

Pro-Grid Decision-Assist Tool: Instructions for Reviewers

Chinook Summer Research Award

Background

The Pro-Grid Decision Assist tool was originally developed in 2000 by Alberta Innovates Health Solutions (AIHS) to assess their Summer Studentship applications. A number of factors led to the adoption of the tool in the Chinook Summer Studentship Award adjudication process including:

- Increasing numbers of proposals;
- Increasing demands on reviewers' time;
- More turnover on committees;
- The need for consistency in review criteria and process;
- Need for more sensitive ranking scale; and
- Request for more feedback from applicants.

The Pro-Grid Tool is based on a matrix of performance factors developed to align with values, priorities and expectations of related to the funding opportunities. The tool uses a set of calibrated performance levels (language ladder). It is designed for high number of proposals and results in a graphical representation of strengths and weaknesses resulting in improved feedback to applicants.

How it works

The Pro-Grid Chinook matrix is built to align with the Chinook Summer Research Award criteria and application requirements.

Evaluation Criteria:

The following evaluation criteria apply to all applicants:

- A. Student (50%):** Transcripts, Student Letters, and References are evaluated for research/scholarly/creative achievements of the applicant as well as how the project fits with the learning objectives of the student.
- B. Supervisor (25%):** The supervisor's capacity to oversee the proposed project is evaluated through their CV.
- C. Overall Impression of the Project (25%):** The Proposal and the complete application package may be used to form an Overall Impression.

Language Ladder

The following language will be used to score each of the components of the application resulting in a relative ranking between applications.

A1 - ACADEMIC RECORD

1. The candidate meets the **minimum expectations** for candidates to the Summer Studentship program.
2. The candidate has a **good academic track record**, with mostly average to above-average grades in all courses.
3. **Very good academic record** with consistently above-average grades, especially in relevant courses.
4. **Outstanding academic record** throughout candidate's academic training.

A2 - REFERENCE/SUPPORT

1. Reference provides **general information** about the candidate's personal characteristics and/or academic strengths.
2. Reference is supportive of the candidate and **speaks in general terms** of his/her personal characteristics (motivation, intellectual capacity, maturity, etc.) and academic strengths.
3. Reference is **very positive and provides considerable detail** about the candidate's relative strengths. Candidate has accumulated some research experience, and the letter comments on the candidate's competence/abilities in this area.
4. Candidate's research experience has been significant. **Reference is very strongly supportive** of the candidate and communicates an element of excitement about his/her future prospects in conducting research.

B1 - SUPERVISOR'S MENTORSHIP CAPACITY

*Please adjudicate this as pass/fail. Award 4 points to supervisors with sufficient expertise and experience. Award 1 point to supervisors with insufficient expertise and experience.

1. The supervisor's background/expertise is unclear, insufficient, or unsuited to the proposed research, AND/OR they lack an active program of research.
4. The supervisor's expertise is a strong fit for the proposed research, AND they demonstrate an active program of research, or show potential (early career researchers).

C1 - OVERALL IMPRESSION OF PROJECT

1. The project appears to be commensurate with the level of the candidate's training.
2. The project is well written, providing sufficient rationalization and methodological detail.
3. The project is well written, providing sufficient rationalization and methodological detail. In addition, this work will potentially produce an original contribution to existing knowledge in this field.
4. The project is clearly defined and is hypothesis-driven. The description provides

enough methodological detail to evoke confidence that the goals of the project will, in all likelihood, be achieved. The project has the potential to contribute substantially to knowledge in this field.

Scoring the Applications:

Scoring the Proposals:

Each of the three reviewers assigned an application will provide a score (1 to 4, using increments of 0.5) on criteria A1, A2, and C1. For B1, they will provide a score of 1 or 4. The Student will be evaluated on the combined average of the Academic Record (A1) and the Letter of Reference/Support (A2). This score will be given a 50% weighting for total score. The Supervisor's Mentorship Capacity takes into account 25% of the final score. The Overall Impression of the Project (C1) is combined with the Student's Score and the Supervisor's Mentorship Capacity to make up the last 25% of the score. All the proposals are then ranked relative to each other from highest to lowest. Applications will be funded from top to bottom to a maximum dictated by the budget allocation.

Plotting the scores

Each criterion has a **language ladder** and each step on the ladder is given a value (such as A=4, B=3, C=2 and D=1) (Appendix A – Reviewer Score Sheet). The ratings from the three reviewers are averaged to provide a score for each of the criteria. For example, STUDENT A is given the following scores:

Criteria	Reviewer 1	Reviewer 2	Reviewer 3	Average
A1	2	2	3	2.3
A2	3	2	3	2.7
B1	4	4	1	3.0
C1	2	3	2	2.3

The **Student Score** is totaled (A1+A2) and weighted for 50% of final rank and the **Supervisor Score** (B1) is weighted for 25% of final rank. The **Overall Impression** (C1) makes up the final 25% of the score. The applicants are then ranked relative to each other. Funding will be awarded based on this relative rank.

Applicants will receive the numerical scores given to them by the three reviewers. The applicants can then compare these ranks with the language ladder as an indication of the strengths and weaknesses of their application according to the reviewers.

