

PhD Application Assessment

When the Graduate Program Admissions Review Committee is reviewing and assessing your PhD application, the following criteria is used:

GPA: the higher the GPA, the stronger the application

Supporting Documents:

1. Referee comments on examples of strengths, competencies, & abilities

- [STRONG] Outstanding depiction of potential for success as a scholar and researcher.
- [AVERAGE] Average depiction of potential for success as a scholar and researcher
- [NEEDS IMPROVEMENT] Ambivalent or minimal depiction of strengths supporting scholarly potential

2. Alignment with proposed supervisor's program of research and expertise - Is there strong alignment to support proposed research topic/methods?

- [STRONG] A compelling case is made for fit with supervisors' expertise and research program.
- [AVERAGE] A plausible case is made for the fit with the supervisor's expertise and research program
- [NEEDS IMPROVEMENT] Fit and alignment are not strong enough to create a positive research/learning environment

3. Quality of past experience & personal statement, career plans, and expectations - Consider personal motivation and drive to engage in research/graduate studies.

- [STRONG] Clear and compelling articulation of personal motivation, experience, goals, and career plans
- [AVERAGE] Moderate articulation of personal motivation, experience, goals, and career plans
- [NEEDS IMPROVEMENT] Minimal articulation of personal motivation, experience, goals and career plans

4. Quality of proposed research plan. We are assessing the quality of the proposed research plan that must include a clear and concise conceptualization of a beginning research topic and research questions. Assessment of readiness for the PhD is to be reflected in the focus, writing ability and articulation of the research idea.

- [STRONG] Articulates a clear and concise conceptualization of a beginning research topic and research questions
- [AVERAGE] Outlines a plausible plan to explore a beginning research topic and research questions, but clarity is lacking
- [NEEDS IMPROVEMENT] Insufficient detail of proposed research plan

5. Publications, presentations, scholarly activity - Consider potential and positioning for future scholarly work and awards

- [STRONG] Outstanding track record with application-led publications in refereed journals/conferences reflecting national profile. Well positioned for award competitions.
- [AVERAGE] Established pattern of publication and presentation in refereed journals/conferences.
- [NEEDS IMPROVEMENT] Beginning track record of publication and presentation, including some refereed works, and some presentations either in or beyond local or regional venues.

6. Bonus

- Previous teaching roles in academia or health systems.
- Previous research experience/research training (research assistant, research coordinator, research team member).
- Recipient of distinguished awards and scholarships (national, international, competitive)
- Leadership contributions are aligned with professional goals and aspirations.
- Community contributions are aligned with professional goals or research aspirations.
- Led or participated in initiatives demonstrating innovation, transformation, and health impact.