

Guidelines for assessing PhD applications

Faculty of Medicine, UiB

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A number of factors should be taken into account in the assessment of PhD applications, and it is important that all those assessing the applications are conscious of this and that they use the entire grading scale. These guidelines describe what the various grades entail and are intended to aid the assessment process and ensure that the grading scale is applied as consistently as possible by all evaluators.

PhD position

Candidate

Factors to be considered:

- education and grades
- scientific qualifications and previous scientific production
- affiliation with the relevant research community
- supervisor declarations

Grading- Grading scale1-5

Grade 5: Applicants with very good grades from relevant final examinations¹.

Relevant master's degree and experience. Well affiliated with the research group. Publication (-s) in the project is not a requirement, but should be taken into account.

Grade 4: Applicants with good grades in relevant final examinations¹.

Relevant master's degree. Affiliated with the research group. Publication(s) in the project is not a requirement, but the applicant could have other scientific publications.

Grade 3: Applicants with good grades in relevant final examinations¹.

Less established affiliation with the research group, e.g. has not started any research work related to the project.

Grade 2: Applicants with lower grades in relevant final examinations¹.

No previous affiliation with the research group.

Grade 1: Not academically qualified.

¹: Grades are not awarded for all degree courses, for example the medical courses at UiT, NTNU and UiO. This means that the grade requirements above are advisory only.

Project

Factors to be considered:

- is the scientific concept in the application sensible?
- is the aim of the project original and is it clearly described?
- is the proposed methodology adequate for the project?
- is the proposed methodology available to the research group?
- does the application include a reasonable time plan?
- is the scope of the project realistic within the available time frame?
- have the necessary ethical questions been addressed?
- are there plans for publication?
- is there a realistic budget?
- is there potential for innovation in the project?

Grading - Grading scale 1-5

Grade 5: Original, innovative and very good project, focused and realistic. Data from the project is likely to be published in a highly acclaimed journal.

Grade 4: Good project, data from the project is expected to be published in good journals.

Grade 3: Good project, but no documentation that the project will lead to high quality publications.

Grade 2: Good project, but cannot compete.

Grade 1: Poor project not worthy of support.

Comments: It is important that the assessment of the project is not merely an assessment of the research community, even though this is relevant to some extent. It should be possible to compete with an excellent project, even if the research group in itself is not regarded as excellent. In such cases the potential, realism and feasibility must be duly considered.

Research group

Factors to be considered:

- the research merits of the main supervisor
- the international reputation of the research group
- the international network of the research group
- relevant publishing activities by the group as a whole
- the level of academic supervision experience within the research group
- the candidate output of the group
- multi- or interdisciplinary cooperation in the group
- the group's methodological strengths and breadth
- resources available to the group, including funds to cover running costs in the project

Where the use of bibliometric tools is appropriate, please use Web of Science:

http://apps.webofknowledge.com/UA_GeneralSearch_input.do?product=UA&SID=X1r85X2rw3uv5eE2MRb&search_mode=GeneralSearch. Choose "All databases" and search by name within the

"Author" category. The relevant publication profile will appear by pressing "citation report". If logged in via iPad or PC/MAC outside UiB network, please use the following link:

<http://apps.isiknowledge.com.pva.uib.no/> Log in using your UiB user name and password.

Please note that bibliometrics is only a technical tool, and that the faculty has good research groups and traditions that would not be able to compete if these tools were to be used without due caution. This is particularly relevant for younger mentors, where age must be considered when assessing the publication profile.

Please note that the wider research community, including partners, is relevant in the assessment of the research group.

Grading - Grading scale 1-5

Grade 5: Internationally leading research group that publishes in the best journals. The main supervisor is highly merited considering their age and research field. The group receives/has received funding from the EU and/or the Research Council of Norway.

Grade 4: Nationally leading research group that publishes in very good journals. The main supervisor is well merited considering their age and research field. The group receives/has received funding from the EU and/or the Research Council of Norway, Samarbeidsorganet or equivalent external sources.

Grade 3: Locally leading research group that publishes in good international journals. The group receives/has received funding from Samarbeidsorganet or equivalent external sources.

Grade 2: Non-established research groups.

Grade 1: Unqualified research groups.

General comment:

It is important that the potential of the applicant, project and supervisor be assessed. This means that a promising candidate, a very good project and a young supervisor who has shown an unusual ability to build a productive and high quality research group should be taken into account.