

Criteria	How to assess	Suitable	Excellent	Outstanding
Academic achievement and commitment to science	<p>Assess whether the student has gone over and above simply completing their degree. Examples of this include but are not exclusive to -</p> <p>A. Opportunity-linked examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributed significantly to a submitted/published paper. Awarded grant funding (e.g. travel grant) or prizes. Taking on summer lab work. <p>B. Alternative examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking part time year-round or vacation work to fund their studies. Overcoming a significant barrier to access or progress (caring responsibilities, disability, illness, being part of a protected group that is underrepresented in academia). Participating in departmental or university culture (e.g. membership of committees, 'BioSoc' roles, engagement in EDI work) or outreach. Work in the sector (e.g. technician). 	<p>(All applications have been screened for basic eligibility and have a suitable degree)</p>	<p>Achieved/predicted 1st class degree or equivalent.</p> <p>or</p> <p>Evidence of engagement with science beyond their degree or a strong determination to complete their studies. e.g. they have taken up multiple opportunities to expand their experiences e.g. they have overcome significant barriers in order to pursue their degree e.g. they pursued their research interests outside of the degree system</p>	<p>Achieved/predicted 1st class degree or equivalent.</p> <p>And</p> <p>Evidence of exceptional engagement with or determination to continue their career in science.</p> <p>This could be evidenced by a major achievement (going above and beyond) or through numerous examples.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Successful long-term commitment to environmental science through work or voluntary positions, perhaps with outputs related to science engagement or papers</p>



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**Knowledge/passion
creativity and grasp
of science**

Candidates should show enthusiasm for science and be able to describe a piece of science/answer questions on it. Look for evidence they can 'see beyond' a study and suggest suitable (if not feasible!) changes or extensions. Be able to explain the broader context relating to the study - why is it important?

Has an understanding of the subject described and can describe the hypothesis/background and findings.

...and conveys enthusiasm and describes importance/relevance, and can give insightful answers which show a firm grasp of the subject area.

...and is able to critique the project and/or suggest reasonable modifications or advances, and shows a deep level of subject knowledge in

Based on interview presentation and related questions, and proforma Q4 "Tell us about a recent piece of science that excited you. If you could repeat it, how would you do it differently?"

Can give answers to follow up questions.

presentation and questions.

Demonstrates creativity or adaptability in identifying alternative approaches or improvements.

Clear understanding of the importance of the research in a broader context

<p>Alignment with and engagement in PhD project</p>	<p>Is there evidence that they have an understanding of, and interest in, the specific project they have applied for and the wider field in which it is embedded?</p> <p>Assessed by looking at a) prior interest (e.g. modules, projects, engagement beyond degree), b) proforma Q1 “What inspires you about the project you have applied for?”, and c) interview questions relating to the project applied for.</p>	<p>Able to articulate an interest/passion for the broader research field.</p>	<p>... and some evidence of genuine interest and engagement in specific project being applied for. e.g. evidence or additional reading e.g. places the project in the context of the wider challenge/question</p>	<p>Written answer shows <u>strong/insightful</u> engagement with the specific project (as previous)</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Shows knowledge of details such as methods and approach</p> <p>AND/OR</p> <p>Demonstrates understanding of the strengths of the project in terms of lab group, facilities, track record etc</p>
				<p>At interview able to make appropriate suggestions about how to go about the project.</p>

**Skills/preparedness
for the PhD**

Assesses broad awareness of the general characteristics required to complete a PhD, and specific skill sets needed for the focal studentship.

Assessed by questions relating to existing skills and training needs, and skills listed in the proforma Q2 “Describe how your skill set matches any skills required for this project and the general skills required for a PhD. Please also describe, with examples, your aptitude to learn new skills”.

Has required skill set for a PhD generally, e.g. numeracy, writing, team work, independent work. Some awareness of skills required for a PhD/the project.

Good awareness of skills needed, and ones they might need to develop.

Can articulate how their existing skills relate to the project/a PhD.

Some evidence of ability to learn new skills.

Strong awareness of skills needed.

Clear understanding and articulation of how their existing skills relate to the project and a PhD more generally.

Clear understanding of skills they want to develop, and why.

Clear/strong evidence of ability to learn new skills.

**Presentation and
communication**

Quality of the presentation and answers.

Note that many students are nervous. This should be taken into account. Candidates can be given the option of prerecording their talk to avoid this or for where they do not have reliable internet connections. Candidates will also be given an indication of the types of questions they will be asked at interview.

Can effectively communicate their project and answer questions.

Presentation contains key details (background, hypothesis or aims, findings).

Able to answer questions clearly without rambling.

Sticks to time.

Presentation contains key details (background, hypothesis/aims, findings). No superfluous detail.

Sticks to time.

Answers questions clearly, elaborating where useful, but sticks to the point throughout



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Contextualising applications

Candidates are asked to contextualise their applications in proforma Q5 "Is there anything else you would like to tell us that can help to frame your application?"

This information should be considered highly sensitive and not discussed with the candidate or others beyond the supervisory team/panel. Please use this information to frame the achievements of candidates in the light of challenges they have experienced. Where candidates are otherwise equally ranked, a candidate who has overcome significant barriers should be ranked above.

N.B. Applicants that do not meet any of the above criteria would be marked as unsuitable.