University of Glasgow | School of Social & Political Sciences

Research Grant Application Peer Review
Policy & Procedures

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PURPOSE

1. This document details the School'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 College peer review policies and requirements, whilst recognising the School's strategic priorities and specific local requirements.

BACKGROUND

2. The School is committed to developing its research profile. 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 the UK Research Councils, are increasingly adopting demand management procedures.

POLICY

3. All research grant applications of a value of £10,000 or greater going forward for external funding must be subject to internal peer review within the School. Where an application is proposed for submission in the absence of School peer review, the School Research Convenor (and Head of School) will not normally approve the application for submission. This policy is voluntary for research contracts.

4. The peer review of applications must be initiated one (1) month prior to the deadline by which the application must be submitted to its proposed funder. Only in exceptional circumstances will this required lead-in time be altered for specific applications, on the agreement of the School Research Convenor.

5. Where it is deemed appropriate to formally grade applications, particularly those subject to demand management, the School will use the ESRC's peer review scoring scales, unless the funder has published its own specific scales. The ESRC's peer review scoring scales can be accessed at http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-peer-reviewers/peer-review-scoring-scales-and-je-s-classification/

6. The School Research Convenor will be responsible for the overall management, coordination and delivery of the School's peer review policies and procedures, supported by the School's Finance Manager and any other administrative colleagues where relevant.

7. The School's research leaders (School Research Convenor and Subject Research Convenors) and Professoriate should play a leading role undertaking peer review of applications, enabling academic colleagues across the School to benefit from their experience and expertise.

8. The School's internal peer review group will consist of two panels,
   - Panel A – School Research Convenor and Subject Research Convenors.
   - Panel B – School Professoriate, not included in Panel A (excluding the Head of School) and Senior Lecturers.

9. A member from each panel will review each application with a value of £20,000 or more; just one reviewers is required for grants with a value of between £10,000 and £20,000. The School Research Convenor will allocate applications to reviewers. Allocations to Panel B members will usually be undertaken on a rotational basis, although where specialist knowledge and expertise is required a specific colleague (s) may be approached. Furthermore, the School Research Convenor can also seek the advice and guidance of an academic colleague out with the School to support the peer review of an application where this is deemed appropriate.

10. It is anticipated that reviews of applications will be undertaken and returned to applicants usually within five (5) working days of receipt by the reviewers.

11. The undertaking of peer review of applicants by members of Panel A is accounted for and recognised within the time allocated within the School academic workload model in respect of the designated roles as research leaders within the School. For members of Panel B, the time required to undertake peer review is accounted for from general administrative allowance that is granted to all colleagues within the School's academic workload model.

12. The School Research Convenor will receive all completed peer reviews and determine what steps (if any) needs to be undertaken by the applicant. Based on the assessments received, the School Research Convenor can:
   a) Approve the progression and future submission of the application with no/minor amendments; or
   b) Approve the progression and future submission of the application subject to major/material amendments being made, which require the application to be resubmitted to the School Research Convenor on amendment for approval; or
   c) Reject the future progression and submission of the application.

13. Where a colleague's application is rejected on the grounds of quality following peer review, this outcome will be reported back by the School Research Convenor to the relevant Subject Research Convenor to ensure that the affected colleague receives the necessary support, advice and mentoring as to the development of future research grant applications.

14. The approval by the School Research Convenor for an application to progress following peer review does not mean that the application's Project Approval Form (PAF) has been approved. The application's PAF will be approved (or otherwise) separately following the School's and College's research administration procedures.

15. The School's Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee will oversee the School's peer review policy and procedures, which will involve:
   a) Receiving and considering internal and external peer review data as to the quality of applications submitted; &
   b) Periodically reviewing the School's policies and procedures to ensure that are effective, efficient and fit-for-purpose.

PROCEDURES

16. **Appendix 1** details the basic workflow of the School's peer review process for a typical grant application.

17. All applications for peer review must be submitted electronically by email to the School Research Convenor, copied to the School Finance Manager, no later one (1) month prior to the stated external set by the funder for applications. A copy of the full draft application must be provided electronically by the applicant, together with any other relevant information.

18. The School Research Convenor will review and allocate an application for peer review to a member of each of the School's Panels. When allocating applications for review the School Research Convenor will usually adopt a rotational approach to ensure the workload of peer review panel members is equitably spread over time, whilst ensuring there are no conflicts of interest. Where deemed appropriate by the School Research Convenor, specific colleagues may be identified and requested to undertake the review and/or a colleague(s) from out with the School.

19. 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.

20. When reporting back on application, peer reviews 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.

21. Panel members will be expected to complete and report back to the School Research Convenor on their review of the application within five (5) working days.

22. Applications that are of the value of £100,000 or greater are also subject to review by the College Dean of Research and the Vice-Principal & Head of College. Once the School's peer review process has been completed and the application has been permitted to go forward, then it will be subject to College review and oversight.

23. All Peer review reports and outcomes will be electronically recorded and stored by the relevant supporting member of the School's Professional Support Services function.

24. Each academic year the School Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee will receive and consider an anonymised report as to the available data generated by the School's internal peer review policy and procedures.

25. It is expected that all members of the School's Professoriate will participate fully in the review process. If extenuating circumstances (e.g., study leave) would substantially impede the assigned Professor from providing a review within five (5) working days, the next professor in the list will be assigned the review, with the unavailable Professor receiving the next application for review.

FURTHER INFORMATION
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Appendix 1
School Peer Review Process Workflow

Colour Code Related to Key Participants in Process:

Dark Blue	**Action/Steps by Applicants**
Purple	**Action/Steps by School Research Convenor**
Light Blue	**Action/Steps by Peer Review Panel Members**
Yellow	**Action/Steps by Subject Research Convenor**

At least 1 Month Prior to Application Deadline → Submit Application to School Research Convenor for Review → School Research Convenor Allocates Application to Members of Panels A & B

Panel A Member Conducts Review & Reports Back to School Research Convenor

Panel B Member Conducts Review & Reports Back to School Research Convenor

Within 5 Working Days → School Research Convenor Determines Next Steps of Application & Notifies Applicant of Status

Application Approved with No/Minor Amendments → Application Progresses Forward for Completion / Submission → Applications £100K or Greater in Value are then Subject to College Review

Application Approved with Major/Material Amendments → Application Amended & Revised Version Submitted to School Research Convenor for Approval

Application Rejected & Not Permitted to Progress → Outcome Reported to Subject Research Convenor for Further Action