For more information or assistance in writing the rejoinder, contact

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Should I write a rejoinder?

1. **YES.** All applicants should take the opportunity to lodge a rejoinder. Your position in the ranking can be improved by a strong rejoinder. This affects the chances of being offered a grant and the size of the grant.

How do I access my reports and lodge my rejoinder?

2. Assessor reports are available for viewing in GAMS and rejoinders are created in GAMS. You will be able to view assessor reports from Tuesday, 1 July and rejoinders are due at the ARC by Monday, 14 July.

3. Only the first named CI can create, edit, save and locally submit the rejoinder. Other applicants are only able to view the rejoinder. Queries regarding passwords/GAMS can be directed to Belinda Snell (bsnell2@une.edu.au) at Research Services.

4. The rejoinder is limited to 5,000 characters (including spaces). If you are creating the rejoinder in a word processing package (e.g. MS Word) and then pasting into GAMS, please be aware that the character count is not the same (the upper limit is approx. 4,960 characters including spaces).

The reports

5. A numeric score is not provided to applicants or Research Services. Scores are provided to the College of Experts (CoE) by assessors for each of the scheme's selection criteria with a weighted average and it is the ranking of your application relative to others by the assessors that is most important. You cannot deduce the strength of your assessor's support from their written comments alone.

Who reads my rejoinder?

6. Rejoinders are **not sent to Oz Readers or Int Assessors - they are only read by members of the CoE**.

7. There is no point in engaging in an argument with the author of a report as they will not see your rejoinder. It is more important to think about how the CoE will evaluate the claims made by the assessor and your rejoinder.

8. Just like you, CoE members are mostly very busy researchers with limited time. Members of the CoE will meet in Committee only once more. Clear, brief and compelling rejoinders are essential!

Getting started on the rejoinder

9. Write your rejoinder in simple, clear, direct 'plain English'. Direct your rejoinder not to the assessor, but to the CoE, not all of whom will be experts in your field.

10. Make it readable, easy to follow, not dense USE

- Headings
- Dot point/Bullet points } to highlight key points.
- *Formatting*

11. Address all questions and criticism(s) raised in your assessor reports.

12. Use citations from the literature to back up points

13. Put the most important argument(s) in the first one to two paragraphs. Catch the readers' attention.

14. Your aim is to give CoE members reason to 'go back' to the reports, help them sort through perhaps contradictory remarks, convince them (where warranted) that one report or one assessor's criticisms are out of step with the others, and then in effect help them present 'your' case to the CoE.

15. Some researchers like to address assessors' comments by topic, e.g. if a number of assessors have made comments on a particular issue. Some organise rejoinders by selection criteria.

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Tactics when some comments are not so positive or reports vary in their apparent support for the application

16. A rejoinder that effectively counters criticism(s) raised in assessor reports can lead to the CoE viewing the application more favourably.

17. An assessor report that is markedly different to others provided may be regarded by the CoE as being 'out of touch'. In these cases a well written rejoinder can be influential.

18. Don't just structure your rejoinder around a negative report. Keep a balanced perspective on all the comments made by the assessors.

19. Address specific issues and make a reasoned response, citing references where possible.

20. Don't question the expertise of the assessor in a personal or emotional way. Don't accuse the assessors of ignorance or careless reading. Avoid irony or flippancy.

21. If you can, substantiate your claims against negative reviewers using the claims of the positive reviewers. Then move on to address criticisms in the reports.

22. Don't address criticisms in the format of a long list; select the critical few that have the most weight.

23. Don't elevate minor criticisms into a major issue. Deal with minor criticism by returning to the positives in the reports (but without exaggeration).

24. If the criticism of your project is that it is too broad, don't try and reformulate the project in the rejoinder. Simply restate what the core aims are and why they are sound and achievable.

25. Where an assessor's report suggests 'ideological divisions' in the area of your project, one possible approach for the rejoinder is to state that you are aware that you are working in an area where these divisions exist and that your project transcends these divisions, then go on to state how. Use assessor reports as examples of the existing divisions.

26. Criticisms by assessors on budgets are not part of the selection criteria but are important when the CoE determines the final budget. You should address any area of academic importance, e.g., a suggestion that a research assistant rather than a research fellow is required.

For all

27. Begin and end with the positives from the reports, e.g. you begin by saying: 'All four assessors believe this project should be funded' or - 'Each of the assessors point to the original and significant contribution this project will make to scholarship'. And end by saying (after having addressed the negatives): 'Despite these comments, the assessors have identified the importance of funding the project'.

28. It is especially important for ECR and APD Fellowship applicants to highlight newly accepted or published work and other research and research training related activities and achievements since the time of application (early March 2008) which add to their track record. Other applicants are encouraged to do likewise.

For further advice

29. Discuss your reports, the rejoinder process and successive drafts with your colleagues, and especially with ARC grant mentors, grant holders and applicants

30. It is very important that draft rejoinders are read by a number of people. This may involve 'exposing' the negative comments received to one's colleagues but it is much better to seek advice than show the rejoinder to no-one.

31. Further information on rejoinder submission is provided by the ARC at:
http://www.arc.gov.au/applicants/assessor_rejoinders.htm