

Dean of Faculty of Science
Palacký University in Olomouc
Czech Republic

Professor A. W. Rutherford FRS
Chair of Biochemistry and Solar Energy

25th Feb 2021

Re: Letter of reference for the promotion of Doc. RNDr. Pavel Pospisil, Ph.D. for the academic title Full Professor

Dear Professor and Members of the Promotion Committee.

I hereby provide a letter of assessment and recommendation for Dr Pavel Pospisil.

I begin by providing you with some background of my knowledge of the Dr Pospisil. He worked as a post-doctoral fellow my lab in France 2002-2004 after his PhD and 2 previous periods of post-doctoral study. Before he arrived in my group, he had already produced a significant number of publications in the field of photosynthesis. This qualified him to obtain an EU fellowship to work in my group. After working with me in France, Pavel went on to pursue a successful career as an academic and researcher in the fields of photosynthesis and biophysics. I have followed several aspects of his work since that time. I, my team, and my students read and cite his papers regularly as some of the central treatments of the subject.

I now provide a brief description of my previous experience of academic promotions. While in France, I was head of the CNRS unit and head of the CEA “service” (\approx department) in charge of \sim 75 staff. I had to deal with promotions within both of those systems. Since moving to Imperial College London in 2011, I have taken part in promotion meetings in my department. In addition, as the line-manager for all the staff in the photosynthesis research group here, I have dealt with several promotions within our department including those to the level of full professor. As the previous president of the International Society of Photosynthesis Research and a Fellow of the Royal Society, I am often asked to write letters of recommendation for academics, particularly in my field. From this extensive experience, I can say that Pavel Pospisil is well qualified for promotion to full professor in the UK academic system.

In my lab, Pavel Pospisil was an excellent post doc; he learned quickly, did many experiments, and thought deeply. He worked well and his focus and drive led to interesting findings that became a very well cited publication. His strong background in photosynthetic biophysics meant that he was able to work rather independently. But we had many discussions about his results, and I was impressed by his quiet determination to get to the bottom of the problem addressed by meticulous experimentation. He showed real curiosity, independence and perseverance. In his subsequent academic career he has been very successful, producing many quality publications. Over his career he has produced a steady series of papers in the field constituting a significant body of work that has established him as a field leader in his area of study, oxidative stress in photosynthesis, and he has used his expertise to expand into other areas including clinically relevant research.

Dr Pospisil's reviews on oxidative stress in photosynthesis are highly cited (e.g., Pospisil 2009, 20012, 2016). His experimental work has had an international impact too; I particularly like the work he led in which he collaborated with Terry Bricker's group in the USA to identify amino acids in PSII modified covalently by reactive oxygen species and detected by mass spec (Cale et al 2017). I also like his work on the chemistry plastoquinone quenching of ROS in plants, which he did with Michel Havaux in France (e.g., Ferreti et al 2018), and his work detecting and imaging radicals and ROS at wounding sites in plants (e.g., Prasad et al 2018). The papers cited are a small selection of Dr Pospisil's many high impact papers related to important areas of the field.

His status as a respected authority in his field is reflected by his important role as reviewer for several leading journals in the field, his guest editorial roles and his citation record. He also plays an advisory role for a Canadian biotech company that works with photochemical medical interventions. Pavel Pospisil appears to play a full teaching role and has played some leadership/policy roles in academia.

Overall, Dr Pavel Pospisil is an outstanding candidate for promotion to full professor. While in my experience his demeanor leans toward the unassuming, he has made an excellent contribution both to his research fields and (as I see from his CV) to teaching and policy in his department. He has achieved and maintained an international reputation in his field and has and he continues to build on this reputation and to expand it through the application of his expertise to fields outside of photosynthesis.

In summary, I certify that Pavel Pospisil achieves all the requirements to be a Full Professor at Palacky University in Olomouc. I recommend him as an excellent candidate for the academic title Full Professor.

Yours faithfully, 

A.W. Rutherford FRS
Chair of Biochemistry and Solar Energy