

	Doctoral programme in Humanities and Communication
	<b>Admission and grant applicants assessment and selection procedure</b>

This document explains the selection procedures performed by the Academic Committee for the doctoral programme in Humanities and Communication when it receives programme admission applications and grant applications for the UOC's regular calls that are announced on 1 December each year.

This document is circulated internally but it is not confidential. This means that it can be sent to potential candidates and to people outside of the UOC in general.

### Frequently asked questions:

- Questions about academic transcripts, requirements, certificates, etc. Students should see the [induction tutorial](#).
- Calculating the average marks: Students should see the [induction tutorial](#).
- Should the person endorsing the candidate be in a six-year research period? No, having a doctoral degree is sufficient.
- What is the minimum mark for applicants for the 2021/22 grants? 2
- Assessment criteria: see [the rubric](#)
- [Differences between the applications for places and the applicants for grants](#)
- [How should I write/send the letter of endorsement/recommendation?](#)
- [What should the motivation letter / research proposal say?](#)
- [How are the finalists for the grants preselected?](#)
- [Institutional prioritizations](#)
- [Outline](#)

### Preliminary considerations

It should be remembered that the doctoral programme admission application and the grant application are two different applications, even though for the candidate they are combined in a single application. The admission applications are assessed in accordance with the criteria defined in the official doctoral programme report, which is public and accessible both in the BOE (Spanish State Gazette) and on the UOC's website. The grant applications are assessed in accordance with the criteria contained in the UOC's grant call. In practice, the same rubric is used as the assessment tool in both cases. However, in the case of grants, the Academic Committee applies additional institutional prioritization procedures that are not applied to the admission applications.

Consequently, the criteria used for admission to the doctoral programme are those defined in the programme's report, which are the following:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> With respect to the first criterion, academic excellence, the Academic Committee will consider changing the weights of the bachelor's and master's degree academic transcripts given in the table (at present, 66% for the bachelor's degree and 33% for the master's degree). This will require starting a programme of study modification process with AQU Catalunya.

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Items	What does each item involve?	Maximum score for each item
<b>Academic excellence</b>	2/3 of the average mark given in the academic transcript of the bachelor's degree + 1/3 of the mark given in the academic transcript of the master's degree.	30%
<b>Experience and vocation</b>	Congresses, publications, grants and participation in projects related with the thesis proposal.	10%
<b>Quality of the research proposed</b>	Level of definition of the research proposed, evidence of theoretical and methodological knowledge about the field.	30%
<b>Motivation and formality</b>	Evidence of vocational commitment and formality when submitting the application and the documentation.	15%
<b>Match with the doctoral programme</b>	Match with the priorities of the possible thesis supervisors and research groups	15%
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

Meanwhile, the criteria applied for awarding the UOC grants are those defined in the institutional grant call announced each year. In the call announced on 1 December 2020, the criteria are the following:

1. The candidates' academic excellence (the academic transcript of the bachelor's and master's degrees).
2. Suitability of the candidates' education, experience and research interests to the fields of knowledge or subject areas associated with the doctoral programme.
3. The criteria put forward by the respective academic committees to ensure a balanced allocation of research trainees amongst research groups and staff.

The specific criteria included in this third point are explained in the following sections.

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### Recommendations for submitting applications

The application procedure is identical both for admission to the UOC's doctoral programmes and for the grants. Therefore, the candidates only have to send one application, stating on the form whether or not they also want to apply for the grant.

In this general admission application procedure, candidates are asked to submit (apart from their identity document and the corresponding certifications): (1) a letter of motivation/presentation; (2) a letter of endorsement written by a member of the teaching or research staff who holds a doctoral degree; (3) a CV, and (4) a recent academic document.

For those candidates who are also applying for a grant, the Academic Committee will consider the following aspects related with the presentation of this documentation:

1. Concerning the letter of **motivation/presentation**: given that the Academic Committee gives priority to the specificness and interest of the research that the student wishes to undertake, we recommend submitting **two separate documents**:
  - a. A short letter explaining the candidate's personal academic career and motivations, with a maximum of one or two pages.
  - b. A draft project that outlines the research question that the candidate wishes to study, a justification of its interest, some objectives or questions, a proposed methodology and an indication of the academic debate related with the subject (including relevant references). This document should have a maximum of 10,000 characters (including spaces). Candidates are advised to confine themselves to the points mentioned above and refrain from furnishing redundant, complementary or cumulative information. It should be remembered that this document has no official or administrative validity beyond the selection process. It is used to determine to what degree candidates hold concrete, matured ideas about their academic interests. As stated in the legislation, the research plan is developed during the first year of doctoral studies. The Academic Committee will determine whether the student shows sufficient autonomy in the writing of this document, particularly during an interview of the finalists.
  
2. Concerning the **letter of endorsement**: this document indicates the willingness of the person writing it to become the candidate's thesis supervisor, in the event of admission. It is used to determine the student's and the project's relevance for the programme's research lines and it has a significant weight in the assessment. The letter of endorsement is confidential and the endorsing person must send it separately to [phd\\_school@uoc.edu](mailto:phd_school@uoc.edu) up until 14 days after closure of the period for submitting applications.

(Remember that both the email and the signed letter must specifically say that they refer to the student in question and to the doctoral programme in Humanities and Communication.) If the letter of endorsement is not received within the stipulated time and with clear indications, the applicant will be excluded both from the doctoral programme admission procedure and from the grant applications. This letter should:



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- a. Explain how the endorsing person knows the student, what potential the candidate offers and on the basis of what evidence.
  - b. Explain how the student and the project can contribute to the possible thesis supervisor's or research group's line of work.
  - c. Any other relevant information. The reasons given should be clearly specified.
3. **The CV.** This can have any format. Candidates are advised to pay attention to its readability and give it a formal style that helps perceive the merits that are relevant for the case. In particular, candidates should make it clearly understood what the merits are: whether they are articles or chapters (academic or otherwise), publication references, whether the courses are given or received, whether the collaborations are as an employee or as a self-employed person, their duration, etc.
4. **A recent academic document:** these should be scholarly articles, working papers or final master's degree projects. They do not necessarily have to have been published. Candidates can also present course work that they consider meritorious. In the latter case, only one assignment should be submitted.
5. **External references:** although it is not compulsory to provide supporting letters or references from people outside of the UOC for the general admission application to the doctoral programme, during its assessment of applicants, the Academic Committee may give up to 5 points to the assessment rubric based on these external references. The submission procedure is more open: students may include the letters in the documentation submitted or their authors may send them directly to [phd\\_school@uoc.edu\\_up](mailto:phd_school@uoc.edu_up) until 14 days after closure of the period for submitting applications.
6. These documents may be written in Catalan, Spanish or English. For other languages, students should consult beforehand.

### Assessment procedure

As has been said, the candidate makes a single application for admission to the doctoral programme, stating in the application whether this also includes application for a grant. Subsequently, this single application is processed internally in a two-part procedure. In the first part, all the candidates applying for admission to the doctoral programme are assessed. In the second part, only the candidates that have applied for admission with a grant are assessed. The criteria used in performing the two assessments is always the same (the same rubric is used to assess the same aspects required in the programme report), but the assessment and prioritization procedure is done differently in each part (admission and grant), as explained above.

The assessment procedure is the following for all candidates applying for admission to the doctoral

programme: Step 1: The candidate sends the application.

Step 2: The documentation is checked.

Step 3: The academic excellence mark is calculated using the formula given in the report (and published in the BOE), based on the base-4 averages of the bachelor's and master's degree marks.

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This mark is weighted as follows: 2/3 corresponds to the bachelor's degree and 1/3 to the master's degree.

Step 4: The candidates are assessed using [this rubric](#), including the academic excellence mark. Step

Step 5: The doctoral programme admission assessment ends with a list that is ordered numerically from highest to lowest score.

In the case of candidates who apply for admission to the doctoral programme and also apply for a grant, the procedure continues as follows:

Step 6. It is checked whether or not the academic mark exceeds the minimum mark established by the Academic Committee (**minimum mark for the 2021/22 academic year: 2**) and a preliminary preselection is made with all candidates who have marks above this threshold. The minimum mark may be lowered within a specific research line, if the Academic Committee so decides, to ensure that it has a minimum of 2 preselected candidates (4 in the case of the Communication line). From this point onwards, the academic transcript mark will no longer be included in the assessment of the candidates in order to balance the differences in assessment practice between different areas of knowledge.

Step 7: Each research group is asked to prioritize a maximum of two of the candidates that they have endorsed (one in the case of individual members of the teaching and research staff) and who are now part of this preselected group that has exceeded the minimum mark.

Step 8: The Academic Committee assesses this group of preselected candidates (candidates who have exceeded the minimum mark and have been prioritized by the groups or by individual researchers). The assessment is based on the rubric, which does not include the academic mark. This group will be narrowed down to 4 candidates (plus 2 runners-up) for the Communication line and 2 candidates (plus 1 runner-up) for each of the other three lines. This gives a final preselection of 10 grant candidates (not including the runners-up, who will only be considered if a candidate is eliminated during the process due to withdrawal or incorrect documentation).

Step 9: The Academic Committee performs a comprehensive assessment of the 10 candidates remaining in this final preselection. Based on the same rubric criteria (also excluding the academic mark), each Committee member assesses one of the items for all the preselected candidates. This procedure also includes interviews of the candidates in order to complete the information available about them and give them the opportunity to defend their application.<sup>2</sup>

Step 10: The comprehensive assessment gives a preliminary prioritization from highest to lowest score. The institutional prioritization criteria are applied to this list (see below). This gives 2 to 3 candidates for grants.

The 2 to 3 candidates who have been prioritized for grants are given the first 2 or 3 places in the final list

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<sup>2</sup> Interviews of other candidates are optional. They may be made at the request of the Academic Committee, the endorsing person or the student.

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for admission to the doctoral programme. The candidates who have not been prioritized for grants return to the position they already had in the numerically prioritized list for admission to the doctoral programme (step 5).

### Assessment and institutional prioritization of grant applications

All the applications for admission to the UOC doctoral programme are assessed in accordance with an assessment rubric (see above). This rubric is available at [this link](#). In the case of the grant applications, the Academic Committee assesses the same aspects as for the applications for admission only. However, certain procedures are added whose goal is to take into account time availability for thesis supervisions and other criteria aimed at achieving a balanced distribution of resources within the institution. This means that the score and the final order of prioritization for grants may not exactly match the final order and score obtained by applicants in the general doctoral programme admission process.

The institutional prioritization criteria for grant applicants are described below:

1. Exclusion criteria (a): Applications endorsed by members of the UOC's teaching and research staff who would be supervising another UOC grant-holding student with contract still in force when the candidate joins the programme.
2. Exclusion criteria (b): In the rare event that two candidates from the same research group have been proposed for grants for different programmes, this will be resolved within the framework of the Doctoral School Management Committee. As a general rule, the Committee usually ends up excluding one of the proposals in order to ensure that a balance is maintained within the call as a whole.
3. Other institutional prioritization criteria: the prioritization order obtained from assessment of the rubrics will be corrected, if necessary, taking into account the following criteria:
  - a. In all cases (except in those mentioned in point 1), the grant will be offered to the person who has obtained the highest score.
  - b. The first candidates selected for available grants (so long as these remain between 2 or 3) may only include one candidate proposed by a member of the Academic Committee.
  - c. The first candidates awarded grants (so long as these remain between 2 or 3) may not include two from the same research group.
  - d. The first 2 grant assignments must include one candidate from one of the two faculties, if the faculty in question did not receive a grant in the previous year.
  - e. The first 3 selected candidates may not include 2 candidates from the same research line in the case of the 3 Humanities lines.
  - f. In all of these cases, the candidates in conflict with this criterion who have the lowest scores will be put lower down in the list.
  - g. In all of these cases, the candidates who have lost their original place in the list will now be at the top of the runners-up list. None of these restrictions will be applied a priori to the runners up, who will receive the grant offer in the event of waiver by grant awardees, starting with those who have the highest score.