

Periodic Assessment of Research, Development, Artistic and Other Creative Activities VER 2026

Final Report of the Psychology and Cognitive Science Sub-panel

Preamble:

This final report represents a summary of observations by members of the Psychology and Cognitive Science Sub-panel concerning the VER 2026 review process. As instructed, the focus of the report is on the *Quality of the Science* that was reviewed by the sub-panel. The below report is organized using the three key review criteria of VER 2026: Originality, Significance and Rigor. For each of these criteria we provide reflections on what we reviewed and what we, as a sub-panel, would encourage researchers to consider for the future.

Originality - past (reflections on the outputs reviewed):

With respect to originality of the outputs reviewed, sub-panelists indicated substantial variability in originality across outputs submitted. Some reviewers noted that certain studies addressed cutting-edge and socially relevant issues, whereas others revisited established topics (e.g., in education, motivation and personality). While some work was deemed to be highly original and to contribute substantially to science, other outputs reviewed represented incremental advances within restricted areas of Psychology and Cognitive Science.

Several reviewers observed that a substantial number of outputs focused on extending largely established research to the context of Slovakia and validating Slovak-specific instruments based on existing tools. While this was recognized as valuable work, sub-sub-panelists agreed that such studies were less likely to achieve the highest ratings for

originality. Still, it was also noted that several outputs achieved contributions at a high and international level.

Originality - future (what might further improve in the future):

Some sub-panelists noted that many studies were correlational in nature and missed opportunities to explore mediators, moderators, or longitudinal designs. More experimental work and a greater commitment to original theorizing in Psychology and Cognitive Science holds promise for enhancing originality and would also strengthen the inferences that can be drawn from the outputs.

Reviewers highlighted that studies combining cross-sectional and longitudinal data were relatively rare but tended to receive higher ratings. Sub-panelists also suggested that researchers could further develop novel conceptual frameworks and theoretically driven models with international relevance.

Significance - past (reflections on the outputs reviewed):

Reviewers noted considerable variation in the significance of the submitted outputs. Some sub-panelists indicated that some of the outputs focused on niche topics within Psychology & Cognitive Science with limited broader relevance.

Several reviewers commented on the prevalence of COVID-19-related work and questioned its long-term relevance, although some sub-panelists emphasized that such work facilitated valuable international collaborations and was clearly salient at the time of data collection. Reviewers, though not taking the publication outlet into account during the review process, also noted that publication in lesser-known journals could constrain visibility and reach.

At the same time, sub-panelists identified strong examples of high-impact work addressing socially relevant issues and noted that this work was frequently published in prestigious international outlets.

Significance - future (what might further improve in the future):

Sub-panelists suggested that future work could focus on more ambitious research questions and designs that go beyond correlations would strengthen the significance of the work. Sub-panelists also felt that to enhance significance, research should aim for publication in widely indexed journals.

Some reviewers recommended producing fewer but more substantial studies, increasing the use of experimental designs, and making greater use of open, secondary datasets where funding is limited. Secondary data analysis can also be very productive for trainees and junior scientists. Sub-panelists also noted that avoiding lower-impact formats such as conference proceedings could enhance reach and significance.

Rigour - past (reflections on the outputs reviewed):

Sub-panelists generally considered the rigour of outputs to be acceptable. However, some reviewers noted that complex and lengthy analyses occasionally obscured the central findings.

Several sub-panelists observed a reliance on correlational designs and single-study outputs. Reviewers also indicated that Open Science practices were not consistently evident across submissions. Sub-panelists agreed that rigour could be enhanced further through more systematic adoption of Open Science practices such as preregistration of study protocols, submission of Registered Reports as well as open data and materials.

Rigour - future (what might further improve in the future):

Reviewers emphasized the importance of greater adoption of open science practices, including preregistration and open data.

Sub-panelists noted that many studies are correlational and cross-sectional and that more experimental and longitudinal work would strengthen the perceived rigour.

Some sub-panelists highlighted the need for clearer justification of methodological decisions and more consistent use of formal ethical approval processes.

Comments on Social Impact:

Sub-panelists generally viewed social impact as a strength. Several reviewers noted a strong orientation toward applied research.

Sub-panelist noted that future assessment may encourage a clearer separation between, on the one hand, the research that underpins the social impact and, on the other hand, the indicators of social impact. Research outputs and social impact were sometimes hard to distinguish from one another.

Some sub-panelists observed examples of a clear progression from measurement development to implementation, although reviewers noted that implementation was not always rigorously evaluated and that clearer evidence for the implementation should be provided. There was also recognition that presentation quality varied, suggesting a need for clearer reporting templates.

Comments on Creative Environment:

Reviewers noted variability in how institutions described their research environments. Some sub-panelists highlighted detailed and structured approaches, while others indicated more limited or unclear descriptions. Some reviewers felt that past achievements were commendable given limited staff and personnel resources at smaller institutions. Increasing the research staff within a feasible range and could help these institutions to further realize research and social impact aims. Implementing doctoral programs where non-existent could help in this regard.

Sub-panelists raised concerns about reliance on limited funding streams and the potential pressure placed on early career researchers without clearly articulated support structures.

Reviewers also suggested that inconsistent reporting may have led to some institutions being undervalued. A clearer description of how sustainability will be sought was also recommended.

Comments on how ratings were assigned:

Sub-panelists indicated that higher-rated outputs were typically innovative, theoretically sound, methodologically rigorous, and relevant to a broad audience.

Reviewers noted that mid-level outputs were generally sound but more limited in scope, while lower-rated outputs often had methodological weaknesses or limited relevance. Sub-panelists agreed that key differentiators included rigour, breadth of relevance, and clarity of design and reporting.

Any general observations:

Some sub-panelists noted that English abstracts for Slovak outputs were occasionally too brief or vague to support proper evaluation.

Sub-panel members

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