Villum Experiment
– Terms of Reference for the Scientific Review Panel

Villum Foundation makes use of a scientific review panel in the process of evaluating applications submitted under the Villum Experiment programme. The panel serves in the interest of the foundation in order to pursue the aim of the programme.

The panel evaluates the proposed research idea from a scientific point of view without knowing the identities of the applicants.

The panel is organised in four sub-panels:
A) Earth and space (e.g. astronomy and geoscience)
B) Life science (e.g. functional biology and cellular biology)
C) Physical science and mathematics (e.g. chemistry and physics)
D) IT and Engineering.

Each sub-panel consists of three to seven reviewers.

Selection of panel members

Villum Foundation identifies and selects researchers to serve on the panel.

Each sub-panel has a broad coverage within the research area. The members are recognized researchers with a broad knowledge across several disciplines and experience in assessing high risk/high gain research ideas.

All members are from abroad and must have an unbiased relation to the Danish research environments.

Review process

Villum Foundation distributes the applications among the sub-panels according to the proposal's research area as expressed by the applicant.

Each proposal is assessed by three members of the sub-panel. The members perform the reviews individually and must not meet, interact or otherwise coordinate their response to Villum Foundation.

The reviewers fill in a review sheet for each application where A) originality, B) potential impact and C) appropriateness of the research for the programme are assessed (see the review sheet for a definition of these criteria). Based on their assessment, the reviewers give an overall score.

Each reviewer is provided with a decisive vote which they can use only once. The reviewer has the option to cast the decisive vote for an application which is found to be truly extraordinary and therefore deserves the highest priority. The reviewer must use this option with great care as Villum Foundation strives to grant all applications which have received decisive votes along with the applications which have the best reviews in general.

Finally, the reviewers must state how confident they feel about their assessment. If two proposals are tied, the proposal with the highest confidence level will be preferred.

The foundation ranks the applications according to the panel's evaluations. The panel members must provide a short statement for each of the top-ranked proposals.