

University of Warwick Graduate School

Ranking Criteria for open competition applications

Applications are ranked in order of preference – 1 being the most highly ranked application. Judgment is made under two broad categories: **Person and Preparedness** and **Project and Place**. The following descriptors indicate the characteristics considered under each heading. It is important to note that the descriptors below should be used to guide assessors, but the University has consciously moved away from a defined scoring criteria in order to recognize areas such as professional experience.

Person and Preparedness descriptors ¹	
An applicant with an outstanding academic record, very well-equipped for doctoral study, usually evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a first class degree, or a distinction at Masters level, or equivalent professional experience• excellent references	Excellent
An applicant with a strong academic record, well-equipped for doctoral study, usually evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• an upper second class degree, or a merit at Masters level, or equivalent professional experience• good references	Good
An applicant that fulfils the academic requirements for entry to doctoral study but does not demonstrate that they are equipped to excel, usually evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a lower second class degree, or a pass at Masters level, or equivalent professional experience• acceptable references	Acceptable
An applicant with a weak academic record, ill-equipped for doctoral study, usually evidenced by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• a third class degree or no degree level qualification• poor references	Poor

¹ * An applicant with substantial and relevant professional experience may be judged to have an outstanding, strong or solid academic record without having achieved the degree classification associated with that category. Applicants in some disciplines are often established and successful practitioners undertaking applied research in professional contexts. They typically have significant professional knowledge and experience that bears directly on their ability to undertake doctoral research. Furthermore, in light of recent grade inflation, the degree classifications of applicants who graduated many years ago may not be directly comparable with the degree classifications of recent graduates.

Project² and Place descriptors	Points
<p>A project with the potential to make a significant contribution to the field</p> <p>A clearly articulated and robustly justified research question</p> <p>Sophisticated critical engagement with relevant literature</p> <p>An appropriate and well-developed research design</p> <p>An excellent fit between the project and the expertise of the proposed supervisors, or in the case of a project the applicant is recruited to, an excellent fit between the candidate's prior knowledge/experience and the project.</p> <p>An excellent fit between the project and the research strengths or priorities of the host department/University</p>	Excellent
<p>A project with the potential to make a strong impact within the student's field</p> <p>A clearly articulated and justified research question</p> <p>Critical engagement with relevant literature</p> <p>An appropriate and partially-developed research design</p> <p>A good fit between the project and the expertise of the proposed supervisors, or in the case of a project the applicant is recruited to, a good fit between the candidate's prior knowledge/experience and the project.</p> <p>A good fit between the project and the research strengths or priorities of the host department</p>	Good
<p>A project with the potential to make an original contribution to the field</p> <p>A clearly articulated research question</p> <p>Engagement with relevant literature</p> <p>An appropriate indicative research design</p> <p>An acceptable fit between the project and the expertise of the proposed supervisors, or in the case of a project the applicant is recruited to, an acceptable fit between the candidate's prior knowledge/experience and the project.</p> <p>An acceptable fit between the project and the research strengths or priorities of the host department</p>	Acceptable
<p>A project without the potential to make an original contribution to the field</p> <p>An unclear research question</p> <p>Little or no engagement with relevant literature</p> <p>An inappropriate research design</p> <p>A poor fit between the project and the expertise of the proposed supervisors, or in the case of a project the applicant is recruited to, a poor fit between the candidate's prior knowledge/experience and the project.</p> <p>A poor fit between the project and the research strengths or priorities of the host department</p>	Poor

² In disciplines where the project is recruited to rather than designed by the applicant, greater reliance will be given to the departmental statement demonstrating the expected characteristics.