

UKRI International Development Peer Review College



Induction for College members

This presentation

UKRI has designed this presentation to allow you as a new College member to better understand:

- how the peer review processes work
- how you as a reviewer fit into those processes
- how you can make sure that your reviews are as useful as possible

By the end of the presentation you will have found about:

- the College and its aims
- College membership
- reviewer protocols and ethical reviewing
- conflicts of interest
- reviewing proposals in Je-S
- the Je-S process

The College forms part of the Global Challenge Research Fund (GCRF) global engagement strategy for Official Development Assistance (ODA) research and has a major focus on recruiting members from overseas, particularly from DAC list countries.

By setting up a college of expert reviewers, UKRI aims to ensure high quality peer review processes.

The College is an important part of the peer review processes. It has significant potential to deliver development impacts and has a vital role in ensuring that UKRI supports excellent research of the highest quality.

Aims of the College

1. To ensure that developing country perspectives are a key part of the expert review of the GCRF Interdisciplinary Hubs call and other ODA relevant Research Council calls
2. To build on the GCRF aim of fair and equitable partnerships, ensuring that developing country researchers and non-academics are able to contribute to the decision making process
3. To facilitate closer engagement with expert reviewers from DAC-list countries, and provide training and capacity building in (interdisciplinary) peer review



As a College member you are appointed for 3 years. You can opt out at any time. We monitor the performance of College members and reserve the right to discontinue members who fail to provide quality reviews. We will also review the College membership from time to time to address any imbalances and may replace members who consistently do not respond to review requests.

Initially members will be involved in reviewing proposals submitted to the GCRF call for Interdisciplinary Research Hubs and future GCRF activities. But you may be asked to contribute to the peer review of any calls led by one or more of the UK Research Councils from UKRI, in particular those funded under the Newton Fund.

Reviewer protocols and ethical reviewing

In Je-S, the first time we ask you to provide a review for UKRI, a screen will show the Reviewer Protocols.

The Protocols outline the standards that UKRI and the UK Research Councils require of reviewers in terms of confidentiality and conduct.

You must agree to follow these protocols before you can access the application to review.

You will be expected to confirm compliance with these protocols each year (not each time a new review is requested).

As a reviewer you are expected to act with integrity and to reflect the following key principles of ethical reviewing:



Applications are received by UKRI 'in confidence'. This means that as a reviewer you must:

- keep confidential all information that you acquire and generate in the course of writing your review
- agree to treat all applications confidentially

This duty of confidence covers:

- the fact that the applicant has applied
- the content of the application

Information about applications / applicants must **not** be disclosed to third parties.



As a reviewer you are expected to (1) **assess the merits of the application**, including the applicants' ability to carry out the proposed programme of work, and (2) make **constructive criticisms** where there are significant weaknesses.

You should never conflate judging the application with judging the applicants.

Any reviewer comment(s) which others might construe as personally defamatory are unacceptable.

An application also represents the applicants' intellectual property, a product of their creativity and knowledge. Reviewers should respect this intellectual property and avoid any plagiaristic and unacknowledged appropriation of applicants' ideas.

As a reviewer you should:

- be impartial and assess the application solely on its own merits according to the assessment criteria
- be aware of any intrusion of your own theoretical or methodological preferences as basis for your judgements

As a reviewer you are expected to be open to:

- different approaches to investigation
- new disciplinary and interdisciplinary thinking
- methodological novelty

UKRI is committed to equal opportunities.

Therefore, as a College reviewer, when we ask you to provide a review for an application, you should:

- exercise your knowledge, judgement and expertise
- reach clear and soundly based decisions that are fair, objective and evidence-based
- ensure that you review all applications on equal terms



Conflicts of interest

A conflict of interest is anything that would prevent you from providing, or being seen as providing, objective and unbiased comments and feedback in your review.

For example, where you have or have had a close working relationship or personal connection with anyone from an organisation involved in the application that you have been asked to review.

If you are in doubt or not sure, please contact the UKRI office to discuss **before** you start the review.

The next slides show some examples of conflicts of interest.



Example 1:

“The company I work for is a named collaborating partner on the grant, but through a division I have nothing to do with.”

This is a conflict of interest because you would be involved in a decision process that could be seen to benefit your employer.

Example 2:

“I hold research contracts from a named collaborating partner on this application.”

This is a conflict of interest, because you could be seen as having a vested interest in a decision beneficial to a company that funds your own research.

Example 3:

“A co-investigator on the application is the wife of a colleague that I both work and publish with.”

This is a conflict of interest, because there is a clear connection to someone who would directly benefit from a decision you would influence.

If you are not sure if you have a conflict of interest, please contact the office **before** you start your review: InternationalPeerReview@rcuk.ac.uk

Joint electronic submission (Je-S) system



Expertise Classification: the information provided in this section in Je-S will be used by us to identify appropriate expert reviewers for the proposals that we receive.

To help us best match you to proposals, it is important that you add your research expertise to Je-S as fully as possible. Therefore please use the three parts to provide a comprehensive description of your area of expertise.

The classification consists of three parts:

1. Research Areas
2. Qualifiers
3. Free-text keywords

1. Research Areas

- You can either search the list of Research Areas or browse through it by expanding higher levels to identify those areas of most relevance.
- In some areas, three levels have been defined, whereas in others there are only two. You cannot select terms at the top-level of the structure, as this is mainly a grouping to assist you in finding relevant areas, but you may select at either the second level or the third level, where this is available. Please try to select terms at the lowest appropriate level to describe your expertise and note that it is particularly important for you to complete the free-text keywords part of the classification if the Research Areas that you select are at the second level.
- You may make selections within up to ten second-level Research Areas. Within these ten second-level Research Areas you may make as many selections at the third level as you wish. Please ensure that once you have completed your selection, you set a primary area to assist in the reviewer matching process.

2. Qualifiers

- These terms further qualify those selected under Research Areas. Qualifiers are grouped by type, for example Time, Period or Methodology.
- Some types will only be relevant to the remits of a subset of the Research Councils, and some are likely only to be applicable to classification of proposals rather than expertise of individuals. Please review the descriptions of [qualifier types](#) or browse the list on screen to decide which may apply to your area of expertise.
- You may select as many Qualifiers as are relevant to enable us to gain a more detailed understanding of the nature of your expertise.

3. Free-text keywords

- These are intended to supplement the information you have provided using predefined terms and will be of particular relevance if your expertise falls in Research Areas that are defined to a second rather than third level of detail.
- Keywords should be terms that do not already occur in the predefined lists and that you feel best describe your particular area(s) of interest.
- As the predefined terms should be used where available, and keywords only to further refine these, you will first need to search for possible matches for your proposed keyword. If no match is found, you should proceed to add the keyword.
- Again, you may add as many of these as you consider appropriate.

The reviewing process is electronic and carried out via the Research Councils' [Joint electronic submission \(Je-S\) system](#).

- **Anonymity:** to maintain anonymity when your comments are passed back to applicants, your name does not appear on the review form, only a reviewer reference number. This links the reviewer to the proposal and is unique to that application, not to the reviewer. If a reviewer receives more than one proposal, each will have a different reviewer reference number.
- **Timescales:** if you can't complete your review within the indicated timescale, please contact UKRI immediately, so we have time to approach an alternative reviewer or perhaps extend the deadline.

Reviewing only some aspects

Please note that particularly for broad calls/large bids we might approach you to review not the whole proposal but only the aspects that fall within your expertise.

So please don't decline a review on the grounds that the proposal falls outside your area of expertise. Instead provide a review on the aspects that fall within your expertise and let the office know. We will then find a reviewer for the aspects that are not within your expertise.

The Je-S process

When you are invited to provide a review:

- **We** will send the application to your Je-S account with any additional guidance as required.
- **You** will need to:
 - read the application and the guidance thoroughly
 - provide your comments in the reviewer form
 - comment as fully as you can, setting out the proposal's strengths and weaknesses
 - return the form to UKRI via Je-S



The Je-S reviewer form

Typically the reviewer form will require you to make comments on these aspects of a proposal:

- **Pathways to Impact:** and evaluation plans (outlined in the case for support) identified for this work, particularly: (1) how complete and realistic are the impacts identified for this work? (2) How effective are the activities identified to help realise these impacts? (3) how relevant and appropriate are the beneficiaries or collaborators? (4) are there appropriate stated criteria for the success of the venture and quantitative and qualitative means of evaluating them?
- **Ethics:** It is important that GCRF funds are used ethically and responsibly. 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.
- **Overall assessment:** quality, importance, appropriateness of applicants, resources and management, added value and data management. And the extent to which a proposal meets each of the criteria laid out in the call document **not already** covered by your previous comments

Please note that a reviewer form and the aspects for a reviewer to comment on, may change to reflect specific calls.

Thank you

Questions?

About the College or your membership, please email:
InternationalPeerReview@rcuk.ac.uk