**PHD FELLOWSHIP: SCORING DESCRIBERS CRITERION “CANDIDATE” (PRESELECTION)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Fair/Reasonable</td>
<td>Good/Very good</td>
<td>Excellent/Outstanding</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1.a. Study results (academic education)**

In the 'Study narrative' section in the application, candidates can refer to evidence of having distinguished themselves during their studies. One can refer to study results (grades, ranking, percentiles), upward trends during course of education, particular situations that can have (positively/negatively) influenced the study trajectory; also to results of additional studies/diplomas, (bachelor or) master thesis score, specific classes successfully attended, or other specific assets. Depending on whether the master studies are already concluded, the narrative should be supplemented with master or bachelor percentiles (referring to their university study group), provided by the candidates. Students from non-Flemish universities should provide either a percentile score (if available), or at least their rank within their study group (if available). In addition, detailed course scores should be added. Bachelor percentiles in particular should, if possible, be complemented by intermediate master study results. These quantitative indicators should be used to complement the assessment based on the study narrative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No scoring possibility</th>
<th>The academic trajectory and study results do not stand out (maybe at the head of the pack within study group, but below average in the applicant population).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rather good academic trajectory and study results, situated well above average and at the subtop in the study group, as evidenced by the study narrative and by specific grades, percentiles or ranking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Good to very good) academic trajectory and study results situated in the (broad) top of the study group, as evidenced by the study narrative and by specific grades, percentiles or ranking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top student with an excellent/outstanding academic trajectory and study results, as evidenced by the study narrative and by specific grades, percentiles or ranking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 1.b. Motivation and substantiation of relevant competences of the candidate

Does the application ("motivation statement") reveal a proper motivation and research interests? Assess the candidate’s (present as well as developing) scientific background and competences (including e.g. experimental skills, presentation or writing skills, commitment/perseverance, ...) in relation to the proposed project and to the requirements for a PhD researcher (strategically thinking and innovation oriented) in general.

Assess further evidence in terms of a range of (passed as well as planned) scientific activities, experiences and (where applicable) achievements that may be relevant for this application. These may relate to the academic education or extracurricular activities, (ongoing or finished) thesis (master or advanced master), or (PhD) research already started. Assess --passed or planned-- activities and experiences such as (e.g.) dedicated training, internships, presentations, collaborations, international contacts, mobility. For PhD fellows strategic basic research (SB), intersectoral mobility (e.g. internships and/or research stays in an industrial R&D environment) and (development of) entrepreneurial and innovation skills are an asset as well. (Intermediate) scientific results, publications, software, data, prototypes and any other meaningful scientific output and achievements may also be taken into account, as well as scientific recognition (e.g. thesis awards).

The assessment should take into account what might be expected from a last year master student vs. from a candidate with some scientific seniority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No scoring possibility</th>
<th>One or more of the following items apply:</th>
<th>All of the following items apply:</th>
<th>Requirements as in “good/very good”, AND</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ Expertise and skills apparently are not in line with what should be expected from a PhD student strategic basic research. Some crucial competences are missing and likely not to be acquired.</td>
<td>□ The application reveals fair/reasonable motivation regarding development towards a researcher. Less convincing evidence of (past and planned) activities and experiences.</td>
<td>□ The application reveals a proper/strong motivation and research interests. This is evidenced by relevant (past/planned) activities, and experiences (e.g. training, internships, presentations, collaborations, international contacts, mobility, ...) . □ Relevant scientific background and competences to carry out PhD research may have been acquired or are being built up (including e.g. experimental skills, presentation or writing skills, commitment/perseverance, ...). □ Some first achievements (of master thesis/started PhD research...) may be an asset, e.g. (intermediate) results, publications, software, data, prototypes or other output, scientific recognition as by e.g. thesis awards, ...</td>
<td>□ the candidate has substantiated to have actively acquired all proper competences to successfully conduct PhD research. Clear plan to further enhance these capacities, including intersectoral mobility and entrepreneurial/innovation skills. Reveals clear motivation and drive.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## PHD FELLOWSHIP SCORING DESCRIPTORS CRITERION “PROJECT” (PRESELECTION + INTERVIEW)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>Unacceptable</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Weak</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

### 2.a Scientific quality, relevance and challenge, originality

A PhD project is scientifically challenging and relies on a proper and focused research question. It should significantly contribute to the current international state-of-the-art. To what extent is the proposal original and will it generate knowledge that goes beyond the state-of-the-art (e.g., novel theories, concepts or approaches, new methods, ...)?

#### One or more of the following items apply:
- □ The project is **out of scope**: it does not comply with the scope of the panel it was submitted to. (preselection only).
- □ Project lacks an intellectual (PhD-worthy) challenge: an in-depth research question is missing.

#### One or more of the following items apply:
- □ Research question and challenge limited or less relevant;
- □ the research objectives lack focus. PhD worthiness is on the low side;
- □ the project is rather a catch-up effort relative to the state-of-the-art.

#### One or more of the following items apply:
- □ Scientifically relevant project, rather high quality, and sufficiently challenging as PhD-research. The research is less well focused;
- □ the project brings less pronounced added value to international state-of-the-art.

#### All of the following items apply:
- □ Original and significant contribution to the international state of the art;
- □ high-quality basic research, with significant scientific challenges (doctoral level).

#### All of the following items apply:
- □ Highly ambitious and original project of potentially groundbreaking nature and large scientific impact;
- □ very high level of scientific risks. Clear inventive and challenging ideas, novel concepts and strategies.

### 2.b Quality of the research methodology and feasibility of the project

To what extent is the proposed research methodology appropriate to achieve the goals laid down in the research project? To what extent is the outlined scientific approach feasible, bearing in mind a personal grant with a duration of four years? Finally the fit in the research team may be of importance (guidance and access to expertise).

#### One or more of the following items apply:
- □ Quality of research approach and planning is below par;
- □ Research activities are too limited for a four-year grant period;
- □ Project not feasible because of too many planned activities.

#### One or more of the following items apply:
- □ Methodology and planning are flawed. Intrinsic feasibility is low, or the objectives are formulated too vaguely to evaluate feasibility.
- □ Project does not fit to an individual PhD project.
- □ Ties with/dependence of other researchers, groups or external partners may jeopardize feasibility.

#### One or more of the following items apply:
- □ Research methodology reasonably well elaborated, but less well substantiated. Given some adjustments and risk control, project implementation appears to be feasible.

#### All of the following items apply:
- □ Adequate, substantiated research methodology to achieve targeted results, logical set-up and realistic planning: feasible within the four-year time frame.
- □ Good fit of project in research group activities, giving candidate access to necessary expertise.

#### Requirements as in “very good”, AND
- □ Thorough identification of the research risks, with alternative research strategies and “fall back” research options.
**PHD FELLOWSHIP STRATEGIC BASIC RESEARCH EVALUATION/ score grid with scoring descriptors - PRESELECTION**

### PHD FELLOWSHIP SB: SCORING DESCRIPTORS CRITERION “APPLICATION POTENTIAL” (PRESELECTION + INTERVIEW)

<table>
<thead>
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**Strategic basic research** in the context of a PhD grant stands for challenging and innovative research (at PhD level), which, if successful, may in the longer term lead to innovative applications with economic added value (for specific companies, for a collective of companies, or a sector, or in line with the Flanders 2025 transition areas (socioeconomic benefits)). Societal impact should always be linked to a (in)direct (macro)economic benefit. E.g. cost reductions in health care, higher education level, environmental impact... should be positioned in an economic context.

#### 3.a Strategic importance of the research approach for the anticipated applications (= relevance)

Does the research —if successful— contribute to the (on the long term) realization of the anticipated applications? Is the research approach the proper one to this purpose?

- One or more of the following items apply:
  - Strategic dimension is lacking, no orientation towards an economic finality;
  - apparent mismatch between application potential and project content.

  - One or more of the following items apply:
    - Strategic dimension is present, but project is not well adapted to the anticipated utilization.
    - Strategic dimension based on an assumption for which there is as yet little concrete evidence.

  - The strategic focus of the project on economically relevant innovations is substantiated in rather broad terms. Research approach is reasonably or partially geared to the anticipated applications.

- All of the following items apply:
  - The strategic focus on economically relevant innovations is clear, and well substantiated in the proposal. Suitable project approach to allow the anticipated utilization.

- Requirements as in “very good”,
  - Best possible approach to achieve the intended applications. The latter are clearly the driving force behind the implementation approach.
  - Project fits well in broader strategic basic research goals of the research group.

#### 3.b Strategic importance of the potential applications for possible users (= impact)

Assuming the research approach is effectively geared towards applications: is there a significant impact for industry and economy, for possible (end-)users? Is the impact of the intended applications described in the project application credible and achievable?

- One or more of the following items apply:
  - Application potential may be real but of less economic relevance and limited impact for the identified possible users.
  - The anticipated applications are economically relevant, they have a potential impact on possible users. The proposal exhibits certain flaws or gaps in the identification and/or elaboration of the (potentially present) applications.

- If successful, the project is very likely to effectively contribute to economically relevant innovations within the identified companies and/or sectors, or even new economic activities. These are clearly defined and interpreted.

- Requirements as in “very good”,
  - If successful, project could play a key role to disruptive innovations, implying substantial economic added value. Moreover, this goal is realistic.
  - (score 7):
    - A successful project may lead to a substantial economic added value for Flanders

- (Frank De Winne SB only) out of scope: no strategic importance for users in the space economy value chain.