

The European Research Council

The ERC's recent changes to the evaluation of research proposals

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European Research Council

Established by the European Commission

Why the recent changes to research assessment?

July 2021: ERC endorses the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)

From 2022 onwards: ERC Scientific Council reviews research assessment in general and considers possible changes to the ERC's evaluation processes

Early 2023: ERC signs the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment

Mid 2023 Novelties introduced with the 2024 ERC Work programme



Novelties – Research Assessment

Combined and **simplified** CV and Track Record template:

- No prescriptive **Principal Investigator profiles**
- New **Curriculum Vitae and Track Record** template contains three sub-headings (maximum 4 pages):

1. **Personal details**

- PI's education and key qualifications, current position(s) and relevant previous positions they have held.



Novelties – Research Assessment

- **New Curriculum Vitae and Track Record template:**

2. Research achievements and peer recognition

*The applicant can provide a **short, factual narrative** on the significance of the listed achievements and recognitions in relation to the research field and the proposed project.*

- Research achievements (≤ 10 outputs)
- Peer recognition, such as prizes or awards



Novelties – Research Assessment

- **New Curriculum Vitae and Track Record** template:

3. Additional information

Relevant additional information on their research career to provide context when assessing their research achievements and peer recognition.

- Career breaks, diverse career paths, life events
- Other noteworthy contributions to the research community



Novelties – Research Assessment

- Evaluation **primarily focused on** the ground-breaking nature, ambition, and feasibility of **the proposed research project**
- **No numerical scoring of the Principal Investigator**, instead an overall assessment of PI's intellectual capacity and creativity
- Streamlined **evaluation questions**:
 - No explicit reference to 'high-risk/high-gain' and 'novel methodologies'
 - Instead: 'ground-breaking, ambitious, and feasible'. **The ERC will always encourage risky research.**
 - 'Novel methodologies' is an element that may be positive but is not strictly necessary for an excellent proposal.



Novelties – Evaluation

- No budget multiplier: **up to 44 proposals per panel in Step 2**
- **New A-score at Step 1:**
 - **‘A invited’** – *high quality proposals to pass to Step 2*
 - **‘A not invited’** – *high quality proposals exceeding the threshold for Step 2, but not subject to resubmission restrictions (only possible if the panel has more than 44 ‘A’ proposals)*



Novelties – Panel Reorganisation

- **New Panel – SH8 – *Studies of Cultures and Arts***
 - combines cultural studies, art history, architecture, music, performing arts, museum studies, cultural heritage and other fields (from SH5) with social anthropology (from SH3)
- **LS3 – *Cell Biology, Development, Stem Cells and Regeneration***
 - new title to make it explicit that both stem cell and regeneration biology fields are addressed
- **LS5 – *Neuroscience and Disorders of the Nervous System***
 - new sub-title (“*In humans and all other organisms*”) to make it explicit that the panel covers research in humans, as well as in other organisms

