

Your rejoinder is possibly the most important page you will write in the ARC process. Treat it as such. Around 10 per cent of rejoinders make a difference to the outcome of an application.

Once you have drafted and even redrafted it, ask a colleague/peer to review it. The Office of Research and Innovation will also review it and provide you with feedback – please allow sufficient time for this.

The Research Grants and Business Development (RGBD) team sits within the Office of Research and Innovation

Remember: calmness is key

- Make sure you are calm when you write your rejoinder
- Even if your assessors' comments have been unfavourable you need to remain objective
- Pick out the most important points and respond factually (non-emotionally)
- Don't attack the assessor or the system
- Ensure your response is written in both a reasoned and a reasonable manner
- Remember, the person who wrote your assessment will not see your rejoinder.

While it is good to acknowledge the favourable comments you may receive and to use them to counter the more critical comments, it is important to look for any criticisms – whether objective or not, direct or implied – and address them.

Critical assessor reports

- Be aware that comments do not always reflect the rating given by the assessors
- Put any criticism into context – is it minor or significant relative to the project?
- Respond to serious criticisms, especially those regarding the methodology and budget
- Highlight any incorrect observation.

A rejoinder that successfully argues that a criticism is unfounded – either through drawing on evidence provided in the application, in peer reviewed published literature or through comparison with other assessor reports – can lead to a critical assessor report being disregarded by the ARC.

Where more than one assessor makes similar critical remarks, address these issues carefully. If they highlight a weakness in your proposal, address their criticisms and highlight the strengths or merits of the proposed approach.

Offer updated results or developments of pilot project work that may support your aims or methodology if this has been questioned.

Top Tips!

- Be calm
- Be objective
- Be factual
- Do not attack anybody
- Be reasoned & reasonable
- Address the criticisms constructively
- Put criticisms into perspective
- Respond to serious criticisms
- A rejoinder that successfully argues can lead to a critical assessor report being disregarded by the ARC

CONTACT US

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Focus on addressing the problems and the negative issues raised. Use your rejoinder to explain to the Panel why these particular issues are not problematic and how you would deal with them.

Favourable assessor reports

If you receive only favourable or positive and encouraging feedback, it is still worth preparing a rejoinder. Use these comments to reinforce the favourable impression that the Panel will have of your application.

Make direct mention of any new publications you have that have relevance to this project.

However, keep this type of rejoinder brief.

Include all of your CIs in the process

Consult with all of the project's Chief Investigators when forming the response. Your response should reflect all of their views.

Plain English

- Your rejoinder readers are senior researchers who aren't experts in your field. Address all issues in plain English, avoiding technical explanations
- Try not to be repetitive – address similar criticisms together
- Avoid irony and flippant statements
- Make it readable – use headings and dot points to highlight key responses
- Begin and end with positives!

Remember that each Panel member will have numerous Rejoinders to read. Be clear, concise, positive and impressive!

Further assistance and advice

For further assistance and advice in relation to your rejoinder, please contact the [Research Grants and Business Development team](#):

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Top Tips!

- Use your rejoinder to explain why the issues raised by the assessor are not problematic
- Even if you only receive favourable feedback, prepare a rejoinder and reinforce your application
- Consult all of the Chief Investigators and include all of their views
- Write in plain English
- Avoid repetitions
- Make it readable
- Begin and end with positives

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