The aim of the Future Fellowship scheme is to attract and retain the best and brightest mid-career researchers. The scheme was introduced in 2009 and awarded 1,000 fellowships over a 5 year period (2009-2013).

In May 2013, the Australian Government announced a further round of Future Fellowships for funding commencing in 2014. It is proposed that there will be 150 fellowships on offer for the 2014 round and that the closing date will be in late November 2013 (this is subject however to election results and the views of the Party elected).

**Eligibility**

- Eligibility for the fellowship is based on the researcher’s PhD award date - the researcher must have between 5 and 15 years research experience.
- Applicants can only apply twice over the life of the scheme. Furthermore, applicants may only apply twice to the scheme over the period 2009-2014.

**What is offered**

- The scheme offers a salary for the Future Fellow at 3 different levels (Academic Level C-E; FT1-3) and up to $50,000 per annum of equipment/infrastructure costs for 4 years.
- A Future Fellowship can be a tool for recruiting candidates nationally and internationally as there are no citizenship restrictions.

**Selection Criteria**

- Candidate 40%    Track record; publications, prizes, grants, impact
- Project 35%      Research quality, innovation, significance
- Strategic Alignment 15%   Fit of the candidate and project with CDU strengths
- Collaboration/Outreach 10%  Collaborative networks and potential for impact

Applicants are scored against each of these criteria by peer reviewers, and the ARC College Panel according to the following matrix.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring band</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Recommendation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td><strong>Exceptional:</strong> Of the highest quality and at the forefront of research in the field. Approximately 5% of Proposals should receive ratings in this band.</td>
<td>Recommend Unconditionally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td><strong>Outstanding:</strong> High quality research and a strongly competitive Proposal. Approximately 15% of Proposals should receive ratings in this band.</td>
<td>Strongly support recommendation of funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td><strong>Excellent:</strong> An interesting, sound and compelling Proposal. Approximately 20% of Proposals should receive ratings in this band.</td>
<td>Support recommendation of funding with reservation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Good:
A sound research Proposal, but lacks a compelling element. Approximately 40% of Proposals are likely to fall into this band.

### Unsupportive of recommending for funding

### Acceptable:
The Proposal is uncompetitive relative to other Proposals. Approximately 20% of Proposals are likely to fall into this band.

### Not recommended for funding

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of FT Applications</th>
<th>Success Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1000</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The 2013 round received a massive increase in application volume, due to the expected end of the five-year funding cycle for the scheme. Similarly, the 2014 round is expected to generate large interest and it is anticipated that around 1000 applications will be submitted (with an expected success rate of around 15%) as there is no guarantee of Commonwealth support beyond 2014.

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### Characteristics of successful Future Fellows

Successful Future Fellowship applicants tend to have certain characteristics. Please note: bibliometric assessment is not relevant to all fields and should only be used as a rough guide. The characteristics below must not be regarded as a ‘bar’ above which applications will be successful, because the ARC College take into account all the selection criteria, and there are marked differences between even the top ranked individuals each year. In general, successful future fellows have:

- published widely
- one or more ‘breakthrough’ publications in interdisciplinary, or generalist journals
- high quality publications - more important than quantity
- some international experience – ie time overseas
- an original project on an important subject that no one else has undertaken
- held previous fellowships (internal/external/international
- extensive, genuine, collaborative links
• show they are ready to branch out their own, lead their own group
• conference organisation experience and have received invitations to present research
• complemented their research program with collaborators
• shown promise and an upward trajectory
• shown ‘proof of principal’ for the technical aspects of the research
• internal recognition (ie home organisation support) noted by Assessors
• a sense of excitement in the way they write.

It is important to acknowledge that for each level the Future Fellow is at a different stage of the career and different characteristics can define them:

**FT Level 1: Promise demonstrated by early postdoctoral years, i.e. upward trajectory**
- show interaction with others (true collaborations producing pubs)
- either a few pubs in top journals or need 5-20+ publications in mid-high quality journals
- a few well cited publications (H index >=8)
- being first author important (usually)
- project must be new and different from PhD supervisor
- supported and nurtured in the right environment.

**FT Level 2: Consolidation of a successful early career**
- need a national profile, and emerging international profile
- need impact - invitations, awards, prizes, patents
- solid panel, conference involvement (good academic citizen)
- several pubs in top A* journals, which should be highly cited (H index >=15)
- 1-3 papers in top multidisciplinary journals
- last 5 yrs: min pubs 10 (20+ more common)
- career pubs: 50+
- mainly first author, some senior author (depends on discipline)
- competitive grants. At least 1 NCG (or equivalent if recently from overseas)
- contributions outside of research e.g. conference organisation.

**FT Level 3: A history of high achievement**
- should be also considering Laureate level
- consistent A* pubs with high impact/citations (H-index >25)
- often part of long standing, high impact collaborations
- many grants - sustained history of continuous national competitive grant funding
- editorial boards, prizes, measures of esteem
- plenary addresses
- consistent history of the above and beyond
- mentoring, supervising, collaborating beyond “the lab/the office”
- academic generosity - students, mentorship etc.
Collaboration and Outreach

Although the application is centred around the Fellow, it does not mean that the approach to the research is singly focused. The fellowship provides an important vehicle for introducing and expanding collaborative networks through the research agenda.

The ability of the Future Fellow to form, lead and demonstrate genuine collaborative links constitutes a distinguishing feature between a great researcher and a Future Fellow.

The selection panel tires very quickly of a list of current collaborations without a clear strategic plan to broaden and enhance these linkages to benefit the project. The Future Fellowship should be a platform for new research networks and should nourish new collaborative research projects.

The application should make realistic assessments of demonstrable links and directions for future collaboration beyond ‘more of the same’.

Collaboration and Outreach can be demonstrated by:

- joint publications
- conference organisation
- visiting Fellowships, including hosting
- contribution to public policy and debate
- public profile, media attention and community engagement.

The Project

An integral part of the Future Fellowship is the project. There are several important aspects to consider when putting together the research Project.

The Research

A Future Fellowship proposal needs to convey a sense of excitement. It is important that this is an original project and not ‘more of the same’. You must highlight exactly what is new in this research proposal and that it is an important subject that no one has undertaken. However, you must still relate this back to the candidate and it is important that you are able to demonstrate that you can conduct the research and, depending on the field, be able to demonstrate some ‘proof of principle’.

A Future Fellowship program of research is funded under the Discovery Program and therefore must be significant and original and one which advances knowledge and provides benefit. The project needs to have significant scope beyond that which is possible within a three year Discovery Project. There should be multiple strands of research that you sketch out where your grand vision will take you. Some detail is required on methodology for each strand, but you should feel liberated and free to pursue an ambitious research program to solve fundamental problems in your field.
Funding
Depending on the nature of your project $50,000 per annum may not be sufficient to fund the research especially when it forms part of a larger research program. You will need to seek additional funding. There are two issues that may arise.

1. Research overlap
The ARC does not duplicate Commonwealth funding, which means you cannot submit the same proposal to two different Commonwealth funding bodies or schemes to increase the funding. In some cases, in taking to account the scheme objectives and assessment criteria when writing the research proposal, you are able to show complementarity (e.g. ARC Linkage Projects versus Discovery Projects).

If it is feasible and appropriate for your research, you may consider including another Chief Investigator (CI) to the proposal that will complement the Future Fellowship. The addition of a different perspective and expertise can be sufficient in differentiating this research from the Future Fellowship.

It is difficult to provide a ‘one size fit all’ approach to presenting a complementary proposal. It is therefore important to discuss your proposal with you those around you, including your Head of School/Department, Associate Dean of Research (ADR) and the Research Grants and Business Development team within the Office of Research and Innovation.

2. Dependence on pending funding requests
Many successful fellows have applied for a Future Fellowship at the same time as other ARC or NHMRC grants. When discussing your research, it is important to convey a sense of confidence. Therefore, if you are relying on pending or future funding to fund some of the research, consider discussing your proposal in terms of all the research getting funded.

However, it is important to acknowledge the uncertainty. You need to work in a contingency into the research proposal, but it should be something that you only refer to once.

Outcomes
A consideration under future fellowships is benefit, outcomes and commercialisation. This carries with it the risk of projects being too applied. Consider the fundamental problems you are addressing and then provide pathway to the application of your solution. Do not feel you must produce a commercialisable outcome at the end of four years. Pathways might include future ARC Linkage/NHMRC Partnership proposals, patents, engagement with policy-makers etc.
Further assistance and advice

For further assistance and advice in relation to your grant proposals, please contact the Research Grants and Business Development team:

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