

Handbook for members of STFC's advisory bodies and peer review panels

We have created this web based Handbook as a source of information to allow members of STFC's advisory bodies (this terms covers all of our Committees /Panels/ Boards) to familiarise themselves with the terms of their appointment. STFC structure and governance can be found on this webpage <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/stfc/how-we-are-governed/advisory-boards/>.

Queries which relate to a specific appointment including the payment of attendance fees should be directed to the secretary of the relevant committee in the first instance.

1. The Organisation

- 1.1. The Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) is a world-leading multi-disciplinary science organisation, part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) the organisation that brings together the UK's seven Research Councils (including STFC), Innovate UK and Research England to maximise the contribution of each partner and create the best environment for research and innovation to flourish. UK Research and Innovation operates under the direction of the Department for Science Innovation and Technology (DSIT).

The UK Research and Innovation is funded and the portfolio of investments can be found here <https://www.ukri.org/publications/how-ukri-is-funded-and-allocates-funds-in-the-most-effective-way/explainer-how-we-are-funded-and-how-we-allocate-our-funding/#section-money-coming-in-to-ukri>.

For more Information about STFC, UKRI and DSIT please visit following websites:

STFC <http://www.stfc.ukri.org/>

UKRI <https://www.ukri.org/>

DSIT <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-science-innovation-and-technology>

The UKRI's main governance bodies are the UKRI Board and the Executive Committee which provides strategy advice to the Board and is the day-to-day coordinating body for UKRI executive activity. More information about UKRI Board and the Executive Committee can be found here <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/how-we-are-governed/ukri-board/> and <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/how-we-are-governed/executive-committee/>.

Each of the nine partners have Council members who play a critical role in our strategy development and governance. Council members will work with their Executive Chair to deliver their council's aims and objectives and to support UKRI's overall mission .

- 1.2. STFC's Headquarters are in Swindon with research facilities at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL) and the Daresbury Laboratory which is part of Sci-Tech Daresbury. The UK

Astronomy Technology Centre (UK ATC) is the national centre for astronomical technology and is also part of STFC along with Chilbolton Observatory and Boulby Underground Laboratory.

Links to the STFC sites and facilities

Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL) <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/stfc/facilities/rutherford-appleton-laboratory/>
 Daresbury Laboratory <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/stfc/facilities/daresbury-laboratory/>
 The UK Astronomy Technology Centre (ATC) <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/stfc/locations/royal-observatory-edinburgh/uk-astronomy-technology-centre/>
 Chilbolton Observatory <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/stfc/facilities/chilbolton-observatory/>
 Boulby Underground Laboratory <https://www.boulby.stfc.ac.uk/Pages/home.aspx>

STFC has a mission to deliver economic, societal, scientific and international benefits to the UK and its people – and more broadly to the world.

We achieve this by working closely with industry, universities, scientific facilities and scientists themselves, bringing together talent and resources to maximise the impact of scientific research. STFC offers a unique combination of large facilities, technologies, knowledge and skills for the entire science base across the UK, supports – through grant funding – research in astronomy, particle and nuclear physics and space science and uses its resources to help address the global challenges of energy, the environment, healthcare and security.

- 1.3. Information about Institutes funded by STFC and the mechanisms for STFC investments including research grants, studentships, fellowships and Public engagement, can be found on the STFC website <https://www.ukri.org/councils/stfc/strategy-remit-and-programmes/>.

As one of the nine bodies of UK Research and Innovation, STFC's research seeks to understand the Universe from the largest astronomical scales to the tiniest constituents of matter, yet creates impact on a very tangible, human scale.

The latest version of STFC's strategic delivery plan can be found here <https://www.ukri.org/publications/stfc-strategic-delivery-plan/>.

- 1.4. In delivering its mission, STFC is advised and guided by a range of advisory bodies with membership drawn from appropriate experts in universities, industry and the public sector. The governance and advisory structure for STFC, including terms of reference, membership, meeting dates and how the various committees interact can be found here <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/stfc/how-we-are-governed/>.
- 1.5. The range of STFC's policies and procedures are also available to view on our website <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/policies-standards-and-data/>.
- 1.6. The list of committees, and associated sub-committees, reporting to STFC Council can be found here <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/stfc/how-we-are-governed/advisory-boards/science-board/>. They cover the areas of: governance; science and technology strategy; education and public engagement; innovation; and equality, diversity and inclusion.

2. Conduct of members

The role of advisory bodies

- 2.1. The role of the advisory bodies is to provide strategic, operational, peer review and project oversight advice. This can range from advice on broad, long-term science priorities, through peer review of project proposals to the oversight of individual projects. Whilst advisory bodies are accountable for the advice given to STFC, accountability for decision making lies with the STFC.

Members are selected, usually following a call for applications, on the basis of their relevant skills and knowledge, and to ensure an appropriate spread of expertise and organisational, geographical or sector representation and gender.

It should be noted that some advisory bodies are set up for a specific time-bound activity and this membership is not drawn from the annual membership call.

More details of the selection process can be found here <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/stfc/how-we-are-governed/advisory-boards/call-for-applications/>.

3. Roles and Expectations of Members

Members commitment

- 3.1. Members should be aware of their wider responsibilities. Like others who serve the public, they should follow the Seven Principles of Public Life set out by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee). Members have a duty to bring an independent judgment to bear on all issues considered by the advisory bodies and to comply at all times with this Code of Conduct, with rules relating to the use of public funds and to act in good faith and in the best interests of the public body. Advisory body membership will be reviewed should these standards not be met. The outlined details on the Seven Principles of Public Life can be found on this page <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>.
- 3.2. All members are expected to understand their role, participate fully in the process and conduct themselves appropriately in meetings and when representing STFC.
- 3.3. At all times members must observe the highest standards of propriety involving impartiality, integrity and objectivity; be aware they are advising STFC and should consider their actions and the reflection they could have on STFC's reputation.

STFC commitment

For its part, STFC will work with you in a professional manner and will provide a collaborative working relationship; training, guidance and advice when required; a straightforward process; transparency of requests and decisions we make.

For members who will be involved in peer review, there are also a set of UKRI protocols which can be found here <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/terms-of-use/ukri-funding-service-terms-of-use/>.

4. Conflict of Interests

- 4.1. In agreeing to join a STFC advisory board, members are required to declare, before and during the course of their appointment, all personal, professional or business interests which may conflict with their responsibilities as a member. UKRI policy and guidance on what constitutes a conflict of interests can be found here <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-declarations-of-interest-policy-and-guidance/>.
- 4.2. A declaration form can be found here https://ukri.sharepoint.com/:w:/r/sites/UKRI-Dol/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7B219391FE-7502-44D1-B7D1-01659764B178%7D&file=01022024%20-%20Published%20Form%20.docx&action=default&mobileredirect=true.

The conflict of interests register is reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that all records are correct and up to date.

- 4.3. As a general rule, members will not take part in, and normally will not be present for, discussions where they have a material interest in the matter under consideration. The test should be whether a member of the public, knowing the facts of the situation, might reasonably think that a particular interest could influence the judgment of other members present.
- 4.4. Members, whether full or part-time, are expected not to occupy paid party political posts or hold particularly sensitive or high-profile unpaid roles in a political party.

5. Gifts and Hospitality

- 5.1 Members should not use their official position to accept, agree to accept or attempt to obtain any payment or benefit from a third party for doing or not doing anything, or showing favour or disfavour to anyone. In relation to their work for STFC, members must adhere to STFC's rules on accepting gifts and hospitality.

STFC aims to guard against the risks of impropriety and the perception or allegation of impropriety. Members should never accept benefits of any kind which might reasonably be thought to compromise either their own personal judgment and integrity or that of others. In this context, perception is as important as reality.

Particular care must be exercised in considering acceptance of gifts or hospitality in case they are intended as a bribe or may be perceived by others as a bribe.

More information on the UKRI policy can be found here <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-gifts-and-hospitality-policy/>.

6. Confidentiality

- 6.1. The 'OFFICIAL-SENSITIVE' marking on papers means that although the contents may be discussed with colleagues as necessary, this should be done with discretion on the part of the recipient of the papers. Members should observe the requirement for confidentiality, and are asked to keep secure papers that come to them in their official capacity and, when their term of office has come to an end, to make sure that all papers are returned or destroyed.
- 6.2. When, exceptionally, a higher classification is necessary, special circulation arrangements will normally be made. Members of the Committees must respect such classification.
- 6.3. Any information that is not already publicly available but does not bear a protective marking should still be treated as confidential and handled as above.
- 6.4. Members who undertake review of applications and assessment of research grant proposals on behalf of STFC must treat all details of such applications in strict confidence. The details of the review of applications and assessment of research grant proposals can be viewed here <https://www.ukri.org/councils/stfc/guidance-for-applicants/what-happens-after-you-submit-your-proposal/review-and-assessment-of-proposals/#contents-list>.
- 6.5. In reporting advisory body business, all members will take special care to keep confidential the part played in discussion by individual members, to maintain the convention that any recommendation is the collective responsibility of the whole of the advisory body and to safeguard the anonymity of any reviewers. Members should resist any requests for information or for explanation of how a particular recommendation was reached. All discussions should therefore be treated in confidence and any requests for information and/or feedback should be referred to the Chair and STFC.

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 7.1. Like all public bodies in the UK, STFC has legal obligations in employment and the provision of services to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. In addition STFC recognises that diverse ideas, experiences, backgrounds and perspectives are fundamental to successful science and innovation.
- 7.2. Members should demonstrate a commitment to and raise awareness of STFC's diversity strategy and equality schemes, particularly in any selection or award processes; promote good equality and diversity practice; and should champion measures introduced by STFC to eliminate discrimination and promote equality.
- 7.3. STFC is committed to safeguarding objective decision making in the peer review process and ensuring that awareness of unconscious bias, and the conditions that contribute to this, are understood by peer review panel members (and staff). Clear assessment criteria are provided to all applicants, expert reviewers and panel members. It is our expectation that these criteria are central to the decisions being made and used to reach evidence based outcomes.

Expectations of Peer Review panel Chairs

Information relating to our expectations of Peer Review panel Chairs can be found here

<https://www.ukri.org/publications/role-and-responsibilities-of-panel-chairs/>.

Information relating to our expectations of Information relating to our expectations of members can be found here <https://www.ukri.org/publications/role-and-expectations-of-stfc-panel-members/>.

Further information can also be found in our equality impact assessment (EIA) for membership calls at <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/STFC-070421-MembershipCall-EIA-V5.pdf> and the UK Research and Innovation diversity Action Plan is available on the Diversity and inclusion page of the UKRI website <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/>.

Maternity / paternity / parental leave during advisory board membership.

Please contact the relevant staff managing panels to discuss your requirements.

STFC staff will make other arrangements to cover your position for the duration of your leave. However, you have options to continue your membership, or to take a time off and return after your leave.

Remote meetings

Where possible, we will facilitate remote attendance at meetings via video conferencing for those who require flexible arrangements e.g. due to caring responsibilities or accessibility needs.

Equality Impact Assessments

Equality Impact Assessment of STFC advisory bodies will be undertaken annually by the secretariat of each board to ensure that potential impacts relating to EDI are thought through and best endeavours made to address these.

STFC support of members with disabilities

To ensure that we are able to do our best to accommodate individual's needs, each time STFC communicate with members regarding an activity in which they are participating (e.g. meeting attendance), members will be asked to contact STFC office to let us know of any adjustments required to enable them to complete and/or participate in the activity (not just when booking rooms/food requirements).

This information does not require STFC to know the exact disability but information about what is needed from STFC to support members in their contribution. For example, members with visual disabilities may find it difficult to access and view the electronic documents. STFC could provide a printed version of the document if they are unable to see it online; also to ensure that colours chosen don't trigger migraines; different colours may assist in this if personnel don't bring their own laptops. For those with hearing difficulties, we will ensure hearing aid loops are available at physical meetings and live transcripts for virtual meetings.

This information will be handled by STFC admin staff who manage meetings. As the needs may change between activities, all members will be asked what support they require each time they are engaged in an STFC activity. STFC will keep the information received in a secure way by designated admin staff and this will be deleted after each activity.

STFC commitment

STFC is committed to minimise and manage conditions that create bias and during the assessment process. STFC is to ensure that members are aware of the conditions that can lead to bias and we will highlight these throughout the meeting to minimise the possibility of impacts on our decision making; provide sufficient number of breaks are built into the agenda. STFC would ensure that the chosen venue, where relevant, is easily accessible to main rail/air links; also, we would ensure that the meeting room, where relevant, is light and airy.

8. Research Misconduct

STFC takes all reported allegations of misconduct in research very seriously and it is the responsibility of members to report any instances of scientific misconduct suspected as a result of conducting the peer review process, for example plagiarism or misrepresentation, to STFC in the first instance.

All allegations will be handled in accordance with the research councils' policy and guidelines on governance of good research conduct.

9. Bullying and Harassment Procedures

As a member of UK Research and Innovation, STFC is committed to high standards of integrity and professionalism in all areas. STFC operates a code of conduct for all of our staff and for Council members but recognises that we need to be responsive where these standards are not adhered to. Members should report any harassment or bullying complaint to STFC so that an effective resolution can be sought as speedily as possible in line with the UK Research and Innovation's here <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/bullying-and-harassment/>.

10. Travel, Subsistence and Meeting fees

- 10.1. Members of STFC advisory boards are eligible for a daily meeting fee of **£170** or **£230** in the role of Chair. To enable the payment of fees and expenses for work carried out on behalf of STFC, members will be provided with a claim form that will need to be completed after each meeting in order for STFC to pay the attendance fee and to be reimbursed any associated T&S.
- 10.2. Meeting fee payments are treated as income from self-employment and all members are required to declare themselves as self-employed in this respect with HMRC.

Eligibility for STFC employees

- 10.3. Any individual with an employment contract from STFC for more than 50% of their time is not eligible to receive a fee. This relates to formal employment contract(s) and, therefore, is based on employer responsibilities and not the proportion of their time funded by STFC.
- 10.4. If a member had a 100% contract with a University and STFC reimbursed 80% of that cost through, for instance grant funding, STFC would pay fees.
- 10.5. If they had a 100% contract with STFC and a University reimbursed 80% of the cost, STFC would not pay fees.
- 10.6. A half fee can be paid for any individual with an employment contract from STFC of 50% or less.
- 10.7. If an STFC employee is on a long term attachment (such as with CERN) they are not eligible to be paid fees.
- 10.8. Members will be reimbursed their actual reasonable expenses incurred in attending meetings or other STFC business; provided the rules set out in the travel policy are observed. Claims for reimbursement should be as detailed as possible and members should take proper account of the need for economy, and should arrange, wherever possible, to travel by the cheapest possible route and means. Standard and economy class travel should be the rule.
- 10.9. Advisory board Secretaries will always be prepared to advise members on individual circumstances before journeys are made. It should be understood that the allowances, whether on account of travelling or subsistence, are intended only to reimburse amounts actually expended.
- 10.10. All expense claims must be made within **60 days** of the meeting for which they were incurred. An electronic claim form will be provided by, and will need to be returned to, the meeting organiser, together with all relevant receipts.
- 10.11. Bank account details need to be provided with each claim submitted. Payroll contact details: email: Payroll@uksbs.co.uk Tel: 01793 867000 (then select option 3).
- 10.12. The current UKRI travel, subsistence and expenses policy can be found here https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-081020-TravelAndSubsistencePolicy.pdf?_ga=2.209529426.1906252694.1631608146-740433852.1626085455.
- 10.13. It is recommended that if travelling overseas on behalf of STFC, members should consult the Foreign and Commonwealth Office travel advice at <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice> for the latest country-specific travel advice.

Additional Care Costs

- 10.14. Members may be reimbursed by STFC for the unavoidable additional costs of child-minding and the care of dependent relatives and pets where such expenditure arises from the need to

work outside normal working hours (e.g. because they need to travel/stay away on official business).

Please note that agreement should be sought from the advisory board secretary prior to any arrangements being made; payments for these expenses are subject to tax and National Insurance and will, therefore, be grossed up and claimed as a taxable expense through UKSBS Payroll.

11.Data protection and GDPR

STFC and UK Research and Innovation understand the importance of protecting personal information and is committed to complying with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR) with regard to the collection, storage, processing and disclosure of personal information

A full notice of UKRI's position with regards to Freedom of Information and the (GDPR) (EU) (2016/679) can be found at <https://www.ukri.org/privacy-notice>.

Annex 1 Common acronyms

Like many organisations, STFC uses its own shorthand language to describe many of its activities, committees, groups or even individuals. The main abbreviations or acronyms in use are:

AHRC - Arts and Humanities Research Council

AO - Accounting Officer

BBSRC - Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council

CEO – Chief Executive Officer (UKRI)

CFO – Chief Finance Officer

DL – Daresbury Lab

DSIT - Department for Science Innovation and Technology

EDI – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

EPSRC - Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council

ESRC - Economic and Social Research Council

FEC - Full Economic Cost

IUK – Innovate UK

MRC - Medical Research Council

NAO - National Audit Office

NERC - Natural Environment Research Council

NDPB - Non-Departmental Public Body

RAL – Rutherford Appleton Laboratory

SO – Swindon Office

SR - Spending Review

STFC - Science and Technology Facilities Council

TFS – The Funding Service

UK ATC – UK Astronomy Technology Centre

UKRI – UK Research and Innovation

UKSA – United Kingdom Space Agency

UK SBS - UK Shared Business Services