

10 PhD Scholarship Scheme - Selection Criteria and Scoring Framework

This document outlines the selection criteria used to assess applications for the PhD Scholarship Scheme. It details the evaluation criteria, scoring system, and eligibility thresholds that will be used by the PhD Scholarship Panel to assess applications. It serves as a guide for both assessors and applicants.

Panel members are expected to apply the criteria consistently and declare any conflicts of interest (e.g., supervising an applicant).

For information on the broader scheme, including eligibility requirements, panel composition, interview procedures, and award processes, please refer to the Guidelines document.

Evaluation Criteria

Each application will be assessed across nine (9) categories, which reflect both academic merit and broader indicators of research potential and alignment with institutional priorities.

Panel members will independently score each category on a scale of 1 to 5, as detailed in the Scoring Scale section. After all panel members have submitted their scores, an average score will be calculated for each category, resulting in a final total score for each applicant (out of a maximum of 45 points).

This averaged score will be used to determine applicant eligibility, ranking, and potential placement on the reserve list.

| Category | Description |
|---|---|
| Academic Merit <i>[CV, Application Form]</i> | Quality of academic transcripts, academic awards, qualifications, overall GPA or Honours classification, and other indicators of academic excellence. Demonstrated academic excellence and preparedness for PhD-level research. |
| Research Proposal <i>[Application Form, Interview Presentation, Interview Q&A]</i> | Clarity, originality, feasibility, and significance of the proposed research. Well-defined aims, methodology, and expected outcomes. Clear alignment with university or School research priorities. |
| Research Experience and Output <i>[Application Form]</i> | Prior research experience (e.g., Bachelor's/Master's thesis), peer-reviewed publications, presentations, and other relevant outputs. Demonstrated research capability at current level. |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Ability to Complete <i>[Application Form, Interview Q&A]</i> | Evidence that the candidate has the skills, discipline knowledge, and research maturity to complete the proposed project. Includes assessment of the submitted Gantt chart/project timeline and discussion of project feasibility during the interview. |
| Alignment with SDGs <i>[Application Form, Interview Q&A]</i> | Relevance and potential contribution of the proposed research to one or more UN SDGs. Strength of argument for broader social, environmental, or economic impact. |
| Teaching Potential <i>[Interview Q&A]</i> | Assessed by the School representative through a subject-specific question. Evaluates communication skills, disciplinary insight, and potential to contribute to teaching as part of scholarship obligations. |
| Supervisor & School Support <i>[Application Form]</i> | Strength of the supervisor's support statement and overall School endorsement. Appropriateness of supervisory arrangements and alignment with School research strengths. |
| Scholarship Interview Performance <i>[Interview Presentation, Interview Q&A]</i> | Clarity, confidence, and critical thinking during the interview. Demonstrated understanding of the project, research design, and rationale. Overall preparedness for PhD-level research. |
| PhD Acceptance Interview Score <i>[PhD Interview]</i> | Average score from the formal PhD admission interview, as recorded in the <i>PhD Interview Form</i> . |

Scoring Scale

Each category is scored on a 5-point scale as detailed below:

| Score | Description |
|------------------|---|
| 5 – Outstanding | Evidence demonstrates excellence well above expectations for entry into doctoral-level study. The criterion is fully met with clear, compelling, and well-substantiated indicators. |
| 4 – Strong | Evidence clearly meets expectations for doctoral-level study. Minor gaps or weaknesses may exist but do not detract from overall strength in this area. |
| 3 – Satisfactory | Evidence meets the minimum expectations for doctoral-level study. The criterion is addressed adequately, though notable gaps, inconsistencies, or weaknesses are present. |
| 2 – Weak | Evidence falls short of expectations. The criterion is only partially addressed, with significant weaknesses or limited substantiation. |
| 1 – Poor | Evidence does not meet expectations. The criterion is largely unaddressed, unclear, or unsupported. |

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For all criteria except *PhD Acceptance Interview Score* (which is taken directly from the *PhD Interview Form*), panel members may assign half-point scores (e.g., 4.5, 3.5) when a candidate's performance falls between two descriptor levels. However, half scores should be used sparingly and only when the evidence clearly warrants an intermediate rating.

Each application can receive a maximum total score of 45 points across the nine categories.

Use of Scores in Final Deliberation

While numerical scores provide a structured and transparent foundation for decision-making, the final award outcomes may also reflect panel discussion, especially in cases where applicants are tied for scores. Reviewers are expected to apply professional judgment and ensure consistency and fairness in all assessments.

Eligibility & Award Thresholds

- **Ineligible:** Any candidate with an average score below 28/45, or a score of 1 or 2 (“Poor” & “Weak”) in any single category, will not be considered for a scholarship.
- **Awarded:** Scholarships will be awarded to the top five eligible applicants with the highest total scores.
- **Ties:** In the event of tied scores, the PhD Scholarship Panel will review and deliberate to determine final rankings.
- **Reserve List:** Eligible applicants who score on average above 37 but fall outside the top five may be placed on a reserve list.
- **Non-Scoring Fields:** Qualitative feedback may be provided at the Panel's discretion but will not factor into the numerical score.

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