



Shortlisting Guidelines:

These guidelines are intended to facilitate comparability of scoring across many shortlisters. Applicants should be scored based on evidence of their likely aptitude for research. Those who have followed an untraditional route but demonstrate impressive skills and aptitude may still score a 4. Where information is available, please consider an applicant's circumstances in evaluating their accomplishments. Particularly, we do not wish to exclude students from disadvantaged backgrounds or overseas who may not have been able to take extra-curricular research opportunities. Any mentioned mitigating circumstances should be taken into consideration. If there are any applicants who haven't completed a research project yet, they should still be able to explain the rationale for what they're about to do and the approaches they're going to be taking.

Scoring: 4 (I would definitely want to interview this person for LIDO) to 1 (Does not meet minimum requirements below).

In shortlisting we are considering academic record, their motivation and aptitude for research, learning from their research experience, a fit with LIDO and desirable personal attributes. We are looking for students with evidence of achievement at the highest level and potential for research.

We would expect that students that we interview would have:

- **Very good academic record** – a high 2i or better BSc/Msci with a substantial proportion of first class module marks or an MSc/MRes Distinction. Given their relevance to research ability, Distinction grades for UG or PG projects are particularly desirable and may compensate for slightly lower overall grades.
- **Strong motivation and aptitude for PhD** – preferably evidenced by proactively seeking out experience; clear, complete and logical explanation of their project hypothesis, findings and implication; evidence of learning about the process of research from their research experience; evidence that research and practical skills have been acquired; Research as part of their degree program is sufficient.
- **Reasonably well-written personal statement** – preferably indicating BBSRC-related research interests and interest in aspects of the LIDO program.
- **Fit for the LIDO program** – evidence of interest in interdisciplinary research; evidence of capability to complete SYSMIC course. The LIDO program emphasises interdisciplinarity between life sciences and physical sciences/ engineering/ mathematics /computation.
- **Useful personality or intellectual traits** – such as independence, maturity, initiative, fortitude, perseverance, enthusiasm, cogency and others that are important in a PhD. Evidenced by research and other experiences in their personal statement. This is one area where shortlisters are expected to exercise personal judgement, since the possibilities are vast and not easily distilled into simple categories.

These scoring guidelines are NOT hard rules. We need shortlisters to exercise their own judgement and use their experience to highlight applicants that they think could have high potential for research. Given the diversity of backgrounds of applicants and PhD projects, it is difficult for any

one shortlister to accurately assess performance and potential of all candidates. This is particularly true for applicants that might have unusual academic/career trajectories. For example, if you find yourself in the circumstance that the outline examples below indicate a lower score, but you would really want to interview the applicant, then give them a 4. Indicate such atypical factors under comments.

A student only needs to have one research experience to use as evidence on their application. **Covid19 restrictions significantly affected research opportunities for undergraduates during the 2019/2020, 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 academic years. This should be borne in mind when assessing applications from recent undergraduates. Care should be taken to recognise the value of alternative research experience, such as data analyses, literature reviews and other qualitative approaches.** Irrespective of the approach taken, successful applicants are expected to provide a compelling description of their hypotheses, findings and the implications of their research.

Overseas students are scored in the same way as UK/EU students.

Each application will be assessed by academics from six of the LIDo institutions (applications will be distributed equitably across the eight LIDo institutions). For each application, scoring LIDo institutions will provide one **integer** score. The **average of six scores** (one from each scoring institution) **will be used to rank the applicants**. Those with large score variance (e.g. having both 1s and 4s) will be discussed at a shortlisting meeting.

Scoring (integers only). Below are examples for applicants who have followed a traditional route. Those with alternative or unusual routes should be scored according to the same criteria but taking into account their route.

4 = Definitely Interview

- **Excellent academic record** – First class BSc/MSci or MSc/MRes Distinction. Predicted final grades supported by transcript evidence are sufficient)
- **Minimum one coherently described research experience** – research as part of their degree program is sufficient.
- **Strong motivation and aptitude for PhD** – evidenced by proactively seeking out experience; clear, complete and logical explanation of their project hypothesis, findings and implications; evidence of learning about the process of research from their research experience; evidence that research and practical skills have been acquired.
- **Reasonably well-written personal statement** – indicating BBSRC-related research interests and interest in aspects of the LIDo program interests.
- **Fit for the LIDo program** – evidence of interest in interdisciplinary research; evidence of capability to complete SYSMIC course.
- **Several useful personality or intellectual traits** – such as independence, maturity, initiative, fortitude, perseverance, enthusiasm, cogency and others that are important in a PhD. Evidenced by research and other experiences in their personal statement. This is one area where shortlisters are expected to exercise personal judgement, since the possibilities are vast and not easily distilled into simple categories.

3 = Possibly Interview

- Minimum high-2.1 (67%) BSc/MSci or high Merit MSc/MRes with distinction level project mark
- Minimum one coherently described research experience
- Lacking in one of the other criteria that would score a 4 e.g. not proactive about seeking a research experience; evidence of average research and practical skills; sketchy interest in BBSRC-related research; perhaps some misconceptions about aspects of the LIDO program; apparent suitability and interest in but no evidence of interdisciplinary research or training.

2 = Unlikely to Interview

- Minimum high-2.1 BSc/MSci or high-Merit MSc/MRes with one distinction module
- One research experience
- Lacking in more than one of the criteria that would score a 4 e.g. not proactive about seeking a research experience; sketchy project description; evidence of average research and practical skills; sketchy interest in BBSRC-related research; limited interest in, or some misconceptions about, aspects of the LIDO program; only limited evidence of interest in interdisciplinary research

1 = Definitely not Interview

- Neither a high-2.1 BSc/MSci nor a high-Merit MSc/MRes with one distinction module
- OR
- Does not have any research experience
- OR
- Meets the minimum high-2.1 BSc/MSci or high-Merit MSc/MRes with one distinction module
 - Has one research experience
 - But severely lacking in respect of one or more of the assessment criteria e.g. poor project description; little evidence of understanding of the research process; very limited research and practical skills; no interest in or a lack of understanding of BBSRC-related research; no or little evidence of interest in aspects of the LIDO program; no or little evidence of interest in interdisciplinary research; weak evidence of capability to complete SYSMIC e.g. low scores in quantitative modules.