

Principles for Internal Selection Processes relating to Research Applications ('Demand Management' Processes)

Introduction

The principles are intended to apply to all research application processes for which there is an internal selection process: for example, UKRI research fellowships and CDTs. They apply throughout the whole process from the announcement of a new opportunity/call through to submission and beyond to implementation, where applicable.

They should always be adhered to unless clear exceptional circumstances apply. The principles below are guided by the Seven Principles of Public Life, otherwise known as the '[Nolan Principles](#)' and UKRI's recent [principles of peer review](#).

Principles

Those involved in internal selection processes must adhere to **all** of the following unless there are genuinely exceptional and unforeseeable circumstances preventing this:

1. **Provide clear communications** – all communications (including feedback where applicable) should be clear, respectful, open, timely and constructive. It should be clear what is expected of applicants and what they can expect from the process. Institutional strategic focus should be outlined in advance, where relevant, to manage expectations and guide applicants in their proposals.
2. **Be accountable** – there should be consistent and clear guidance about each stage of the process including timescales. It should be clear who is managing and signing off each stage of the process and what is involved. This includes support available, the peer-review process and the constitution of decision-making panels and assessment criteria. Selection panel chairs should oversee the process and not themselves be decision-makers unless a casting vote is required. Applicants should be mindful of the commitment to lead future proposal development or project delivery should they be successful (at any stage).
3. **Be open, fair and supportive** - opportunities should be promoted widely to suitably qualified colleagues and applicants should be provided with and/or directed to support at each stage (where available and appropriate). There should be transparency about the effort involved, the benefits of applying and the likelihood of success through indications of internal (and external if selected) expected competitiveness.
4. **Act with integrity** – colleagues should act ethically, impartially and actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs. Conflicts of interest (COIs – see below for examples) or other real or perceived sources of bias should be declared. This should be done in advance (where known) by both applicants and panel members so that appropriate action can be taken. Where not known in advance, any conflicts emerging later should be declared as the earliest possible opportunity and appropriate action taken.

Appropriate action will normally mean that staff with conflicts or other real or perceived sources of bias remove themselves completely from the assessment process. Colleagues with COIs must not chair selection panels under any circumstances.

5. **Be robust yet timely** – (where possible) a timeline of the whole process should be published in advance to allow each stage to be efficiently managed. Applicants should have adequate notice and time to prepare while allowing sufficient time for reviewers and those supporting development of proposals to offer a robust service.

Applicants should be given normally not less than 10 working days to prepare any documentation and normally not less than 5 working days to prepare for any interviews or meetings where these form part of the selection process. It is noted that timelines and late-stage changes are often controlled by funders which could affect the ability to fully adhere to this principle in all cases, in these instances communications will be as timely as possible.

6. **Ensure representation** – selection panels should be balanced and representative in line with EDI principles. For example, there would be an expectation of roughly equal numbers of men and women and some inclusion (where practicable) of colleagues with protected characteristics. Panels must also be balanced and representative with respect to the disciplinary spread across the university, depending on the nature of the grant scheme in question. For example, for a generic scheme equal representation would be expected from each Faculty. If it is more specialist, then it may be acceptable for a particular Faculty to be in a majority.
7. **Be respectful** – all colleagues should act in a respectful way and uphold the University's values. This includes appreciation of professional service staff expertise in the development of proposals.

Conflicts of Interest: examples

In line with current [UKRI Guidance](#), conflicts of interest would include the following. Please note however that this is not an exhaustive list and *any* factor which may adversely affect an assessor's capacity to make an unbiased decision (or which could reasonably be perceived to do so) should be declared.

- You are named on the application.
- You have assisted the applicants in preparing the application; this would not cover general advice but would cover providing detailed comments.
- You are named as a project partner, subcontractor, visiting researcher or have any type of relationship with the application.
- You have written a letter of support for the application.
- You have been approached and agreed to be a member of a committee or board connected with the proposed project, for example an advisory group or steering committee/board.
- You are in close regular collaboration with any individuals named in the application, including investigators, research staff, collaborators, subcontractors, and project partners, to an extent where you feel uncomfortable being involved in the discussion or you feel unable to give an unbiased opinion.
- You have a personal, financial, or professional relationship with any individuals named in the application.
- You have been any of the applicants' PhD supervisor, line manager or group leader in the last three years, or the other way around.
- You stand to gain a financial or professional advantage from a particular outcome for an application which you are asked to review.
- You have any commercial or financial/pecuniary interest, for example where you are a member of an organisation that may benefit financially, directly or indirectly, from any decision made.
- You have stocks or shares in a company named in an application.

See: <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-declarations-of-interest-policy-and-guidance/declaration-of-interests-guidance-for-assessors-reviewers-and-panellists/>

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12 December 2023