

NECTAR Fellowship Presentation

November 2015

Douglas Robertson -Research Services

Learning outcomes of the seminar

- Look at a number of Fellowship schemes
- Appreciate the difference between a fellowship and a project grant
- How to approach the process

Running order

- A bit about me
- What is a Fellowship
- Run through the variety of fellowships
- Pick a couple of schemes to demonstrate the nature of the process
- Pull out some key learning from looking at the detail
- Then hear from individuals

Fellowship experience

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A little about me

- 30 years in research support management and technology transfer and support in five different universities (4 in the UK)
- I have been involved in over 50 early stage companies and served on the Board of more than 20 and have also served on an investment advisory board
- I have seen and read hundreds of fellowship and project applications across all subjects – the good, the bad and the ugly, the excellent-funded, the excellent-unfunded and the shouldn't be funded
- I failed to secure a fellowship in the mid 1980's

Types of fellowship

- Huge variety
- Some examples
- EABC-ANUCES Fellowship – 3 months travel
- ANU Educational Fellowship
- Research School of Asia Pacific Fellowship – rolling 6yr appointment
- Congressional Research fellowship
- ARC Future Fellowship
- NHMRC Translational Research Fellowship
- NHMRC Career Development Fellowship
- Westpac Research Fellowship
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Definition

- There is no consistent standard definition of a research fellowship
- In some institutions all research assistants with PhDs are Research Fellows
- Apart from that they do research
- Sometimes honorary, visiting, fulltime, short term, long term
- Be careful – read the specific fine print

For the rest of the seminar we are primarily focusing on fulltime fellowships over a number of years to pursue research on a fulltime basis which the fellow themselves has selected and which has been subject to rigorous scrutiny.

The primary difference with a project grant is that the focus is primarily on YOU with an excellent project AND trajectory. It is more personal.

NHMRC Peer review Guidelines for one of their schemes

- Process Panels appointed February
- Applications close April
- Eligibility Checks
- Allocation to Panels
- External Assessment of Indigenous Applications
- Panel members declare conflicts of interest
- Allocation of spokesperson
- Briefing of panel members mid-May
- Panel members score June
- Teleconference review mid-July
- Final ranked list
- Funding Approval Process (including the Minister) September
- Notification October

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There is a lot of information available
which can guide your application

Topics to be addressed in the CV

- Career disruption
- Professional memberships
- Conference Participation
- Community engagement
- Patents
- Translation Policy and Practice
- Contribution to NHMRC
- Editorial Responsibilities
- Supervision and mentoring
- Funding
- Publications
- Workload

Other parts of the proposal

- Against the CRITERIA
- Executive Summary
 - Do not repeat the CV
 - Focus on the case
 - Most significant contribution
 - Highlight activities that you consider to be of note
 - Peer recognition
 - Highlight translation
 - Significance relative to the field
- Potential for development
- Quality of career development strategy
- Quality of the research environment



What does all this tell you?



- It is about you and your strategy and contribution
- Build your CV
- Research is not all that matters
- Translational research

Westpac Research Fellowship

- Different entirely
- Research project still matters
- Seeking the next generation of leaders
- Exceptional people, chosen for their intellectual ability, leadership, quality and commitment to the community with the potential to make a difference
- Able to demonstrate
 - academic excellence
 - supportive environment
 - connection to Australia

ARC Future Fellowship Criteria

- Candidate 40%
 - research opportunity and performance evidence (ROPE);
 - capacity and leadership to undertake the proposed research;
 - record of high quality research outputs appropriate to the discipline/s;
 - evidence of national research standing

Additional criteria for level 3 relating to training and outreach

- Project quality 35%
 - a significant problem, conceptual framework innovative, advancement of knowledge, cultural/social/economic/environmental benefit to Australia, value for money, strategic research priorities
- Strategic alignment 15%
 - facilities, resources, complement the strengths of the institution, future employment
- Collaboration outreach 10%
 - strategies for dissemination and outreach
 - collaborations with disciplines, users etc

Some words from researchers

“the first principle is that you must not fool yourself and you are the easiest person to fool” Feynman

“I merely followed the power of microbes” Omura Nobel Prizewinner

“you have to love the questions themselves as the answers are not coming weekly, monthly,.....” Neil Tyson

“If the majority of referees like your research, you can be certain you are doing boring work” Oswald

“innovators in both literature and science are basically dreamers and storytellers” Wilson

“it is quite simple put passion ahead of training” Wilson

“find a subject you can make your own” Wilson – the road less travelled.

Final thoughts

- Read the criteria
- You have choices to make
- Maintain excellence in research
- Broaden your experience
- Grab leadership, mentoring opportunities
- Build and use your network
- Talk to the successful
- Ask others to critique
- Think about translating research into practice

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