

Expert Funding Panel Recruitment - Improving access and participation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students in postgraduate research study.

Summary

1. Research England and the Office for Students are **seeking applications for expert panel members** [for the joint Research England and OfS funding competition to improve access and participation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students in postgraduate research study](#). The Expert Panel will:
 - a. provide advice on funding decisions.
 - b. act as a steering group for the programme over the long term.
2. We particularly welcome applications from Black, Asian or minority ethnic candidates and we will seek to appoint a panel with lived and learnt experiences relevant to the aims of the funding competition.
3. We will appoint **six expert panel members**:
 - four **general panel members**, and
 - two **student panel members** (One of whom will be appointed as a Co-Chair).
4. Panel members will be paid at a rate of **£170 per day**.
5. Applications should be submitted via the online form found [here](#) by **midday 12 April 2021**.

Background

6. Persistent inequalities exist throughout higher education for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students. Some of the inequalities that are present for Black, Asian and minority ethnic undergraduate students – such as the current gap (2018-19) in degree outcomes (1st or 2:1) between white students and black students of 22.1 percentage points – are reflected in the underrepresentation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic students in postgraduate research (PGR) students.
7. PGR students are also researchers and teachers, and play an important role in supporting the research and academic talent pipeline, as well as the broader economy through careers beyond academia. Supporting access and successful participation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic PGR students is crucial – both to improve opportunities for current generations, and to increase the flow of talent, which has been identified as important to addressing attainment gaps.

8. Research England (RE) (a council within UKRI) and the OfS have launched a joint funding competition for project proposals to improve access and participation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups in PGR study in the English higher education sector.
9. RE and the OfS are seeking to appoint six expert panel members (two PGR student members) to work with the Panel Co-Chair to provide advice on funding decisions and in the longer term, support the funding competition to successfully achieve its aims.
10. We are keen to ensure that the panel represent the variety of experiences and knowledge that are likely to be reflected in the individual projects, so they are able to make judgements on the credibility and focus of proposed projects in line with the programme aims and priorities.

Purpose

11. The Expert Panel will serve two primary purposes:
 - a. Following from the initial assessment process, make recommendations to RE and the OfS regarding funding decisions; and
 - b. provide ongoing advice to RE and the OfS over the course of the funded programme.

Timescales and commitment

12. We are seeking to appoint the panel for an overall period of approximately 5 years (2021 – 2026 inclusive).
13. Bid assessments will take place in summer of 2021, during which there will be some time commitment that includes preparation for, and participation in the panel meeting.
14. Following the bid assessment process, the Co-Chairs and Panel members will form part of a steering group that will meet once a year over the course of the scheme.
15. Table 1 provides more detailed information on timescales and commitments.

Table 1

Purpose	Activity	Approx. Dates (2021)	Approx. commitment
Panel meeting	Orientation and training (likely to be held virtually)	w/c 5 Jul – 12 Jul	1/2 day
	Preparation for meeting (reading bids)	w/c 12 Jul – w/c 19 Jul	2 days

	Panel meeting	w/c 19 Jul	1 day
Steering group (virtual)	Opening meeting	Aug	2-4 hours
	Annual steering group meeting	TBD	4 hours per year

Terms of appointment

16. All appointments will be for the whole funding period of five years. However, we recognise that in some instances appointment for the whole duration may not be possible. Membership will be kept under review to ensure that a range of experiences and expertise is maintained throughout.

17. The panel will be appointed as individuals and, as such, deputies may not be appointed.

Panel Members

18. The panel will be appointed in order to deliver the tasks as set out in the Panel Person Specification (ANNEX B) to the best of their ability.

19. The panel must declare any conflicts of interest. This includes:

- c. Direct employment with any organisation named as an applicant or partner in a bid for the funding.
- d. Direct benefit from any funding recommendations – either financially or professionally.

20. Panel members will abstain from participation in the appropriate parts of the panel meeting that may result in a conflict of interest, either direct or indirect.

21. Panel members will receive payment for their role in the panel meeting and appropriate preparation for it of £170 per day.

22. Panel members will receive payment of £170 per day for activities relating to the steering group. Any expenses incurred over and above this payment will be also be covered.

How to apply

23. To apply, please complete the online application form [here](#), by **midday 12 April 2021**.

24. We will make decisions on panel appointment based upon the applications we receive. We may contact you in order to gain clarity on aspects of your application, but interviews will not form part of this process.

25. The OfS Director of Fair Access and Participation and the Research England Executive Chair will make final decisions on panel appointments.
26. Applications will be considered against the criteria set out in the Person Specification (Annex B). The selection process will consider the need to include a range of experiences and expertise across the panel membership.
27. We aim to inform all candidates about the outcome of the recruitment process in early June 2021
28. The terms of reference for the panel and steering group are at Annex A. For the person specification see Annex B. For further information contact: jonathan.piotrowski@re.ukri.org
29. If you wish to be considered for appointment please complete the online application form [here](#), by **midday 12 April 2021**. You will be asked to attach your CV to the online application form, which should be no longer than one side of A4.
30. The application includes a request for diversity information, please note that completion of this form is optional, but we urge you to do so, in the interests of meeting our ambitions with regard to creating an inclusive expert panel and our broader equality, diversity and inclusion objectives.
31. Research England and the OfS are committed to ensuring equal opportunities and we particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups. The diversity information form enables us to determine whether we are receiving applications from a diverse range of applicants. If a candidate chooses not to complete the form, this will not affect their application, though we will use diversity information to help us appoint a diverse panel.
32. If you require reasonable adjustments to enable your participation, please contact jonathan.piotrowski@re.ukri.org

ANNEX A: Panel Terms of Reference

The role of the panel is to:

1. Review the internal assessment process to ensure that the processes and assessment procedures are robust and appropriate and have been applied in a consistent manner. This will be done by:
 - a. Reviewing a specific selection of bids (panel members will have access to all bids);
 - b. based upon the bids received, establish a recommended cut-off point for funding; and;
 - c. scrutinising bids around the recommended cut-off point for funding.
2. Consider the aim to fund a range of high-quality, diverse and innovative projects that deliver and demonstrate activities across different types of providers, places, approaches, academic subjects, across Black, Asian or minority ethnic groups, and stages of the PGR lifecycle¹.
3. Provide advice on risk to the OfS and Research England, noting which of the bids being recommended for funding may be considered to represent a higher investment risk.
4. Make recommendations to the OfS and Research England regarding the portfolio of projects being recommended for funding. Final decisions on funding will be made by both Research England and the OfS.
5. The panel will reserve the right to call bidders for interview, where this would help inform recommendations.

¹ https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/59535c6a-1343-4dce-ba21-96d8ebd4d944/pgr-funding-competition_bidding-guidance.pdf

Annex B - Personal Specification

The general members and the student members of the panel will be selected based on the evidence provided against the following criteria as detailed in the application form. We expect applicants to meet all specified criteria for the role that they are applying for.

General Panel Member - Personal specification

1. An expert through;
 - a. lived experiences relevant to the aims of the funding competition, and/or
 - b. learnt experiences relevant to the aims of the funding competition.
2. Leading knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion activities relating to ethnicity and race being undertaken in the UK and internationally in relevant or comparable sectors
3. Track record of providing evidence-based insight and recommendations based upon equality, diversity and inclusion in relation to ethnicity and race.
4. Track record of a collaborative and responsive approach, and of demonstrating a commitment to making progress on equality, diversity and inclusion issues relating to ethnicity and race, with experience of improving outcomes.

Postgraduate Research Student Panel Member – Personal specification

1. An expert through;
 - a. lived experiences relevant to the aims of the funding competition, and/or
 - b. learnt experiences relevant to the aims of the funding competition.
2. Current or recent (within one year of graduation) experience as a postgraduate research student.
3. Demonstrable experience and understanding of making a difference to Black, Asian and minority ethnic students in higher education study and/or graduates.
4. Experience of representing the views of a student body to constructively influence and reach consensus.
5. Understanding of the barriers to access and participation for Black, Asian and minority ethnic students in education and/or employment.

The selection of membership across both general and student panel members will aim to secure a spread of expertise relevant to the aims of the funding competition and provide a comprehensive range of knowledge to support funding recommendations.

We particularly welcome applications from Black, Asian or minority ethnic candidates.