

Reviewer Guidance - Je-S system

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REVIEWER SELF-ASSESSMENT

The AHRC would be grateful if you could provide a review of the attached proposal in accordance with the guidance contained in this document. **You are asked to bear in mind that the AHRC is seeking an expert academic review of the proposal, not a personal testimonial.** You should exercise your knowledge, judgment and expertise to reach clear and soundly based decisions that are fair, objective and evidence based. Peer review relies on the free and honest exchange of views between specialists, and the Research Councils have jointly developed a [Freedom of Information framework](#) as a result.

Level of Confidence

Given the importance of high quality reviewer reports to the peer review process, it is essential that you can speak with confidence when assessing the proposal, justifying your comments in full. Perhaps because of the nature of the proposal, you may feel that you are only able to comment with confidence on some aspects of it. For this reason, confidence boxes are provided against each section. These boxes are the opportunity to tell us about your own confidence, or otherwise, in being able to make your assessment, not your confidence in the success of the proposal if it were funded. If, for any reason, you feel that you were not able to confidently assess the proposal, please advise the AHRC.

Assessment Criteria

In assessing applications you should ensure that the application meets the eligibility criteria of the scheme and should assess the proposal on the basis of its academic merit. The assessment criteria are outlined in the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#) (Section 5: Assessment Criteria and Peer Review).

Due Date for Review Return

Please be aware that it is important that your review is received by the due date specified, in order for AHRC to be able to progress the assessment of applications in accordance with the timescales published in the AHRC Funding Guide. If your review is received after the due date therefore, it will be unusable. If you anticipate having any difficulties meeting the due date specified, please contact the AHRC contact named under Reviewer Information in your review form for advice.

Conflict of Interest

It is vital that all reviewers, including technical reviewers, are seen to be completely impartial at all stages of the review process. You should not take part in the review of any proposal where a conflict of interest may be construed. AHRC officers endeavour to identify conflicts of interest and will not select you as an assessor if there is a clear conflict. Not all conflicts are obvious from the information we have available. **If you consider you may have a conflict of interest you must contact the AHRC before proceeding with the review.**

It is important that you ensure you are eligible to review the proposal before undertaking the review. A list of conflicts that exclude you from assessing a proposal is included below. **This is not an exhaustive list; if you are in any doubt about whether or not you should assess a proposal, please contact the Programmes Coordinator who has approached you for this review.**

Examples of Conflicts of Interests

A conflict of interest occurs for a reviewer or panel member when you:

- are a personal friend or a relative of the applicant.
- are intending to submit or have already submitted a proposal to the same round of the competition for which you are being asked to provide a review. For schemes which operate without closing dates, this should be if you have or are intending to submit a proposal within 3 months of when you are being asked to provide a review.
- are directly involved in the work that the applicant proposes to carry out and/or have assisted the applicant with their application for funding.
- are a current member of staff or a Professor Emeritus/Emerita at the same research organisation as the applicant, or at the proposed host institution for Fellowship proposals? If you are at Cambridge or Oxford University you should not review proposals from any college at your institution. Please note that staff employed by a member institution of London University or University of Wales may review proposals from other member institutions.
- have collaborated on a research project, or worked closely with the applicant in the last five years.
- have been employed at the same department as the investigator(s) in the last 12 months.
- were the PhD Supervisor for the investigator(s).
- are asked to review an application in which your RO is named as a partner institution.
- have a vested interest in the research, for example you are a general editor of the series to which the work that is the subject of the proposal will contribute, or a curator of a gallery where the work will be exhibited.
- have been approached and agreed to be a member of a committee connected with a research project, for example an advisory group or steering committee; you should not - if approached - also act as a reviewer for that project.
- are invited to sit on a panel which will moderate an application that you have reviewed.

Please note that, **the restrictions which apply to the Principal Investigator, in terms of research organisation, past research organisation, past collaborations and any other types of conflicts of interest as mentioned above, apply equally to the Co-Investigator(s) on an application.**

Assessment Process

The AHRC is committed to assessment by process of peer review. The assessment process is outlined in the [AHRC Research Funding Guide](#) (Section 5: Assessment and Peer Review).

OUTPUTS/DISSEMINATION/IMPACT

Please comment on the proposed dissemination strategy and Pathways to Impact (Impact Plan), including:

- the extent to which the programme of work will result in high quality public output(s).
- whether the plans to increase impact are appropriate and justified, given the nature of the proposed research, and whether sufficient attention has been given to who the beneficiaries might be and appropriate ways to engage with them throughout the project.

Please also choose from the two sets of tick boxes provided to rate:

- the proposed outputs and dissemination strategy, using 'Outstanding', 'Very Good', 'Good', 'Adequate' or 'Unsatisfactory'.
- the Pathways to Impact (Impact Plan), including identification of potential beneficiaries, using 'Outstanding', 'Very Good', 'Good', 'Adequate' or 'Unsatisfactory'.

Academic beneficiaries (note - this section is not relevant to Follow-on Funding reviews)

All proposals should include appropriate and effective plans for communicating and disseminating the research to

relevant academic audiences in order to ensure that the research outputs lead to advances in relevant research fields. In assessing these plans you are asked to consider in particular the 'academic beneficiaries' section of the proposal as well as the communication and dissemination plans described in the case for support. Your assessment of these should be reflected in your grading for the 'proposed outputs and dissemination strategy'.

Impact Summary and Pathways to Impact (Impact Plan) – Not relevant to the Collaborative Doctoral Awards scheme.

Your assessment of the Impact Summary and Pathways to Impact (Impact Plan) should take into account the guidance below on peer reviewing excellence with impact. In particular **you should consider what is appropriate, reasonable and /or expected for research of the nature proposed in the application**. Your assessment should also take into account the diversity and variety of forms of impact (economic, social, cultural, policy, quality of life etc), timescales within which impacts might emerge and approaches through which impact might be achieved.

Excellent research without obvious or immediate impact will continue funded by the Research Councils and should not be disadvantaged within the assessment process.

Where applicants explain why beneficiaries or impacts beyond academia cannot be identified at this stage of the research and you judge this to be appropriate you should not disadvantage the application (e.g. the Pathways to Impact (Impact Plan)) may be graded as adequate. However, where insufficient attention has been given to potential beneficiaries or impacts outside academia this should be reflected in your assessment and comments relating to the Pathways to Impact (Impact plan); similarly where proposals include particularly strong or innovative approaches this should be reflected in your assessment and comments. Any suggestions for improvements to impact plans in your comments would be welcomed and will be fed back to applicants for response prior to consideration by panels.

Research Networking:

Where appropriate, please comment on the plans to engage any relevant non-academic groups in the networking activities.

Please comment on the likelihood that what is proposed will have an impact beyond the lifetime of the award.

Please comment on the likelihood that what is proposed will rapidly advance thinking on a particular theme or issue in order to enhance knowledge and understanding.

Follow-on Funding Scheme:

Please note that applicants to the Follow-on Funding Scheme are **not** required to complete a Pathways to Impact statement (Impact Plan).

Based on the information contained in the proposal, with particular reference to the Impact Summary, please comment on:

- the potential for the proposed activities and outputs to enhance the value and impact of the base research.
- the extent to which the project delivers benefits to all the partners.
- the level of engagement with target audiences or users and the extent to which their needs have informed the development of the proposal **and**
- the likelihood that the project will meet those needs and have a lasting transformative effect.

Peer Reviewing Excellence with Impact

The excellent research funded by the UK Research Councils has a huge impact on the wellbeing and economy of the UK. Working together with our wider communities and other partners, we want to ensure that these impacts are effectively demonstrated and supported throughout the research lifecycle, in order to add value, stimulate interest from wider stakeholders, including the general public and, where needed, actively highlight the need for continued investment in the research base.

The following principles define, in broad terms, the approach and expectations of the Research Councils:

- excellent research with high impact is central to Research Council activities.

- the onus rests with research applicants to demonstrate how they would achieve excellence and impact.
- Research Council guidance and assessment procedures aim to:
 - maximise both excellence and impact, and
 - ensure user perspectives are strongly represented.

The Research Councils define impact as the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy. This definition accords with the Royal Charters of the Councils and with HM Treasury guidance on the appraisal of economic impact. Impact embraces all the extremely diverse ways in which research-related knowledge and skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations by:

- fostering global economic performance, and specifically the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom
- increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy, and
- enhancing quality of life, health and creative output

Impacts from research can:

- take many forms
- become manifest at different stages in the research lifecycle and beyond
- be promoted in many different ways.

Research Council assessment processes reflect this diversity and variety.

In order to allow the applicant to demonstrate plans to enhance the impacts of research, the application form will capture details in these two places:-

- The Proposal Form includes an Impact Summary that invites the applicant to address the following questions:
 - Who will benefit from this research?
 - How will they benefit from this research?

The Pathways to Impact (Impact Plan) is primarily for detailing the activities which will help develop potential economic and societal impacts. It should continue on from the two questions addressed within the Impact Summary by addressing the following question:

- What will be done to ensure that potential beneficiaries have the opportunity to engage with this research?

In presenting their plans to enhance the impacts of research, the applicant was asked to consider first what was reasonable and/or expected for the nature of research being undertaken.

COLLABORATION

Collaborative Doctoral Award Scheme only

Please comment on:

- the appropriateness of the partner to the proposed project.
- the additional benefits brought to the project, student and the partner organisation by the collaboration.
- the quality and viability of the collaboration.
- the contribution and support offered to the project by the partner organisation.
- whether the collaboration offers real and tangible benefits not only to both partners and the student, but also for the outcomes and wider audiences.
- where the partner organisation is outside the UK, please consider whether real value and benefits will be accrued in the UK and that sufficient contributions are made by the non-UK partner.

Follow-on Funding Scheme only

Please comment on the strength of the proposed collaboration, including:

- the appropriateness of the non-academic project partners and their capacity to undertake or facilitate the project.

- the extent to which the commitment and active involvement of all project partners is evidenced.
- the extent to which all partners demonstrate a shared understanding of their respective roles, responsibilities and expectations - how they will work together to achieve their aims of the activity?

QUALITY

General Guidance

Please comment on the quality and importance of the proposal, including its contribution to enhancing or developing creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in the area to be studied. In structuring your answer please consider the following:

All schemes:

- **Aims of the Scheme** – Does the proposal meet the aims of the scheme? (see below for details of the schemes)
- **Overall Quality** – please choose from the tick boxes provided to rate the overall quality and importance of the work proposed, using ‘Outstanding’, ‘Very Good’, ‘Good’, ‘Adequate’ or ‘Unsatisfactory’.

Thematic Programmes Only:

In addition to the general guidance above you should also consider the extent to which the proposal fits the aims of the thematic programme, which can be found in the Funding Opportunities area of our website under these headings -

Care for the Future

Connected Communities

Digital Transformations

Science in Culture

Translating Cultures

All schemes except Research Networking and Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement:

- **Research question(s), issue(s) or problem(s)** – For a proposal to be considered eligible for support, it must define a series of research questions, issues or problems that will be addressed in the course of the research. It must also define its objectives in terms of seeking to enhance knowledge and understanding, relating to the questions or problems to be addressed. Are the research question(s) or problem(s) clearly defined? How important is it that these questions should be addressed? Are these the appropriate questions given the aims and objectives, context and methods outlined?
- **Research context** – For a proposal to be considered eligible for support, it must specify a research context for the questions, issues or problems to be addressed. It must specify why it is important that these particular questions, issues or problems should be addressed; what other research is being or has been conducted in this area; and what particular contribution this project will make to the advancement of creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in this area. Has the applicant placed their proposal in an appropriate context, giving due consideration to other work in the area and the range of audiences that might be targeted?
- **Research methods** – For a proposal to be considered eligible for support, it must specify the research methods for addressing and answering the research questions or problems. It must state how, in the course of the research project, it will seek to answer the questions, address the issues or solve the problems. It should also explain the rationale for its chosen research methods and why they provide the most appropriate means by which to address the research questions, issues or problems. Has the applicant provided an adequate rationale for their chosen research methods? Do the research methods provide an appropriate means by which to answer the research questions?

Leadership Fellows Scheme - Additional criteria

- In addition to considering the quality and importance of the research aspects of the proposal, you should also consider the appropriateness, feasibility and potential of the proposed leadership development activities, as outlined in the Case for Support and Head of Department statement.

Research Networking only:

- **Aims and objectives** – Are they realistic given the resources and timetables specified? What will be the impact if the aims are achieved?
- **Research potential** – How significant and important are the thematic areas to be explored? What is the potential for the proposed activities to lead to advances in knowledge and understanding in the fields concerned and/or new high quality interdisciplinary research projects?

Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement only:

- **Aims and objectives** – Are the proposed activities genuinely innovative and creative and are they aimed at new audiences and user communities? Is there a well-defined non-academic need for the project and have they demonstrated engagement with potential users and stakeholders in defining the project? Are the activities and chosen methods of delivery likely to deliver the proposed outcomes and impact?
- **Knowledge Transfer activities** - Does the proposal constitute a well-defined programme of knowledge exchange activity that is founded on completed, high-quality arts and humanities research? Is the original research clearly identified and does this project constitute a genuine impact opportunity arising from that research? If the original research was not Arts and Humanities based, is the Follow-on proposal genuinely based within an Arts and Humanities field?
- **Transformative effect** – Does the research have the potential to have a transformative effect, enhancing the value of the original research to deliver significant economic, social, cultural and/or policy impacts, beyond the world of academia? Will there be a long-term impact on the partner organisations or user communities and is it likely to be sustainable beyond the end of the formal project? Is there evidence to support this?

Collaborative Doctoral Awards only:

- **Aims and objectives** - Are they realistic given the resources and timetables specified? Do they fit the requirements of doctoral research? Do the research questions allow for the nominated student to develop their own thesis within the project? Does the project provide genuine scope for high quality doctoral research within the relevant subject area?
- Where more than one studentship has been requested, please consider whether the project can sustain the requested number and that sufficient resources and support will be available.

Scheme Aims

Research Grants (Standard, Early Career)

The aims of the Research Grants scheme are:

- To assist researchers in all areas of the arts and humanities to realise their potential and improve the breadth and depth of our knowledge of human culture both past and present.
- To support well-defined research projects of the highest quality and standards, that will lead to significant advances in creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding, of interest and value both to the research community and to a wider public.
- To enable researchers to pursue, and bring to completion in due time, collaborative research projects that demand the resources of more than a single scholar, enhance collaboration between researchers in academic departments and establish or enhance effective working relationships with fellow researchers, practitioners and those who support, undertake and utilise research beyond the academic base.
- To provide opportunities for less experienced researchers to develop their expertise and their careers, by working collaboratively with senior researchers on well-defined projects and by leading projects themselves.
- To maximise the value of research outcomes by facilitating and promoting their dissemination both to the research community and to as broad a public as possible.

Leadership Fellows (standard and early career routes)

The Leadership Fellows scheme has the following aims:

- To support research projects which have the potential to generate a transformative impact on their subject area and beyond, and/or are of exceptional intellectual scope and importance, which cannot effectively be supported through routine provision of sabbaticals or other forms of research leave funded through QR and which are of wide benefit to the research community;
- To develop capacity for research leadership in the arts and humanities through the support and development of knowledge and skills in areas such as: intellectual leadership; creativity and innovation; development of capacity in emerging research areas, methods or approaches; interdisciplinary facilitation; developing cross-institutional research; international collaboration; project management; inspiring other researchers; development of key skills in the communication of research within and beyond the academy; knowledge exchange and engagement with non-academic partners or wider publics.
- To sustain and enhance research capacity in areas which may currently be under-supported for a variety of reasons.
- To support the AHRC in delivering its strategic priorities and national capability needs.

For Leadership Fellows funded through the early career route specifically, the following additional aims apply:

- To develop the experience and capabilities of early career researchers in a crucial phase of their careers, as they establish themselves and develop beyond doctoral and immediate post-doctoral work.
- To enable the production of high quality innovative research that moves significantly beyond doctoral projects.
- To provide opportunities for Fellows under the early career route to develop their research management skills, including (where appropriate) people management through supervision of a research assistant.

Research Networking

- To support interdisciplinary collaboration between researchers within the arts and humanities, colleagues in other disciplines and (where appropriate) non-academic colleagues, to explore a particular theme, issue or subject area.
- To enable interdisciplinary groups of researchers to explore ideas which could lead to tangible projects and maximise opportunities for advances in creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in the area to be explored, with results of value both to the arts and humanities research community and to other contexts where they can make a difference.
- To encourage and enable researchers within the research community to involve new researchers and research students, as well as people or organisations from outside the research community, in the discussion and development of ideas.
- To foster (where appropriate) international collaboration with overseas researchers, in order to develop understanding through engagement with different cultures and parts of the world and to enhance research standards.
- To support interdisciplinary groups of researchers who wish to advance rapidly, thinking on a particular theme or issue in order to enhance knowledge and understanding (workshops awards).
- To encourage the establishment of interdisciplinary networks of researchers, where the impact of the interaction will extend beyond the life of the award (networks awards).
- To provide a framework for the AHRC to learn of emerging areas of intellectual urgency and potential strategic importance, both within the UK and internationally.

Follow-on Funding Scheme for Impact and Engagement Scheme

This scheme aims to support innovative and creative engagements with new audiences and user communities, which stimulate pathways to impact. Funds will be awarded for knowledge exchange, public engagement, dissemination and commercialisation activities that arise unforeseeably during the lifespan of, or following an AHRC-funded project. **The scheme does not support supplementary funding for continuation of research activities.**

Proposals must clearly demonstrate both a well-defined non-academic need for the work and engagement with potential users and stakeholders in developing their project. Proposed activities must enhance the value and wider benefit of the original AHRC-funded research project and clearly demonstrate how they will deliver significant economic, social, cultural and/or policy impacts.

The aims of the Follow-on Funding Scheme are:

- To explore unforeseen pathways to potential impact, either within the lifespan of an AHRC research project or resulting from a completed research project.
- To enhance the value and benefits of AHRC-funded research beyond academia.
- To encourage and facilitate a range of interactions and creative engagements between arts and humanities research and a variety of user communities, including business and commercial, third sector and heritage sector, public policy, voluntary and community groups and the general public.

Types of activity supported by this scheme might include:

- Knowledge exchange, public engagement or active dissemination activities which engage new user communities and audiences.
- Commercialisation or proof of concept.
- Activities that build upon knowledge exchange and impact pathways already undertaken.
- Conferences and seminars for a policy/practice audience.
- Pursuit and development of new user contacts.
- Feasibility studies to test the potential application of ideas emerging from the research in different business, policy or practice contexts.

The Follow-on Funding Scheme is **not** intended to:

- Support pathway to impact activities that have already been taken into account (i.e. included as part of the original projects outputs and impacts and funded as such)
- Extend an existing grant or award or to continue similar or existing activities or conduct further research.
- Support resource enhancement activities or to develop or extend an existing website.
- Cover research leave type activities or primarily fund staff time.
- Support principally academic outputs (such as an academic paper, conference or a publication).

Collaborative Doctoral Awards

- Collaborative awards are intended to encourage and develop collaboration between Higher Education Institution (HEI) departments and non-academic organisations and businesses.
- Collaborative research studentships provide opportunities for doctoral students to gain first-hand experience of work outside an academic environment. The support provided by both an academic and non-academic supervisor enhances the employment-related skills and training a research student gains during the course of their award.
- The studentships also encourage and establish links that can have benefits for both collaborating partners, providing access to resources and materials, knowledge and expertise that may not otherwise have been available and also provide social, cultural and economic benefits to wider society.

PEOPLE

Please comment on:

- The quality and importance of the applicant's work to date.
- The applicant's ability to monitor the project and bring it to completion, as evidenced in the proposal and also in their previous track record, taking full account of their 'academic age' and experience.
- If relevant, the appropriateness of the level and balance (in terms of time and seniority) of the proposed staffing on the project, including the principal and co-investigators and the extent to which opportunities will be made available for less experienced researchers. In relation to the principal and co-investigators, you should consider whether the time estimated for their contribution is consistent with the work proposed for them and whether this level of involvement is necessary or sufficient for the successful undertaking of the project. You should be aware that it is permissible for a Co-Investigator's contribution to a project not to last for the full duration of the project. In this instance, the average number of hours will be automatically calculated as being less than 4 hours per week. This should be explained in the Case for Support or Justification of Resources by the applicant.

- If research staff are to be employed on the project, the quality of the support proposed to develop and manage their career and professional development.
- If relevant, whether the other named participants have the appropriate experience and expertise to deliver the project.
- If students are to be appointed, is the number of students appropriate and is their role clearly defined? Will these students benefit from integration within the project, whilst also being able to develop an independent thesis?
- Please choose from the tick boxes provided to rate the applicant's/s' work to date and ability to bring the project to completion, using 'Outstanding', 'Very Good', 'Good', 'Adequate' or 'Unsatisfactory'

Fellowships – Route for Early Career Researchers

In addition to the above, please comment on:

- The plans for delivering the research project alongside the development of individual leadership capabilities during the Fellowship period.
- The evidence provided in support of the leadership development proposed for the Fellow, including the Fellow's ability or potential to provide intellectual leadership within their discipline and beyond.
- The extent to which the host institution has made a case for the selection of the candidate as a research leader (or potential future research leader).
- **For early career researchers**, relevance of the research project to the applicant's career development.

Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement Scheme

In addition to the above, please comment on:

- The applicant's experience in external engagement or knowledge exchange and understanding of working with user communities or other audiences (or their demonstrated potential to undertake these activities) as relevant to the proposal.

PRESERVATION OF DATA

Will the plans for the preservation of the data deliver for the duration indicated? Is there a clear articulation of what will be preserved and what will not, as well as how and where it will be preserved? Do the plans have any implications for institutional support and how have these been addressed? Has the project explained what documentation, technical as well as user, will be produced alongside the data; is this proportionate to the envisaged value of the data?

RESOURCES AND MANAGEMENT

Management

For the Collaborative Doctoral Award Scheme Only

Please comment on:

- The arrangements for the management of the project and the partnership.
- Appropriateness of procedures for recruitment and selection of student/s; if they have named a student in the application, is this justified? Is the named student suitable?
- If a partnership agreement will be put in place, have or will issues such as confidentiality, ethical considerations and intellectual property rights be addressed?
- Any arrangements that have been put in place for monitoring the progress of the project and the student by both the HEI and partner organisation.

All other Schemes

Please comment on:

- The feasibility of the proposal.
- Is the proposed timetable realistic for the completion of the project and are there appropriate milestones by which to measure the project's progress?

- The way in which the project will be managed, if appropriate; are the arrangements for managing the research team and supervising any research staff (research assistants; project students; other staff) appropriate?
- Overall Management – please choose from the tick boxes provided to rate the proposed management of the project, using 'Outstanding', 'Very Good', 'Good', 'Adequate' or 'Unsatisfactory'.

Fellowships (standard and early career routes)

In addition to the above, please comment on:

- The level of PREVIOUS support given by the host organisation for the development of the applicant's research and academic career.
- The level of support to be given by the host organisation DURING the Fellowship period, for the research and leadership activities they propose to undertake during the Fellowship. Also, the support to be provided by the institution for continued leadership development.
- The level of support to be given by the host organisation AFTER the end of the Fellowship period, for the applicant's research and academic career.
- The extent to which the proposed Fellowship would fit within relevant institutional/departmental research, career development and knowledge transfer strategies, as appropriate.

Fellowships – Route for Early Career Researchers

In addition to the above, please comment on:

- The appropriateness of the mentoring arrangements and other development activities that have been put in place for the duration of the award.

Value for Money

(Note – this section is not relevant to Collaborative Doctoral Awards reviews)

In light of your comments in relation to the quality and importance of the proposal and the likely impact of the anticipated outputs, please comment on whether, in your view, the overall cost of the proposal represents value for money.

Please consider whether the resources requested, for example equipment, travel and subsistence or consumables, are reasonable in the context of the proposed research. If you have not already commented on the appropriateness of the level and balance of staff input to the project please also do so here.

Please note that while we ask you to take into account the overall cost of the project, it is not necessary to scrutinise the amount requested as Estates or Indirect costs.

Please choose from the tick boxes provided to rate the overall value for money of the project, using 'Outstanding', 'Very Good', 'Good', 'Adequate' or 'Unsatisfactory'

Follow-on Funding for Impact and Engagement Scheme:

In addition to the above:

- You may want to consider the appropriateness and methods of the knowledge exchange activities in facilitating the stated pathways to impact as part of the value for money of the project, including potential audience reach and sustainability of outcomes.

TECHNICAL METHODOLOGY

Data Acquisition, Processing, Analysis and Use

Does the project have realistic milestones within the timetable for delivery? Is the process of technical development robust and has the proposal demonstrated how the standards, formats, hardware and software relate to each other? Has there been appropriate consideration of the issues of backup, monitoring, quality control and document control?

Does this section of the plan cohere with the project management details outlined in the Case for Support? Is the technical delivery embedded within the research project as a whole?

Hardware and Software

Has the choice of hardware and software been clearly explained and satisfactorily justified? Are they appropriate to the nature of the output being produced? Do they represent value for money in delivering the output? Do the choices create any potential problems for ensuring sustainability and accessibility?

Standards and Formats

Has the choice of data and file formats been clearly explained and satisfactorily justified? Are they appropriate to the nature of the output being produced?

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Please comment on:

- Does the project team have access to appropriate support, expertise and advice to ensure that the output will be created to the specification outlined?
- Have these people been involved in the development of the proposal?
- Has external advice been sought and is this clear from the proposal?
- Is the project overly-reliant on one individual's knowledge?
- Has there been due consideration of provision of e-support once the AHRC project has finished?
- Has the issue of risk being adequately addressed?

SUSTAINABILITY: ACCESS AND RE-USE OF DIGITAL OUTPUTS

Please comment on:

- Will the plans allow for access and re-use beyond the life of the grant?
- Does the project have a robust sustainability plan that has considered the ongoing costs of maintaining the output and that matches the claims made for the envisaged long-term value of the data for the research community?
- Do the plans have any implications for institutional support and if so how have these been addressed?
- Are any assurances provided with regard to sustainability realistic?
- Has the proposal factored in the relevant IP, copyright and ethical issues associated with making the digital output accessible?
- Will the academic content need extending or updating?
- Has the proposal clearly explained how this will be done, by whom and at what cost?
- Have they demonstrated how any cost will be sustained after the period of funding?

STANDARD REVIEW

Overall Conclusions

Please give your overall conclusions on this proposal, highlighting strengths and weaknesses. You may also make any additional comments that have not previously been made elsewhere. For example, you may wish to comment on any ethical aspects of the proposal that give rise to concern.

It would also be helpful if you could provide a brief justification of the grade that you have given above. Please do not disclose the grade you have given, as this is not normally disclosed to the applicant (although, if you are a Peer Review College or External reviewer, your comments will be).

Overall Grade

Please refer to one of the 4 scales below for the relevant scheme when assigning an overall grade to the proposal:

For **Research Grants, Large Grants, Development Grants** and **Research Networking** schemes please refer to this scale -

Grade	Definition
6	<p>An outstanding proposal that is world-leading in all of the following: scholarship; originality; quality; and significance. It fully meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme and excels in many or all of these. It provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal and management arrangements are clear and convincing.</p> <p>It should be funded as a matter of the very highest priority.</p>
5	<p>A proposal that is internationally excellent in all of the following: scholarship, originality; quality; and significance. It fully meets or surpasses all the assessment criteria for the scheme. It provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal and management arrangements are clear and convincing.</p> <p>It should be funded as a matter of priority, but does not merit the very highest priority rating.</p>
4	<p>A very good proposal demonstrating high international standards of scholarship, originality, quality and significance. It meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme. It provides good evidence and justification for the proposal and management arrangements are clear and sound.</p> <p>It is worthy of consideration for funding.</p>
3	<p>A satisfactory proposal in terms of the overall standard of scholarship and quality but which is not internationally competitive and/or which is more limited in terms of originality/innovation, significance and/or its contribution to the research field. It satisfies at least minimum requirements in relation to the assessment criteria for the scheme, provides reasonable evidence and justification for the proposal and management arrangements are adequate overall.</p> <p>In a competitive context, the proposal is not considered of sufficient priority to recommend for funding.</p>
2	<p>A proposal of inconsistent quality which has some strengths, innovative ideas and/or good components or dimensions, but also has significant weaknesses or flaws in one or more of the following: conceptualisation; design; methodology; and/or management. As a result of the flaws or weaknesses identified the proposal is not considered to be of fundable quality. A proposal should also be graded 2 if it does not meet all the assessment criteria for the scheme.</p> <p>It is not recommended for funding.</p>
1	<p>A proposal which falls into one or more of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has unsatisfactory levels of originality, quality and/or significance • falls significantly short of meeting the assessment criteria for the scheme • contains insufficient evidence and justification for the proposal • displays limited potential to advance the research field • the potential outcomes or outputs do not merit the levels of funding sought • is unconvincing in terms of its management arrangements or capacity to deliver the proposed activities. <p>It is not suitable for funding.</p>

For **Leadership Fellowships** and **other fellowships** schemes please refer to this scale –

Grade	Definition
6	<p>An outstanding proposal that is world-leading in all of the following: scholarship; originality; quality; and significance. It fully meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme and excels in many or all of these. A convincing case is made that the proposed Fellowship has outstanding leadership and transformational potential, commensurate with the applicant's career stage. It provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal, demonstrates very strong institutional support, and management arrangements</p>

	<p>are clear and convincing.</p> <p>It should be funded as a matter of the very highest priority.</p>
5	<p>A proposal that is internationally excellent in all of the following: scholarship, originality quality and significance. It fully meets or surpasses all the assessment criteria for the scheme. A convincing case is made that the proposed Fellowship has excellent leadership and transformational potential, commensurate with the applicant's career stage. It provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal, demonstrates strong institutional support and management arrangements are clear and convincing.</p> <p>It should be funded as a matter of priority, but does not merit the very highest priority rating.</p>
4	<p>A very good proposal demonstrating high international standards of scholarship, originality, quality and significance. It meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme. A convincing case is made that the proposed Fellowship has leadership and transformational potential, commensurate with the applicant's career stage. It provides good evidence and justification for the proposal, demonstrates good institutional support, and management arrangements are clear and sound.</p> <p>It is worthy of consideration for funding.</p>
3	<p>A satisfactory proposal in terms of the overall standard of scholarship and quality but which is not internationally competitive and/or does not make a fully convincing case that the proposed Fellowship has significant leadership and/or transformational potential, commensurate with the applicant's career stage, and/or which is more limited in terms of originality/innovation, significance and/or its contribution to the research field. It satisfies at least minimum requirements in relation to the assessment criteria for the scheme, provides reasonable evidence and justification for the proposal, demonstrates institutional support and the management arrangements are adequate overall.</p> <p>In a competitive context, the proposal is not considered of sufficient priority to recommend for funding.</p>
2	<p>A proposal of inconsistent quality which has some strengths, innovative ideas and/or good components or dimensions, but also has significant weaknesses or flaws in one or more of the following: conceptualisation; design; methodology; management; leadership and transformational potential; collaborative activities; and/or institutional support. As a result of the flaws or weaknesses identified, the proposal is not considered to be of fundable quality. A proposal should also be graded 2 if it does not meet all the assessment criteria for the scheme.</p> <p>It is not recommended for funding.</p>
1	<p>A proposal which falls into one or more of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has unsatisfactory levels of originality, quality and/or significance • falls significantly short of meeting the assessment criteria for the scheme • contains insufficient evidence and justification for the proposal • displays limited potential to advance the research field • the potential outcomes or outputs do not merit the levels of funding sought • is unconvincing in terms of its management arrangements or capacity to deliver the proposed activities • displays inadequate institutional support • does not make a convincing case that the proposed Fellowship has leadership and transformational potential commensurate with the applicant's career stage • contains insufficient proposals for relevant collaborative activities <p>It is not suitable for funding.</p>

For **Follow-on Funding** schemes please refer to this scale -

Grade	Definition
6	<p>An outstanding and innovative proposal meeting the highest quality and standards of knowledge exchange, active dissemination and /or public engagement, which targets new audiences and is likely to lead to significant impact. It fully meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme and provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal in terms of concept, design, methodology and management.</p> <p>It should be funded as a matter of the very highest priority.</p>
5	<p>An excellent and innovative proposal meeting the highest quality and standards of knowledge/exchange, active dissemination and /or public engagement, which targets new audiences and is likely to lead to significant impact. It fully meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme and provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal in terms of concept, design, methodology and management.</p> <p>It should be funded as a matter of priority, but does not merit the very highest priority rating.</p>
4	<p>A good proposal meeting a high quality and standard of knowledge /exchange, active dissemination and /or public engagement and is likely to lead to impact. It meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme, and provides good evidence and justification for the proposal in terms of concept, design, methodology and management.</p> <p>It is suitable for funding.</p>
3	<p>A satisfactory proposal in terms of the overall quality and standard of knowledge exchange, active dissemination and /or public engagement which targets new audiences and likely to lead to some impact. It meets the assessment criteria for the scheme and provides reasonable evidence and justification for the proposal in terms of concept, design, methodology and management but which in a competitive context is not a priority.</p> <p>It is not recommended for funding.</p>
2	<p>A proposal of an inconsistent quality and standard of knowledge exchange, active dissemination and /or public engagement which is unlikely to lead to any significant impact, which has some strengths, but also contains a number of major weaknesses or flaws in its conceptualisation, design, methodology and/or management. It does not meet all the assessment criteria for the scheme.</p> <p>It is not suitable for funding.</p>
1	<p>A proposal of an unsatisfactory quality and standard of knowledge exchange, active dissemination and /or public engagement which will not lead to significant impact, which does not meet the assessment criteria for the scheme and does not provide satisfactory evidence and justification for the proposal.</p> <p>It is not suitable for funding.</p>

For the **Collaborative Doctoral Awards (CDA)** scheme please refer to this scale -

Grade	Definition
6	<p>An outstanding proposal meeting the highest quality and standards of research collaboration and likely to provide significant mutual benefits and outputs. It fully meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme and provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal in terms of concept, design, methodology and management.</p> <p>It should be funded as a matter of the very highest priority.</p>
5	<p>An excellent proposal meeting the highest quality and standards of research collaboration and likely to provide</p>

	<p>significant mutual benefits and outputs. It fully meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme and provides full and consistent evidence and justification for the proposal in terms of concept, design, methodology and management.</p> <p>It should be funded as a matter of priority, but does not merit the very highest priority rating.</p>
4	<p>A good proposal meeting a high quality and standard of research collaboration and likely to provide some significant mutual benefits and outputs. It meets all the assessment criteria for the scheme, and provides good evidence and justification for the proposal in terms of concept, design, methodology and management.</p> <p>It is suitable for funding.</p>
3	<p>A satisfactory proposal in terms of the overall quality and standard of research collaboration, mutual benefits and outcomes which meets the assessment criteria for the scheme and provides reasonable evidence and justification for the proposal in terms of concept, design, methodology and management but which in a competitive context is not a priority.</p> <p>It is not recommended for funding.</p>
2	<p>A proposal of an inconsistent quality and standard of research collaboration, mutual benefits and outcomes which has some strengths, but also contains a number of major weaknesses or flaws in its conceptualisation, design, methodology and/or management. It does not meet all the assessment criteria for the scheme.</p> <p>It is not suitable for funding.</p>
1	<p>A proposal of an unsatisfactory quality and standard of research collaboration, mutual benefits and outcomes which does not meet the assessment criteria for the scheme and does not provide satisfactory evidence and justification for the proposal.</p> <p>It is not suitable for funding.</p>

TECHNICAL REVIEW

Please indicate your overall view of the proposal from a technical point of view, referring to the technical review grade descriptors. You are asked to highlight strengths and weaknesses and when outlining any weaknesses, you should outline how fundamental these weaknesses are in relation to the viability of the project. Can these concerns be rectified by small amendments or additions or do they require a substantial reconstruction of the project?

Is the approach appropriate to the aims of the project and will it produce the output claimed?

You should bear in mind that this review will be seen not only by the panel but will be forwarded to the Applicant as part of the Applicant response process. You should bear this in mind when raising any issues where clarification would be welcome.

You may wish to look at the guidance provided to applicants on completing the Technical Plan which is available in the [Research Funding Guide](#) on the AHRC's web site.

Overall Grade - Technical Reviews

Grade	Definition
6	Strong Support – the technical aspects of the proposal are strong, well thought out and appropriate to the needs of the proposed project.
5	Support with advice – the technical aspects of the proposal are sufficient to allow the project to be completed successfully, although there are some issues raised in the review that the P.I. is advised to bear in mind.

4	Conditional Support – in general, the proposal has addressed the technical requirements of the project but there are one or more issues which would need to be addressed before an award is made. Minor issues may be addressed through PI response, whereas larger issues may need to be addressed through a conditional grant offer. Please indicate whether the issues are minor or major.
3	Unsatisfactory – there are significant concerns about the technical aspects of the proposal. The proposed approach is inappropriate to the nature of the project and would need to be completely revisited. The concerns are of such significance that the project should not be funded as it currently stands.
2	Insufficient information – the proposal has not provided enough information to enable a review to be provided. The proposal would need to be resubmitted.
1	Please do not use this grade.