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INSTRUCTIONS FOR REVIEWING RESEARCH APPLICATIONS – ACADEMY PROFESSORS

CONTENTS

- 1 ACADEMY PROFESSOR FUNDING INSTRUMENT
- 2 ROLE OF EXPERTS AND THE ACADEMY OF FINLAND
- 3 EXPERT PANEL MEETING
- 4 REVIEW
- 5 CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHICS
- 6 CONFLICT OF INTEREST
- 7 DECLARATION

1 ACADEMY PROFESSOR FUNDING INSTRUMENT

The aim of a research post as Academy Professor is to facilitate full-time scientific research for internationally leading-edge researchers. Academy Professors are expected to greatly contribute to the progress of research and develop a creative research environment. Their duties include (without separate compensation) supervision of thesis and dissertation writers and teaching associated with the research, covering 5% of annual working hours. The applicant is a researcher. Posts as Academy Professor are intended for leading-edge researchers for fixed-term, full-time research and related tasks. They pursue their research plans, supervise their team and provide guidance to junior researchers.

The Academy Professor's term is five years. Successful applicants can – having received the decision on their salary funding – submit a separate application for a grant for research costs to the relevant research council. This grant can cover research costs, salary costs of a research team, national and international collaboration, and mobility.

The Academy Professor funding call follows a two-stage review process. Selection is based on thorough international peer review of the plans of intent and thereafter of the full applications. On the basis of your review, a subcommittee appointed by the Board of the Academy of Finland selects the Academy Professor candidates for the second stage. More information on the Academy Professors is available at <http://www.aka.fi/en/about-us/scientists-behind-the-research/academy-professors/>.

2 ROLE OF EXPERTS AND THE ACADEMY OF FINLAND

The Academy of Finland grants funding to the best researchers and research teams as well as to the most promising junior researchers through several funding instruments. Experts are invited to review the scientific excellence of the submitted research applications. In most cases, the reviews are finalised in expert panel meetings.



After receiving the panel reviews, members of the Academy's research councils, or in some cases steering committees, rank the applications. These decision-making bodies make the final funding decisions. The decisions are based on a peer review of scientific quality, but factors related to science policy may also influence the decisions. Examples of such factors are the promotion of equal opportunities for both genders, the advancement of junior researchers' careers, as well as the impact beyond academia.

3 EXPERT PANEL MEETING

Before the meeting takes place, each application is assigned to at least two panel members who then prepare preliminary reviews. All preliminary reviews will be made available to the panel members before the meeting. In some cases, an application may be sent to an expert outside the panel to provide additional knowledge pertaining to a particular field.

The panel of experts consists of esteemed, mostly international researchers in the field. At the meeting, the panel will review all applications assigned to it and prepare one joint review report for each application based on the discussions and the preliminary reviews. Academy staff will assist the panel in preparing the final reviews. The panel members have access to all applications assigned to the panel, barring conflicts of interest (see below).

4 REVIEW

4.1 Reviewing research applications

WRITTEN REVIEWS: Evaluative comments are particularly valuable to the decision-making bodies. After the funding decisions have been made, the applicants get access to the final panel review on their own application. The review also provides the applicant with important feedback. Reviewers should therefore:

- give evaluative comments rather than descriptive phrases
- write comments under each sub-item
- write coherent phrases that can be used, if agreed, as such in the final panel review.

NUMERICAL EVALUATION: Only the final rating (and renewal rating if applicable) is given numerically. There should be consistency between the numerical rating and the written comments. Please rate the plan of intent using the scale below:

6 =	outstanding: Demonstrates exceptional novelty and innovation. Potential to substantially advance science at global level. High gain projects that can include risks.
5 =	excellent: Extremely good in international comparison – no significant elements to be improved.
4 =	very good: In general sound, but contains a few elements that could be improved.
3 =	good: In general sound, but contains important elements that should be improved.
2 =	fair: Contains flaws. In need of substantial modification or improvement.
1 =	poor: Severe flaws that are intrinsic to the proposed project or the application.

4.2 Items to be reviewed

There are five main items in the evaluation of the plan of intent, (1) Research Project, (2) Principal Investigator, (3) Scientific Renewal of the PI (if applicable), (4) Overall Assessment and (5) Final Rating.

1. *Research Project*

Assess the scientific quality, ground-breaking nature, ambition and potential impact of the research project

2. *Principal Investigator*

Assess the scientific productivity, originality and researcher education displayed by the PI, especially during the last 5–10 years. Assess PI's status and recognition within the international scientific community

3. *Scientific Renewal of the PI (if applicable)*

This question concerns only those PIs who apply for renewal of their ongoing or earlier Academy Professor term.

Assess the renewal of the PI's research in relation to that of the earlier Academy Professor term (results presented in a separate appendix) both verbally and numerically using the scale: 6 = outstanding; 5 = excellent; 4 = very good; 3 = good; 2 = fair; 1 = poor

4. *and 5. Overall Assessment and Final Rating*

Please give an overall assessment and a final rating for the research project including the strengths and weaknesses as well as any additional comments. You are also welcome to comment on the effects and impact beyond academia. However, impact beyond academia should not affect the scientific review/rating of the application. Instead, it will be considered as an additional factor when making the funding decisions.

4.3. Open Science

The Academy is committed to promoting the practices outlined in Finland's national Open Science and Research Roadmap 2014–2017. Openness improves the overall quality and impact of research and is part of the good scientific practice. The Academy requires that their funded projects commit to open access publishing and open their research data and methods for further use. For research data there can be varying degrees of openness ranging from open access to strictly confidential due to research ethics and law. The experts are asked to give their view on the planned open science activities.

4.4. How to review applications in the Academy's online services

To review applications, please use the online services available on the Academy's website. Both preliminary reviews and final panel reviews are made in the online services. You can find the review instructions and all our evaluation forms for current calls at: <http://www.aka.fi/en/review-and-funding-decisions/how-applications-are-reviewed/guides-for-reviewers/>.



5 CONFIDENTIALITY AND ETHICS

In Finland, according to the Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999), research plans, abstracts, progress reports and reviews are confidential documents. Application documents should therefore be handled and stored with due care and confidentiality.

The Academy of Finland is committed to following the guidelines of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity for responsible conduct of research. The guidelines also apply to the process of reviewing funding applications, research programmes and scientific disciplines. All reviews must be handled confidentially, competently and impartially, based on the criteria set for the review process. Care must be taken to ensure that the review is conducted in accordance with general stipulations about conflict of interest. Prior notice to ensure no conflicts of interest exist is required if a reviewer has economic or other affiliations or significantly different schools of thought in relation to the applicant under review.

As a reviewer, you are not allowed to disclose any information concerning application documents or evaluations to outsiders, nor are you allowed to use this confidential information to your own benefit or anyone else's benefit or disadvantage. You may not reveal to outsiders that you are assessing the research plan of a particular researcher. If you are contacted by anyone, including the applicant, who has questions about the application or reviews, please advise them to contact the Academy of Finland.

Reviewers are guilty of research misconduct if they misappropriate research ideas from applications. The quality of the review is not a research-ethical issue unless the review has been conducted carelessly, which may give an appearance of a review that deliberately either underrates or overrates the applicants under review.

Disclosing the contents of research plans to third parties or contacting applicants personally without explicit agreement to do so are also regarded as instances of inappropriate behavior on the part of reviewers.

Once the review has been completed, you are required to destroy all application documents and any copies made of them, or return them to the Academy. Confidentiality must also be maintained after the review process has been completed. Reviews are confidential documents, but applicants will have access to the final review on their own application after the funding decisions have been made.

After the funding decisions have been made, the Academy of Finland will publish a list of names, titles and institutions of all individual reviewers and panel members used in the call. In addition, the applicants will see the names of all panel members in the final review. If requested, the names of reviewers giving the preliminary reports will also be disclosed (Finnish Act on the Openness of Government Activities).

6 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

As a reviewer you are required to declare any personal interests according to the following criteria. You must disqualify yourself if you can in any way benefit from the approval or rejection of the application. You must also disqualify yourself in the following circumstances:





- You have collaboration with the applicant (e.g. you have co-authored and published an article or manuscript with the applicant in the past three years; you have been involved in the preparation of the application; or you are involved in the publication or application of the results).
- You have been a superior, subordinate or instructor of the applicant in the past three years.
- You are currently applying for the same post as the applicant.
- You are currently applying for funding from the Academy from the same funding instrument.
- The applicant is a close person to you. A close person is:
 - a) your spouse (also *de facto*), child, grandchild, sibling, parent, grandparent or a person otherwise close to you (e.g. fiancé/e or a close friend), as well as their spouses (also *de facto*)
 - b) a sibling of your parent or his/her spouse (also *de facto*), a child of your sibling, or your previous spouse (also *de facto*)
 - c) a child, grandchild, sibling, parent or grandparent of your spouse as well as their spouses (also *de facto*), or a child of a sibling of your spouse
 - d) or a half-relative comparable to the above-mentioned persons.

You are also disqualified if your impartiality may be endangered in any other way, or if you feel that you have a conflict of interest and are therefore disqualified to review the application.

If you identify any conflicts of interest, please notify the Academy as soon as possible.

7 DECLARATION FOR THE REVIEWER TO ACCEPT

Please acknowledge that by accepting the task of a reviewer you guarantee not to disclose the information you receive as reviewer and not to use it for anybody's benefit or disadvantage as stipulated in section 3 above (Confidentiality). Further, you affirm that you will immediately notify the Academy if you have a conflict of interest in one or more applications.

