

Annex 11 – NERC Peer Review Grades and Definitions

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

Guidance Notes for Reviewing and Grading Applications to use NERC Facilities

Facility steering committee members are asked to assign a final grade of between 0-10 to each proposal based on Research Excellence using the definitions provided below.

Score	Usual Indicators
Excellent quality proposal	
10	The proposed work is outstanding and represents world-leading standards in terms of quality, significance and scientific impact. Highest priority for funding.
9	The proposed work is excellent and represents world-class standards in terms of quality, significance and scientific impact. Very high priority for funding.
8	The proposed work is very good, contains aspects of excellence, and represents high standards in terms of quality, significance and scientific impact. High priority for funding.
Good quality proposal	
7	The proposed work is of a good quality, internationally competitive, at the forefront of UK work and has a high level of scientific impact. Should be funded if possible.
6	The proposed work is of a good quality, on the borderline between nationally and internationally competitive, and has a good level of scientific impact. Potentially fundable.
5	The proposed work is of a good quality, has some scientific merit and addresses useful questions, but is not at the leading edge. It is suitable for funding in principle but in a competitive context is not a priority.
Potentially useful proposal	
4	The proposed work is of a good quality, has some scientific merit, but has a number of weaknesses. Not recommended for funding.
3	The proposed work is of a satisfactory quality. It would provide some new knowledge, but fails to provide reasonable evidence and justification for the proposal. Not recommended for funding.
Unacceptable proposal	
2	The proposed work is weak in terms of quality, significance and scientific impact, and has only a few strengths. Not suitable for funding.
1	The proposed work is of an unsatisfactory quality and is unlikely to advance the field. Not suitable for funding.
0	For special cases, e.g. flawed in scientific approach, subject to serious technical difficulties, does not address operational risks, sufficiently unclearly written that it cannot be properly assessed, success depends on the project student, is duplicative of other research, or not suitable for the scheme.
R*	Potentially exciting and worthy of funding but requiring clarification of specific aspects or minor amendments before a final decision can be made.

Note: A Principal Investigator whose application has been rejected may be invited to resubmit if the Committee considers that insufficient information has been supplied for a grade to be given and if there is sufficient potential in the proposal for it to be significantly stronger when reformulated. Such applications could be marked R*.