

## **LIDo Project Vetting Guidelines**

- Essential Principles:
  - Student must have continual supervision that is guaranteed for the entire duration of their PhD within LIDo institutions. Supervisors who hold a part-time position at a LIDo institution must clearly declare this.
  - Projects must fit BBSRC remit and be non-trivially interdisciplinary [*see specific sections, below*].
  - LIDo must have confidence that proposed project and resources available are feasible for a student to complete a PhD and submit a thesis within the LIDo deadline.
- The guidelines below represent general criteria; individual LIDo institutions may consider additional criteria based on local rules and requirements.
- With essential principles in mind, LIDo representatives vetting projects in their institution should apply discretionary flexibility based on local situation and local knowledge, and consider project approval on a case-by-case basis.
- Projects are scored on the overall combination of qualities, not any one specific criterion.
- Projects are vetted in comparison to other projects submitted the same year rather than on absolutes.
- The Management Committee may also set the numbers of projects for institutions as one of many mechanisms for maintaining the balance of students among institutions.

## **Eligibility**

- Primary and Secondary supervisors must hold a position within a LIDo institution that allows them to accept PhD students at that institution, all part-time appointments must be declared. It is the supervisors responsibility to ensure that supervisory arrangements are guaranteed over the duration of the PhD. Typically, the supervisors should hold:
  - an Academic Staff position (at lecturer level or above) resourced from the central funds of a LIDo institution for the duration of the PhD.
  - a lecturer-level equivalent postdoctoral fellowship (e.g. from the Research Councils, the Royal Society, the Wellcome Trust, or an internal university fellowship with a similar lecturer level equivalent status and which was awarded in open competition). Fellows whose fellowship ends prior to the PhD submission date must have a guaranteed hard money (proleptic) position at lecturer level or above within a LIDo institution after their fellowship. Such guarantees should be endorsed by the appropriate Head of Department in writing.
- A supervisor can only have ONE LIDo PhD student in their lab as primary supervisor at any one time. This includes BBSRC and institutionally funded students who chose their PhD from the main LIDo project pool. This excludes rotation students, and students who applied for a specific project such as iCASE students and Bloomsbury students. A primary supervisor is thus eligible to submit a project for the cohort starting the year before their current LIDo PhD student is due to submit their thesis.

## **Project Description**

- Project forms with incomplete, or incorrect information will be rejected.
- There should be a clear connection between the rotation and PhD projects.
- All resources, equipment and facilities required to run the projects should be in place (or already funded at the time of application with the reasonable expectation that they will be in place when the student starts).
- Projects have flexibility to evolve, especially if students add their input during the PhD. However, changes should be within reasonable limits and recognisably connected to the one advertised.
- Changes in the project area or supervisory team will require LIDo approval.
- Supervisors who assign projects to students that differ significantly from the advertised version without approval will be penalised, especially if there are deviations from BBSRC remit and interdisciplinarity.

## **BBSRC Remit**

- Projects must fall under BBSRC remit. They cannot be too clinical (MRC), or lie exclusively in engineering or in the physical sciences (EPSRC).
- Projects must genuinely fit to at least one of the broad BBSRC strategic priorities (stated on the form). See BBSRC Strategic Plan for details: <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/news/planning/strategy/>

## **Scientific Quality and Interdisciplinary Research**

- Genuinely interdisciplinary. A biological problem tackled with approaches from mathematics, computation, statistics, physics, chemistry, or engineering that shows clear synergy would be ideal.

- Involve NEW ways of working that emphasise quantitative analysis of biological data or development or application of new technologies, not just well-established combinations of wet-dry work. Examples of project to accept: new combinations of experiment with computation/modelling or non-trivial bioinformatics; new combinations of chemical or physical approaches with biology; bioengineering; incorporation of new technologies into research working practices. Projects driven by large-scale data or lying in the areas of synthetic and systems biology are considered inherently 'new' by the BBSRC.
- Having supervisors from different disciplines is ideal, but supervisors who are inherently interdisciplinary should not be penalised.
- Creativity, originality, and science of exceptional interest.
- Genuinely dual supervision, i.e. not merely a primary and token secondary.
- Cross-institutional projects are encouraged, to ensure that LIDo achieves the committed minimum of 50% cross-institutional projects. Each institution should ensure that at least 50% of the projects approved are cross-institutional.

### **Financial Support and Other Resources**

- The primary or secondary supervisor must have the financial ability and necessary resources (e.g. availability of specialist equipment) to support the student's project. This must be made clear in the project form.
- We consider all sources of funding, including start-up funds, funding track record, and current grants. We also consider the possibility that some projects can be supported purely via the RTSG.
- Funding does not need to come from BBSRC, so long as the project is within BBSRC remit.

### **Supervision Track Record**

- Good track record of student completion is required.
- Any late or non-submission requires detailed explanations from PI and/or enquiries by the institutional representative to departmental graduate tutor.
- New PIs yet to supervise a student to submission but are applying as a primary supervisor should have an experienced secondary supervisor with a history of successful supervision. Such new PIs should also be supported by an experienced staff member from their department as an additional named supervisor/mentor.
- All supervisors must have attended supervisor training that meet local requirements in each institution.

### **Fulfilling LIDo Responsibilities**

- Supervisors or departments that do not fulfil their LIDo obligations will have their projects vetted with a lower standing or be outright rejected, depending on the severity of their failure.
- These obligations include but are not limited to: on-time thesis submission of LIDo students; marking rotation reports; participation in compulsory LIDo events (e.g. rotation talks and posters); reporting requirements; or meeting deadlines for LIDo-related events.

### **Vetting Procedure**

- In most institutions, projects are scored and ranked by 2-3 LIDo representatives. The cut-off score may be adjusted based on the number of projects for each institution and the number of cross-institutional projects.
- At UCL, all projects are also sent to at least two supervisors for scoring; each proposal is scored by at least two assessors but with incomplete overlap between assessors, so any given pair or triple only sees a small fraction of the total together. Assessors score "Yes/No/Maybe" for Interdisciplinary, BBSRC Remit, and BBSRC strategic priority. If there is any disagreement or contention, the UCL Lead adjudicates.