

Project Grants GRP Assessment Summary Explanatory Guide 2012

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. From 2011 no such narrative was provided – the 'GRP Assessment Summary' provides a **numerical** summary of the GRP's assessment of an application, based on the GRP's average category score for each assessment criterion. This approach has been made possible by a change to the way GRP members vote. Before 2011, each member of a given GRP (typically 12 – 15 individuals) voted by providing a single Category score (from one to seven) for an application. Now, each panellist provides a 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 Rules for funding commencing in 2013*² (the Funding Rules). Details on the revised voting procedure are available in *NHMRC Project Grant Peer Review Guidelines for funding commencing in 2013* (the Guidelines)³

Interpreting the GRP Assessment Summary

Two versions of the GRP Assessment Summary are issued: A version for applications that undergo full discussion by the GRP, and a version for applications that are on the Not For Further Consideration (NFFC) list or that are assessed by the GRP as being a Not Competitive Application (NCA).⁴

1. GRP Assessment Summary for applications that undergo full discussion

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 2012 Project Grant applications 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 criteria⁵
- The overall Category of your 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 Rules. The Guidelines describe the deeming of ratings within certain ranges as follows:

Application rating range	Deemed Category
1.001 – 1.500	Category 1
1.501 – 2.500	Category 2
2.501 – 3.500	Category 3
3.501 – 4.500	Category 4
4.501 – 5.500	Category 5
5.501 – 6.500	Category 6
6.501 – 7.000	Category 7

Table 2 summarises:

- the number and proportion (%) of 2012 Project Grant applications assessed by GRPs that fall within each Category
- the mean score of each assessment criterion ± 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.

2. GRP Assessment Summary for NFFC / NCA applications

On the advice of Research Committee, these GRP Assessment Summaries refer applicants to comments provided by the application's assessors. No quantitative information pertaining to the application is provided.

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 https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/grants/apply/projects/project_grants_funding_rules_2012_funding_2013_111208.pdf.

3 https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/grants/apply/projects/project_grants_peer_review_guidelines_120525.pdf.

4 Information regarding policy and process for NFFC and NCA applications is available [here](#)

5 To ensure the same proportion of Category 5 applications from all GRPs are funded (see https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/file/grants/peer/peer_review_summary_project_grants_2012.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

