



FCT

Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia
MINISTÉRIO DA EDUCAÇÃO E CIÊNCIA

GUIDELINES FOR SITE VISITS

FCT Evaluation of R&D Units 2013

2 July 2014

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Guidelines for Site Visits

The following document presents guidelines for site visits as a part of the 2nd stage of the evaluation process. It aims to provide the R&D units with orientations from FCT for a better planning of the site visit as well as general recommendations from the evaluation panels.

1. Evaluation Structure - Panels

Given the distribution of the scientific domains covered by the applications, six disciplinary and one transdisciplinary review panels will be set up. In addition to the Chair, each panel will be composed of between 7 and 16 members, depending on the number of proposals to be allocated to each panel.

- **Panel 1:** Exact Sciences
- **Panel 2:** Engineering Sciences
- **Panel 3:** Health and Life Sciences
- **Panel 4:** Natural and Environmental Sciences
- **Panel 5:** Social Sciences
- **Panel 6:** Humanities
- **Panel 7:** Transdisciplinary

2. Evaluation Process

The evaluation process is organised in two stages. This document will focus only on Stage 2, namely on the site visits.

Stage 2 – Research Unit site visits

Shortlisted research units will be visited in the summer/autumn 2014. The preliminary calendar for the site visits is:

Evaluation Panel	Preliminary dates *
Exact Sciences	September and October 2014
Engineering Sciences	September and October 2014
Health and Life Sciences	21 – 26 of July 2014 (for some research units) October 2014 (for the remaining units)
Natural and Environmental Sciences	September and October 2014
Social Sciences	21 – 26 of July 2014 (for a certain number of research units in Economics, Finance, Management, Political Sciences and Sociology) October 2014 (for the remaining units)
Humanities	September 2014
Multidisciplinary	September and October 2014

* **For a regular update of the site visits' calendar please see:**

http://www.fct.pt/apoios/unidades/avaliacoes/2013/processo_avaliacao.phtml.en.

1. *Before the site visit*

After notification of the results of the 1st stage of evaluation, the units that are recommended to proceed to the 2nd stage are given an additional opportunity of responding to the comments of the evaluation panels. These comments are optional and should be limited to clarification of misunderstandings or to correct factual errors in the reports.

In preparing for the site visits, R&D units are advised to take particular attention to critical aspects and comments presented in the evaluation panels' consensus reports of the 1st stage. In many cases there are specific questions/suggestions of topics that the panel would like to see addressed by the unit coordinators.

2. *During the visit*

Each visit is expected to include:

- i. A 15 minute (maximum time allowed) presentation of the research team(s) and of the proposal, highlighting the strategic programme for the next six years, and addressing answers/clarifications to specific questions raised by the panel;
- ii. A site visit lead by the Unit coordinator(s) and a limited number of research members, PhD students and post-doctoral researchers;

- iii. For Units with more than one site, the unit coordinator needs to identify and notify FCT which site is to be visited.

Each unit will be visited by a small group of reviewers from the corresponding panel. While a lead rapporteur will chair the visit, a secondary rapporteur will keep track of the discussions and will formalise the conclusions of the experts in a visit report that will be submitted online and made available for the final evaluation meetings (final review panel meetings).

It is the responsibility of the unit coordinator to organise the site visit and to adopt the structure that best suits the unit and the panel comments. Each unit is allowed **up to three hours** of interaction with the panel members. To ensure that the schedule of each visit is properly accomplished, the coordinator should provide the agenda of the site visit to FCT (avalinstituicoes@fct.pt) at least one week before the visit.

As a general guideline, FCT suggests the following structure:

- Presentation plus time for discussion: max. of 1 h (please provide sufficient time for discussion/interaction with the panel members);
- Site visit: max. of 1 h (optional and if considered relevant);
- Meetings with team members, PhD students and post-doctoral researchers: max. of 1 h.

General Recommendations of the Review Panels for the site visits:

Based on the feedback of several review panels, the unit coordinators might find it useful to briefly address some or all of the following topics:

- i. High level strategic agenda;
- ii. Budget strategy;
- iii. Chart with the structure of the unit (for example: what are the services provided, description of the facilities and its cost, who are the principal investigators and students, etc.);
- iv. Highlights of the R&D unit;
- v. SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities).

During site visits meetings with PhD students and young principal investigators (PIs) should be facilitated, without the presence of the unit coordinator.

3. *Final Review Panel meetings*

Once the site visits are completed, the panel shall meet to discuss and integrate the results of the first stage and the main conclusions arising from the site visits.

All information will be made available to the Review Panels in advance of their meetings. The Review panels will meet physically, discuss each application and reach a consensus on:

- Qualitative scores for each criterion and comments to be put forward to the research unit
- Recommendations on the classification for each R&D unit (exceptional, excellent, very good, good, fair, poor).

In Stage 2 of the evaluation process, the qualitative overall grading should be based on the Review Panel's own judgment of the general merit of each R&D Unit, after the visit, and will not be the direct result of a quantitative algorithm based on the ratings attributed to each individual criterion (which should however inform the judgement of the Panel).

Grade	Description
Exceptional	R&D Unit recognised as an international reference for its scientific and technological output and exceptional contributions to its area of research.
Excellent	R&D Unit distinguished by the high quality and international merit of its scientific and technology output and with significant contributions to its area of research.
Very Good	R&D Unit with high quality and national merit and with significant contributions of international relevance in its area of research
Good	R&D Unit with quality at the national level, reduced internationalisation and some contributions to its area of research.
Fair	R&D Unit without significant contributions to its area of research.
Poor	R&D Unit without contributions to its area of research and with other weaknesses.



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