



**CAASTRO**  
ARC CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE  
FOR ALL-SKY ASTROPHYSICS

## Post-Doctoral Committee

### *Fact Sheet: Future Fellowship*

October 2016

#### **Quick facts:**

- Eligibility cut-off at 5-15 years full-time post-PhD but career interruptions taken into account.
- You may only apply for a Future Fellowship twice. So be really sure that you want to go for one. If you can wait for a year to advance your career and give your application a better chance, wait.
- Preparing the application can take 6-8 weeks full-time (or equivalent) but can be shorter if applicants have existing research collaborations and/or plan and experience with budgeting.
- Lead time is significant, e.g. decision to apply in 2016 for 2017 round means start in 2018. However, a recent announcement by the ARC may change this lead time somewhat.
- In every round, information can be slightly changed, including template formats or sections being deleted/added.
- The ARC "Instructions to Applicants" document already contains a lot of important advice: [http://www.arc.gov.au/sites/default/files/filedepot/Public/NCGP/FT16/FT16\\_ITA.pdf](http://www.arc.gov.au/sites/default/files/filedepot/Public/NCGP/FT16/FT16_ITA.pdf)
- Most applicants found previous (successful) applications most helpful to familiarise themselves with the structure of the required documents. Asking your peers for their applications should be one of the first steps when considering to apply!
- The first thing applicants should get started on is a rough draft of their research plan (D1 in 2017) since all the other parts should build around this proposal.

#### **ARC Research Management System (RMS):**

- Future Fellowship applicants need to create their RMS account via <https://rms.arc.gov.au/>
- Upon login, all ARC scheme rounds are visible.
- This is where the application will be stored and updated with submissions along the way; the university Research Office (specific name differs between universities; here referred to as RO) needs to receive submissions for RMS to include and release back to applicants to work on.
- Future Fellowship round will not open in RMS (to fill in the actual online application) until a month before the "internal deadline", so applicants need to start writing sections (in Latex or Word format to make PDFs) *well in advance* of this date.
- When Future Fellowship round opens in RMS, applicants receive an email from the RO/HR department and can login to RMS and create their application (e.g. filling out all of section A, with place-holders if needed); they then receive an ID number. All edits/uploads must be saved!

#### **Host institution:**

The current information from the ARC is that they are opening the 2017 ARC Future Fellowships round in early October 2016 and closing externally in November this year! Therefore applicants need to choose a host institution in Australia *as soon as possible*. This needs to be approved by the director because applications rely on their support!

Applicants then have to indicate their interest in applying to their RO to receive any relevant emails. Meeting RO staff might be possible to provide additional guidance. They help with the application process, and in the end they will submit the application on the applicant's behalf to the ARC.

## **Templates:**

As the deadline approaches, you will receive templates for the various sections of the proposal from the RO (usually in Word format). These templates are good to use for some sections, e.g. “Statement by the Administering Organisation outlining Strategic Alignment” (D2 in 2017 round) and budget, especially where files need to be uploaded in the online application. Other sections can be prepared in Latex or Word to then copy/paste into the online application. The RO might not be able to handle Latex.

## **Section A:**

Sections A4 and A5 (in 2017 round) are short but therefore difficult and require much thought. They are the first things that assessors will read about the applicant’s proposal, thus they are quite important. Applicants should keep things very general for a broad audience (e.g. non-physicists).

## **Research Opportunity and Performance Evidence (ROPE):**

These sections include a list of publications and have significant weight in the final grade (40%), more than the research proposal (35%). Don’t be shy to talk yourself up in the appropriate section: no-one else will do it for you! Sections C9 and possibly C6 (in 2017 round) are sections to get started on early: C6 highlights any limited or “lack of opportunities” (e.g. career breaks or part-time) and how this has impacted on collaborations/meetings/invited talks/publications etc.

In terms of your publication list, do not hesitate to list your h-index, but also list citation count for each publication. When summarising your publications, list remember to quote what a high citation rate is *in your field*. The Thomson-Reuters Web of Knowledge Essential Science Indicators can be used to give a baseline for how many citations would be expected over ten years, for example. One great idea is a paper network figure, created using NASA ADS <https://adsabs.github.io/help/actions/visualize>

## **Main proposal:**

This was section D1 in the 2017 round and 8 pages. It is worth a significant part of the final grade (35%) and should be started *as soon as possible*. Generally, the first page should be the best crafted because is the first and potentially only part of the research proposal that assessors will look at! A good piece of advice is “*Make sure your proposal addresses a 'big idea' people care about.*”

Aim(s) of the project should be stated concisely, with enough background (for a general audience!) but without going into too much detail. Text boxes and different fonts can accentuate critical points but there are guidelines for minimum size allowed, e.g. no footnotes. Figures can work well in this section but there is limited room for them on eight pages.

## **Strategic Statement (D2 in 2017 round):**

This part is normally *due before the RO internal deadline!* You should get started on this ~2 page section ahead of time, and it is a tricky one to write. It is a support letter from the director but applicants might end up using a template or drafting it themselves. The director/head of school will approve the letter before submission to the RO and sign it once processed in RMS.

Try to figure out what the Future Fellowship salary should be based on (“level of employment” and host institution pay scale). The RO can provide a salary calculator. If a “top up salary” needed from the department to meet these pay requirements, this figure should be indicated in the letter.

And try to negotiate what the university will give you, if applying for a Future Fellowship with that host institution. These fellowships are points of status for them, so it benefits them to have you there, not just for the research you do. If they cannot promise you a permanent position, at least ask for further support for a number of years after the fellowship ends.

### **Peer-feedback:**

Getting together with other Future Fellowship applicants – also from other areas of science – to review drafts of each other’s proposal (or just section D1 drafts) can be very helpful.

### **Rejoinders:**

A couple of months after submission, applicants will receive feedback on their proposal from expert reviewers. They will have given a grade but applicants only see the comments. Applicants then have a week or so to address any concerns/criticisms or highlight any positive feedback that the reviewers gave. The RO will set a deadline for this and can give tips on how to write a rejoinder response. This first set of reviewers never sees the applicant’s response, only the next set of reviewers (the College of Experts) will see the first expert comments and the response. Be positive, but remember that you cannot bring new information into the rejoinder, only comment on what was in the original application.

***Questions from potential applicants can be directed to the CAASTRO Post-Doctoral Committee at [cpdc@caastro.org](mailto:cpdc@caastro.org) who maintains a contact database of previous grant recipients at each CAASTRO location who are willing to mentor new applicants.***