

Guidance notes for referees for BBSRC Doctoral Training partnership applicants

1. The assessment criteria for the references are given in Annex 1. Please refer to these when you are completing your form.
2. Please word-process all sections of the form in Arial and no smaller than font size 11.
3. References **will not** be considered after the deadline.

Notes for the Referee:

This applicant has applied for a doctoral award through the BBSRC Doctoral Training Partnership. The reference form can be found on our [website](#).

More information about the award for which the applicant has applied can be found here: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/graduateschool/bbsrc-doctoral-training-programme-in-biosciences/index.aspx>

Please tick the box on the online form if you do **not** consent for us to disclose the information provided in the reference to the applicant. If requested by the individual to release this information, we will take your consent preference into account when considering all of the circumstances and deciding if it is appropriate.

All referees need to complete the 1st page of the form.

For **professional referees, continue to the second page of the referee's report headed 'Professional and/or Academic reference section'**. We would like you to draw on your experience of the applicant's work to give an appraisal of his/her professional performance to date. Please highlight the applicant's strengths in the area in which he/she plans to study and note any weaknesses the applicant may have. Please give examples to illustrate your comments.

For **academic referees, please complete all sections** in the referee's report using the criteria provided.

Previous performance

Please comment in detail, and impartially, on the applicant's recent work and his/her preparedness for doctoral study. It will be particularly helpful if you could provide evidence of the skills that the applicant has demonstrated and how they relate to the proposed study (as described in the applicant's case for support). Additional evidence on the candidate's ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines would also be useful.

Please provide a realistic appraisal of the applicant's current abilities based on your assessment of his/her academic and, where relevant, professional performance to date. Include comments on the applicant's overall performance in his/her degree (or degrees, if you have taught him/her at undergraduate and Master's level), and his/her performance on individual modules or courses. Where appropriate, you should draw on the comments of external examiners or other external contacts. Where the applicant has a joint degree, please include performance in both disciplines. For assessment purposes, it is important that all marks are given and not only the ones related to the subject applied for.

We are interested in such qualities as the applicant's conceptual ability, ability to solve problems, independence of mind, communication skills, organisational abilities and, where relevant, his/her practical or technical capabilities. Please give examples to illustrate your comments.

Preparedness for doctoral study

Please give your assessment of the applicant's preparedness to undertake doctoral research and whether he/she can bring it to completion. You should mention any relevant intellectual, practical, technical or professional skills the applicant possesses that you have not already highlighted. You should say how the proposed area of research relates to the applicant's experience to date, and to his/her future plans. You should make your comments in the context of the applicant's proposed programme of work as we will be looking at the applicant's preparedness for doctoral study, not just at his/her abilities more generally. You may wish to address questions such as how the applicant has developed and improved during his/her undergraduate or postgraduate career.

If the applicant is currently undertaking a Master's degree, and if you are permitted to do so, please include details of any formal assessments of his/her Master's work. This information should link in to the predicted grade that you have indicated.

Motivation and perseverance in achieving objectives

Please give your assessment of the applicant's motivation and commitment. Please comment on the applicant's ability to complete their postgraduate studies successfully and on time, how they approach challenges and difficulties and how they overcome them. Please provide evidence of work which has previously been completed independently and within a given timescale.

Other comments

Academic referees should use this space to add anything else that they think is relevant to the candidate's application. It would also help if you could mention any additional training that the applicant will need in order to successfully complete his/her doctoral studies. Are there particular aspects of the proposed study of which the applicant has had no, or little, experience? Constructive observations about training needs will not disadvantage the candidate since the acquisition of new skills is an important part of a doctoral student's training and development.

Professional referees should comment here on the applicant's professional commitment, motivation and potential. It would be helpful to say how the professional experience the applicant has gained has built on his/her academic studies, and how it will prepare him/her to pursue his/her research and meet his/her long-term career aims.

If it is likely that we will be unfamiliar with the research or professional environment to which your comments refer, please ensure that you provide sufficient background to enable the panel to place your comments in context.

Checklist:

Complete all the sections of this form as fully as possible.

Please save the file with the applicant's forename and surname and your own name eg 'Jack Smith reference-your name'

Then go to <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/bbdtip/> select the **referee online submission** tab and upload document by the deadline. Please note if the file size is too large (over 4MB) then we will not receive it.

Annex 1

Clearly and unequivocally supported by referees. View expressed that candidate has outstanding academic potential. Referees believe the PhD will make a valuable contribution to the field.	Strong support from referees. View expressed that will produce high quality research and has good academic potential.	Supported by referees. View expressed that will be able to finish and produce a good PhD.	Supported by referees. Student viewed as unexceptional.	No reference provided OR not unequivocal support from referees. Doubts expressed over candidate's abilities to produce thesis of appropriate standard or complete.	
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