

CINBIO

nano4talent

GUIDE4EVALUATION

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose.

This guide aims to establish a framework for the best practice of applicants evaluation in the framework of the NANO4TALENT postdoctoral programme, funded by the EC under the call HORIZON-MSCA-2023-COFUND-01 (101179069-NANO4TALENT: post-doctoral talent attraction programme to boost research career In the field of nanomaterials for biomedicine) to ensure that the selection is imbued with the guidelines of the HRS4R. Since 2017, UVigo has been awarded with the HR Seal of Excellence, reflecting the commitment of both the University and CINBIO to continuously improve and make progress in aligning HRS policies & strategies to the 40 principles of the European Charter & Code” and the “Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers” (more info see: <https://www.uvigo.gal/en/r-d-i/ethics-and-quality/hrs4r-excellence-research>).

1.2. Scope:

Evaluation is a critical part of the selection process to ensure its impartiality, transparency and keeping the maximum ethical standards. This guide will provide detailed information about the evaluation and interview process that will lead to a score for selecting the best candidates for the different calls of the NANO4TALENT postdoctoral programme. The guidelines will include clear and unambiguous information on the steps, evaluation principles and criteria, scoring system and feedback to provide to the candidates.

The selection process will take approximately 22 weeks from the call deadline and the workflow will consist of five steps, including application process, admissibility and eligibility check, evaluation, interviews and final ranking. Evaluators will participate only in the evaluation and interview phases.

1.3. Audience:

This guide is a manual for evaluators and applicants, to ensure the impartiality of the process and to have a clear understanding of the rules managing the selection process and to avoid any uncertainty and doubt when evaluating the different items.

1.4. Evaluation principles:

The evaluation and therefore the selection process will be carried out under the following principles:

Impartiality: Ensure evaluations are unbiased and based solely on merit and concrete and quantifiable criteria. Evaluation process, eligibility criteria and scoring system will be clearly established and disseminated among stakeholders to ensure that all the people involved in the process are aware of the rules and regulations and avoid misunderstanding. All experts selected for the evaluation and interview panels must be independent, impartial, objective, and with an international projection. They will be

briefed by the PMO and provided with this Guide to provide unambiguous information on evaluation and selection procedures, their timeline, as well as their tasks and responsibilities.

Transparency: Openness will be maintained during the evaluation process, although never undermining the right to privacy of the applicants. Lists of admitted, excluded, and selected candidates will be made public during the process, indicating only the reasons for exclusion and the itemized scores. Personal data will not be published or shared under any circumstances.

Confidentiality: Privacy of applicants and the integrity of the evaluation will be maintained during the whole evaluation process. No private information will be disseminated or disclosed at any time and PMO will ensure that information exchange is performed in a secure manner and in the right measure. Ensuring that only the necessary people review candidate information at each step of the process.

Ethical Standards: The people involved in the process will adhere to high ethical standard, using as reference national and international legal and ethical standards, including but not limited to the European Charter for Researchers, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, the Charter and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Supplementary Protocols and relevant legislation such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Moreover, an Ethics and Equity Committee will be established to assess and provide advice regarding ethical aspects and adherence to regulations, including privacy issues that have been identified by the fellows and/or the Evaluation Panels.

1.5. Quality Control

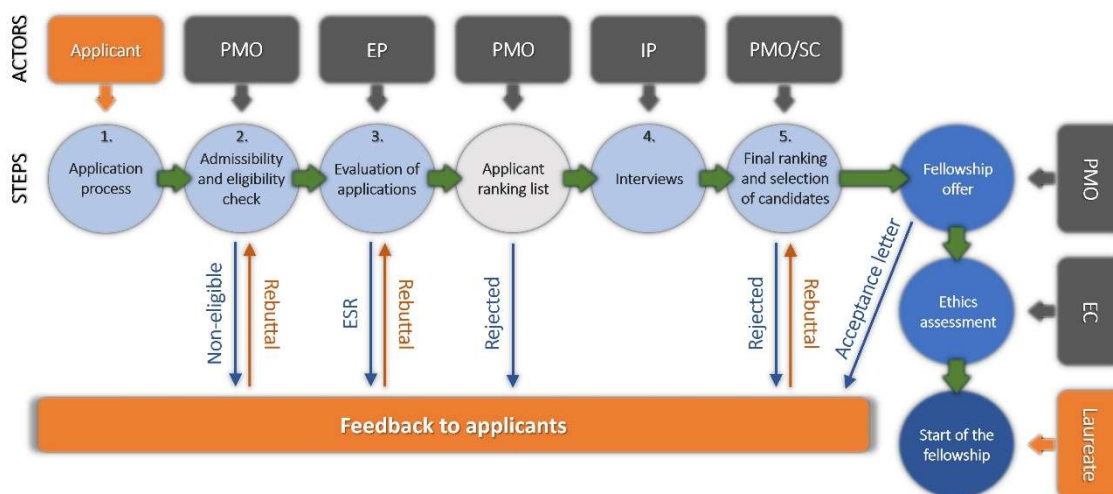
1.5.1. Consistency Checks: The full process will be closely monitored by UVigo's HR, CINBIO Management Unit and NANO4TALENT PMO, as part of their role within the management structure, ensuring that the process leading up to the selection and employment of candidates has been open, transparent, merit-based, and fully compliant with the Guidelines for the European Code and Charter.

1.5.2. Conflict of Interest: The list of the independent experts selected for evaluation will not be published nor communicated to the applicants, to avoid any possible influence. Each evaluator will sign a Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Declaration that follows the principles stated in the European Charter and Code for Researchers. By signing these documents, each evaluator must declare any conflict of interest (such as family relations, personal or financial interest, co-authorship) with any of the potential candidates, supervisors, and the hosting institution, assuring their impartiality during the evaluation process. Confidentiality rules must be adhered during the whole evaluation process and once it has been concluded. If there are any known or potential conflicts of interest, the application will be assigned to a different expert.

1.5.3. Appeals Process: The eligibility check, the evaluation and final ranking of applications can all be rebutted if a candidate suspects procedural shortcomings. A suggestion on the format for rebuttals will be available on [NANO4TALENT web](#). Within five days of the respective information to candidates, candidates can send their rebuttals to the PMO via e-mail (nano4talent@uvigo.es). Within the next seven days, the PMO will either a) re-evaluate the eligibility or b) forward the request to an External Rebuttal Reviewer if the evaluation procedure is contested. This will be an independent external expert who will assess the request and analyse the achieved score and decision, sending a Rebuttal Report to the PMO. In cases of identified procedural shortcomings or factual errors that may impact the ranking results, the application will be re-evaluated and re-ranked. In such cases, the PMO will recruit three new external reviewers who will be given 7 working days to produce individual assessment reports, reach consensus, score, and produce a final (new) ESR. Rebuttals of this adjudication procedure will not be permitted.

2. Evaluation Process

2.1. Prospective Timeline: The whole selection process will take approximately 22 weeks from the call opening to the final selected candidate's information and will consist of 5 phases.



2.2. Composition of committees

Evaluation Panel (EP): will consist of internationally renowned external experts in nanomaterials and/or biomedicine and will be appointed based on the expertise needed to assess the various research proposals. The panel experts cannot be employed at CINBIO/UVigo and will be recruited from non-Spanish Universities, non-academic research institutions, the public sector and/or industry. Composition of the evaluation panels will follow the directives laid out in the “Charter and Code”. All experts will remain anonymous throughout the evaluation process to ensure that they will not be contacted by applicants. Both

genders will be represented in the evaluation panels, unless it is justified that such representation was not possible. The experts will evaluate and score all CVs and research proposals, providing written feedback in the form of an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR). The PMO will prepare the ranking list.

Interview Panel (IP): Will consist of two representatives from the EP and at least one scientific representative from CINBIO. The IP will interview the top 10 candidates from the ranking list and send the evaluation and scores to the PMO. The PMO will then prepare a draft shortlist of the ranking of candidates based on the scores from both the EP and the IP and forward it to the Selection Committee.

Selection Committee (SC): comprised by the Assistant Director of CINBIO (Diana Valverde Pérez), the Coordinator of Nanomaterials area (Isabel Pastoriza Santos), the Coordinator of the Biomedicine area (David González Posada), and three independent scientific external representatives from the pool of experts. The SC will formally approve the final ranking list, which will form the sole basis for the selection of candidates. The SC is responsible for making sure that the assessments presented for them have been made in a proper way, ensuring impartiality, independence, and transparency.

Ethics and Equity Committee (EC): this committee will not be directly involved in the selection of the fellows but will have a key role in ensuring high quality of the selection process and smooth implementation of the fellowship. EC will be formed by two members of CINBIO's ethical board, two members of the Responsible Research Innovation and Equity Board and one external ethics mentor. The EC will assess and provide advice regarding ethical aspects and adherence to regulations, including privacy issues that have been identified by the fellows and/or the Evaluation Panels. All selected research proposals will need to be ethics cleared before the project starts, performing the necessary adjustments (if needed) recommended by the EC.

2.3. Evaluation phases

Phase 1. Application process (12 weeks): Organized by UVigo through its online tool and supported by the PMO.

Phase 2. Admissibility and eligibility check (3 weeks): performed by the PMO. Applicants with an incomplete application will be directly rejected. Applicants not fulfilling the criteria will be given the reason(s), with the opportunity for rebuttal on procedural shortcomings. If deemed a valid request the PMO will re-evaluate and inform the applicant of the outcome within 5 working days. Eligible applicants will be informed of the status of their application (eligible, sent to review).

Phase 3. Evaluation of applications (4 weeks): Executed remotely by three external experts for each panel. Each proposal will be first assessed independently by the individual experts, against the evaluation criteria and then jointly for each evaluation panel in a consensus meeting to discuss the applications and agree on the scores for each candidate. In this validation process, experts can detect inconsistencies in the evaluations, and specific aspects of the thematic areas to be considered, which must be assessed when making the final list. All the decisions

must be consistent with the regulations established in the call and reflect the merits and value of the candidate's proposal. The resulting report of the experts will be used to inform the applicants (ESR) about weak and strong points of their proposal. If no consensus can be reached, the PMO will appoint a fourth external expert as adjudicative reviewer. Based on the scores attributed by the experts, the PMO will prepare an applicant ranking list. The highest 10 Candidates, always with a score above a threshold of 7 out of 10 (>70%), will be invited to the following evaluation phase consisting of a remote interview.

Phase 4. Interviews (2 weeks): Top ranked candidates will be remotely interviewed by the Interview Panel, using a safe, secure, and reliable video-conference solution (e.g., Zoom). This interview will take place within a period of 2 weeks. The outcome of the interview will be a written ESR for each candidate.

Phase 5. Final ranking and selection of candidates: The PMO will elaborate a draft ranking list and waiting list taking into consideration the sum of the remote evaluation and the interview. This list will be sent to the Selection Committee (SC), who will be responsible for formally approving which applications are to be selected based on the scores obtained in the previous evaluations. The final ranking list will include the top 3 (call 1) and 2 (call 2) selected candidates whereas the waiting list will include the next top 5 candidates.

2.4. Evaluation criteria and Scoring System:

Application will be assessed in two different phases: **evaluation** and **interview**. Only the highest scored 10 candidates from the evaluation phase will pass to the interview phase (threshold 70%). Final score will be calculated by adding up the scores obtained in Phases 3 and 4, weighted as follows: evaluation 70% and interview 30%.

Scoring will be based on the following guidelines:

0 – Fail. The application fails in this criterion or cannot be judged due to incomplete information.

1 – Weak. The application has serious weaknesses or is addressed in an inadequate manner.

2 – Fair. The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 – Good. The application addresses the criterion well, although improvements are necessary.

4 – Very Good. The application addresses the criterion very well; only minor improvements are still possible.

5– Excellent. The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion.

Specific evaluation criteria, weighting and scoring for each phase is described below:

Evaluation phase (70% of the final total score): Applications will be assessed towards different criteria (academic merit, excellence, impact and implementation), which will be scored 0-5 following the standard MSCA scoring system:

Item	Criteria	Weight
Application qualifications (Curriculum Vitae)	Academic merit: 1. Awards/honours (awarded grants & scholarships, prizes etc.); 2. postdoctoral experience; 3. Teaching & leadership experience; 4. Coordination and/or participation in scientific projects; 5. Publications (indicating the IF and citations); 6. Conference communications; 7. Public engagement activities; experience in technology transfer activities, innovation activities and patents; language skills; soft skills; other relevant competences.	20%
Research proposal	Excellence: 1. Quality and credibility of the research/innovation project; 2. Cross-disciplinary nature of the proposal, linking nanotechnology and biomedical research; 3. Level of novelty, appropriate consideration of inter/multidisciplinary and gender aspects; 4. Quality and appropriateness of two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host.	35%
	Impact: 1. Potential of the researcher to reach or reinforce professional maturity/ independence during the Fellowship; 2. Enhancing the future career prospects of the researcher after the fellowship; 3. Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results; 4. Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the project activities to different target audiences.	25%
	Implementation: 1. Overall coherence, effectiveness, and appropriateness of the work plan (including milestones and expected results) and assessment of risks; 2. Appropriateness of the host research group facilities/infrastructure and staff.	20%
Total Phase 3 (Threshold: 70/100)		100%

Each proposal will be first assessed independently by the individual experts, against the evaluation criteria and weighting score system set out above. Scores will be awarded with a resolution of two decimals, with the rating scale (0,00 to 5,00). Once all proposals have been scored individually, a consensus meeting (remote) will be held for each evaluation panel to discuss the applications and agree on the scores for each candidate.

Interview phase (30% of the final total score): The interviews will consist of a set of questions to address the desired content to be evaluated through the following criteria, which will be scored 1-5. All candidates will be allowed to ask questions during the interview

Each interview will be clearly structured with a given template and scoring chart and will last 45 minutes.

Item	Criteria	Weight
Project and Career prospect	Presentation of the project by the fellow. Scientific discussion. Match of career path with the proposed research. Ability to answer CV-related questions.	65%
Transversal competences	Motivation and charisma. Clarity of presentation. Oral English skills. Ability to communicate during interview. Analytical capacity. Leadership. Teamwork spirit.	35%
Total Phase 4 (Threshold: 70/100)		100%

Final score: The weighted total score will be calculated based on the scores of the individual criteria. The weighted sum between the evaluation phase (70%) and the interview phase (30%) will be the final result obtained by the candidate.

In case of proposals with identical scores, the following priority will be considered for ranking: 1. higher score in the excellence of the experienced researcher; 2. gender balance; 3. younger candidates and/or researchers at their early position; 4. applicants with a refugee status (under the 1951 Geneva Convention and the 1967 Protocol); 5. from low- to middle-income countries according to Horizon Europe rules.

2.5. Feedback:

Evaluation Summary Reports (ESR) will be sent to applicants after both evaluation and interview phases. These Reports will include the scores obtained as well as information about weak and strong points of their proposal and interviews.

ESRs will be elaborated using evaluators feedback and all the information requested to them into the evaluation and interview templates provided for the purpose.

Reports and feedback provided to candidates should be constructive and consistent. Which means that it should provide clear and respectful comments to explain scores, focusing on both strengths and areas for improvement and apply the criteria fairly to all applicants.

Annexes:

- Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Declaration for Evaluators
- Evaluation phase form
- Interview phase form



NANO4TALENT PMO

Programme Management Office

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DECLARATION OF ABSENCE OF CONFLICT OF INTERESTS AND OF CONFIDENTIALITY

Conflict of interests

I, the undersigned [*FAMILY NAME, first name*], with ID or passport number [*insert number*], having been appointed as an expert for the call NANO4TALENT the “Post-doctoral talent attraction programme to boost research career in the field of nanomaterials for biomedicine” funded by the EC under de HORIZON-MSCA-COFUND-2023 call, declare that I do not fall under any of the following circumstances in which a conflict of interests might exist. I confirm that, if I discover before or during the performance of my tasks that a conflict of interests exists, I will declare it immediately to the contracting party.

1. Disqualifying conflict of interests:

- Involvement in the preparation of the application(s);
- Direct benefit in case of acceptance of the application(s);
- Close family relationship with any candidate applying for the call;
- Director, trustee or partner of a candidate applying for the call;
- Current employment by a candidate applying for the call;
- Current involvement in a contract or collaboration with a candidate applying for the call;
- Any other situation that compromises my ability to evaluate the application impartially.

2. Potential conflict of interests:

- Employment by the coordinating organisation within the previous three years;
- Involvement in a contract or collaboration with coordinating organisation within the previous three years;
- Any other situation that could cast doubt on my ability to evaluate the applications impartially, or that could reasonably appear to do so in the eyes of a third party (*Ex. Past or current personal relationships, nationality, political affinity, etc.*).

I hereby declare that I fall under one or more of the above circumstances (please specify which and explain)*:

**Ex. In case of employment by a structure including different departments or institutes, please specify the degree of autonomy between them.*

I hereby declare on my honour that the disclosed information is true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Confidentiality and personal data protection

I confirm that I have read, understood and accepted the evaluation rules specified on the Guide4evaluations provided by the project coordinators.

I also confirm that I will keep all matters entrusted to me confidential and will process the personal data I receive only for the purposes of the performance of the present action. If unnecessary or excessive personal data are contained in the documents submitted during the implementation of the action I will not process them further or take them into account for the implementation of the action. I will not communicate outside the panel or the expert's group any confidential information that is revealed to me or that I have discovered. I will not make any adverse use of information given to me.

Expert: [insert full name]

Date:

Signature:

EVALUATION PHASE FORM

NOTE: Applications should be assessed towards different criteria, which will be scored 0-5 following the scoring system. Half-marks may be given:

0 – Fail. The application fails in this criterion or cannot be judged due to incomplete information.

1 – Weak. The application has serious weaknesses or is addressed in an inadequate manner.

2 – Fair. The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 – Good. The application addresses the criterion well, although improvements are necessary.

4 – Very Good. The application addresses the criterion very well; only minor improvements are still possible.

5– Excellent. The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion.

PROJECT DATA:

Call	
Application N°	
Project name	
Applicant name	

Criterion 1.- Academic merit.

Score this criterion from 0 to 5 considering the following aspects:

- 1. Awards/honours (awarded grants & scholarships, prizes etc.);*
- 2. Postdoctoral experience;*
- 3. Teaching & leadership experience;*
- 4. Coordination and/or participation in scientific projects;*
- 5. Publications (indicating the IF and citations);*
- 6. Conference communications;*
- 7. Public engagement activities; experience in technology transfer activities, innovation activities and patents; language skills; soft skills; other relevant competences.*

Score:

Please, briefly justify your score (around 1000 characters):

Criterion 2.- Excellence.

Score this criterion from 0 to 5 considering the following aspects:

1. *Quality and credibility of the research/innovation project;*
2. *Cross-disciplinary nature of the proposal, linking nanotechnology and biomedical research;*
3. *Level of novelty, appropriate consideration of inter/multidisciplinary and gender aspects;*
4. *Quality and appropriateness of two-way transfer of knowledge between the researcher and the host.*

Score:

Please, briefly justify your score (around 1000 characters):

Criterion 3.- Impact.

Score this criterion from 0 to 5 considering the following aspects:

1. *Potential of the researcher to reach or reinforce professional maturity/ independence during the Fellowship;*
2. *Enhancing the future career prospects of the researcher after the fellowship;*
3. *Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results;*
4. *Quality of the proposed measures to communicate the project activities to different target audiences.*

Score:

Please, briefly justify your score (around 1000 characters):

Criterion 4.- Implementation.

Score this criterion from 0 to 5 considering the following aspects:

1. *Overall coherence, effectiveness, and appropriateness of the work plan (including milestones and expected results) and assessment of risks;*
2. *Appropriateness of the host research group facilities/infrastructure and staff.*

Score:

Please, briefly justify your score (around 1000 characters):

SCORING SUMMARY:

CRITERION	MAX. SCORE	SCORE
Criterion 1.- Academic merit	5	
Criterion 2.- Excellence	5	
Criterion 3.- Impact	5	
Criterion 4.- Implementation	5	
TOTAL	20	

INTERVIEW PHASE FORM

NOTE: Applications should be assessed towards different criteria, which will be scored 0-5 following the scoring system. Half-marks may be given:

- 0 – **Fail**. The application fails in this criterion or cannot be judged due to incomplete information.
- 1 – **Weak**. The application has serious weaknesses or is addressed in an inadequate manner.
- 2 – **Fair**. The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
- 3 – **Good**. The application addresses the criterion well, although improvements are necessary.
- 4 – **Very Good**. The application addresses the criterion very well; only minor improvements are still possible.
- 5 – **Excellent**. The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion.

PROJECT DATA:

Application N°	
Project name	
Applicant name	

Criterion 1.- Project and Career prospect.

Score this criterion from 0 to 5 considering the following aspects:

1. *Presentation of the project by the fellow.*
2. *Scientific discussion.*
3. *Match of career path with the proposed research.*
4. *Ability to answer CV-related questions.*

Score:
Please, briefly justify your score (around 1000 characters):

Criterion 2.- Transversal competences.

Score this criterion from 0 to 5 considering the following aspects:

1. *Motivation and charisma.*
2. *Clarity of presentation.*
3. *Oral English skills.*
4. *Ability to communicate during interview.*
5. *Analytical capacity.*
6. *Leadership. Teamwork spirit.*

Score:
Please, briefly justify your score (around 1000 characters):

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SCORING SUMMARY:

CRITERION	MAX. SCORE	SCORE
Criterion 1.- Project and Career prospect	5	
Criterion 2.- Transversal competences	5	
TOTAL	10	