Peer review handbook

Research project grant and starting grant
Natural and engineering sciences 2024

Contents

Foreword

The review process for applications submitted to the Scientific Council for Natural and Engineering Sciences of the Swedish Research Council is now underway. A prerequisite for achieving the best possible allocation of research funds is access to accurate information regarding all steps of the review process. This review handbook is intended to give you, as a reviewer, the basic support and reference material necessary to carry out your task.

The review handbook is organised according to the main steps of the review process. General guidelines, the fundamental principles of peer review and the policies specific to the Scientific Council for Natural and Engineering Sciences are available through links in the text.

In this context, I want to highlight that the main task of the Swedish Research Council is to support research of excellent quality, pushing the frontiers of knowledge. Thus, the main goal is to gain new scientific insights. In this regard, relevance to societal challenges, for instance, can never compensate for low scientific quality. I also want to emphasise that the Swedish Research Council pays special attention to how conflicts of interest and gender equality are handled. Avoiding irrelevant information during the review process is one important aspect of this. The Swedish Research Council is also concerned about the impact of bibliometric data, and it is the view of the Council that such numbers reflect the size of a scientific area and the popularity of the topic rather than scientific quality. Therefore, you are expected to look beyond quantitative indicators to identify the best science.

The work of reviewing grant applications is the foundation of the Scientific Council activities. Serving as a member of one of the Scientific Council review panels is an important commission of trust. My experience is that such a commission naturally involves a considerable amount of work, but the work is interesting and rewarding since it offers an overview of a broader area of science than we normally encounter in our daily lives as researchers. I hope you will appreciate the work in the review process. Your assessments will have a profound impact on the type and quality of research in natural and engineering sciences being performed in Sweden in the future.

Welcome as a reviewer for the Swedish Research Council!

Mattias Marklund
Secretary General
Natural and Engineering Sciences
Swedish Research Council

Introduction

This review handbook includes instructions for the assessment of applications for the general call for proposals in natural and engineering sciences. The following grants are available in the 2024 call; project grant and starting grant. The purpose of the research project grant is to give researchers the freedom to formulate by themselves the research concept, method and implementation, and to solve a specific research task within a limited period. The aim of the starting grant is to give junior researchers the opportunity to establish themselves as independent researchers in Sweden.

This handbook is designed to reflect the review process step by step. We want to make it easy for you as a panel member to find the information you need for the tasks to be carried out in each step.

New features in the review process 2024

Additional information regarding the applicant's competence and merits

A new contextualising part has been introduced in the application for project grants, which should be seen as a complement to the other parts of the application that deal with the applicant's competence. This part has previously only been included for starting grant applications. In this part, the applicant must describe how the merits that has been indicated in the CV and under "Publications and other research output" show the competence to carry out the proposed research.

Publications and other research outputs

The list of publications in the application is now called "Publications and other research outputs." It consists of two parts where the applicant must separate between publications and research outputs that are peer-reviewed and not peer-reviewed.

AI in the assessment of applications

Generative AI tools (ChatGPT or similar) must not be used in the scientific assessment of the applications. The assessment is a task that must be carried out by a specialist researcher who has been recruited based on their expertise in the area. On the other hand, there is no prohibition against using digital AI tools for tasks such as improving the language in written statements on applications, as long as this does not entail factual contents or the applicant's personal data being disseminated.

AI in applications

There is no prohibition against the applicant to use generative AI or other tools (digital or of another type) when they draw up the application. At present, they do not need to state whether they have used AI. Read the guidelines for the use of AI tools.

Grant types

Research project grant

The research project grant (complete call text here) may be used to cover all kinds of project-related costs, such as salaries, premises costs, running costs as well as depreciation costs. The active participation of the applicant in the project is assessed in relation to the proposed project whilst the employment must be at least 20 per cent of a full-time equivalent. Four years represent the standard and maximum grant period. The applicant may apply for a minimum of 400 000 SEK and maximum of 1.3 million SEK per year, resulting in a maximum of 5.2 million SEK over a four-year period.

Starting grant

The starting grant (complete call text here) is available for researchers with a doctoral degree awarded more than 2 years ago and up to 7 years ago. If the doctoral degree was awarded earlier, an applicant may be eligible to apply if special circumstances interrupted the period of active research. The active participation of the applicant in the project, and employment, must be at least 50 per cent of a full-time equivalent. The grant may be used to cover all kinds of project-related costs, such as salaries, premises costs, running costs as well as depreciation costs. The grant period is fixed at four years and the budget is a standard amount of 1,1 million SEK per year

Important starting points and principles

Peer review

The Swedish Research Council regards peer review as a guarantor that our support goes to research of the highest scientific quality in all scientific fields. The Board of the Swedish Research Council has formulated guidelines for peer review based on eight principles. Read the guidelines for peer review.

Conflict of interest

To avoid any conflict of interest situation, we have established strict guidelines. Read the Swedish Research Council’s conflict of interest policy and guidelines for managing conflicts of interest.

If you have a conflict of interest, you must not take part in the handling or assessment of that application during any part of the process. The following applies for panel members:

- Any application where you are the applicant or participating researcher must not be reviewed by your review panel.
- Any application where a close relative of yours is the applicant (does not apply to participating researchers) must not be reviewed by your review panel.

You are obliged to notify any conflict of interest for all applications handled by your review panel.

Gender equality

The Swedish Research Council aims to ensure that women and men have the same success rates and receive the same average grant amounts, taking into account the nature of the research and the form of support. The review panel shall calculate the approval rate in the proposal and refer to, and possibly comment on, how this impact the gender equality.

Confidentiality and integrity

Handle the applications and the review of them in a confidential manner:

- Do not disseminate documents that you get access to.
- Delete documents that relate to the review work after completing the task.
- Do not speak to outsiders about what was discussed during the review.
- Do not use information in the application for personal gain.
- Let the Swedish Research Council personnel manage all communications with applicants.

Applications from retired researchers or foreign guest professors

Retired researchers or foreign guest professors who are applying for grants should be assessed on the same basis as other applicants. All applicants must be employed at least 20 per cent of a full-time equivalent by the administrating organisation when the grant period starts. By signing the application, the head of department vouches that the applicant can carry out the research at the employment level required.

Roles in the review process

Chair and vice chair

The role of the chair is to lead and coordinate the work of the panel. The vice chair’s task is to stand in for the chair of the review panel in situations where they cannot or should not take part, such as when the chair has a conflict of interest. Normally, the chair does not review any applications, but the recommendation is to read all the applications reviewed by the panel in order to acquire the necessary information.

Panel member

As a panel member, you may be a reviewer or a rapporteur. In both roles, you shall read and grade the applications ahead of the review panel meeting. As

rapporteur, you are responsible for starting the discussion of the application at the meeting, and for writing a final statement on the application after the meeting.

Observer

An observer from the scientific council will monitor and safeguard the quality of the review panel's work. The observer reports back to the scientific council and the secretary general responsible after the review.

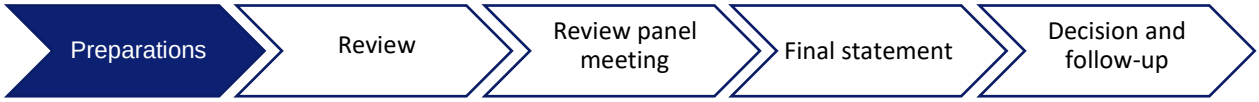
Swedish Research Council personnel

The research officer and senior research officer ensure that the rules and procedure established for the process are complied with. They also support the chair and panel members in the review process.

Secretary general for scientific council

The secretary general has overall responsibility for the review process and for questions of a scientific nature. The secretary general also handles any complaints following the grant decision.

Preparations



Prisma

As a reviewer, you work in the web-based system Prisma. The first thing to do is to create an account in Prisma, if you do not already have one. Make sure all your account information and personal data are correct. You must also decide whether or not you want to receive remuneration for your review work. Follow the instructions in Prisma's user manual.

If you have any technical questions and cannot find the answer in Prisma's user manual, please contact the research officer responsible.

How we allocate applications to review panels

Once the call has closed, the applications are allocated to the review panels. Usually, each application is allocated to the group the applicant has listed as their first choice. However, if the chair considers that an application should be reviewed by another panel, it might be moved. An application may also be moved due to a conflict of interest.

Reporting any conflict of interest

Once you have been notified that the applications are accessible in Prisma, you must report any conflict of interest. You should therefore check who the project leader and participating researchers are for all applications allocated to the review panel. Please contact the Swedish Research Council personnel and the review panel chair if you have any questions about conflict of interest. If you discover later on in the process that you have a conflict of interest, this must be reported as soon as possible to the chair and the administrator responsible.

Reporting level of scientific competence

In order to facilitate the allocation of applications to reviewers, you are asked to report your level of scientific competence for assessing each application at the same time as reporting your conflicts of interest. The scientific competence is reported on a three-grade scale: low, medium or high. Please note that you may be asked to review an application even though you reported a competence level of medium or low.

Reviewers and rapporteurs

When all the re-allocations between review panels have been completed and all review panel members have reported any conflict of interest, the chair will allocate the applications to members of the review panel. Each application shall be read by at least three reviewers, one of which is given the role of rapporteur. The rapporteur is responsible for presenting the application for discussion at the meeting. As rapporteur, you are also responsible for summarising the review panel's final statement on the application after the meeting.

Technical preparations

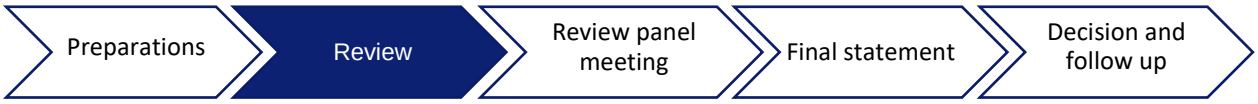
The review panel meeting will be held via the digital platform Zoom. Download Zoom Desktop client to your computer before the meeting.

Make sure you have access to a stable network connection. Your computer also needs to have a built-in or external camera and microphone. We strongly recommend that you use a headset with a microphone, as this provides the best sound, both for yourself and for other participants. If you do not have access to one, you may buy one at the Swedish Research Council's expense, at a maximum cost of 50 EUR or equivalent. We also recommend that you use a large screen next to your laptop computer, if possible.

Preparations: summary

What you need to do	When
☐ Provide account information in Prisma.	Before the first digital meeting
☐ Download Zoom and check your technical equipment.	Before the first digital meeting
☐ Reporting any conflict of interest and state competence level in Prisma.	Before the deadline in Prisma

Review



During the review period, you shall:

- attend the start-up meeting,
- read the applications allocated to you,
- write assessments and preliminary statements,
- grade and rank the applications you have reviewed.

Once the review process has ended, you will get access to all members' assessments in Prisma. Prepare for the review panel meeting discussion by reading the other panel members' assessments. During this stage, a first sifting of the applications is also carried out.

Start-up meeting

A start-up meeting is held shortly after applications have been allocated and you have received your review tasks. The purpose of the meeting is to be informed about the guidelines and principles that adhere to the review, and to within the panel discuss important aspects regarding the individual review.

Individual review

Each application is reviewed and graded by three members of the review panel: one rapporteur and two further reviewers. If you are the rapporteur, you shall write a *preliminary statement.* This shall consist of a numerical grade and detailed written comments on all evaluation criteria. The comments shall highlight strengths and weaknesses in the project described.

In the role as reviewer, you shall write an *assessment*. The assessment shall consist of a numerical grade and written comments, but the comments do not have to be detailed. Your notes will be a support in the discussion during the review panel meeting, and also after the meeting, when the rapporteur writes the final statement. You should therefore get used to ending your review of each application by listing the strengths and weaknesses that your assessment are based on.

Deviations in the application

If you suspect that the content of an application does not follow good research practice, please inform the Swedish Research Council personnel as soon as possible. Continue with the review unless we notify otherwise. The Swedish Research Council is responsible for further investigation in cases of deviations in the application.

Irrelevant information

Base your assessment only on the contents of the application itself. Irrelevant information must not impact on the assessment. Disregard facts that you believe you know despite them not being included in the application. Other examples are various types of rumours about for example lack of research ethics or assumptions that someone else wrote the application.

Ask for advice from others only in exceptional cases

You must not disseminate information about the applications or applicants outside the review panel. Only in exceptional cases may it be justified to ask a colleague about any specific information, for example relating to the use of statistics or new research findings, on condition that you do not show them the application itself.

Ethical aspects

The applicant shall state whether there are any requirements for permits and approvals for the research planned. If there are such requirements, the applicant shall also describe how the permits and approvals will be obtained. If parts of the research will be conducted abroad, the applicant must be able to describe how this impact any requirement for permits or approvals. Necessary permits and approvals must be in place when the research begins. The assessment of legal and formal requirements is a part of the feasibility criterion.

The assessment of ethical aspects also includes evaluating potential ethical concerns with respect to the proposed research. The evaluation of ethical concerns is part of the criterion for the scientific quality of the project.

Sex and gender perspectives

The assessment of scientific quality includes scrutinising how sex and gender perspectives are included in the applications. The applicant shall justify their answer, irrespective of whether it is relevant or not. Read the instructions for applicants.

Project budget details

There is no need to scrutinise the project budget details. The Swedish Research Council grants typically only part-finance a project. The applicant awarded a grant will have a large degree of freedom to use the funds in the way that best serves the overall purpose of the project.

Deductible time

During the review process, you must take into account any deductible time that the applicant has reported in their application. The merits of the applicants shall be valued considering the deductible time. In this aspect, a history of illness, parental leave and similar reasons for deductible time must not affect the grades given for feasibility.

Evaluating research outputs

The assessment of scientific merits should be based on a broad consideration of research achievements, including published papers, preprints and other research outputs listed by the applicant. Bibliometric data included in the application (publication and citation data) shall be used by the experts in the scientific area as part of a wider consideration of scientific merits relevant for the project proposed. Bibliometrics represent a deceptively simple way to compare merits between applicants, and quantitative indexes such as H-index, must be used with caution in the assessment. The numbers could be influenced more by the size of the scientific community and popularity of the research field than by the quality of the published research. The contributions of co-authors must also be factored in. Hence, the bibliometric data shall never be used as the sole basis for an assessment of the applicant's qualifications and as a reviewer you are expected to see beyond the numbers offered by bibliometrics to judge both the applicants' merits and the quality of the proposed scientific plans.

Assessment criteria and grading scales

You shall assess the scientific quality of the application based on four basic criteria:

- Scientific quality of the project
- Novelty and originality
- Merits of the applicant
- Feasibility

The purpose of using several basic criteria is to achieve a multi-faceted assessment. The criteria are evaluated on a seven-degree or a three-degree scale.

Grading scales

The assessment of the scientific quality of the application, novelty and originality, merits of the applicant is done on a seven-degree scale.
Please note that the grading scale is an ordinal scale, where it is not possible to specify distances between the different values.

Grade	Explanation
7	Outstanding Exceptionally strong application with negligible weaknesses
6	Excellent Very strong application with negligible weaknesses
5	Very good to excellent Very strong application with minor weaknesses
4	Very good Strong application with minor weaknesses
3	Good Some strengths, but also moderate weaknesses
2	Weak A few strengths, but also at least one major weakness or several minor weaknesses
1	Poor Very few strengths, and numerous major weaknesses

Feasibility grade

The assessment of feasibility is done on a three-degree scale.

Grade	Explanation
3	Feasible
2	Partly feasible
1	Not feasible

For all criteria, you can also mark “Insufficient”, if you consider that the application lacks sufficient information to allow you to make a reasonable assessment of the criterion. Please note that any such mark should only be used in the individual review before the review panel meeting, and not in the final grade.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of grades during previous year according to the seven-grade scale for the three basic criteria (scientific quality of the proposed research, novelty and originality, merits for the applicant) and for the overall assessment. The distribution of grades should, unless the applications reviewed

are of exceptionally good or weak nature, not differ significantly from previous years' assessments.

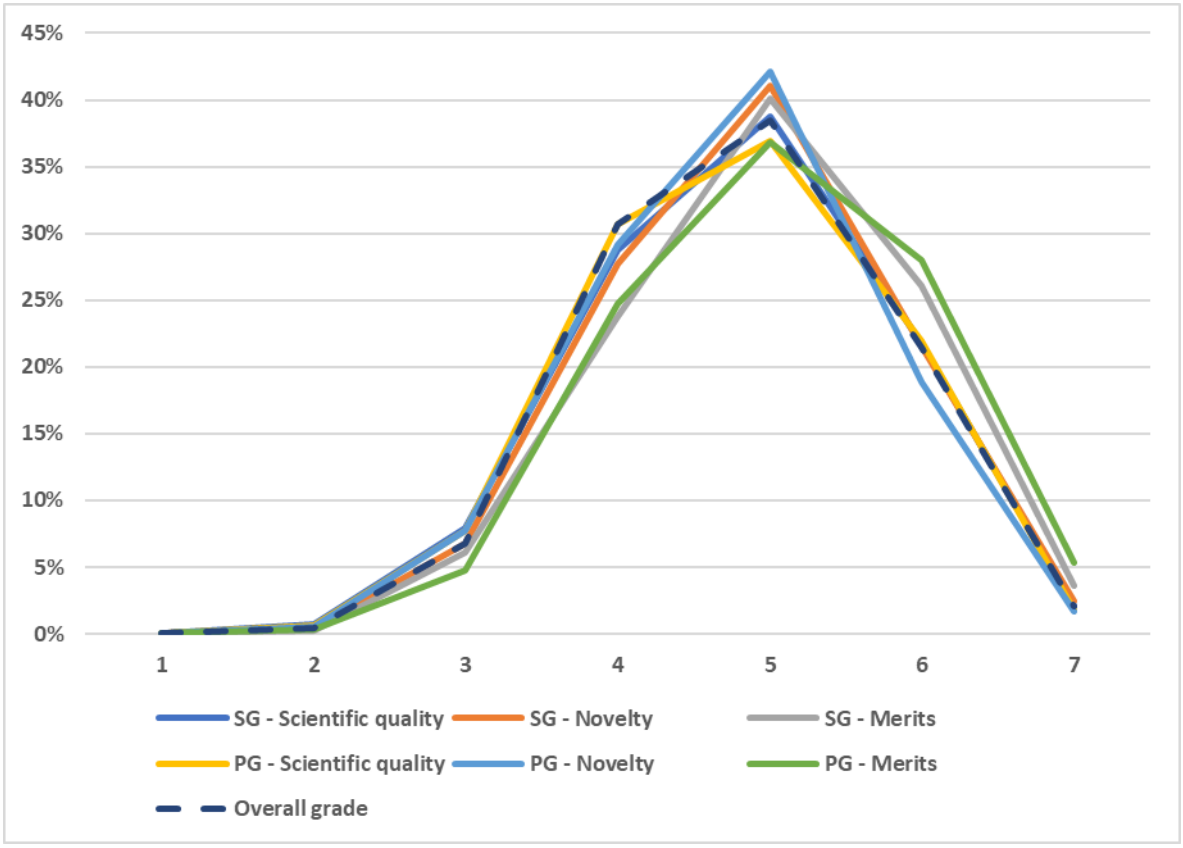


Figure 1. Distribution of grades for the criteria scientific quality, novelty and originality and merits of the applicant for project grants (PG) and starting grants (SG) for applications within natural and engineering sciences 2023. Distribution of the overall grade for all applications for project grants and starting grants is indicated in the black, dashed line**.**

Overall grade

Weigh together the various subsidiary criteria into an overall grade according to the seven-grade scale above. The overall grade is not the same as an average grade or a summary of the subsidiary evaluations. It should reflect the scientific quality of the application as a whole. In normal cases, however, a strongly positive evaluation of only one criterion cannot outweigh other weaknesses of an application when weighed together

Please use the guiding questions we have produced for each criterion to support the assessment of the application.

Guiding questions

Scientific quality of the project (1–7)

Assess the quality of the project’s research question and method, and also its potential for future research.

- To what extent does the proposed research address important challenges in relation to existing knowledge and ongoing research worldwide?
- To what extent is the project structured so that it can result in significant progress in addressing these challenges?
- When applicable, how are issues relating to sex and gender perspectives justified and handled in the research plan?
- When applicable, are the ethical considerations for the proposed project properly described and addressed? Does the applicant adequately consider potential suffering of humans and animals, and the balance of risk and value to nature and/or society?

Novelty and originality (1–7)

Assess how well the applicant develops and implements new theories, concepts, methods, and questions.

- To what extent are the objectives novel, original and beyond the state of the art?
- To what extent does the research involve development of novel concepts and approaches, or development between or across disciplines?

Merits of the applicant (1–7)

Assess the applicant's merits and competence in relation to the proposed project. For project grants, the assessment of the complementary expertise of the participating researchers is only of relevance for the grading of the feasibility of the project.

- How significant is the applicant's scientific productivity, impact and other merits in a national and international perspective, in relation to the research area, and the applicant's career age? Here the emphasis should be on recent (the last 8 years) scientific achievements.

- To what extent does the applicant have the required scientific expertise and capacity to successfully execute the project?

- **Only for starting grants:** To what extent does the applicant provide evidence of creative independent thinking?

- **Only for starting grants:** Has the applicant shown the ability to work in new (international) research environments, for instance during postdoctoral work?

Feasibility (1–3)

Assess the feasibility of the proposed project. An application must be graded as 2 or 3 for feasibility in order to be funded.

- To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible considering the degree to which the proposed research is high gain?

- To what extent are the proposed research methodology and working arrangements (including participating researchers if relevant, and access to infrastructure, equipment and other resources) appropriate to achieve the goals of the project?
- To what extent are the proposed timescales, resources and applicant commitment adequate and properly justified?
- Does the applicant adequately consider relevant legal and formal requirements for the proposed research, for example ethical permits?

- **Only for starting grants**: Does the host institution's support letter show that the research environment is adequate for the applicant and for carrying out the research project?

Overall assessment (1–7)

The above subsidiary criteria are weighed together into an overall grade, the overall grade is formed without a pre-determined numerical weighing of the basic criteria. As a guidance, the scientific quality of the proposed research and the merits of the applicant are the two most important criteria whilst novelty and originality should be given lower weight. The feasibility shall be weighed into the overall rating of the application if it deviates from the grade "Feasible".

Ranking applications

Rank every application in relation to the other applications you have reviewed. The ranking is a supplement to the grading when the review panel's applications are compared with each other. You shall rank all the applications you have been allocated, both those that you are rapporteur for, and the other ones you have reviewed. Ahead of the review panel meeting, the individual rankings of all the reviewers are weighed together into a preliminary ranking factor for each application. For instructions, please see Prisma's user manual.

It is very important to complete the ranking in time for the applications to be sifted before the meeting. At the same time, the ranking should not be carried out too early, as it might happen that you are allocated further applications to review at a later stage (for example if a conflict of interest is discovered late).

External reviewers

External review may come into question if the scientific character of an application means that the joint competency of the review panel is not sufficient for a thorough review, or if the conflict of interest situation within the panel makes an application difficult to evaluate. The external reviewers only provide written motivation for each subsidiary criterion, not grades. In normal cases, the administrator responsible at the Swedish Research Council will contact the external reviewers.

Sifting

A proportion of the applications with the lowest grades are sifted, which means that they are not discussed in detail at the review panel meeting, and therefore do not receive any specific written comments on the grades. This process enables more in-depth discussion of the applications that have a reasonable chance of being funded.

The chair and vice chair, together with the observer and Swedish Research Council personnel, produce a proposal for the applications to be sifted. The proposed list is based on the review panels' joint preliminary ranking of the applications. The chair identifies a break-off point on the list where it is reasonable to assume that applications below the break-off point will not be considered for funding.

The chair also identifies any applications that, despite having a low ranking, should still be discussed at the meeting, for example where the rankings or gradings by the three reviewers differ considerably.

Around 50-70 per cent of the applications shall be discussed at the review panel meeting, but the exact percentage may vary depending on the number of applications in the panel. The sifting should be carried out with the gender distribution of the applicants in mind, in order to ensure that the process is not applied differentially for women and for men.

Ahead of the meeting, you as a member will read the sifting proposal, including proposed grades. You can then decide whether any of the sifted applications should be brought up for discussion at the meeting nevertheless.

More readers of applications around the threshold for funding

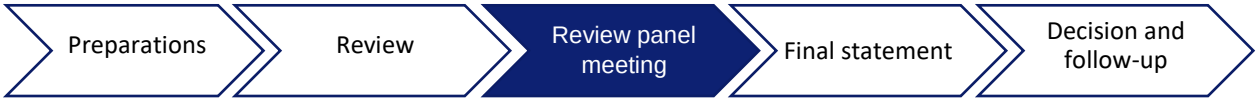
After the sifting procedure, you may be asked to read a few more applications which in the preliminary ranking end up around the threshold for funding, or where the individual assessments from the reviewers differ significantly. The aim is to increase the quality of assessment for the applications on the threshold of being funded. Additional readers may also be appointed between the days of the panel meeting in order to address specific questions regarding a few applications; for instance, to better define the panel's opinion on scientific quality or novelty when opinions between the initial three reviewers differ significantly.

Review: summary

What you need to do	When
☐ Grade and write detailed comments (preliminary statement) on all applications for which you are the rapporteur.	Before the deadline

What you need to do	When
☐ Grade and write comments (assessment) on all applications for which you are a reviewer.	Before the deadline
☐ Rank all applications allocated to you.	Before the deadline
☐ Prepare for the meeting by reading other panel members' comments and any external assessments.	Before the meeting
☐ Prepare a brief presentation of strengths and weaknesses in the applications for which you are the rapporteur.	Before the meeting
☐ Check the list of sifted applications and decide whether any of the sifted applications should be brought up for discussion at the meeting.	Before the meeting
☐ Contact the Swedish Research Council personnel and the chair if you discover during the review that you do, after all, have a conflict of interest with any of the applications, or if you discover any problem with an application.	As soon as possible
☐ Contact the Swedish Research Council personnel if you suspect any deviation from ethical guidelines or good research practice.	As soon as possible

Review panel meeting



Sifted applications

At the start of the review panel meeting, you as a member have the opportunity to bring up applications that have been sifted, so that they are included among those discussed at the meeting.

At the end of the review panel meeting, sifted applications will be given grades for each criterion and a standard final statement. The separate grades will be suggested by the rapporteur, based on the individual reviews, and decided on by the review panel.

Discussion of applications

The chair leads the discussion of the applications that have not been sifted. As a rule, the rapporteur begins by presenting an application's strengths and weaknesses. Thereafter, the other members give their assessments. The chair is responsible for ensuring any external assessments are included in the discussion.

For each application discussed at the meeting, the panel shall agree on subsidiary grades and an overall grade. The rapporteur shall take notes to support the wording of the panel's final statement.

All applications shall be treated equally

The review panel is responsible for ensuring each application is assessed on its own merits.

- Irrelevant information shall not be discussed.
- The panel's applications shall compete with each other on equal terms.
- No application shall be given a higher or lower grade because it belongs within a certain subject area.
- The panel shall not carry out any quota-based allocation between the scientific disciplines included in the panel.
- An application is guaranteed a new assessment under each call – even if it has been submitted in conjunction with previous calls.
- A balance shall be found in the time the panel allocates to each application.

Conflict of interest during the review meeting

Persons who have a conflict of interest in relation to an application shall leave the room or the digital meeting while the application is discussed. A person who has a conflict of interest in relation to an application shall not take part in the discussion of that particular application. If you discover any possible conflict of

interest (your own or another's) during the meeting, you should bring this up with the chair and the Swedish Research Council personnel in private.

Prioritisation

Once all applications have been discussed, and the panel has agreed on a joint grade for each application, a prioritisation shall be carried out of the applications with the highest scientific quality. This prioritisation shall conclude with the review panel's proposal for applications to be awarded grants within the panel's budgetary framework. The panel should also draw up a priority list with reserves, covering the applications that fall immediately outside the panel's budgetary framework, i.e. one list for research project grants (6 applications), and one for starting grants (2 applications).

If there are no significant differences in terms of quality between applications, the panel shall strive for equal approval rates for women and for men during the prioritisation. Exception from this can be made if the proportion of one gender is 20 per cent or less among the applicants, and this gender has a higher approval rate.

Amount awarded

Funding will be discussed after all applications have been reviewed and ranked. The Scientific Council will assign separate budgets for the categories project grants and starting grants to the review panels. Each panel will be given a budget frame per year for the years 2025-2028 and the review panel must not exceed the given budget frame for any year.

The chair, vice chair and Swedish Research Council personnel will make a funding proposal, which will subsequently be discussed by the panel. As a guideline, the highest ranked projects should receive larger grants.

It is common practice for project grants not to be granted the full amount applied for. The average grant amount for project grants last year was 950 000 SEK per year. The average amount awarded may differ slightly between different review panels reflecting the different character of research to be supported. The amount awarded to starting grants is a standard amount of 1.1 million SEK per year.

Nomination of an awarded grant for research communication

The panel is prompted to nominate one of the awarded grants for research communication efforts. This project should be of general interest to the public and decision-makers, and suitable for communicating the usefulness of researcher-initiated fundamental research.

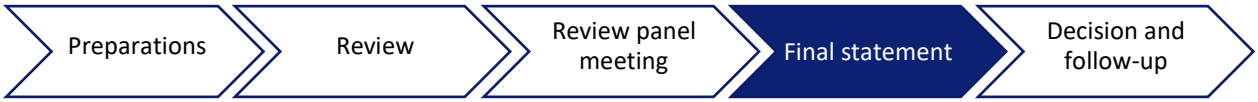
Feedback

In conjunction with the review panel meeting, the panel members are encouraged to provide feedback on the review work carried out. We will ask for comments on various aspects of the process

Review panel meeting: summary

What you need to do	When
☐ Agree on grades for sifted applications.	At the review panel meeting
☐ Agree on subsidiary grades and an overall grade for each application discussed.	At the review panel meeting
☐ Agree on a proposal for the applications to be awarded funding within the review panel's budgetary framework.	At the review panel meeting
☐ Agree on a prioritisation list with reserves.	At the review panel meeting

Final statement



The rapporteur writes a final statement

The discussion at the review panel meeting forms the basis for the review panel's joint statement. The final statement is the end product of the review process to which each application is submitted. It forms the Swedish Research Council's basis for decision-making in the matter, and is also sent to the applicant in conjunction with the grant decision being published. It is therefore a central document, and a high-quality final statement is to the benefit of all parties involved in the review.

You are responsible for writing final statements on the applications for which you have been the rapporteur. After the meeting, you shall modify the *preliminary statement* that you wrote before the meeting so that it reflects the review panel's joint assessment of the application. In addition to your notes from the meeting, the assessments from the other reviewers and external assessments will be available to you in Prisma for reference when you write the final statement. You usually have one week in which to write final statements following the end of the review panel meeting.

Only applications that have been the subject of discussion at the meeting receive a full final statement. The sifted applications are instead handled by the Swedish Research Council personnel. These applications receive a standard final statement describing the sifting process and gradings for the subsidiary criteria and a summarising grade.

The chair reviews all final statements

Once the final statements are completed, they are checked by the chair and by the Swedish Research Council personnel. The chair is responsible for ensuring the final statements on the applications discussed at the review panel meeting reflect the panel's discussion, and that the written justifications correspond to the grades. In conjunction with the chair's review, you may be asked to supplement or adjust a final statement.

General advice and recommendations on final statements

The final statement shall reflect the review panel's joint and overall assessment, including any external assessments.

Completing the final statements, you must

- focus on describing the main strengths and weaknesses of the application.
- ensure the written justifications correspond to the grading – feel free to use the definitions in the grading scale in your written comments.
- consider the guiding questions for the different assessment criteria.
- write concisely, but not too briefly – the content is more important than the length of the text.
- comment on whether the review panel has weighed in deviations from the Swedish Research Council's general instructions in the assessment of the application.
- be constructive and factual in your comments.

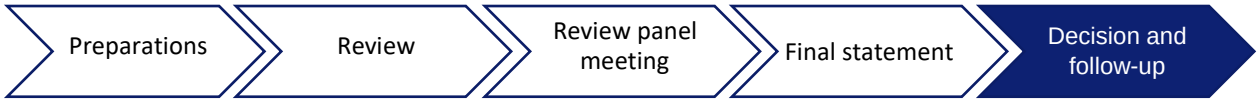
Completing the final statements, you must not

- make a long summary of the contents of the application or the merits of the applicant.
- introduce personal comments – the final statement shall constitute the review panel's joint assessment.
- state quantifiable data.
- state any personal information about the applicant.
- write any recommendation whether to refuse or approve an application in the final statement.
- comment on whether an application belongs in the review panel, as all the applications allocated to the panel shall be assessed.

Final statement: summary

What you need to do	When
☐ Write the review panel's final statement in Prisma on the applications for which you are the rapporteur.	One week after the review panel meeting
☐ Supplement final statements following review by the chair if you have been asked to do so.	After the review panel meeting
☐ Submit receipts for any expenses to the panel's research officer responsible.	

Decision and follow-up



Re-distribution

The Scientific Council reserves part of its budget for re-distribution to mediate potential imbalances in the review process. The final statements, grades and ranking lists will serve as the main supporting documentation for the complementary decisions.

Decision

The Scientific Council for Natural and Engineering Sciences will make the formal decision of funding. The decision is based on the priority lists (including reserves) and the review panels' final statements. The decision is then published shortly thereafter on vr.se and in Prisma, and the applicants are also informed of the outcome.

Follow-up

Following each review, internal follow-up is also carried out of the process and the outcome. An important starting point for this follow-up is the feedback you provide as a panel member in conjunction with the review panel meeting. We also produce statistics of various kinds.

Complaints and questions

If you as a review panel member receive any question about the assessment of an individual application, you must refer this to us. The Swedish Research Council personnel make sure that all complaints or requests for clarification are registered and handled by the secretary general responsible in consultation with the chair of the review panel. The chair will contact you as necessary.

Decision and follow-up: summary

What you need to do	When
☐ Refer any questions about the assessment of individual applications to the Swedish Research Council personnel.	As they arise

What you need to do	When
☐ Be prepared to assist the chair and the secretary general responsible in the event of any questions.	As they arise