



**Economic  
and Social  
Research Council**

## **Grants Assessment Panel User Member Appointments 2021**

ESRC is now inviting applications from suitably experienced persons to act as ‘user’ members of the Grant Assessment Panels (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 2020-21 was around £250 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 Computing and Methodologies*

Desirable: based in a third sector organisation, with experience of undertaking and/or assessing both quantitative and qualitative research/perceived impact

### **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 public sector organisation; expertise in one or more of the following areas: Education, Sociology, Linguistics

### **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 third sector organisation; expertise in social policy

## **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 and ESRC will seek to ensure that the membership of its panels demonstrates a suitable balance wherever possible.

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 reviewing research proposals;
- 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 2021/22 GAP meetings are Thursday 4 November 2021 and Thursday 17 March 2022. Further dates will be confirmed. Meetings are normally held in Swindon.

Appointments will run from 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2023. A further one to two years term may be served by mutual agreement.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

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

Members are paid an attendance fee per meeting to recognise their contribution. Travel and subsistence expenses will also be reimbursed.

Please note that attendance 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 an attendance fee.

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 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021**. 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 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021.

Successful applicants will be expected to be available for an induction session on the **9<sup>th</sup> September 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.ukri.org](mailto:grants@esrc.ukri.org)