The 2014 NHMRC Project Grants Category Descriptors

The following category descriptors are used to score an application against each of the assessment criteria: 1) Scientific Quality; 2) Significance of the Expected Outcomes and/or Innovation of the Concept; and 3) Team Quality & Capability, relative to opportunity.

The Category Descriptors provide a benchmark for peer reviewers to appropriately score each application. The process of consistently referring panel members to these descriptors is vital to ensuring equity, thoroughness and process consistency both within and across all Peer Review Panels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>Scientific Quality 50%</th>
<th>Significance and/or Innovation 25%</th>
<th>Team Quality &amp; Capability relevant to this application 25%</th>
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</table>
| 7 Outstanding by International Standards | The proposal has a research plan that:  
- has objectives that are well-defined, highly coherent and strongly developed.  
- has a near flawless design.  
- is without question, highly feasible given that all of the required expertise and research tools and techniques are present in the relevant research environment(s). | The planned research:  
- will result in a highly significant advance in knowledge in this field which addresses an issue of great importance to human health.  
- will translate into fundamental outcomes in the science and/or practice of clinical medicine or public health or fundamental changes in health policy.  
- will very likely be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national and international meetings.  
- will likely result in highly influential publications.  
- is highly innovative and introduces advances in concept(s).  
- will use very advanced approaches which will optimize outcomes. | Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:  
- has expertise that specifically targets the proposed research both in terms of its depth and breadth.  
- has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement quality (as exemplified by the top 5 publications of each CI) and productivity (totality of outputs) and/or translation into practice that is outstanding by international standards commensurate with their field of research.  
- has senior members with outstanding national and international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application.  
- may involve junior members who are very strong contributors to the overall team quality & capability. |
| 6 Excellent | The proposal has a research plan that:  
- has objectives that are well-defined, highly coherent and strongly developed.  
- is well designed.  
- is highly feasible given the experience, skills and readiness of the team in the relevant research environment(s). | The planned research:  
- will result in a significant advance in knowledge in this field which addresses an issue of significant importance to human health.  
- is likely to translate into fundamental outcomes in the science and/or practice of clinical medicine, public health or provide fundamental changes in health policy.  
- will likely be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national and international meetings.  
- will likely result in influential publications.  
- is highly innovative in approach.  
- will use advanced approaches to enhance outcomes. | Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:  
- has expertise that is highly relevant to the proposed research both in terms of its depth and breadth.  
- has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement quality (as exemplified by the top 5 publications of each CI) and productivity (totality of outputs) and/or translation into practice that is excellent by international standards commensurate with their field of research.  
- has senior members with excellent national and/or international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application.  
- may involve junior members who are strong contributors to the overall team quality & capability. |
| 5 Very Good | The proposal has a research plan that:  
- is very clear in its scientific approach and is logical.  
- raises a few minor concerns with respect to the study design.  
- is feasible, with all required techniques and tools either established or nearly established in the relevant research environment(s). | The planned research:  
- will advance knowledge in this field which addresses an issue of importance to human health.  
- may translate into fundamental outcomes in the science and/or practice of clinical medicine, public health.  
- could be the subject of invited plenary presentations at national and international meetings.  
- is likely to result in some very strong publications.  
- is innovative in approach.  
- will use strong approaches to good effect. | Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:  
- raises only minor concerns regarding the depth and breadth of expertise relevant to the proposed research.  
- has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement quality (as exemplified by the top 5 publications of each CI) and productivity (totality of outputs) and/or translation into practice which places it well above average for their peers or cohort.  
- members have very good and growing national and/or international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application.  
- may involve junior members who are valuable contributors to the team quality & capability. |
| 4 Good | The proposal has a research plan that:  
- has clear objectives.  
- raises several concerns regarding the study design.  
- is generally feasible, although some concerns exist about the ongoing need to develop or obtain some research tools or techniques. | The planned research:  
- addresses an issue of importance to human health.  
- is unlikely to be the subject of invited plenary presentations at international meetings.  
- may result in some good but not excellent publications.  
- is solid in approach.  
- will use standard approaches. | Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:  
- members have track records in fields relevant to the proposed research but with several potentially significant concerns regarding depth and breadth of relevant expertise.  
- has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement quality (as exemplified by the top 5 publications of each CI) and productivity (totality of outputs) and/or translation into practice that places them above average for their peers or cohort.  
- members have good and growing national and/or international reputations in the field of research relevant to the application. |
| 3 Marginal | The proposal has a research plan that:  
- is somewhat unclear in its scientific approach and goals.  
- raises several concerns about the feasibility and thus the likelihood of successful completion. | The planned research:  
- addresses an issue of some importance to human health.  
- may result in some publications.  
- may have some innovative and novel aspects, while others underpin or extend existing knowledge. | Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:  
- members have made contributions to the field of research but there are significant concerns regarding the depth and breadth of relevant expertise.  
- has over the last 5 years, a combined record of research achievement quality (as exemplified by the top 5 publications of each CI) and productivity (totality of outputs) and/or translation into practice, that places them at an average level for their peers or cohort.  
- members have established national reputations but do not yet have strong international profiles. |
| 2 Unsatisfactory | The proposal has a research plan that:  
- is unclear in its scientific approach and goals.  
- contains several major study design flaws.  
- raises several major concerns about the feasibility and thus the likelihood of successful completion. | The planned research:  
- addresses an issue of some concern to human health.  
- provides a program of research which will not significantly advance current knowledge in the field.  
- has relatively little innovation or novelty. | Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:  
- is deficient in some areas of expertise that will be required to successfully complete the proposed research.  
- has published only a few works in relevant and other fields of research.  
- members are not well known nationally or internationally in the relevant research fields. |
| 1 Poor | The proposal has a research plan which does not seem to be feasible.  
- is unlikely to be successfully completed. | The planned research:  
- does not address an issue of more than marginal concern to human health.  
- will not advance current knowledge in the field.  
- only follows behind previously well documented and studied concepts or previously well used approaches. | Relative to opportunity, the applicant team:  
- is heavily underexposed in terms of relevant expertise required to successfully complete the research program.  
- is not productive to any significant extent in relevant fields.  
- members are not well known nationally or internationally in the relevant research fields. |