

# Guidance for reviewers: peer review form for the Interdisciplinary Research Hubs

## Sections of the peer review form:

The peer review form for the full proposals submitted to the 'Interdisciplinary Research Hubs to Address Intractable Challenges Faced by Developing Countries' has three sections where you as a reviewer have to provide comments:

1. Pathways to Impact (including Impact Summary)
2. Ethics
3. Overall Assessment

Finally, at the end of the form you must give your judgement by choosing a score (1-6) which overall must reflect and be in line with your comments in those three sections.

## Section 1: Pathways to Impact (including Impact Summary)

A clearly thought through and acceptable Pathways to Impact is an essential component of a research proposal and a condition of funding.

In this section you should comment on the Pathways to Impact identified for this work, particularly:

- How complete and realistic are the impacts identified for this work?
- How effective are the activities identified to help realise these impacts (including the resources requested for this purpose)?
- How relevant and appropriate are beneficiaries or collaborators?

You are asked to assess how effectively and realistically the applicants have addressed impact in their proposal. For this you should consider:

- How convincingly has the potential impact of the activity been described?
- How does that impact compare to your normal expectations for the general type of activity proposed?
- How appropriate/effective are the arrangements described for facilitating the impact?
- How are appropriate the collaboration arrangements in the proposal in this respect?

You should not be seeking tangible deliverables, direct return on investment or detailed routes to exploitation in making your assessment. Pathways to Impact is not synonymous with early exploitation. It can take many forms over widely varying timescales. It might involve developing a commercial product or service, or creating a new technology, but could also be about improved medical or health care, contributions to national planning or social policy or engaging the public in the outputs of research.

We don't need you to take the relative importance of the identified impacts into account in reaching your judgement. **The key element to be assessed is the range and appropriateness of the activities to be undertaken to help realise them.**

Proposals where impact activities are clearly integrated throughout the broader project should normally be seen as stronger than those where they are seen as an afterthought bolted on to the back of the project.

## Section 2: Ethics

It is important that GCRF funds are used ethically and responsibly but this is mainly assured by requiring that universities have in place and operate appropriate ethical approval processes. Ethical considerations should not therefore normally be an assessment criterion and you should not take these into account when making your assessment.

If the proposal is in a subject or area that causes you serious personal concern, to the extent that you feel you cannot provide an objective review, then you should decline to review the proposal giving the reason as other, and stating “ethical issues” in the comment box. If you have a concern that the proposal raises ethical issues that have not been clearly identified or addressed, then you should raise this directly with RCUK who will need to make a policy decision on how the proposal should be treated.

## Section 3: Overall Assessment

In this section you should assess the proposal using these criteria which should all be weighted equally:

- Strategic rationale
- Research excellence
- Capability and interdisciplinary research team
- Capacity building and international partnerships
- Likelihood and pathways to impact
- Leadership and management
- Organisation, governance and evaluation
- Value for money

For your review to be useful to the panel, you should comment fully and in detail on each of these eight criteria. You should:

- provide clear and concise comments and recommendations
- clearly identify strengths and weaknesses
- raise concerns in the form of questions for the applicant
- provide constructive, fair and objective criticism

### Assigning a score:

At the end of the peer review form you must assign a score using the six-point scale. The score should reflect your overall conclusion and should be in line with your comments in the individual sections of your review taking account of all the assessment criteria and the various weightings you applied.

The scores are:

- 1 = the proposal is technically flawed
- 2 = the proposal does not meet one or more of the assessment criteria
- 3 = the proposal meets all assessment criteria but with clear weaknesses
- 4 = this is a good proposal that meets all assessment criteria but with minor weaknesses
- 5 = this is a strong proposal that broadly meets all assessment criteria
- 6 = this is a very strong proposal that fully meets all assessment criteria