

Villum Ascending Investigator – Terms of reference for the selection committee and reviewers

The objective of the Villum Ascending Investigator Programme is to enable the most promising mid-career researchers to fulfil their potential to consolidate their research and forge a leadership position with significant scientific impact at the global front.

The selection process puts a strong emphasis on finding the applicants who have proven their talent and track-record in terms of excellent research, academic leadership, mentoring, and capacity building for the past 5-8 years at a minimum. Applicants must present a cohesive and ambitious plan for their research and consolidation of their group and cultivation of their research environment.

Villum Foundation expects that Villum Ascending Investigators have shown an independent presence and earned a solid international reputation within their respective fields, e.g. at the ERC Consolidator level.

In order for the foundation to be able to evaluate the applicant and the proposed research, the reviewers are asked to address the points below in their assessment. The foundation expects a well-argued evaluation of approximately 2-3 pages and in summary, a clear overall ranking of the application.

Applicant

- Does the applicant have a significant and independent presence and recognition internationally (e.g. in comparison to others within their and the research field)?
- Is the track record of the applicant(s) characterised by ground-breaking research and have their achievements typically gone beyond state of the art, and do they have the potential to forge ahead with significant new developments?
- Has the applicant demonstrated sound leadership and commitment to building capacity by supporting, training and advancing junior researchers and engaging in strong (i.e. beyond own group) and international collaborations, as well as investment in their own leadership development?
- Is the applicant well qualified to lead a project of this size and are there indications of positive contributions towards the academic environment of the host institution?

Research

- To what extent does the proposed research present new and original ideas?
- Does the research have the potential for reaching significant scientific breakthroughs and making an impact?

Research Environment

- Is the research environment at the host institution ideal for the proposed research and for recruiting and training students and junior researchers from abroad as well as from Denmark?
- To what extent does the support letter of the host institution show commitment to hosting and supporting the continued development of the applicant?

Concluding remarks

Please sum up the overall assessment and point out the three top qualities and the three weakest points of the application.

Held against the objectives and criteria of the Villum Ascending Investigator Programme, please rank both the applicant(s) and the proposed research on a scale from 1 to 5 (1 poor, 2 fair, 3 good, 4 very good and 5 excellent). You will also be asked to enter the rankings in the online reviewer tool.

Conflict of interest

In order to ensure that an assessment is not suspected of bias, a reviewer must not have a conflict of interest (such as close family relationships or friendships with any of the persons involved in the proposed research, joint projects or co-authorship within the past 5 years, etc.). Applicants will receive an anonymised copy of the reviews and will be asked to comment on them before the foundation makes its final decision.