

Reviewing proposals

Sally Day
Electronic and Electrical
Engineering
UCL

Contents

- Advice
- Information
- Collaboration
- Consultancy
- Impact
- EPSRC
- Other funders
- More advice

Ignore advice

- Ask for advice,
- Listen
- Choose what suits you

Getting Advice

- Research office for faculty, university
- Mentor
- Other researchers
- Head of Group
- PI on your current grant
- Someone outside of your group/dept/university

Information

- Check the requirements for different grant awarding bodies
 - Dates/deadlines
 - Specific constraints (within a call, including collaborators)
 - Format
 - Type of information (e.g. EPSRC different to EU different to Innovate UK)
- Look at what the reviewers are asked to look at
 - Most grant givers will publish the reviewers guidance

Collaboration

- Important for all applications, essential for some (e.g. Innovate UK and some EU grants)
- Integrate the collaboration into the proposal
- Letter confirming collaboration, with financial input
 - Could be ‘in kind’, time of researchers, access to facilities, materials etc.

Consultancy

- You may have the opportunity to apply your skills and knowledge to a consultancy
 - Choose carefully to be sure it enhances your research, also true for industrial collaborations
 - Restrictions due to confidentiality
- Can be useful for starting collaboration

Impact

- Generally thought of in terms of financial benefit, spin out companies, revenue gain for companies
- It is not impact on other researchers in your area,
 - (important for research quality), but can be other research areas.
- Could be societal – health/well being
- Can include Public Engagement
- Be realistic, but optimistic – if everything went to plan where would your work impact?

Public Engagement / Outreach

- Don't forget this – think of some ways that this can be included without it taking too much of your time!
- Obvious routes are working with schools, but don't forget local museums, festivals etc. and primary schools (see IoP resource for ideas)
- Link with others in the University doing outreach
- Ask for some funding either for training or particular events.

What are reviewers asked to do?

From EPSRC website:

To maximise their value to the peer review process reviewer reports should aim to:

- Provide clear and concise comments and recommendations
- Clearly identify strengths and weaknesses
- Give justification for overall markings
- Raise concerns in the form of questions for the applicant
- Provide constructive criticism

EPSRC

- Reviewers are asked to comment on the following:
 - research quality;
 - national importance;
 - pathways to impact;
 - applicant ability;
 - resources and management.
- Make it easy for them!

EPSRC

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The most important
How will this be judged?

Reviewers will know a lot about
at least some of your proposal,
but not all of it.

Clarity – keep sentences
reasonably short. Use diagrams.
Reduce the number of words –
most people completely fill the 6
pages, it is not necessary.

EPSRC

- Reviewers are asked to comment on the following:
 - research quality;
 - **national importance;**
 - pathways to impact;
 - applicant ability;
 - resources and management.
- Why should your research be supported by the UK taxpayer so that the UK remains internationally competitive?**
- Different strands:**
- Benefit to UK Economy
 - Advances in different academic discipline
 - Support for Internationally leading group to be continued.

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EPSRC have a lot of information about Themes, Sectors, Research Areas etc. Refer to these if you can do this easily – it will help the reviewer.

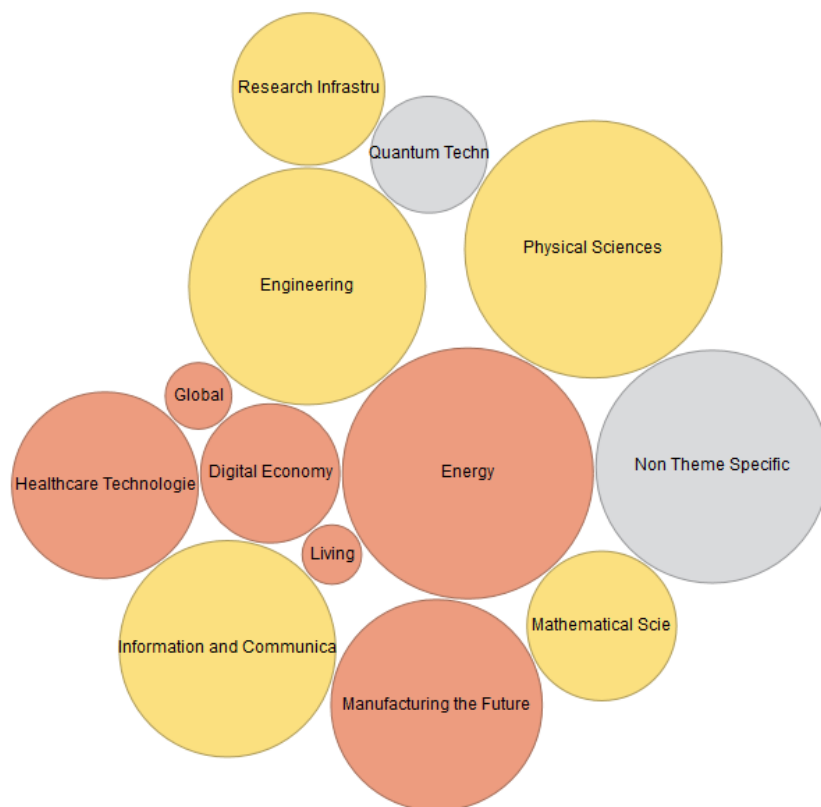
Browse our Portfolio

Themes Sectors Research Areas Research Organisations

The EPSRC Portfolio By Theme

EPSRC research and training support is structured into "Capability" themes (defined as EPSRC's support (which are aimed at solving some of the most serious global, economic and societal challenges facing the time of award) attributed to individual Capability or Challenge themes. These are detailed below in the a theme for more detail.

Total portfolio, £4.50 billion across 4339 grants.



comment on the following:

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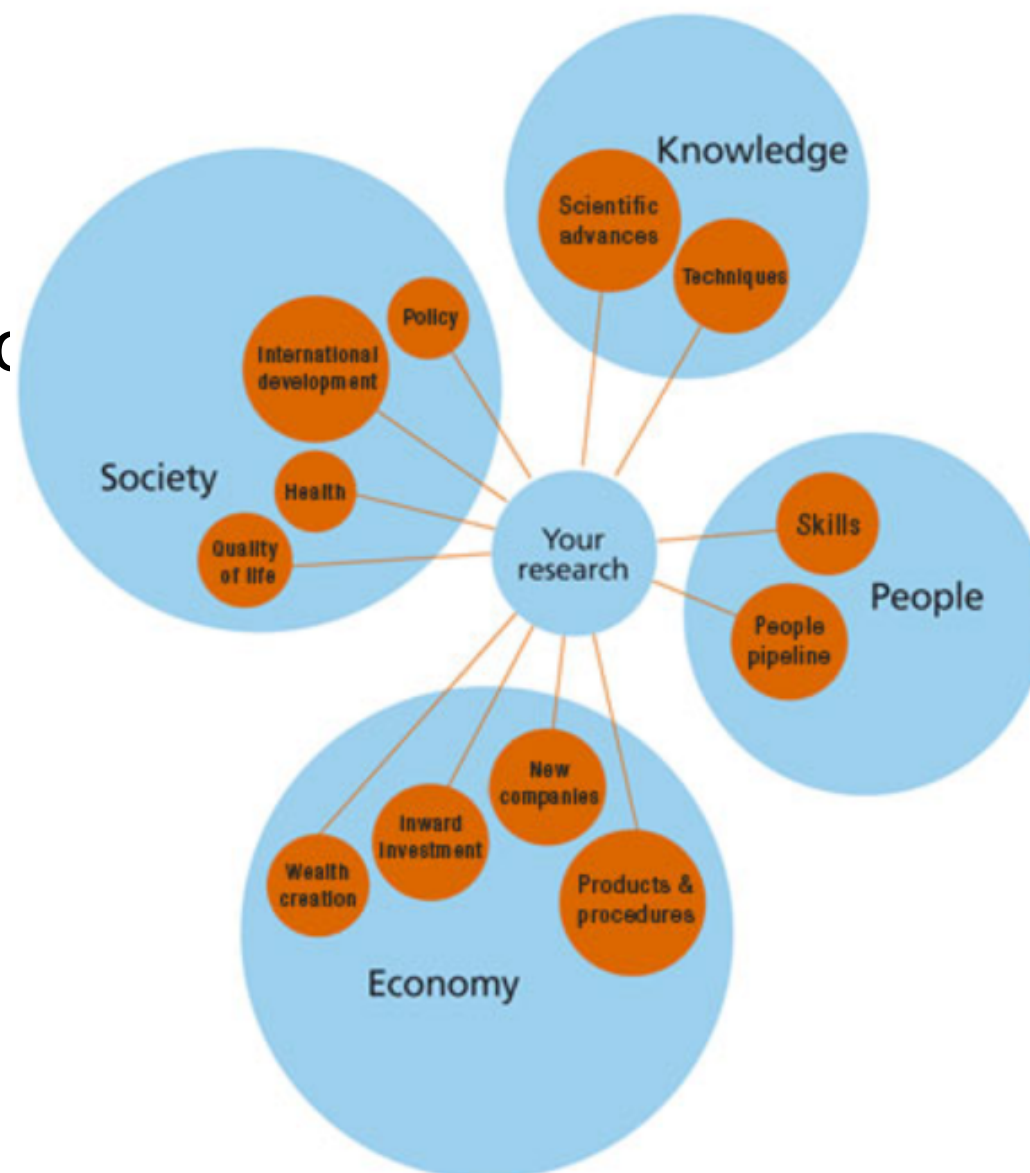
Instructions to reviewers:

- How convincingly the potential impact of the activity has been described
- How that impact compares to your normal expectations for the general type of activity proposed
- How appropriate / effective the arrangements described for facilitating the impact are
- How appropriate the collaboration arrangements in the proposal are in this respect

the range and appropriateness of the activities to be undertaken is important. 17

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Background of the group/
applicant (2 pages)

How will this be judged?

Reviewers may know you –
remember this when you are at a
conference and other networking
opportunities.
If not they will probably look at your
publication record and the quality of
the research!

EPSRC

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For EPSRC there are two places to look

1. Breakdown of costs

2. Justification of resources

Both need to look reasonable – don't miss important things out – remember to mention equipment that you may be using from another group, collaborator – adds value.

EPSRC

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Think about staff – make it clear that you have a good idea of the skills needed for the role and think about their career as well. (impact)

Recruitment – timing, check on timescales for starting grant and rules for advertising etc.

EPSRC

- After the (anonymous) reviewers comments are written, you are given a week to reply to them all.
- If you are going to be away let EPSRC know
 - they will delay sending the comments to give you time to reply.
- *The reviewers do not see the reply – you are now writing to the panel.*
- No-one likes criticism – be polite!.
- Write reply and then wait before sending....
- Discuss reply with mentor/colleague/collaborators

EPSRC

- At the panel each proposal has two readers
 - One 'expert' close to the area, one expert in another area
 - Important to remember when you write the proposal
- 40 or more proposals may be considered in one day
- They can only decide on the basis of the reviewers comments
 - they cannot review the proposal themselves.
- Proposals are ranked by the panel
- Funding will be decided later by EPSRC

EU

- Large collaborations
 - Generally don't agree to run these too early in your career! However use research offices (you may have a European office)
 - Emphasis is different – the business case is important, so you will need to rely on industrial partners.
 - Clear plan for the work is required – must be realistic and have contingency.
- ERC
 - Discussed in another talk.

Many other funders

- Ask for list of opportunities
 - research admin offices, other researchers
- Have a proposal ready at all times!
 - Sometimes opportunities arrive at short notice.
- Equipment
 - often calls for large equipment comes at different times to research applications
- Be strategic
 - but take opportunities when they come, so adapt research for different calls.
- Balance ambition and realism
 - vary the proportion according to call or funder.

Don't give up!

- As with getting work published you need to keep trying
 - or find something else to do?!
- Optimism is essential
- Keep looking forward
- Write up work for publication, dissemination
- Take opportunities to network
 - the people you meet may be your reviewers!

GOOD LUCK
and ENJOY your research