significance and impact of top five publications
- Did not correctly address the impact criteria
  - Nominating initial research findings or publications as the research impact, without describing the change that resulted from the use, adaption or adoption of that knowledge
  - Excessive repetition across the sub-criteria
  - Poorly articulated or evidenced claims of significance, reach or contribution
- Little attention to leadership section

### Knowledge Gain

- There was a lack of detail, focus or cohesion in the research proposal
- No cohesive outline of a five year research program. Focussed on prior work, with no clear demonstration of the new knowledge to be gained
- Proposed research did not demonstrate progression on current activities
- Research outcomes poorly defined
- Applications were too technical, assumed knowledge, and included heavy use of jargon
- Poor methodology or insufficient methodological detail



- Research proposals did not provide clear details as per assessment criteria (i.e. access to additional expertise required, resources etc.)