

Young Researcher Award in Coeliac Disease Research – Criteria for the evaluation of projects.

Terms of Reference (ToR)

PART A) Curriculum vitae and suitability of the young researcher for the project **(45 points out of 120)**.

Based on an analysis of the researcher's overall scientific output and their ability to carry out research projects. To this end, consideration will be given to the quality, scientific contribution, and impact of the applicant's research outputs, considering publications, data resources, software, patents, clinical guidelines, dissemination activities, and other relevant achievements. **(30 points)**.

Applicant track record (25 points)

- Publications and research outputs (10)
- Independence and contribution to projects (10)
- Training, awards, mobility, leadership activities (5)

Candidate's contribution and career development (5 points)

Assessment of:

- Scientific responsibility within the project
- Leadership opportunities
- Training and mentoring plan
- Expected benefit for career progression

The track record of the research group and its connection to the subject matter outlined in the project will also be considered. Publications or authorship of chapters or books related to coeliac disease or the gluten-free diet. **(10 points)**.

Research environment (10 points)

- Group expertise
- Infrastructure
- Access to patients/cohorts

Previous participation of the researcher or its group in AOECS-funded projects, as the Scientific Poster's call will be assessed only in relation to demonstrated project completion, outputs, and impact. **(5 points)**.

PART B) Scientific quality and feasibility of the research proposal (75 points out of 120).

Originality and innovation of the project's subject matter **(5 points)**.

The research must be applicable and provide concrete solutions to health problems. Financial support from a company, organisation or entity should be viewed positively **(10 points)**.

Assessment of:

- Advancement of knowledge in coeliac disease
- Potential benefit to patients
- Potential influence on clinical practice
- Potential influence on gluten-free food systems, policy, or education

Clear, non-redundant objectives—free from conceptual and methodological formulations and, where possible, quantifiable—demonstrate a clarity of concepts that will facilitate the development of the proposal. It is recommended to distinguish between “main objective” and “secondary objectives” **(5 points)**.

The analysis of the context in which the proposed research would be carried out must be well-structured, and the bibliography provided must be accurate and, in general, up to date **(10 points)**.

The study design and methodological approach, must be ensured that the sample to be studied is valid for the stated objectives, that the proposed methods are feasible for the group, that the project complies with ethical standards (favourable report from the Institution's Ethics Committee if applicable must be provided), and that potential contingencies which may limit the validity of the results obtained have been considered **(15 points)**.

Study design and methodological rigor (10 points)

- Design appropriateness
- Statistical plan
- Sample size justification
- Bias mitigation

Ethical and regulatory considerations (2 points)

Risk management and contingency plans (3 points).

Researchers undertaking the project must demonstrate their ability to apply the techniques described, although exceptions may be made in cases of collaboration with other groups or the use of external services. In projects involving human subjects, the description of certain study characteristics (sampling, sample size, design, analysis plan, etc.) will be viewed favorably, and risk management needs to be considered, having the contingency already studied. This helps reviewers identify strengths and weaknesses more precisely.

Explaining the relationship between the methodology and the objectives demonstrates an ability to justify the choice of techniques; this would be viewed favourably compared to a mere listing of techniques without explaining a clear link to the objectives of the research **(5 points)**.

Feasibility assessment, which must consider the team's suitability to undertake the methodology, the distribution of tasks, the working environment and available equipment as well as the tasks and responsibilities of the candidate into the project **(10 points)**.

Patient-centred relevance and dissemination (5 points)

Assessment of:

- Relevance to unmet patient needs
- Engagement with patient organisations
- Dissemination plan to patients, clinicians, and stakeholders

Eligibility condition: minimum 50% score in both Part A and Part B.