Guidelines for scoring and justifying scores for INTERACT Transnational Access evaluations

Evaluation scores

A. Scientific quality of the planned research

1. Weak. Perhaps 5% of applications. Use this score with caution. The planned research is characterised by one or more of the following:
   -is not novel
   -is not feasible/is unrealistic in its goals
   -has unclear aims
   -uses inappropriate methodology
   -does not identify specific products of the research such as publications

2. Satisfactory. Perhaps 20% of applications. The planned research is characterised by one or more of the following:
   -is not novel
   -is feasible but adds only limited data and no new insights
   -identifies output but this is limited in ambition e.g. report or poster rather than publication

3. Average. Perhaps 50% of applications. The planned research is characterised by one or more of the following:
   -is not novel
   -extends existing data sets, for example in comparative analyses
   -seeks to publish results in an international journal

4. Good. Perhaps 20% of applications. The planned research is characterised by one or more of the following:
   -is novel
   -all aspects of the work plan are clearly identified
   -the results are new, and not simply new in the context of a new geographical area or species
   -the results will clearly be of interest to international journals, conferences and international organisations

5. Excellent. Perhaps 5% of applications. Use this score with caution. The planned research is characterised by one or more of the following:
   -the research is ground-breaking
   -It adds new knowledge in methodology and/or understanding
   -the research fills important knowledge gaps already identified or adds important knowledge not yet identified as a gap.
   -the results will be published in the highest ranking international journals

B. Scientific merits of the user group leader

1. Weak (Use with caution)
   -the researcher is not an early career scientist yet has no track record
   -the applicant is not a researcher with a relevant position in an academic institution
2. Satisfactory
   -the applicant holds an appropriate academic position
   -the applicant has some experience of relevant research
   -the applicant has at least some publications but as reports or in foreign language journals of limited circulation
3. Average
   -the applicant holds an appropriate academic position
   -the applicant has experience of relevant research but not necessarily as a project leader
   -the applicant has at least some publications in international journals
4. Good
   -the applicant provides evidence of leadership
   -the applicant has published in international journals as first author
   -the applicant provides evidence of academic activities such as membership of national and international academic organisations
   -the applicant presents at relevant international conferences.
5. Excellent (Use with caution)
   -the applicant is internationally recognised as an expert
   -the applicant leads a research group
   -the applicant provides evidence of participating in and leading previous international projects
   -the applicant publishes in the highest level international journals
   -the applicant has experience of presenting key note speeches at international conferences

C. Relevance of the planned research for the INTERACT goals and TA selection priorities [1]

1. Weak (Use with caution)
   -the planned research does not relate to any of the INTERACT priorities and shows no knowledge of the INTERACT goals
2. Satisfactory
   -the planned research refers to some connection to the INTERACT priorities and goals but lacks clarity on how these will be addressed
3. Average

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[1] The selection of TA user groups is based on a scientific merit and novelty of the research, but taking into account that priority should be given to user groups composed of users who:

- Have not previously used the installation
- Are working in countries where no equivalent research infrastructure exists
- Apply working at more than one location for generating comparative studies
- To early career scientists (<5 years from a PhD degree)

-the planned research refers to the INTERACT priorities and goals, and identifies links between these and some aspects of the planned research

4. Good
-the planned research specifically and clearly relates to INTERACT priorities and goals

5. Excellent (use with caution)
-the planned research specifically and clearly relates to INTERACT priorities and goals, and also shows knowledge of, and relates to other internationally agreed research priorities

D. Value for money[2]

1. Weak (Use with caution)
-very expensive (travel and/or numbers of researchers) with little expectation of any results

2. Satisfactory
-expensive (travel and/or numbers of researchers) with evidence of a result that adds little to our knowledge base

3. Average
-appropriate costs for travel and moderate research team size, i.e. 2 or 3 members each appropriately justified

4. Good
-costs low in relation to research activities and expected output

5. Excellent (use with caution)
-costs low in relation to expected major scientific achievements

Justification text

Please remember that evaluations are open to applicants and be careful with your wording to avoid complaints by applicants. Some examples to minimise problems are listed below.

1. The justification text should reflect the scores
2. The text should not refer to "acceptance" or "rejection" of any previous applications or the current one but can refer to "recommendations based on the scientific evaluation". This is to close a loophole when recommendations by the scientific evaluation committee are over-turned by a research station.
3. When using words to denote an exceptional feature of the application, such as "Excellent", "Outstanding", "Inappropriate" etc., please use a phrase such as "in the view of the reviewer". This is to prevent applicants from acting on inconsistencies such as having an application score less than the acceptance

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[2] Note: the actual costs of working at a station vary greatly according to remoteness etc. and the evaluation of "value for money" should be independent of the station costs

threshold when one reviewer has commented on the "excellence" of the proposal.