

Scoring scale for peer reviewers

The reviewer scores changed in 2011 to a numerical scale from 1 to 6. The mapping of old to new scores is as follows:

Score	Equivalent previous grade	Description
6 (Outstanding)	A+	The proposal is outstanding in terms of its potential scientific merit.
5 (Excellent)	A+	The proposal is excellent in terms of its potential scientific merit.
4 (Good)	A	The proposal is important as it has considerable potential merit.
3 (Satisfactory)	A-	The proposal has significant potential scientific merit but is not of a consistently high quality.
2 (Fair/Some weaknesses)	B	The proposal will add to understanding and is worthy of support, but is of lesser quality or urgency than more highly rated proposals. Such proposals are unlikely to have a significant influence on the development of the research area.
1 (Poor)	Reject	The proposal is flawed in its scientific approach, or is repetitious of other work, or otherwise judged not worth pursuing; or which, though possibly having sound objectives, appears seriously defective in its methodology.

All academic peer review forms now have four core criteria (below) plus up to two scheme-specific ones. The scores on the form for each criterion are also on a scale from 1 to 6, where 6 is 'Outstanding'. If you feel unable to assess a proposal against a particular criterion, you can also indicate this by ticking 'Unable to assess.' For research proposals the core criteria are as follows:

- Assessment criterion 1 - Originality; potential contribution to knowledge
- Assessment criterion 2 - Research design and methods
- Assessment criterion 3 - Value for money
- Assessment criterion 4 - Outputs, dissemination and impact.

Non-academic ('user') reviewers assess research proposals according to the following criteria:

- Assessment criterion 1 - Likely importance of research to potential users
- Assessment criterion 2 - Timeliness of the outcomes for potential users
- Assessment criterion 3 - Effectiveness of plans for involving potential users and disseminating results to them
- Assessment criterion 4 - Outputs, dissemination and impact.

However, you are also invited to score the scientific merit of proposals (see above) if you wish.

The overall score descriptions for user reviewers are as follows:

Grade	Previous user grades	Description
High	High	Research of high importance to users of research, for example, of such novelty or timeliness and promise that a significant contribution to policy or practice is likely.
Worthy	Moderate	Research that will add to understanding and is worthy of support but which may not be of such relevance or urgency as to have a significant influence on policy or practice.
Reject	Low/None	Research which is flawed in its proposed contribution to policy or practice or is repetitious of other work.

Proposals receiving an average reviewer score of below 4.5 (equivalent to A previously) are normally rejected without referral to the Grants Assessment Panels (GAPs) in responsive mode. All proposals with an average score of 4.5 or above are forwarded to the Panels for consideration.

Scoring scale for Panel Introducers

Panel Introducers now score proposals on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 is an exceptionally strong proposal. The following table summarises the meaning of the new scores for our responsive mode research grants and career development schemes based on scientific quality, and the mapping of old grades to new scores. However, all assessment criteria should be carefully considered before you arrive at an overall score. Please use the form to note any comments you might have about any aspect of the proposal, even though there are no specific sub-sections on the form. Other schemes, such as Knowledge Exchange Opportunities, have different score definitions according to different criteria. If you are asked to assess proposals to calls where the assessment criteria are distinct from those given below you will be provided with separate guidance.

Please note that you may on occasion be asked to make assessments as Introducer where the proposals have not previously been out to peer review, for example in the annual Hong Kong Bilateral Small Grants call. The following scoring scale still applies in such cases.

Introducer scores	Equivalent previous Assessor grades	Score description based on scientific quality. <i>All assessment criteria should be considered before arriving at an overall score.</i>
10	A1 (H)	Exceptional proposals which are of outstanding scientific merit, i.e., of such innovation, novelty or timeliness that they are highly likely to make an exceptional scientific contribution and/or greatly enhance the development of the applicant's academic career.
9	A1 (L)	Outstanding proposals which are of excellent scientific merit, ie, of such innovation, novelty or timeliness that they are likely to make an outstanding scientific contribution and/or greatly enhance the development of the applicant's academic career.
8	A2 (H)	Excellent proposals which are of significant value, and are highly likely to make a very important scientific contribution and/or will significantly enhance the development of the applicant's academic career.
7	A2 (L)	Very good proposals which are of significant value, and are likely to make a very important scientific contribution and/or will significantly enhance the development of the applicant's academic career.
6	A3 (H)	Good proposals which are of considerable value, and have the potential to make an important scientific contribution and/or will seriously promote the development of the applicant's academic career.
5	A3 (L)	Good proposals which are of considerable value, and have the potential to make a valuable scientific contribution and/or will seriously promote the development of the applicant's academic career.
4	A4	Proposals which are of value in their scientific contribution and/or may augment the development of the applicant's academic career.
3	A5	Proposals which offer some value in the potential scientific contribution of the proposal, but which may not be of a consistently high quality and/or are unlikely to enhance the development of the applicant's academic career.
2	Beta	Proposals which will add to understanding and are worthy of support, but which are of lesser quality or urgency than more highly rated proposals and would not greatly enhance the development of the applicant's academic career.
1	Reject	Proposals which are flawed in their scientific approach, or are repetitious of other work, or otherwise judged not to be worth pursuing, or which, though possibly having sound objectives, appear seriously defective at a technical level.