

Evaluation of applicants to the PhD program at the Department of Psychology, Stockholm University

Step 1: Initial shortlist procedure

Two sets of reviewers make a shortlist of applicants based on the reviewers' rank ordering of the research plans.

Step 2: Full evaluation of shortlisted applications

Shortlisted applicants are evaluated by three reviewers based on three factors:

A) Research plan

In the research plan, the applicant describes their thesis project. The plan is assessed primarily based on the following criteria:

- a) whether the plan is consistent with previous and current research within the field,
- b) whether the research questions are based on current research,
- c) whether the methods used for collecting and analysing data are adequate,
- d) whether the plan seems realistic considering the scope and time frame of the PhD program.

Beyond these criteria, the research plan is evaluated on a separate scale based on the following "upper score consideration" criteria, which might be used in step 3:

- e) the research plan shows considerable creativity and originality, along with the potential for being ground-breaking, while remaining methodologically realistic and testable.

B) Master thesis in psychology or other scientific written production*

Note that only one paper may be submitted for evaluation, either a thesis or one other scientific paper.

The submitted paper is assessed primarily based on the following criteria:

- a) problem formulation and stringency
- b) methodological and scientific proficiency
- c) theoretical and conceptual basis

* If a scientific paper is submitted where the applicant is not the sole author, supplementary information must specify the applicant's contribution to the paper, as well as the contributions of the co-authors'. The supplementary information should also contain a motivation as to why this particular work has been chosen for the application. The applicant must also submit a note signed by all co-authors, describing the applicant's contribution to the work. Separate notes from each co-author is acceptable.

C) Other merits (e.g., education, work experience, quality and scope of other scientific production) and grades/credentials

Factors A-C are evaluated on a 7-point scale, allowing for half points.

1 = Unacceptable

2 = Insufficient

3 = Acceptable (Requires acceptable subcriteria for factors A and B) 4
= Good

5 = Very good

6 = Excellent

7 = Exceptional

In order to be admitted, the applicant needs a mean value of at least 3 (across raters) on each of the factors A, B, and C.

Step 3: Identification of final shortlist of top applicants and selection within this group

The raters, along with the director of studies, convene in order to further evaluate the applications. Step 3 consists of four substeps:

1. Identifying and specifying the top applicants

The applicants are ranked based on the sum of the means for factors A+B+C for all raters. If the top applicants' scores are highly clustered, only these applications are processed further.

2. Inter-rater reliability

When (and if) the shortlist of top applicants has been specified, the raters discuss possible discrepancies between their ratings of the applicants in this group. This discussion can lead to a new ranking within the shortlist.

3. Evaluating necessity of further processing of the top applicants

Based on the rankings from the second substep, the director of studies, along with the raters, decides whether further processing of the applications is necessary. Further processing can consist of interviews, bringing in additional raters, or administering a skill test, for example a test of writing ability. Strategic considerations for the department may also be taken into account (e.g., internationalisation, expansion of the department's research profile, distribution of new PhD students between supervisors/divisions).

4. A proposed final ranking is produced based on substeps 1-3.

Step 3: The PhD program supervisor board convenes and decides on what candidates to recommend to the Department board for admission

The raters must attend the meeting at which admission decisions are made.

Step 4: The Department board convenes and decides on admission.