



# AHRC Peer Review College Membership Guide

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## Version Control

We will record the latest changes to the Membership Guide here. Please ensure you are referring to the most up-to-date version.

Version	Date	Change(s)
1.0	March 2026	Old guidance and PRC Handbook overhauled and combined into Membership Guide.

# What to Expect as an AHRC Peer Review College Member

Our Peer Review College (PRC) consists of approximately 1,000 members from higher education institutions, independent research organisations, and outside of academia, in the United Kingdom and overseas.

Members provide AHRC with high quality and objective assessments of research applications: a core part of the decision-making process to allocate grants using public funds.

A [list of current PRC members is published on our website](#) and is updated quarterly. Please note that due to UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) transition to the UKRI Funding Service, there may be a delay in the external publication of PRC membership and change in format.

AHRC provides regular updates to PRC members in a quarterly e-newsletter.

## The role of a PRC member

As a College Member, you play a fundamental role in the expert review process and UK funding landscape, ensuring that the highest quality research applications receive funding in accordance with robust and transparent decision-making processes.

Your main role is to provide reviews of research applications and participate in panel meetings (noting that you are typically more likely to complete a review for us, than to participate in a panel meeting during your membership). You may also be invited to further draw upon your expertise by participating in other AHRC activities, for example, training the next generation of college members, or aiding in the development of new policies and processes.

We don't expect you to take on all peer review activity - you are always welcome to turn our requests down and to [utilise the unavailability tool within Je-S](#), which we currently continue to monitor, if there are periods of time in which you are unable to take on requests. In addition to this, we are always happy to negotiate extensions to deadlines where possible.

## PRC terms and conditions

### Standards of Service

We rely on your expert and informed assessment of applications as part of the decision-making process. It is imperative that we maintain a high standard throughout the process to ensure the efficient processing of applications. Reviews are requested and must be submitted through the Funding Service.

As a PRC member, you must read and agree to abide by all terms and conditions in this Membership Guide, outlined below and later in this section, as well as relevant UKRI and AHRC policies, standards and guidance:

- [Standards of Service](#)
- [Code of Practice](#) and [Seven Principles of Public Life](#)
- [Declaration of Interests](#)
- [Freedom of Information](#) and [Data Protection Policy](#)
- [UKRI Principles of Assessment and Decision Making](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#) and [Action Plan](#)
- [UKRI Counter Fraud and Bribery Policy](#)

We may make reasonable updates to our Standards of Service from time to time, and we will communicate any changes to all members.

Before your membership can be activated, you are also required to complete induction training. This ensures that every member undertakes the same level of training before assessing applications and participating in panel meetings.

If members fail to comply with the standards and policies outlined, we reserve the right to review individual college membership.

## **Code of practice**

AHRC has adopted a [code of practice](#) for members of the AHRC Council, Committees, Panels and Advisory Groups, and for those who assist in the work of the Council.

In fulfilling your role, you should abide by the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#) that were drawn up by the Committee on Standards in Public Life (the Nolan Committee).

As the cornerstone of grant funding, it is essential that the process be both transparent and objective, and that activity is conducted in line with the Seven Principles of Public Life. Decisions must be made and seen to be made impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

## **Conflicts of interest**

An important aspect of the code of practice is the avoidance and management of conflicts of interest, to ensure the integrity of UKRI's decisions and those of our representatives. Everybody involved in UKRI decision-making and funding processes must comply with the [UKRI declaration of interests policy and guidance](#).

UKRI defines a conflict of interest as a situation in which an individual's ability to exercise judgement or act in one role is, could be, or is seen to be, impaired or otherwise influenced by their involvement in another role or relationship.

The expert review and panel processes are essential in allowing the UKRI Research Councils to serve our communities by providing recommendations for funding of world class research.

While we recognise that it is possible for assessors to objectively assess research applications, putting any personal knowledge of the applicant aside, it is crucial there be no perception of a conflict of interest at any stage of the decision-making process, to protect the integrity of the recommendations made on our behalf.

Our staff endeavour to identify conflicts of interest and will not select you as a reviewer or panellist if there is a clear conflict apparent. However, not all conflicts are obvious from the information we have about you on our system and therefore, we rely on your support in identifying these when they arise.

For information on managing conflicts of interest related to review requests or panel meetings, you can find guidance within our [Review Guide](#) and [Panel Guide](#).

You can also find [further guidance surrounding conflicts of interest and common examples on the AHRC website](#).

## **Freedom of Information and data protection**

This section describes your obligations in relation to information legislation. The following paragraphs provide the context and practical implications.

The [Freedom of Information Act 2000](#) and [Environmental Information Regulations 2004](#) give you specific rights to obtain information about what we do and how we do it.

[The EU General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) and [the UK Data Protection Act 2018](#) give you the right to request personal information we hold about you.

All UKRI bodies must ensure that the peer review process encourages and supports the free and frank exchange of views between specialists, whilst maintaining the highest possible standards of openness and accountability. As such, the UKRI Councils have set out [UKRI principles of assessment and decision making](#) which outlines peer review information that is routinely disclosed and that which is routinely withheld.

All written information, electronic or physical (including notes you take) relating to AHRC matters could be the subject of a Freedom of Information (FOI) request.

It is essential that PRC members operate impartially, honestly and fairly. We expect that panel members will delete or shred applications, relevant papers and notes after the panel meeting, or if in person, you can leave them at the meeting for us to dispose of. Any personal data received by email must also be kept securely, copies must not be made, and electronic files must be destroyed as soon as possible.

If you receive any requests for information relating to your work for AHRC, please pass them immediately to AHRC's Information Manager at [foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org). You should not respond directly to any requests from applicants or other members of the public.

## **UKRI principles of assessment and decision making**

The [UKRI principles of assessment and decision making](#) explains eight core principles in detail and how they may impact you when assessing applications in the form of reviewing and panel attendance. They outline UKRI's expectations and ambition for assessment processes and provide transparency to its commitment to robust decision-making.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and Action Plan**

We are committed to promoting the values of equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusivity. We want to learn, share good practice, mature our practice and policy, and place equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) at the core of everything we do. Our [EDI Policy](#) and [Action Plan](#) state our intentions to embed good EDI practice across AHRC and to ensure everyone feels supported and confident to embed EDI principles in their work.

## **Equal opportunities**

UKRI believes a dynamic, diverse and inclusive research and innovation system must be an integral part of UK society, giving everyone the opportunity to participate and to benefit. Everyone has an important contribution to make – the researchers and innovators, and the wider support system including the technical and administrative support, and those who maintain our infrastructure.

Accordingly, no eligible job applicant, funding applicant, PRC member, employee or external stakeholder including members of the public should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of their [protected characteristics](#). UKRI is committed to its obligations under [the Equality Act 2010](#).

All applications must be assessed on equal terms, regardless of the protected characteristics of the applicants. Applications must therefore be assessed and scored on their merits, in accordance with the criteria and the aims and objectives set for each funding opportunity.

## **Counter fraud and bribery policy**

AHRC is committed to the practice of responsible corporate behaviour and to complying with all laws, regulations and other requirements which govern the conduct of our operations ([UKRI counter fraud and bribery policy](#)).

AHRC is fully committed to instilling a strong anti-corruption culture and is fully committed to compliance with all anti-bribery and anti-corruption legislation including, but not limited to, [the Bribery Act 2010](#) and ensures that no bribes or other corrupt payments, inducements or similar are made, offered, sought or obtained by us or anyone working on our behalf.

## Confidentiality

UKRI operates an open peer review process, whilst at the same time preserving reviewer anonymity.

As a PRC member, you agree to treat all applications made to AHRC confidentially, including ensuring application information is not shared with third parties (including 'bots'). This duty of confidence covers:

1. the fact that the applicant has applied;
2. the content of the application.

You must not discuss their contents with anyone falling outside of AHRC's assessment processes.

For most AHRC schemes, we provide copies of reviews to applicants who are given the opportunity to write a response to be assessed by a moderating panel. The applicant's organisation will also be given access to the anonymised reviews.

AHRC will not normally disclose panel member comments (or notes) to the applicant, although in some rare cases panels may recommend that specific feedback or conditions of funding be conveyed to the applicant. Comments will only be disclosed to individuals outside of AHRC if it is required as part of the funding decision process, or is required under the Data Protection Act or the Freedom of Information Act (or any other law or regulation to which AHRC is, or may become, subject to).

AHRC will not release your name in connection with any specific comments that are released under the Data Protection Act or the Freedom of Information Act without first obtaining your permission. In such circumstances, AHRC will ask the applicant to keep your comments confidential and not to release your name in connection with them without first obtaining your permission.

Please note that [panel members' names and their organisations are published on the AHRC website](#) once funding decisions have been made and communicated. If you would NOT like your name to be published as part of the panel attendance record, please inform [peerreviewcollege@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:peerreviewcollege@ahrc.ukri.org) following the panel meeting.

## Use of generative artificial intelligence in application assessment

You are not permitted to use generative AI tools as part of your assessment activities, including to correct language, grammar and formatting. Using these tools can potentially compromise the confidentiality of the ideas that applicants have entrusted to UKRI to safeguard. For more detail, please see our [policy on the use of generative AI](#).

## Withdrawal of membership

We expect all members to uphold the standards outlined above. Where concerns arise, our priority will always be to work constructively and resolve matters informally with the PRC member wherever possible.

However, please note that we reserve the right to discontinue membership where serious issues occur. If unacceptable conduct during engagement with AHRC or other parties representing us is reported, we will review the matter carefully and reach a balanced, evidence-based decision.

We are committed to creating a respectful and inclusive environment. In line with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010, we operate a zero-tolerance approach to all bullying and harassment.

## Applying for funding from AHRC

You may apply to AHRC's funding opportunities, but you will not be permitted to review competing applications, or attend panel meetings, for the same opportunity to which you intend to apply within the next 9 months (or have submitted an application to within the last 9 months).

AHRC PRC members are free to apply for funding from other sources, including other UKRI Research Councils.

## Accessibility and Inclusion

We are committed to promoting equality and to ensuring our guidance is accessible to all users. We welcome and encourage you to contact [peerreviewcollege@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:peerreviewcollege@ahrc.ukri.org) with any feedback, queries or concerns.

If you require any additional support in your role as a PRC member, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us on the above email address.

## Employment transitions, retirement and changes in circumstances

We completely understand that your circumstances may change during your time on the College.

If you leave employment, move outside academia/research, or retire, it may still be possible for you to remain on the College and participate in peer review activities should you wish to do so. In addition to this, moving outside the UK has no impact on PRC membership.

Ultimately, if you remain actively or directly engaged in research or practice, you are still eligible for PRC membership.

We also recognise that members may take parental leave, have caring responsibilities, or experience health-related or other personal circumstances that may temporarily affect their availability. Please feel free to discuss these with us at any time and be assured that such circumstances will not negatively impact your membership.

To help us support you, please keep your Je-S and Funding Service accounts up-to-date with any changes to circumstances or contact details. Feel free to get in touch with [peerreviewcollege@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:peerreviewcollege@ahrc.ukri.org) if you would like to discuss your college membership status or have any questions regarding this.

## Resignation from the PRC

Members can submit their resignation from the College at any time during their term. If you wish to stand down, please contact the PRC team by emailing [peerreviewcollege@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:peerreviewcollege@ahrc.ukri.org).

If you do not want to resign but need to take a break from AHRC peer review activity, you can set a [period of unavailability within your Je-S account](#).

# Reviewing for AHRC

## Reviewer selection

We currently select reviewers based on your self-reported data in Je-S, which we match to applications. You can find more information on keeping your classifications and keywords up-to-date below, under '[your research expertise](#)'. Not keeping your data up-to-date or providing sufficient detail is one of the main reasons why college members don't receive requests to review.

We select reviewers from within the College in the first instance, but we will seek non-College reviewers from wider communities where expertise can't be sourced from the PRC alone.

You can find guidance surrounding reviewing in our PRC [Review Guide](#).

# Participating in panels for AHRC

## Panel selection

Panellists and Chairs are primarily drawn from the PRC, but not all college members will have the opportunity to sit on a panel during their term of membership.

To avoid conflicts of interest, in the first instance, college members are not appointed to panels for which they have submitted a review, or where they are involved with an application that is being considered at the meeting.

The following is taken into consideration when selecting panellists:

- the number of panellists required relative to the number of applications being discussed
- required panellist experience and expertise, noting that some panels may evaluate a broader range of applications than others
- balancing the number of panellists who have previously sat on an AHRC panel against those who haven't
- there is only one panel member from any one institution
- ensuring that a representative spread of panellists sit on panels in any given year, considering [protected characteristics](#), geographical location, experience and subject coverage.

You can find guidance surrounding participating in panel meetings in our PRC [Panel Guide](#).

### **Panel member expressions of interest**

If you are a member of our PRC and would be interested in participating in AHRC panel meetings, please complete our [online expression of interest form](#). Once you have registered your interest, you will be marked as available to participate in upcoming panel meetings and may be contacted by one of our team.

## **Using Je-S and the UKRI Funding Service as a PRC Member**

Throughout 2026, UKRI is continuing to transition grant systems from Je-S to the Funding Service and as such, you may still be required to use both systems. The guidance below is applicable to current system functionality.

We appreciate that this means continuing to use Je-S for now while we transition to the Funding Service, but the information you provide there is still actively being used. As more functionality is built in the Funding Service, we will keep you updated and let you know if there is anything you need to do.

To make sure you're receiving expert review requests and other emails from the Funding Service, you may want to ensure that the automated email address [noresponse@funding-service.ukri.org](mailto:noresponse@funding-service.ukri.org) has been added to your list of contacts within your email account, to avoid emails going to junk folders.

## Creating an account in the UKRI Funding Service

You will need a Funding Service account to start a review or to access panel papers. It is only possible to create an account if you have received a review or panel invitation from us, or if you are applying for a funding opportunity.

To create an account, you need to:

- have accepted a review or panel invitation from us;
- return to your review invitation email and hit the 'respond now' button which will take you through the account creation process

When you have a Funding Service account, you can sign in to continue a review that you've accepted, or to access the documentation for your panel meeting. You'll need the email address and password used to set up your account when you previously accepted an invitation to review, sit on a panel, or applied for a funding opportunity.

Your Funding Service account will list all the reviews you've accepted and their deadlines, and details for panel meetings which you are participating in.

## Your research expertise

In order to ensure the most appropriate reviewers are invited to complete expert reviews on applications, we still use the information submitted under the classifications, keywords and expertise sections of your Je-S account to match reviewers to the subject matter of each application. If your account contains no, or limited, information we will be unable to match you to any applications we receive, as your details will not pull through to our reviewer matching system.

As well as making sure that you have added classifications to your Je-S account, please also ensure that there is a classification marked as 'primary'.

Ensuring that your classifications, keywords and expertise are fully up-to-date within Je-S and cover all areas for which you are happy to review increases the chance of you being contacted for the right activities.

You can update your classifications and keywords by logging into Je-S and selecting the 'Classification Expertise' link under the 'Research Expertise' section within the menu on the left of the Homepage. Additional guidance on how to update this information can be found within [the Je-S Handbook](#) under the 'Research Expertise' section.

You should update this information regularly to ensure you capture different avenues your research may have taken since first joining the College, that may have increased or changed the areas in which you could be asked to review.

## Keeping your personal details up-to-date

As a PRC member and a user of the Funding Service and Je-S systems, you are responsible for updating your personal details, including keeping your contact details and your institutional affiliation (where applicable) up-to-date.

Your Je-S account is linked to you as an individual, not your organisation, so if you move to another organisation, you should not set up another account but instead use this facility to amend your contact details.

To amend your details in Je-S, please log in to the Je-S system using your User ID and password and then select 'My Details'. Some changes, including a change to Department and/or Organisation, will not be displayed until the details have been verified by the Je-S Helpdesk.

To amend your email address in the Funding Service, please log in using your email address and password and then select 'Account settings'. Amending this will send an email to your new email address with a link to verify it. An email will also be sent to your old email address to notify you of the change.

If you experience any difficulties using Je-S or the Funding Service, or have any questions, please contact the Helpdesks as below:

- Je-S: [JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org), or call 01793 444164
- Funding Service: [support@funding-service.ukri.org](mailto:support@funding-service.ukri.org), or call 01793 547490

## Submitting a period of unavailability

The [unavailability tool in Je-S](#) can be used to indicate a timeframe in which you will be unable to undertake any peer review activity. A start date and end date can be entered; however, if you do not know when your period of unavailability will come to an end, this can be left blank and updated at a later time.

If you return from a period of unavailability and have not submitted an end date, you will still be classed as 'unavailable' on AHRC systems and will therefore continue to not receive any review requests or panel invites.

## ORCID Reviewer Recognition

The functionality to connect the Funding Service to the ORCID registry will become available in 2027. This will allow you to link your ORCID iD to your Funding Service account. Functionality for the reviewer recognition process, which was previously offered in Je-S, will be added at a later date.

## Key benefits for reviewers

[ORCID Reviewer Recognition](#) provides a visible and verifiable way for UKRI to publicly credit reviewers' contributions.

It can act as an effective reference point to keep track of the number of reviews that you have carried out for UKRI over time, which can be useful when it comes to applying for a promotion or funding.

Currently the ORCID reviewer recognition does not cover review credits for panel assessments.

You can read more about ORCID reviewer recognition on the [ORCID website](#).

## Appendix A: Useful Links and Contacts

### Member information:

- Conflicts of Interest: <https://www.ukri.org/councils/ahrc/guidance-for-reviewers/carrying-out-a-peer-review/reviewer-guidance-notes/conflicts-of-interest/>
- Current PRC membership list: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/arts.and.humanities.research.council/viz/AHRC/CPeerReviewCollege/CurrentPeerReviewCollegeMembers>
- Expression of interest to participate in panel meetings: [https://engagementhub.ukri.org/ahrc-operations/caf858f4/?\\_gl=1\\*1ysncho\\*\\_ga\\*MjMwNTkzNzlyLjE3MTkzMDQxNzU.\\*\\_ga\\_HPSM59M7J4\\*MTcyMTIwNzMwMi4zNS4xLjE3MjE3MTQxNDEuMC4wLjA](https://engagementhub.ukri.org/ahrc-operations/caf858f4/?_gl=1*1ysncho*_ga*MjMwNTkzNzlyLjE3MTkzMDQxNzU.*_ga_HPSM59M7J4*MTcyMTIwNzMwMi4zNS4xLjE3MjE3MTQxNDEuMC4wLjA).
- ORCID Reviewer Recognition: <https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/improving-your-funding-experience/about-ukris-funding-service/> and <https://support.orcid.org/hc/en-us/articles/360006971333-Peer-Review>
- Panel outcomes and attendance: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ahrc-panel-outcomes-and-attendance/>
- AHRC Panel Guide: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ahrc-panel-guide/>
- AHRC Review Guide: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ahrc-review-guide/>
- Unavailability tool in Je-S: <https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/pages/UpdatingAccountPersonalandExpe/UpdatingAccountPersonalandExpe.htm#Unavailability1>
- Updating your expertise information in Je-S: [https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/handbook/index.htm?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery#t=pages%2FUpdatingAccountPersonalandExpe%2FResearchExpertiseClassification.htm](https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/handbook/index.htm?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery#t=pages%2FUpdatingAccountPersonalandExpe%2FResearchExpertiseClassification.htm)

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI):

- EDI Policy: <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-policy/>

- EDI Action Plan: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/ahrc/our-policies-and-standards/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-policy/>

## Policies:

- AHRC Conflicts of Interest: <https://www.ukri.org/councils/ahrc/guidance-for-reviewers/carrying-out-a-peer-review/reviewer-guidance-notes/conflicts-of-interest/>
- Code of Practice: <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/ahrc/our-policies-and-standards/code-of-practice/>
- Counter Fraud and Bribery: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/uk-research-and-innovation-counter-fraud-and-bribery-policy/>
- Data Protection: <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/UKRI-011021-DataProtectionPolicyV2.2.pdf>
- Freedom of Information: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/contact-us/freedom-of-information-request/>
- Reviewer Protocols: <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/terms-of-use/ukri-funding-service-terms-of-use/>
- Seven Principles of Public Life: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2>
- Standards of Service: <https://www.ukri.org/councils/ahrc/guidance-for-reviewers/carrying-out-a-peer-review/reviewer-guidance-notes/standards-of-service/>
- UKRI Declaration of Interests Policy and Guidance: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-declarations-of-interest-policy-and-guidance/>
- UKRI Declaration of Interests Guidance for Assessors, Reviewers and Panellists: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-declarations-of-interest-policy-and-guidance/declaration-of-interests-guidance-for-assessors-reviewers-and-panellists/>
- UKRI Principles of Assessment and Decision Making: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-principles-of-assessment-and-decision-making/>
- UKRI Use of generative artificial intelligence in application preparation and assessment: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/generative-artificial-intelligence-in-application-and-assessment-policy/use-of-generative-artificial-intelligence-in-application-preparation-and-assessment/>

## Useful Contacts

- PRC Team ([peerreviewcollege@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:peerreviewcollege@ahrc.ukri.org)): for any queries regarding your membership, or for any feedback/concerns
- Je-S Helpdesk ([JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org)): if you experience any issues or difficulties with Je-S
- Funding Service Helpdesk ([support@funding-service.ukri.org](mailto:support@funding-service.ukri.org)): if you experience any issues or difficulties with the Funding Service