



Australian Government
Department of Industry,
Science and Resources

The 2026 Prime Minister's Prizes for Science

Principles for promoting diversity and inclusion

The Department of Industry, Science and Resources (the department) is committed to ensuring the nomination and assessment processes for the Prime Minister's Prizes for Science (the Prizes) promotes inclusion and diversity and aligns with current best practice. This document outlines the department's approach and the role of the assessment committee to support inclusion and diversity in the Prizes.

Role of the Department of Industry, Science and Resources

Promote a large and diverse pool of nominees

The department is committed to encouraging nominations from diverse cohorts. The department will develop communication plans aimed at increasing the awareness of the Prizes among the general community, the teaching community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the science sector. The department will:

- promote the nomination period across a range of channels
- highlight a diverse range of role models and champions
- use communications materials that avoid elitist and exclusive language
- provide plain English guidance
- promote the Prizes to historically underrepresented groups and their associations.

Annual review of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines

The prize recipients are selected based on the eligibility and assessment criteria outlined in the [Grant Opportunity Guidelines](#) (the guidelines). The department will review the eligibility and assessment criteria annually, to ensure they remain current, and wherever possible, eliminate barriers to nominations for candidates from diverse

backgrounds. This includes reviewing the language used and accessibility in the guidelines against best practice.

Establishment of the Prizes assessment committees

The department will establish an independent committee of experts to assess each eligible nomination against the relevant prize assessment criteria and compare it to other eligible nominations. The department will establish and maintain diversity in the committees, including diversity in gender in line with Australian Government gender balance targets. In addition, the department will aim for representation across disciplines, geographical location, Australian Indigenous mob/language groups and industry associations.

Guidance for assessment committees

Assessment committee members are required to review this guidance and uphold the Government's commitment to diversity and inclusion. During the assessment process committee members will:

- manage unconscious bias
- advocate for inclusion and diversity
- establish committee consensus on the assessment process
- consider career interruptions and other relevant circumstances
- identify top nominees before sharing with the committee
- ensure every committee member can equally contribute to the assessment process.

Manage unconscious bias

All committee members will proactively manage the influence of unconscious bias during the assessment of eligible nominations. This includes participating in the unconscious bias training recommended by the department. This will enable a fair, objective and consistent approach to the assessment of nominations by the assessment committee members.

Advocate for inclusion and diversity

All committee members will advocate for inclusion and diversity. Allyship reduces the burden on individuals from underrepresented groups and ensures committee members from historically underrepresented groups are not solely responsible for championing inclusion and diversity in the Prizes.

Establish committee consensus on the assessment process

Before the start of the assessment process, the committee will discuss and confirm their prioritised list of attributes match the eligibility and assessment criteria within the guidelines. This will reduce the risk of implicit bias entering the assessment process through inadvertent ‘criteria shifting’. The committee will demonstrate complete impartiality to, and equitable treatment of, all nominations through a structured, objective assessment process.

Consider career interruptions and other relevant circumstances

The guidelines include clauses that consider the range of circumstances that can affect opportunity. There is particular emphasis on supporting those from historically underrepresented groups and those who have experienced career interruptions.

Committee members will consider every nominee’s achievement in the context of opportunity and experience according to the guidelines. This includes career interruptions that may be due to caring, cultural and community responsibilities.

Career interruptions are not limited to a fixed set of circumstances and may include:

- unemployment
- non-research and non-teaching employment
- limited or no access to facilities and resources
- disaster management and recovery
- medical conditions
- disability
- caring and parental responsibilities
- community obligations, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultural practices and protocols
- any other circumstances that have resulted in a career break.

Identify top nominations before sharing with the committee

Committee members will carefully review each eligible nomination against the assessment criteria, compare them to other eligible nominations and rank in order of merit. Committee members will give scores and nominee rankings to the Program Delegate prior to the committee meetings and before discussions occur. This will help mitigate the undue influence of any one member. At the committee meetings the committee members will discuss, reach consensus and rank the nominations in order of merit per prize category.

Ensure every committee member can equally contribute

The department will share the consolidated scores and merit rankings to committee members prior to the committee meetings. The Chair of the assessment committee will moderate assessment discussions to include all members and ensure enough time for decision-making. All committee members must support the Chair in allowing all members to equally contribute to the assessment process. This will ensure all members can contribute thoughtful reflection and discussion.