Macquarie University
Research Fellowships 2015

Information Session Thursday 5 June 2014

MQ Fellowships Panel Chair
Professor Amanda Barnier
Department of Cognitive Science
Human Sciences
**Purpose of the Scheme**

1. Support researchers < 3 years post PhD with **outstanding track records or excellent research potential**

2. Provide **incubation period** for ECRs, help them become competitive for external funding

3. Enhance **existing and emerging areas of MQ research strength**
What MQ Offers

• **AT LEAST** 6 x 3 year full-time Research Fellowships for 2015-2017

• Each receives:
  – 3 years full-time salary at Level A6-A8
  – Up to $50,000 for research costs over 3 years (maximum of $20,000 in any year)
Note: Departments and Sponsors are your first port of call. You must identify a Sponsor for your application in the Department in which you wish to work. More on Sponsors in a moment.

Other important people in this process include:

Faculty Research Managers in the Faculty of your Department. They set earlier internal Faculty deadlines and provide advice and feedback on these applications. If you haven’t already indicated your interest in applying, you should do so today or as soon as possible.

Georgie Chinchen from the Research Office administers the MQRF Scheme. She can answer queries re the process or direct queries to the Panel. She and her staff check applications for eligibility, source reports in the Full Proposal Stage, advise the Fellowships Panel, and advise applicants of outcomes.

Finally, there is the MQ Fellowships Panel.
The structure of the MQ Fellowships Panel has been revised this year to create two new Sub-Panels: Science and Medicine, and Arts and Social Science.

The Panel will be made up of a group of 8 who cross both Sub-Panels: the Chair and 2 Deputy Chairs (likely 1 from Arts and 1 from Science), who make up the Panel Executive. Then 1 Member each from the four Faculties and from ASAM.

In addition, in each Sub-Panel there will be 4 members from the particular Faculties. So Sub-Panels A and B will have 12 members each but in different configurations.

Essentially all applications will be assigned to a particular Sub-Panel based on FoR codes (more on this later) and each Sub-Panel (the 8 common members and the 4 area expert members) will run the entire assessment process (EoI, shortlisting, then Full Proposal) in parallel. The 8 common members will be part of both parallel processes.
Panel Members will still have a range of backgrounds. Depending on your area, there may or may not be someone on the panel from your field or from your Department.

But this year there will be more people on the Panel, say from Arts assessing Arts applications, or from Human Sciences assessing Human Science applications.

Nevertheless, there will still be people from outside your area reading your application. So you still need to write your application for a broad audience.
MQ Fellowships Panel

• Conflicts of interest:
  – Applicants they are sponsoring
  – Applicants they have supervised, employed, or in a close professional or personal relationship
  – Applicants for whom they provide detailed advice and feedback on applications
  – Please don’t ask Panel Members to read applications unless happy for them to call a conflict of interest

For applicants and applications that Panel Members have a conflict of interest with, they will recuse themselves from assessment of those applications and step out of the room during discussion of them.
Are You Eligible?

- PhD awarded on or after 1 March 2011
- Or submit thesis by 20 August 2014
- Out of time: make a case for ECR status based on career interruptions
- If MQ PhD or employed at MQ: make a case for remaining at MQ
- Must be based full-time at MQ
- Must have an MQ Sponsor

Note: you must be in full-time attendance at MQ with the exception of approved travel, field work or leave. This means that a MQ Fellowship cannot be held by a candidate who resides in another State, for instance.

Also, applications that are submitted without an MQ Sponsor will be ruled ineligible
Note: A Sponsor can be currently sponsoring a MQRF awardee from a previous round. There are limits only on the number of applicants they sponsor in each round.

Sponsors and HoDs: support only candidates you are convinced will be excellent MQRFs. They will be managed be Sponsors and HoDs via PDR process and need to report on progress and meet progress goals (e.g., applying to external schemes)

**Identify a Sponsor**

- Nominate from host Department
- **Must be good applicant-sponsor fit** (appropriate profile + in area of existing/emerging strength)
- Consult closely
- Sponsor only can be named on one application per round
- Co-sponsorship is fine; nominate Primary for EoI
### Timeline of the Scheme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25 June</td>
<td>Expressions of Interest due <em>(note earlier Faculty deadlines)</em>; <em>RO eligibility check, Panel assessment</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 July</td>
<td>Eol outcomes expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 July</td>
<td>Full Proposals <em>(from invited applicants)</em> open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 August</td>
<td>Full Proposals due <em>(note earlier Faculty deadlines)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 August</td>
<td>Deadline for HOD/Sponsor, Referee Reports; <em>RO eligibility check, Panel assessment</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 September</td>
<td>Deadline for Independent Reviewer Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 October</td>
<td>Full Proposal outcomes expected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stage 1

Expressions of Interest
Note: The MQRF is a very competitive scheme. If you are a very ECR with few or no publications, you will not be successful in this Scheme. Please consult with your Sponsor, FRM and others to assess the competitiveness of your track record. Successful candidates typically are publishing above their discipline norms.

Note that for this year’s round we are implementing two strategies: discipline norms as in 2013, especially at Full Proposal stage; and assessing in separate sub panels (with Panel Members who cross both Sub Panels and some Panel Members specific to the Sub Panel as broad discipline experts).

**Eol Selection Criteria**

- **Applicant (40%)**
  - Relevant to opportunity and career stage
  - All applicants expected to have track record of quality publications, research performance, and promise
- **Project Significance, Innovation, and National Benefit (30%)**
- **Approach, Resources, and Feasibility (15%)**
- **Sponsor, Environment, Fit, and Benefit to MQ (15%)**
Completing the EoI

- Download the latest versions from the Research Office website
  - Do not use MQRF 2014 versions (dated 2013); they have changed

- Read the Funding Rules

- Follow the formatting instructions
  - Applications that do not will be ruled ineligible

Note: I will not specify the formatting instructions here. They are in the Funding Rules and on the application form. These tight rules were introduced in response to candidates in previous years doing tricky things with the form to get more space. We want a level playing field. The same space for information from all candidates.
Note: section 6 is the place for you to tell us about your background, your achievements, your impact so far. This should be related to the project you pitch in section 8. It should also be written without jargon where possible. Remember that for the EoI stage there are no independent reports to interpret for the Panel. It is the Panel's interpretation. So aim to make it clear to everyone.

Section 8 is your proposed project. This year we have separated questions about benefit to MQ and national benefit into new questions in section 9. So in section 8 just focus on what you will do, why it is important. Again, minimise the jargon. Tell us why it is exciting. The project should follow from your research record (within reason).

Section 10 asks important questions (15% weighting) about benefit to MQ and national benefit. These questions relate to the purpose of the scheme: to help build areas of current or emerging strength. Take care with your answers here. Minimise hand waving.

Section 11 is your CV. You have two pages to tell us things you don’t have space for elsewhere. Follow the suggested inclusions and make
Information for the Eol Template

Two important bits of information:

2. Project Details asks for up to three 4-digit FoR codes and whether your project is interdisciplinary. We will use this to assign projects to Sub-panels.

12. Publications List asks for one paragraph explaining discipline norms. We will use this to understand your track record relative to others from different fields.
Assessment

• Eols checked by the RO for eligibility and sent to MQ Fellowships Panel (and Sub-Panels)

• Panel members each score and rank subset of Eols against the selection criteria

• Panel members meet to discuss

• Sub-Panels short-list candidates who will be invited to submit Full Proposals
Stage 2

Full Proposals
Note: These criteria are identical to the EoI. However, the Full Proposal seeks a greater range of information to help address them (e.g., more space for Approach in the 10 page project description; information from referees and independent reviewers about track record). We take all this information into account in applying the selection criteria.
Full Proposal Selection Criteria

- The MQ Fellowships Panel makes assessments based on:
  - Your application
  - HOD/Sponsor’s statement
  - Referee report
  - Independent reviewers’ reports
Completing the Full Proposal

• Shortlisted applicants will be emailed the Funding Rules and application form
  – Only a sample copy will be available on the RO website

• Read the Funding Rules

• Follow the formatting instructions
  – Applications that do not will be ruled ineligible

Note: Same comment as above re completing the form. Stick to the formatting instructions.
Information for the Full Proposal Form

- Part A: Administrative Summary, including project summary, research environment (don’t just copy and paste)
- Part B: Applicant, including up to 3 pages for research record then publications
- Part C: Budget (well justified)
- Part D: Referee and Reviewers
- Part E: 10 page Project Description

Note: The Full Proposal seeks information in a similar format to an ARC application. Note that there are a number of places that appear to ask for similar information. Don’t just copy and paste. Use all of the space to build an argument.
Note: In addition to your Full Proposal we seek three sets of reports to inform our decisions.

Your Sponsor and HoD should complete and submit their statement. You should send the Referee report and your application to your Referee and request their report.
A Note on Independent Reviewers

• These are supposed to be independent:
  – You nominate, RO sources reviews
  – No further contact from you (RO will chase)
  – Funding Rules clearly state who cannot be a reviewer; follow these rules
  – If you nominate one of these, your application will be ruled ineligible
  – There is only one exception, which must be approved by Chair of Panel

Note: the following people cannot be nominated as Independent Reviewers: PhD or postdoctoral supervisors, employers, co-authors, research collaborators, colleagues in the same department, co-investigator on a similar grant lodged elsewhere.

The one exception is co-authorship on a disciplinary paper, where large numbers of people in the field are co-authors.
Advice Re Budget

• Link your budget items clearly to your project (especially in the Approach section)

• Describe and **fully justify** each budget item

• Don’t guess and don’t be vague about amounts
Assessment

- Checked by the RO for eligibility; RO contacts Independent Reviewers and requests reports
- All material sent to MQ Fellowships Panel (and Sub-panels)
- All Panel members score and rank all applications against the selection criteria
- Panel members meet to discuss
- Sub-panels decide list of applicants who will be offered MQRF plus a reserve list
Changes From Last Year

• At least six MQRFs rather than up to six
• A number of measures to take into account discipline differences:
  – Use of discipline norm information
  – Introduction of Sub-panels; allocation of Eols and Full Proposals to Sub-panels will be based on FoRs

CHECK OKAY TO INCLUDE COMMENT ON SUB-PANELS
Key Points

- The MQRF Panel is still multidisciplinary (although more discipline experts)
- Write for general audience and experts
- Avoid jargon (define specialist terms)
- Be clear why your project is important
- Invest as much time as you can in writing and seek lots of feedback from different people
- Address all the criteria:
  - You have to be high on all dimensions!
Questions?
Good Luck!