

EVALUATION OF RESEARCH UNITS

(2007)

GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATORS AND EVALUATION FORMS

The current evaluation by FCT aims to determine the level of performance that the Research Units financed under the pluriannual program (base and programmatic) have achieved over the last 4 years (2003-2006).

Eventually, the FCT would like to ascertain the performance of the Portuguese Research Units during this period when compared with equivalent research Units at the International level. Thus, a clear and accurate evaluation exercise, based upon panels of international experts will be carried out.

Of particular importance for the evaluation panels will be to determine whether the Research Units have reached sufficient critical mass to carry out the proposed research and whether the fusion of previous small Units into larger Units has been guided by a logical and sensible aims that can be justified in view of the objectives of the research.

At the end of the evaluation process, the panel will provide an overall grading for each Unit (excellent, very good, good, fair and poor) reflecting the Unit's performance in the past and the future research proposal. Units which are classified as either Fair or Poor will not receive funding from the FCT.

For the evaluation Units will be asked to submit a report in English concerning the work carried out during the relevant period. They will specifically be required to organize their report into a number of individual Research Groups under the leadership of a Responsible Investigator. It is expected that each Unit will contain a number of Research Groups that represent the different research areas of the Unit. The coordinator of the evaluation panel should allocate the evaluation of specific Research Groups to specific members of the panel according to the field of expertise. This first stage in the evaluation will be done online so that by the end of this process the panel will have an overall view of the Unit's performance. If at the end of this stage the overall performance of the Unit is considered to be so poor and that during a site visit could not be redeemed, the coordinator in collaboration with the panel may decide not to proceed with the site visit to the Unit. Accordingly, a final Unit evaluation form should be completed and the reasons for this decision and the overall grading of the Unit should be clearly explained. However, in most cases the first stage in the process of evaluation will serve to prepare the Site Visit. During the Site Visit a second evaluation form should be completed that should answer the specific questions raised by the evaluation during the first stage. A final Overall Unit Evaluation Report will then be prepared that should take into consideration all the information analyzed during the online evaluation of Research Groups and the results of the Site Visit. The Overall Unit Report should reflect the consensus of the panel, integrating the reports and recommendations on different research groups within the Unit into a single document. Its contents will be communicated to the Research Unit coordinator at the end of the evaluation process and will be made public afterwards.

It is **not expected** that any simple computation be applied to derive the final research unit evaluation from the preliminary evaluation form or the site visit.

It is **expected** that the evaluation panel will explain in some detail in the Final Unit Evaluation Report its overall judgment of the Research Unit at the end of the evaluation process, as well as to give specific comments on the different research groups that make up the Unit including the grades attributed to each individual Research Group.

To indicate the relative importance of different recommendations the following qualitative terms should be used: *recommends, strongly recommends, most strongly recommends.*

RATING SCALES AND CRITERIA

For international comparability purposes, the rating scale adopted for assessment in the evaluation forms 1) Research Groups and 2) Site Visit and how the grading is translated into form 3) Overall Unit Report, is described in the tables below.

Table 1. Rating of individual groups

Rating	Description
5	Internationally recognized outstanding research which contributes to the advancement of the field
4	High quality international research which leads to some contributions to the field
3	Good, solid research at the international level which might lead to incremental contributions to the field
2	Satisfactory research at the international level which will not necessarily lead to recognized contributions to the field
1	Unsatisfactory research which is unlikely to contribute to advancement of the field at any level

Table 2. Overall grading of the Unit

Grades	Description
Excellent	Unit in which one or more groups carried out internationally recognized outstanding research which contributed to the advancement of the field while most others did high quality international research which lead to some contributions to their specific fields
Very good	Unit in which most groups did high quality international research which lead to some contributions to the field and the remaining did good, solid research at international level leading to incremental contributions to their fields
Good	Unit in which one or few groups did high quality international research which leads to some contributions to the field while most groups did good, solid research at international level leading to incremental contributions to the field
Fair	Unit in which few groups did Good solid research at the international level leading to incremental contributions to the field while most groups did satisfactory research which will not necessarily lead to any significant contributions to the field
Poor	Unit in which few groups did Satisfactory research at the international level which will not necessarily lead to recognized contributions to the field and most groups carried out research that is unsatisfactory and unlikely to contribute to advancement of the field at any level

Parameters for the evaluation of individual Research Groups:

The evaluation of research activity of the group must take into account the quality and quantity of relevant research. The items that will serve as the basis for evaluation will be rated in a scale 1 to 5, as described in Rating Scales and Criteria. For all items you must keep in mind international standards. However, note that each item will weight differently for the final rating of the Research Group.

Productivity:

Refers to the total output of the group in its many different forms, including publications, patents, prototypes or products. Consider the output in terms of human resources. For those research areas in which bibliometric parameters are available they will be used.

Relevance:

Refers to the scientific, technical and/or socio-economical impact of the work carried out by the group. Research choices in view of current trends at the international scene are an essential component. Organization of conferences and seminars, as well as collaborative international publications should be considered.

Feasibility:

This item reflects on the capacity of the group of transforming interesting plans into practical projects that are relevant at the international level.

Training:

Training of PhDs and master students and participation in graduate programs.

The final numerical score given on these four items will be calculated using the weighting indicated in the table below.

Item of Evaluation	Weighting	% of total	Rating
Productivity	x 0.4	40	2
Relevance	x 0.2	20	1
Feasibility	x 0.2	20	1
Training	x 0.2	20	1
Final Score:	x 1.0	100	5