

School of Arts, Languages and Cultures

PEER REVIEW OF RESEARCH GRANT APPLICATIONS: PROCEDURES (FOR APPLICANTS, REVIEWERS AND RESEARCH COORDINATORS)

- 1) We are expected by the Research Councils, and required by Faculty, to have a robust peer review process in place for external funding applications that we submit. This is in order to ensure that the funding bodies are not burdened with processing large numbers of premature or low-quality applications. From the individual applicant's viewpoint, it is, however, also the very best way of improving the quality of the proposal. From the School's and Faculty's perspective, it is the most important tool with which to maximise success rates, and thus our external research income.
- 2) All members of SALC staff for whom research is part of their contract are considered to be part of the School's Peer Review College and should be expected to be called upon at some point; reading and evaluating other people's grant applications is one of the best ways of improving one's own future applications.
- 3) As soon as any colleague has a firm idea about a research grant application of whatever size or nature s/he should inform the divisional research coordinator who will be able to give preliminary guidance and advice (for those divisions which are maintaining full departmental structures, it is the departmental research coordinator who will perform this role). Work on the best large grant applications normally starts 6 months or more prior to the point of submission.
- 4) Once the research coordinator and the individual have agreed on the timing of the submission, the Head of Division should be consulted on the feasibility of an application at this stage from the divisional point of view.
- 5) When the Head of Division has approved the intention to apply, the School Research Office should be notified, with a clear indication of the scheme deadline where applicable (the Research Office will need **at least 4 weeks** in order to cost the project budget, arrange for sign-offs, and so on)
- 6) When a completed draft application (all components, including Je-S form, budget, Justification of Resources, Pathways to Impact, other attachments) is ready, the Research Coordinator should be contacted. S/he will look at and comment on the draft, and, if the application is for 30K or more of funding, arrange in close consultation with the Research Office for a peer reviewer to evaluate the proposal (applications for less than 30K will normally require peer review by the Research Coordinator only, though expert advice may also be sought as appropriate). This will often be someone from within the same division, but if the Research Coordinator feels that the relevant expertise lies outside his/her division, then s/he is encouraged to rely on the School Research Office (with advice from the School Research Director) to select the peer reviewer, ideally with some suggestions as to whom to approach (the applicant can be asked to nominate potential reviewers). The Research Coordinator may choose to do the peer review him/herself and will, in any event, look through all applications. If s/he feels that two reviews are necessary, this should also be arranged in consultation with the School Research Office. In any event, it is important that the Research Office be involved in the selection of reviewers, and that it issues all requests for peer reviews.
- 7) Ample time must be given to the research coordinator and peer reviewer to process the application (the School will not be able to process or submit draft applications submitted fewer than 10 days before a scheme deadline). Out of respect for the Research Coordinator, the Research Office, and the peer reviewers, and in the interests of the applicant, this principle must be observed. Applying for grants needs careful planning, well ahead of time. Technical expertise provided by the IT team will need several weeks of advance notice

- 8) The standard school template (attached) should be used for all peer reviews, including those completed by Research Coordinators. Peer reviewers must be given ample time to produce their reviews (at least one week).
- 9) Peer reviews should be returned to the divisional Research Coordinator who will then forward them by email to the School Research Office and School Research Director, together with a clear indication of whether the application is (a) ready to be submitted, (b) in need of further work, or (c) premature. The Research Coordinator will feed back comments to the applicant as appropriate.
- 10) If the draft application is deemed to require further work, the Research Coordinator can use his/her discretion as to whether more peer review is required when the second draft is complete, but s/he will still need to write to the Research Office to confirm that the application is now ready for submission.
- 11) The School Research Director will read and comment on all grant applications of over £1 million, supported by a convened panel or peer reviewers.
- 12) Peer review for large grant schemes may well be organised at the Faculty level, and according to Faculty deadlines and procedures.