

Project Grants GRP Assessment Summary Explanatory Guide

Background

In response to observations from NHMRC's Commissioner of Complaints¹, suggestions from applicants, peer reviewers and Research Committee, NHMRC has significantly revised the feedback that we provide to applicants concerning a Grant Review Panel's (GRP) consideration of their application. This guide is designed to help applicants interpret the GRP Assessment Summary.

Key changes

In recent years, the "Final Report" comprised a written summary of the GRP's consideration of the strengths and weaknesses of an application. This year, there will be no such narrative – the "GRP Assessment Summary" will provide a **numerical** summary of the GRP's assessment of an application, based on the GRP's average category score for each selection criterion. This approach has been made possible by a change to the way GRP members vote: whereas previously, each member of a given GRP (typically 10 – 12 individuals) voted by providing a single Category score (from one to seven) for an application, in 2011 each panellist provided a single score (out of seven) for each of the three Project Grant assessment criteria (Scientific Quality – 50%; Significance and/or Innovation – 25%, and Track Record – 25%). Further information concerning Project Grant categories is available in the *NHMRC Project Grants Funding Policy for funding commencing in 2012*² (the Funding Policy). Details of the revised voting procedure are available in *NHMRC Project Grant Peer Review Guidelines for funding commencing in 2012* (the Guidelines).³

Interpreting the GRP Assessment Summary

Key information in the GRP Assessment Summary (GAS) is provided in two tables. **Table 1** relates to a specific application. **Table 2** provides information concerning all 2011 Project Grant applications assessed by GRPs and is included to help applicants understand how their application fared, relative to others in this year's round.

Table 1 provides:

- The GRP's average score for each of the assessment criteria⁴
- The overall Category of an application, as deemed from a calculation of the application's "rating". This rating takes account of the weighting of each criterion, as detailed in the Funding Policy. The Guidelines describe the deeming of ratings within certain ranges as follows:

Application rating range	Deemed Category
1.000 – 1.499	deemed as Category 1
1.500 – 2.499	deemed as Category 2
2.500 – 3.499	deemed as Category 3
3.500 – 4.499	deemed as Category 4
4.500 – 5.499	deemed as Category 5
5.500 – 6.499	deemed as Category 6
6.500 – 7.000	deemed as Category 7

Table 2 summarises:

- the number and proportion (%) of 2011 Project Grant applications assessed by GRPs that fall within each Category
- the mean score of each assessment criterion \pm 1 standard deviation for all applications within each Category.

Table 2 may be used in conjunction with the quartile information provided at the beginning of the GAS. The accompanying example of a hypothetical Category 4 application illustrates how to interpret the quartile information.

¹ NHMRC's Commissioner of Complaints advised the CEO that "while the intention of the [old style] final report is well-meaning the NHMRC together with the research community may want to rethink the usefulness or otherwise of these final reports".

² http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/grants/apply/projects/projects_2011_funding_policy_2012.pdf

³ http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/grants/apply/projects/peer_review_guidelines_nhmrc_2011.pdf.

⁴ To ensure the same proportion of Category 5 applications from all GRPs are funded (see http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/grants/peer/peer_review_summary_project_grants_ceo_2011.pdf), the ratings of Category 5 applications are linearised. The GAS indicates the GRP's raw category score, not the linearised category score, which affects the ultimate funding 'cut-off'.

How to interpret the GRP Assessment Summary

Assessed Project Grant applications by category

