The Palaeontological Association - Career Development Grant

Rubric

Proposals will be reviewed by a subcommittee appointed by Council. This subcommittee typically includes ~5 members of Council and will be assembled with considerations of the diversity of its membership and an appropriate range of subject expertise. Council will also identify a Chair for this subcommittee who will be responsible for overseeing the review and decision-making process. Each proposal will be graded using the criteria detailed below by each member of the research grant subcommittee – these reviews should be conducted independently. Overall scores for each proposal are then compiled by the Chair, averaged (using one or more appropriate measures) and ranked.

Following the review process, the Chair will organise a wash-up meeting at which recommendations are reached as to which proposal(s) should be funded. These recommendations should be based upon the ranked list of proposals considering the available budget. In the event of proposals receiving equal support from the subcommittee, the subcommittee has the flexibility to decide between these proposals either using a lottery system or by the Chair using a casting vote. Recommendations are then presented to Council at a Council Meeting for formal approval.

Where subcommittee members disagree on whether individual proposals pass basic eligibility criteria, and where these proposals are within the zone of consideration for possible funding based on scores, the subcommittee should discuss and come to an agreement on the eligibility or not of the proposal.

The review scores should be input by each subcommittee member onto an Excel spreadsheet and forwarded to the Chair, who should compile them and provide them to the Secretary along with the recommendations. It is important that some comments are given for each proposal by each subcommittee member – these comments provide justification for the gradings, and also provide some text that can be edited by the Secretary to be used as feedback to unsuccessful applicants. Please note that the compiled spreadsheet of scores and comments will be shared with the whole of Council, but individual reviews will be anonymised.

Conflicts of interest

Members of the grant review subcommittee should declare any conflicts of interest that they have with any of the proposals. Conflicts of interest should be declared to the Chair, and subcommittee members should abstain from scoring any proposals for which they have a conflict of interest or advocating for those proposals in the wash-up meeting. Examples of conflicts of interest include (but are not limited to):

- You are an applicant on one of the submitted proposals [in this case you should remove yourself from the grant subcommittee]
- You share a formal affiliation with the research organisation of the applicant
- You are directly involved in the work proposed and would benefit from it being funded and/or have assisted the applicant with their proposal for funding
- You are a close relative of the applicant
- You are a close personal friend of the applicant and think that friendship might affect your judgement or be seen as doing so by a neutral observer familiar with the relationship
- You are in close regular collaboration with the applicant to an extent where you feel uncomfortable being involved in the review process or you feel unable to give an unbiased opinion

- You were involved in the development of the proposal, at any stage of its preparation, including providing comments or advice to the applicant

The proposed date of PhD submission (application question 1)

The proposed or known date of PhD submission falls within the window required by the grant rubric	Pass
The proposed or known date of PhD submission falls outside the window required by the grant rubric	Fail

Demonstrable need for funding (application question 2)

No other post-PhD funding is available to support the candidate	Pass
Other sources or partial sources of funding are available	Fail

The proposed activity is feasible (application questions 4, 6 and 7)

The proposed activity is achievable on the budget asked for and in the time specified	Pass
The proposed activity is not achievable either on the budget requested or in the time specified	Fail

A clear and well-explained future career plan (application question 3)

The candidate has a very clear plan of where they see themselves in five years' time, it is clearly in palaeontology (research or curation), and it has detailed and clearly stated objectives and milestones that indicate how they will get there	5
The candidate has a clear plan of where they see themselves in five years' time, it is clearly in palaeontology (research or curation), and it has some objectives but may lack some detail	4
The candidate has a five-year plan in palaeontology (research or curation), but it lacks objectives or milestones	3
The candidate has a five-year plan in palaeontology (research or curation), but it is vague	2
The candidate has a vague idea of where they want their career to go, but not a clearly-stated five-year plan	1
The candidate's future career plan is not in palaeontology (research or curation)	0

How the funding will help the candidate to strengthen their CV to achieve their future career plan (application questions 4 and 5)

The proposed activity is clearly stated, explicitly linked to their five-year career plan, and will clearly strengthen their CV to help them achieve their goals	10
The proposed activity is clearly stated and will clearly help to strengthen their CV, but is not explicitly linked to their five-year career plan	8
The proposed activity is clear, and it will somewhat enhance the candidate's CV	6
The proposed activity is vague, but it will somewhat enhance the candidate's CV	4
It is unlikely that the proposed activity will enhance the candidate's CV	2
The request for funding is not linked to a specifically-defined career enhancing activity	0

Value for money (application questions 5 and 6)

The budget is detailed, justified, and will offer a good return on the investment by PalAss	3
The budget is detailed, justified, and will offer a moderate return on the investment by PalAss	2
The budget lacks detail or some justification, or will offer a poor return on the investment by PalAss	1
The budget is not given or not justified	0