

TALENT Doctoral Programme – Evaluation Guide

Introduction

Proposals are submitted in a single stage and evaluated in four steps. The evaluation of proposals is carried out by the TALENT secretariat placed in Research & Innovation at the Faculty of Science (the University of Copenhagen) and the departments at the Faculty of Science (SCIENCVE) with the assistance of independent experts.

The TALENT secretariat will ensure that the process is fair and in line with the principles contained in the Guide for Applicants, the Evaluation Guide, the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. In other words, the evaluation of the applications will be based on an open, transparent, merit-based, impartial and equitable procedure and on international peer review. The latter will be anonymous and e.g. the gender of the applicants will not become known to the reviewers. The TALENT secretariat will ensure that the applications are anonymised before being sent to international peer review.¹

Expert reviewers perform evaluations on a personal basis, not as representatives of their employer, their country or any other entity. They are required to be independent, impartial and objective and to behave throughout in a professional manner. They sign a declaration of confidentiality and absence of conflict of interest, before beginning their work. Confidentiality rules must be adhered to at all times before, during and after the expert evaluation. This principle is endorsed by the anonymised applications/project descriptions. Reviewers will have an obligation to inform the secretariat of any potential conflict of interest, e.g. academic, financial or personal. If a conflict of interest becomes apparent during the evaluation, the secretariat will assign the application to another reviewer. The proposals are evaluated remotely and the evaluators will be remunerated for their task.

Eligibility and admissibility check

On October 1, 2018 23:59 Copenhagen time, all proposals submitted through the University of Copenhagen's [Job Portal](#) will be registered in a database. Any documents received via any other means will not be taken into account. In other words, the review will be based solely on the submitted application material.

Admissibility and eligibility criteria for each proposal are checked by the TALENT secretariat. Proposals which do not fulfil these criteria will not be evaluated. Applicants will be informed within three to four months after the call deadline about the outcome of the entire evaluation or the result of the admissibility and eligibility check or the outcome of the pre-selection at department level. A proposal may be declared ineligible or inadmissible at any stage.

To be considered admissible, a proposal must be:

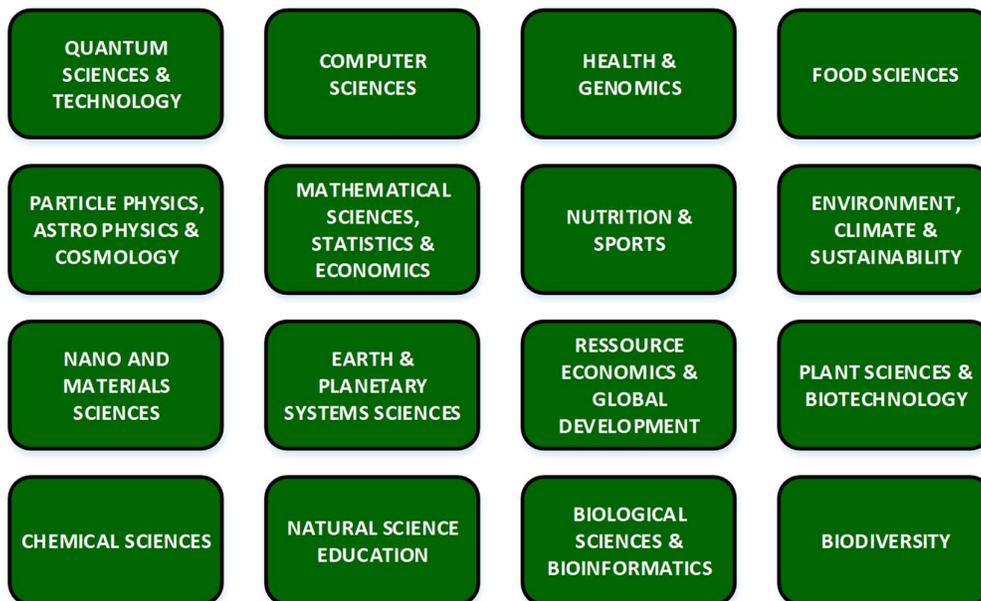
- submitted through the University of Copenhagen's [Job Portal](#) before the given deadline;
- readable, accessible and printable;
- complete and include the requested information and any obligatory supporting documents specified in the call (e.g. cover/motivation letter, declaration re. mobility, project description incl. ethics assessment form, prioritized CV incl. publications, documentation of academic degrees obtained, copy of English test score sheet at the time of applying and two recommendation letters).

Applicants must use the provided templates and follow the instructions in the job advert, the Guide for Applicants, on the website and in this Evaluation Guide.

A proposal will only be considered eligible if the applicant chooses one of the 16 programme areas/panels (cf. below) and indicates a specific department as host incl. mentioning possible names of main supervisors and co-supervisors. It is, however, within the scope to include collaborations across departments at SCIENCE, e.g. in order to address interdisciplinary aspects. Furthermore, the applicant must live up to the eligibility conditions regarding mobility, education and experience as outlined in the Guide for Applicants, pages 1-2.

¹ Project descriptions must be anonymized and gender neutral language is encouraged, cf. the Guide for Applicants, page 2.

The 16 programme areas/panels:



The evaluation process:

Evaluation step	Output	Actor
<p>STEP 1: Eligibility and admissibility checks (10 working days)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ineligible and inadmissible proposals are removed from the evaluation process. Applicants are notified about their ineligibility/inadmissibility. The eligible and admissible applications are distributed to the relevant departments based on the applicants' choice of programme area/panel and host as indicated in the application form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The TALENT secretariat Information to de-selected applicants
<p>STEP 2: Pre-selection at department level (internal review)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-selection of the incoming proposals acc. to scientific quality and department expertise. Online interviews will be conducted between potential supervisors and candidates to ensure academic and professional alignment. The Head of Department issues for each application a host statement stating if the department can host the proposed research project or not. Applicants without a host commitment will be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Research Committees at each department, consisting of the Deputy Head of Department for Research and the section heads as well as Centre of Excellence Directors, discuss and provide advice to the Head of Department. The TALENT secretariat Information to de-selected applicants

	<p>informed about the outcome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only proposals with a host commitment will go to step 3. 	
STEP 3: Expert/international review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External experts will carry out the review of the proposals. • Min. one of the three reviewers pr. proposal will be working in an academic institution outside of Denmark, whereas others can be scientists working at a Danish university or in R&D in the private sector. • The evaluation is done on an individual basis and the reviewers are blind to each other's reviews and the gender of the applicants. • The evaluators will return an evaluation summary of each proposal and the corresponding review scores to the TALENT secretariat. • The secretariat makes a consensus score for each proposal based on the corresponding scores attributed by the individual expert reviewers. • Applicants will receive the panel's evaluation report and the overall score and be given five days to comment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two to three evaluators (selected to fit the specific programme areas/panels) pr. proposal • The TALENT secretariat • The TALENT secretariat
STEP 4: Final selection of candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A ranking of all applications based on the consensus scores (incl. evaluation summaries and review scores as provided by each of the reviewers) is handed over to the Faculty of Science Research Committee. • This forum will address any interdisciplinary elements and identify potential supervisors and co-supervisors across departments. • The committee will make a decision on which candidates to hire. • The candidates will be informed of the outcome, whether positive or negative. • Successful applicants will receive an actual offer of hire via email, which should be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Faculty of Science Research Committee, consisting of Deputy Heads from all departments • The TALENT secretariat • Information to selected and de-selected applicants

	accepted within the stated timeframe. It is therefore of the utmost importance that applicants regularly check their email in the period where offers are expected to be sent out (three to four months after the application deadline). ²	
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Criteria

Applicants will be judged on professional merits, scientific and technological quality of the proposed project, feasibility of the implementation and the potential impact of the proposed project. The review process takes into consideration the whole range of experience of the candidate. While focusing on their overall potential as researchers, their creativity and level of independence will also be considered. International and intersectorial experience will be seen positively in the evaluation. Please see the table with the evaluation criteria below.

Evaluation criteria table

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	
Excellence 50%	Scientific and innovative quality of the proposal 25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality and relevance of proposed research plan - Clear and relevant methodology - Realistic plans and contingency plans - Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary aspects, including intersectorial relevance - Quality/Innovative nature of the project (in relation to relevant state-of-the-art)
	Applicant 25%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualification and background of applicant (incl. non-academic work, international collaborative experience and career breaks) - Research experience and results (patents, publications, teaching and other results) - Collaboration with business partners (if relevant) - Independent thinking, creativity, leadership and mentoring abilities - Match between applicant and proposal
Impact 30%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential impact on fellows career - Potential to create long-term mutually beneficial collaborations in academia and/or non-academia - Appropriateness of dissemination, outreach and exploitation activities 	
Implementation 20%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality and match of proposed project and host research environment - Overall coherence, effectiveness and appropriateness of the work plan 	

Applications will be evaluated based on scores (cf. table below) and summary reports. Only applicants with a total score of minimum 4 will be considered for a position, as excellence in research is the primary goal of this program.

² A waiting list of 5-10 applicants will be established. If a person declines, the position will be offered to the next person on the waiting list.

Scoring Chart

Score	Descriptor	Explanation
5	Excellent	Section stands out with exceptional quality and meets all relevant aspects of the criteria
4	Good	Section is strong and meets the criteria well. Any shortcomings are minor.
3	Satisfactory	Section addresses the criteria well, although improvements in some elements are required
2	Below average	Section broadly addresses criteria, but has not been fully elaborated and there are several weaknesses
1	Poor	Section has several weaknesses and fails to address the criteria.

- **Weighted scoring:** each section of the proposal is scored and subsequently weighted according to the tables above. For transparency an example is given: a proposal scoring 4 and 4 in the two excellence sub-sections, 5 in impact and 3 in implementation would receive a score of 4.1 ($=0,25*4+0,25*4+0,3*5+0,2*3$). Weighing of scores by section (50%/30%/20%) is based on best practice as seen in e.g. Horizon 2020 and national funding schemes.
- **Scoring threshold:** to be accepted and enrolled the fellows and applications must be marked 'good to excellent', and thus their weighed score must exceed the threshold of 4. **Applicants under the threshold cannot re-apply.**

Career breaks

Attention will be paid to individual career paths and career interruptions, e.g. parental or sick leave and compulsory military service or inter-sectoral and non-academic mobility such as working for industry. Career breaks will not be penalized in the assessment procedure, i.e. an application will be evaluated only according to its merit. Career breaks can be valuable for the applicant's professional development; these may be considered by the reviewers as a positive point in the evaluation. The TALENT secretariat therefore encourages applicants, for whom it would be relevant, **to submit evidence-based/documented CVs.**

Redress

Applicants have the opportunity to utilise a redress procedure upon receiving their evaluation. Redress applications must be submitted within 14 days of receiving the evaluation. The procedure is as follows:

- The Research Committee will review redress cases and will recommend an appropriate course of action to the TALENT secretariat.
- If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of a given proposal will be re-evaluated.
- **This procedure is concerned with the evaluation and/or eligibility and admissibility checking process.**
- **The redress will not call into question the scientific or technical judgement of the external reviewers.**
- A re-evaluation **will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the final decision on whether to fund it or not.** This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on the other criteria.
- The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive and may be lower than the original score.
- **Only one request for redress per proposal will be considered by the committee.**
- All requests for redress will be treated in confidence and will have no impact on potential re-submissions.