Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Research Grant Application Peer Review

Policy & Procedures

PURPOSE

1. This document details the Faculty's policies and procedures for the peer review of research grant applications and other similar proposals. It aims to put into action the University and Faculty peer review policies and requirements, whilst recognising individual Schools' strategic priorities and local requirements.

BACKGROUND

2. The Faculty research strategy commits to developing its research activity and increasing research income. The development and submission of high quality grant applications are essential to this. The research funding environment is becoming ever more competitive and, in order to manage an increasing volume of applications, major funders, in particular UKRI research councils, are increasingly adopting demand management procedures for strategic bids. To help enhance the quality of applications from staff and Schools in the Faculty a peer review policy has been established.

POLICY

3. All research grant applications of a value of £35,000 to £350,000 going forward for external funding must be subject to internal peer review within Schools (some Schools may wish to undertake peer review for smaller awards as well). Peer review documentation (reviewer comments and applicant responses) must be included on Worktribe prior to submission for Faculty and institutional approval. Applications without this documentation will not be approved. All research grant applications of a value of £350,000 or greater must be peer reviewed at the Faculty level through the Peer Review College.

    Where an application is proposed for submission in the absence of School/Faculty peer review, the Head of School/Dean for Research will not normally approve the application for submission.

    This policy is voluntary for enterprise (consultancy) research proposals.

4. The peer review of applications must be initiated one month prior to the deadline by which the application must be submitted to the proposed funder, where possible. Only in exceptional circumstances will this required lead-in time be altered for specific applications, on the agreement of the School's Director of Research and the Faculty Research Manager.

5. Where demand management is imposed by the external funder, the selection and application process will be managed by the Joint Management Research Office (JRMO) with support from the Faculty Research Manager. The policy on institutional demand management can be found on JRMO website.

6. The Dean for Research and Faculty Research Manager will be responsible for the overall management, coordination and delivery of the Faculty peer review policies and procedures for larger applications, supported by the School Directors of Research and Research Managers.

7. The Peer Review College, involving the Dean for Research, the Faculty Research Manager, School Directors of Research, and School Research Managers, will play a leading role in the peer review of large applications, enabling academic colleagues across the Schools to benefit from their experience and expertise.

8. The Faculty's internal peer review group will consist of two panels:
   • **Panel A** – School Specific Peer Review Panel: Subject Specialist, Director of Research, Research Manager (smaller awards: £35,000 to £350,000)
   • **Panel B** – Faculty Peer Review Panel: Director of Research and Research Manger from another school, Dean for Research, Faculty Research Manager (awards above £350,000)

9. The School and/or Faculty Research Manager will allocate applications to reviewers according to the value of the application (see section 3). If Panel A requires a reviewer with interdisciplinary knowledge and cross-cutting expertise the peer review will be arranged with Panel B.

10. It is anticipated that reviews of applications will be undertaken and returned to School or Faculty Research Manager usually within fifteen (15) working days of receipt by the reviewers.

11. A copy of the full draft application, together with any other relevant information (including budget) must be submitted electronically by email to the School or Faculty Research Manager, no later than one (1) month prior to the stated external date set by the funder or by the intended date of submission if it's an open call.

12. When peer review panel members are requested to undertake a review, they will be provided with the necessary guidance as to the scheme/funder to which the application is being submitted to, and all other relevant information.

13. Peer reviewers should provide commentary against the follow criteria:
    a) The originality and potential contribution to knowledge of the application;
    b) The rigour and robustness of the application's design and methodology;
    c) The value-for-money of the application;
    d) The strength of the application's proposed outputs, dissemination and impact.

14. All applications must be peer reviewed before the approval process is initiated on Worktribe. Applications under the value of £350,000 will be approved by the Faculty Research Manager, all research applications over £350,000 will be approved by the Dean for Research.