

# Rutherford Discovery Fellowships

## Guidelines for REFEREES

### Background

The Rutherford Discovery Fellowships were announced by the New Zealand Government in May 2010. With this scheme, the New Zealand Government is supporting the development of excellence and has moved to fill a major gap in career opportunities for the most talented early- to mid-career researchers. The Fellowships will develop and foster the future leaders in the New Zealand science and innovation system<sup>1</sup>. They will attract and retain New Zealand's most talented early- to mid- career researchers and encourage their career development by enabling them to establish a track record for future research leadership. It is expected that Fellows, throughout their careers, will contribute to positive outcomes for New Zealand.

The application process is competitive, with ten prestigious Fellowships of five years in length, awarded annually. An important part of the decision process is the assessment of the applicant and their proposed research programme by external referees.

Your role as a referee is an integral part of the appraisal process. Your detailed comments help in the final assessment of the proposal, and will assist the funding decisions undertaken by the interview panel when appointing the Rutherford Discovery Fellowships.

### Referee suitability

A suitable referee will be able to comment on aspects of feasibility, significance, technical aspects and originality of the proposal, the ability of the researcher to carry out the research, and the potential of the research to contribute to the advancement of knowledge in the field. To help in assessing your appropriateness as a referee, please consider the following:

- Whether you are qualified to comment on the proposal;
- Whether you wish to act as a referee for the applicant;
- Whether a conflict of interest exists in that you have a line management role over the applicant;
- Whether a conflict of interest exists in that you are, or could be, directly involved in the proposed programme of research; or,
- Whether the applicant is a relative or close friend.

If you do choose to withdraw as a referee, please advise the applicant as soon as possible so another referee can be contacted.

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<sup>1</sup> This includes research in science, technologies, and humanities.

## Confidentiality

The contents of the referee reports are confidential in every respect. A referee report is submitted on the understanding that: (i) it will only be used in the appraisal process; (ii) it is confidential to the selection panels appointed by the Royal Society Te Apārangi; and, (iii) that it will not be made available to the applicant or the public (this includes all comments and grades).

## Referee's comments

Your comments are essential in making final judgements on the applications, as the assessment panel consists of researchers from a broad range of disciplines. Comments should be consistent with the grades given. Grades without comments may be discounted by the selection panellists. Please keep the reference to a **maximum of two pages**.

## On-line web-based referee reports

Referees will be emailed a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) link to a web-based portal to complete their report. If there are any difficulties, please contact the Rutherford Discovery Fellowship secretariat at:

[Rutherford.Discovery@royalsociety.org.nz](mailto:Rutherford.Discovery@royalsociety.org.nz)

## Criteria for refereeing

Referees should address their comments primarily to each of the following criteria and base their judgment on them.

### 1. Calibre of the applicant as a researcher:

*Is the applicant's career exceptional for a candidate in this discipline, at their career stage?*

**Exceptional** may be determined by consideration of the merit of the applicant's career to date and how the research compares with other New Zealand or international research in the same field. If the applicant is at the start of his or her career the calibre must be assessed in relation to the years of research experience.

### 2. Calibre of the applicant as a research leader:

*Describe the leadership qualities of the applicant.*

Describe the leadership qualities you believe the applicant possesses, or the potential they have, and provide any evidence for your assertions.

### 3. Calibre of the research programme:

*Please consider the merit of the proposal and the potential of the research.*

**Merit** may be determined by the applicant incorporating originality, insight and rigour, and please consider the ability of the researchers to carry out the research.

**Potential of the research** may be assessed from the work outlined in Sections 8-10 of the proposal. The research should significantly contribute to advances in theoretical understanding, develop new methodologies, contribute to new knowledge, or lead to advancement in a field by cross-fertilisation with ideas and results from another field. Often the design and planning of a programme of research determines its success. Good design and planning are determined by whether the overall proposal and its specific objectives have a clear focus, and the methods and experimental or sampling design are likely to produce high quality results.

Note: budgets are not attached, as referees are not required to comment on them.

#### 4. If the candidate is known to you; please state how long and in what capacity:

For instance if the applicant is a former colleague or student this should be noted here. Knowing the applicant in a professional sense need not be an impediment for being a referee, provided you are satisfied with your suitability as a referee, as described earlier.

#### 5. Any other comments that you feel are relevant:

For instance, areas where the proposal could have been improved.

#### 6. Overall Grade:

Please ensure that the grade matches the comments above.

Grade 1: Outstanding (compares to the top 5% of international applicants)

Grade 2: Excellent (Top 10%)

Grade 3: Well above average (Top 20%)

Grade 4: Above average

Grade 5: Average or below average

If you have received any proposals for review from international funding agencies, please benchmark the applicant's proposal against these. For example, Grade 1 should be given if you consider that the proposal is in the top 5% of international proposals in the field, Grade 2 if it is in the top 10%, and so on.

#### Disposal of applicant proposal matter

Please destroy all proposal material once your report is completed.

#### Additional information

Additional information on the Rutherford Discovery Fellowships is available on the following website:  
<https://royalsociety.org.nz/what-we-do/funds-and-opportunities/rutherford-discovery-fellowships/>

If you require further assistance, please email the Rutherford Discovery Fellowship Secretariat at [rutherford.discovery@royalsociety.org.nz](mailto:rutherford.discovery@royalsociety.org.nz) or phone + 64 4 470 5764.

#### Checklist before returning your report

Before completing your Referee Report Form, please ensure that:

- the *intended* grade and all comments have been entered;
- you have not exceeded the two page limit; and,
- your name and the *date* are entered at the end of the referee report (the last page of the form).

#### **NO SIGNATURE IS REQUIRED IF THE REPORT IS COMPLETED ON-LINE.**

Reports are due no later than 5 pm on **16 May 2019** (New Zealand Standard Time). Please note that applicants will be excluded from further consideration in the funding round if the Royal Society Te Apārangi has not received the required three referee reports by the deadline as described in the proposal guidelines. We therefore ask that you compare New Zealand Standard Time to your own time zone in order to assure that the report is posted on time (for assistance please visit the website [here](#)).

The preferred mode of reply is by completing the on-line web-portal. Referee reports by email can be arranged on request. Please contact the Royal Society Te Apārangi at:  
[Rutherford.Discovery@royalsociety.org.nz](mailto:Rutherford.Discovery@royalsociety.org.nz)