ICN2 PhD Programme

Admission

Contributors:

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ADMISSION TO THE ICN2 PhD PROGRAMME

DEFINITION

The aim of this admission protocol is to ensure that the best candidates are selected to be part of the ICN2 PhD Programme. It consists of a structured process with defined evaluation criteria, admission committee, call calendar, etc.

PHASES OF ADMISSION

1. CALLS AND CALENDAR

The ICN2 envisions one annual call for the ICN2 PhD Programme:

Opening date	May-June
Deadline for applications	July
Selection process	July-October
Contract start date	January-March

The calls are coordinated by the Human Resources Department (HR).

Publication and dissemination of the calls is carried out by HR with the support of the Marketing & Communication Department and ICN2 group leaders (GLs). Candidates detected by the groups must also apply to these calls and undergo evaluation by the Admissions Committee. It is useful for HR to know the names of these candidates.

Meanwhile, as part of its on-going action to provide information about upcoming competitive calls, the Strategy Development Office (Strategy) will remind GLs of upcoming PhD Programme calls and related sources of funding.

HR is the point of contact for applicants throughout the application process.

To be finally accepted on the ICN2 PhD Programme, the candidates must have guaranteed funding for the duration of their PhD (3+1 years). For more information on sources of funding, see page 6.

2. EVALUATION

Applications are assessed via a four-step process:

1. Eligibility check
2. Evaluation by the Admission Committee
3. Interviews with the research groups
4. Final matching (candidate-group-position)

2.1 Eligibility Check

HR examines all the applications received and automatically rejects those that do not meet the eligibility criteria published in the call guidelines. Specifically, it ensures that the applications sent to the Admission Committee fulfil the following requirements:

- Compliance with the formal requisites of the call (required documentation, academic situation, etc.)

- Accreditation of the necessary qualifications to enrol on a postgraduate programme (e.g. Masters)

The remaining candidates are then organised in a summary document. A provisional threshold will be indicated below a grade of 7/10, though all candidates passing the eligibility check will be included. This document is then sent to the Admission Committee, together with the applications themselves and a summary of the evaluation criteria.

2.2 Evaluation by the Admission Committee

The internal admission committee is appointed by Direction. It is tasked with evaluating and prioritising candidates based on the number of ICN2 PhD competitively-funded positions available plus that of any PhD calls/openings within the groups.

2.2.1 Admission Committee

There will be one Admission Committee for all candidates, governed as follows:

- It will have five members, be multidisciplinary and achieve gender balance
- Members will serve for a period of two years, working on four consecutive calls
- Rotation of members will be partial, with the aim to provide continuity
- Meetings will be called by HR as necessary; this department will also coordinate the results of the decisions made

2.2.2 Evaluation Criteria

As indicated, the committee will initially evaluate all those candidates who have achieved a minimum grade of 7/10 in their undergraduate academic records, except in cases where extraordinary circumstances apply.

The criteria for this evaluation are as follows:

- **Academic record**: i.e. grades at undergraduate and Masters level. If the final Masters result is pending, the average of the partial grades will be considered. Marks in other education systems will be adapted to the 0-10 system.

- **Research experience**: i.e. research skills acquired, publications, patents, attendance of international conferences, reference letters, etc.

- **International experience**: i.e. experience in multicultural environments, capacity to adapt to different working environments.

- **Presentation**: i.e. the quality of the motivation letter and overall presentation will also be evaluated. If the calendar allows it, a short video presentation will be required of the best candidates. Level of English will also influence scores here.

Each of the four criteria is to be scored based on the following scale:

o Academic record: a score of 1 to 10 reflecting the candidate's grades at undergraduate and Masters level will be assigned for each degree.

o Research experience (including publications):

No experience	0
For every 3 months of research experience	2

No publications/patents	0
For each publication as non-first author	1
For each publication as first author; participation in a patent	3

No or poor reference letters	0
Average reference letters	1
Good reference letters	3

o International experience:

No international experience	0
Candidate has studied at two different universities	2
Candidate completed their undergraduate or Masters degree in a country other than their country of the origin	5
Candidate completed their undergraduate and Masters degree in a country other than their country of origin	10

o Presentation:

No or poor motivation letter	0
Average motivation letter	5
Good motivation letter	7
Excellent motivation letter	10

Scores will be weighted as follows:

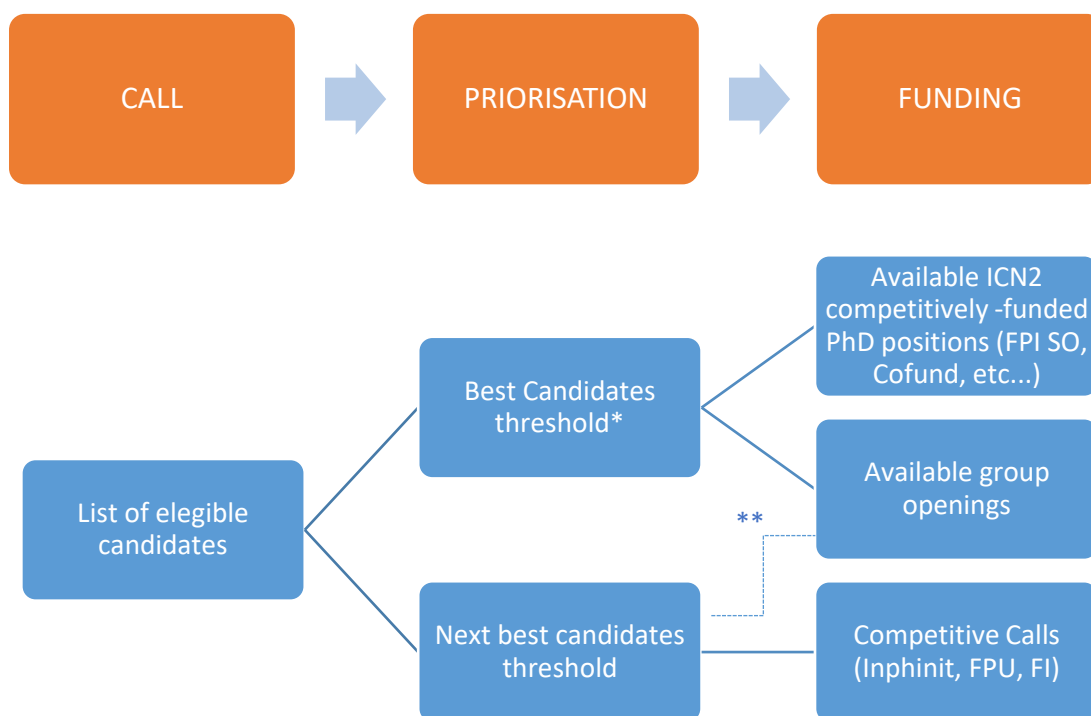| Academic record	Undergraduate final grade x 0.8 + Masters final grade x 0.2
Research experience	No upper limit
International experience	0-10 points
Presentation	0-10 points
Overall result	(academic record x 9 + research experience x 4 + international experience x 1 + presentation x 2) / 16

2.2.3 Admission Committee Decisions

The outcome of the above described evaluation is a final ranking of candidates over an admission threshold. The number of candidates above the threshold will depend on how many PhD positions there are available. This in turn will depend on the number of ICN2 competitively-funded PhD positions available plus that of any PhD calls/openings available within the research groups (see page 6 for more details). As a general rule, the number of candidates above the threshold will be twice the number of available positions.

HR will inform Direction as to the outcome of the evaluation process.

Direction will assign institutional funding for the very best candidates in order to guarantee their place. The number of candidates "pre-funded" in this way each call will depend on the availability of institutional funding. The idea is that these candidates be able to start their contract with the ICN2 while waiting for the outcomes of their applications to competitive calls.

Final acceptance onto the ICN2 PhD Programme requires the candidate having secured funding to cover the duration of their PhD.

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┌──────────┐      ┌──────────────┐      ┌──────────┐
│   CALL   │  ➔   │ PRIORISATION │  ➔   │ FUNDING  │
└──────────┘      └──────────────┘      └──────────┘
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                                    ┌────────────────────────┐
                                    │   Available ICN2        │
                    ┌───────────────┤ competitively -funded   │
                    │ Best          │ PhD positions (FPI SO,  │
                    │ Candidates    │   Cofund, etc...)       │
                    │ threshold*    ├────────────────────────┐
┌──────────────┐    └───────────────┤   Available group       │
│ List of      │                    │   openings              │
│ elegible     │              **    └────────────────────────┘
│ candidates   ├────┐                ┌────────────────────────┐
└──────────────┘    │ Next best      │  Competitive Calls      │
                    │ candidates     │  (Inphinit, FPU, FI)    │
                    │ threshold      └────────────────────────┘
                    └────────────────┘
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*The number of candidates over the threshold will depend on the number of positions available at the time of each call. As a general rule it will be twice the number of available positions (ICN2 Competitively-funded Positions + Group Openings).

** If there is no match between the Best Candidates over the threshold and the Group Openings (e.g. no candidate is interested in a particular group position), then the Next Best Candidates will be considered.

3. Interviews with the research groups

The information regarding the candidates over the threshold will be sent by HR to the GL chosen by the candidate. The GL should then arrange an interview with the candidate.

Following the interview, the GL will report back to HR with feedback from the interview.

4. Final Matching (Candidate-Group-Position)

In coordination with Strategy, HR will send details of the ICN2 competitively-funded positions available to the candidates. Strategy will also inform GLs about these opportunities.

The Competitive Funding Department will provide support for the candidates during the application process.

There are essentially two sources of funding for ICN2 PhD Programme candidates:

- **ICN2 competitively-funded PhD positions**:
    - **FI Agaur:** Candidates must apply with a project and a group.
    - **FPI MINECO:** Candidates must apply with a project and group.
    - **FPI SO:** Candidates apply to one Severo Ochoa application areas.
    - **FPU:** Candidates apply to the funding calls and decide where they want to do their PhD.
    - **Inphinit/PREBIST/COFUND:** Candidates apply for a position created specifically for them.
- **Group openings:** Candidates may be hired directly by ICN2 groups using group funds.