



**Economic  
and Social  
Research Council**

## **Grants Assessment Panel User Member Appointments 2020**

ESRC is now inviting applications from suitably experienced persons to act as ‘user’ members of the GAPs spanning the public, private and third sectors. Users are non-academic members of the panels who represent the fields of policy and practice.

### **About ESRC**

ESRC is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), an organisation that brings together the UK’s seven research councils, Innovate UK and Research England to maximise the contribution of each council and create the best environment for research and innovation to flourish. The vision is to ensure the UK maintains its world-leading position in research and innovation. UK Research and Innovation is a non-departmental public body funded by a grant-in-aid from the UK government.

We are the UK's largest organisation for funding research on economic and social issues. We support independent, high quality research which has an impact on business, the public sector and civil society. ESRC's total budget for 2019-20 was around £243.3 million. At any one time ESRC supports over 4,000 researchers and postgraduate students in academic institutions and independent research organisations.

### **About the Panels**

Our Grant Assessment Panels (GAPs) assess proposals for three key responsive mode schemes: Research Grants, New Investigator Grants and the Secondary Data Analysis Initiative (SDAI).

There are currently three Panels (Panels A-C) organised around a cluster of disciplines with a fourth panel (Panel D) that considers proposals submitted to the Secondary Data Analysis Initiative (SDAI). Between them the Panels cover the whole of ESRC’s disciplinary remit.

GAPs consist of a predominantly academic membership which is drawn from all areas of the social sciences, representing a broad range of expertise, skills and approaches. However, in addition to academic members GAPs also include experienced people from across the, public, business and civil society sectors to help ensure ESRC funds high quality research with academic, economic and societal impact.

GAPs also have an opportunity to feed into and learn about ESRC policy development.

The ESRC Grants Delivery Group (GDG) considers the funding recommendations from the GAPs on behalf of the ESRC Council and makes the final funding decisions, subject to available budget. The GDG is chaired by a Council member. Its other members include the Chairs of each of the GAPs.

## **Vacancies**

Each panel has three user members. We have the following vacancies in this recruitment round.

### **Panel A: 1 Vacancy**

*Panel A covers the disciplines of Demography, Environmental Planning, Human Geography, Psychology, Statistics and Methods*

Desirable: based in a public sector organisation; expertise in health, public health or social care

### **Panel B: 1 Vacancy**

*Panel B covers the disciplines of Education, Linguistics, Social Work, Science and Technology Studies, Socio-Legal Studies and Sociology*

Desirable: based in a third sector organisation; expertise in social work, social policy, health or social care

### **Panel C: 1 Vacancy**

*Panel C covers the disciplines of Area and Development Studies, Economic and Social History, Economics, Management and Business Studies, Political Science and International Relations, Social Anthropology and Social Policy.*

Desirable: based in a private sector organisation; expertise in economics and/or management and business studies

### **Panel D: 1 Vacancy**

*Panel D assesses applications to the Secondary Data Analysis Initiative across the full ESRC disciplinary remit.*

Essential: An appreciation for data and data infrastructures for research

Desirable: based in a public sector organisation; expertise in one or more of the following areas: health, education, employment and welfare, social policy, environment, planning, housing, inequalities.

## **Role of User Members**

User views are critical within ESRC's decision-making processes. Funding is highly competitive, and the potential for impact beyond academia is of particular importance in identifying which proposals are funded. User members of the GAPs are expected to read and comment on an average of 30 research proposals per annum and to meet three times a year (in March, July and November) to make funding recommendations. User members are not required to provide written assessments but are expected to read a number of proposals for each meeting paying particular attention to the relevance, timeliness and utility of the research for policy-makers and practitioners. They will be expected to assess the

appropriateness and quality of plans for communications, knowledge exchange and impact in the context of the full proposal.

## **Person requirements and eligibility**

Appointments to Grant Assessment Panels are made on merit. All applicants must be able to satisfy the person specification. Applications are welcomed irrespective of age, disability, sex, gender identity, race, religion or sexual orientation. ESRC will also seek to ensure that the membership of its panels demonstrates a suitable balance of gender and regional spread.

Applications are welcome from users who can demonstrate the following:

### *Essential Skills and Experience*

- An appreciation for research and research-related issues and the ways in which excellent research (particularly from the disciplines covered by the specific panel to which you are applying) can inform policy and practice, and the ability to exercise sound judgement on these issues;
- An understanding of knowledge exchange activities and user engagement;
- An in-depth understanding of the sector in which they operate;
- Effective evaluation skills;
- Excellent verbal communication skills;
- An understanding of how to operate within senior levels of their field;
- An accountable and open working style.

### *Desirable Skills and Experience*

- A research background or knowledge exchange background;
- Strong personal experience of ESRC's work;
- Experience of peer review;
- Experience of using research findings to inform policy and/or practice
- Experience and interest in qualitative and/or quantitative data resources.

## **Time Commitment**

It is essential that applicants should be able to commit the required time and attention to the role, and should have the full support of their employing organisation.

GAP members are expected to commit around three working days per year to panel business, in addition to attending GAP meetings (three one-day meetings per year/one two-day meeting every other year).

The dates of the 2020/21 GAP meetings are Thursday 12 November and Thursday 18 March 2021. Further dates will be confirmed. Meetings are normally held in Swindon.

Appointments will run from 1 January 2021 to 31 August 2022. A further one to two years term may be served by mutual agreement.

## Conflicts of Interest

Applicants are asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest on the application form, and once appointed, all members of our GAPs are required to declare any private, professional or commercial interests that might conflict with the interests of the ESRC, or which might be perceived by others as creating a conflict of interest.

## Payment

There is normally an annual honorarium of £800 per annum paid to members to recognise their contribution

Please note that honoraria and fees are not payable to members who are:

- Civil Servants
- Full time employees of organisations whose funds are derived from Votes of Parliament (e.g. Government Departments, UKAEA, BBC, other Research Councils)

Retired Civil Servants, and Local Authority employees are eligible to receive Honoraria and/or fees.

Members will be refunded all reasonable expenses incurred in connection with ESRC business. Further information and guidance for members of ESRC's Council, committees, networks and panels are available on ESRC website: <https://esrc.ukri.org/about-us/governance-and-structure/>

## How to apply

Applications should be submitted using the online form no later than 17.00 on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2020. A short curriculum vitae (no longer than 2 A4 pages) should also be included. Paper applications will not be accepted. All applicants will receive acknowledgement of their submission.

Applications will be shortlisted internally by a panel of senior officers. Final decisions will be made in conjunction with the GDG. The successful candidates will be informed about the outcome of the process in the week commencing 19<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

Successful applicants will be expected to be available for an induction session on the **13<sup>th</sup> January 2021 in Swindon**, or via Zoom.

## **Application and process queries**

For further information on the appointments process or what the role entails, please contact:

Email: [grants@esrc.ac.uk](mailto:grants@esrc.ac.uk)