

Economic and Social Research Council Guide to Information

February 2016

Introduction

Role of the Economic and Social Research Council

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) was granted Royal Charter in 1965 as the Social Science Research Council. The charter has been amended three times to date, in 1973, in 1983 when the Social Science Research Council became the Economic and Social Research Council and finally in 1994.

The objectives of the Council are:

- to promote and support, by any means, high-quality basic, strategic and applied research and related postgraduate training in the social sciences
- to advance knowledge and provide trained social scientists which meet the needs of users and beneficiaries, thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness or Our United Kingdom, the effectiveness of public services and policy, and the quality of life
- to provide advice on, and disseminate knowledge and promote public understanding of the social sciences.

As the UK's leading research funding and training agency addressing social and economic concerns, we fund over 1,500 researches in academic and policy research institutions as well as 2,500 postgraduate students. In the period 2012-13 our funding to these two spheres was approximately £143 million and £50 million respectively. Our budget for 2014/2015 is £166 million, with the majority of this received from the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS).

Through this work the ESRC aims to provide:

- rigorous research on issues important to business, government and the public sector
- economic competitiveness, the effectiveness of public services and policy and our quality of life.

Freedom of Information Act 2000

The Freedom of Information Act (“the Act”) received royal assent on 30 November 2000. It establishes a general right of access to all types of recorded information held by public authorities, sets out exemptions from that right and places a number of obligations on public authorities. Individuals are entitled, on making a request for information, to be informed in writing whether the information of the description specified in the request is held and, if so, to have that information communicated, unless the information falls under one of the specific exemptions in the act.

The Act gives a time limit of 20 working days for dealing with a request for information. There is also an appeal mechanism, where individuals may apply to the Information Commissioner for a decision on whether ESRC dealt with a specified request in accordance with the act.

Copies of the act are obtainable, for a charge, from Her Majesty’s Stationary Office (HMSO). A copy of the act is also available on the UK Government Legislation website: www.legislation.gov.uk

Publication Scheme

All public authorities designated under the Act are obliged to adopt and maintain a publication scheme.

The ESRC publication scheme, drawn up under Section 19 of the Act, sets out all the information we publish, and states how this information will be published. It informs you if the information is available on our website or if it may be purchased from HMSO, or if it can be obtained from a public library or will be supplied promptly when requested from ESRC by letter, fax or email.

The aim of a publication scheme is to develop a greater culture of openness by publishing more information with regard to the public interest and focusing on key areas of accountability. A publication scheme should ensure that a large amount of non- personal information is readily available to members of the public (without the need for specific consideration under the Act) and should inform the public about what material is available.

The information below sets out the classes of information that the ESRC publishes or intends to publish.

Responsibility for the Publication Scheme

Our Corporate Information Manager is responsible for maintaining our publication scheme. Contact details:

- Isabelle Unachukwu
ESRC
Polaris House

North Star Avenue
Swindon
SN2 1ET

Email: information.charter@esrc.ac.uk

Charging for Publications

All the classes of information we commit to publishing under this scheme are either published on our website, held electronically, or can normally be made available free of charge, in hard copy, if requested. This includes a copy of this document.

We may make a charge where the cost of extracting the information requested is high, for example, requests for multiple copies or multiple documents. We will adhere to the fees regulations issued by the Department of Constitutional Affairs. Details of these charges can be found at the UK Government Legislation website: www.legislation.gov.uk

Copyright

The material available through this publication scheme is subject to copyright protection unless otherwise indicated. ESRC material protected by copyright may be reproduced free of charge in any format or medium provided it is reproduced accurately and not used in a misleading context. Where any copyright items on this Scheme are being republished or copied to others, the source of the material must be identified and the copyright status acknowledged.

Permission to reproduce copyright protected material does not extend to any material accessed through the publication scheme where the copyright is held by third parties. Permission to reproduce such material must be obtained from the copyright holders concerned.

Requests for non-personal information: The Freedom of Information Act 2000

If the information you require is not in the publication scheme, you can make a request for the information under the Act. Please contact our Information Manager in ESRC by email at informationcharter@esrc.ac.uk or in writing to PSU Information Services Team, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon, SN2 1FL, giving your name, address, the information/documents required, and the method of access (for example, hard copy, email and so on).

Your right of access to information is subject to a range of exemptions covering issues like security, international relations and commercial confidentiality etc. Some exemptions may be subject to a public interest test to decide whether or not we can release some information.

Information is normally available free of charge. If we make a charge we will adhere to the fees regulations issued by the Department of Constitutional Affairs.

We aim to respond to your request within 20 working days. However, we may need longer if significant search or collation of material is required, or if we need to consider the public interest test. We will reply to you in writing with a response to your request.

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to request a review of our decision, please write to:

- The FOI Complaints Officer
PSU Information Services Team
Polaris House
North Star Avenue
Swindon
SN2 1FL
- Email: informationcharter@esrc.ac.uk
- Telephone: 01793 416000

If you are still not content with the outcome of the review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner (ICO) for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by ESRC. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

- Information Commissioner
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF

Enquiry/Information Line: between 9.00 and 17.00 Monday to Friday 0303 123 1113 or 01625 545745

Further information about the Office of the Information Commissioner can be found at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Requests for Personal Information: the Data Protection Act 1998

The Data Protection Act 1998 gives you the right to request access to personal information held about yourself. This right to access is subject to exemptions which may affect our ability to supply information.

You are entitled to know: whether we hold any personal data concerning yourself; for what purposes the data are processed; the recipients or classes of recipients to whom the data are or may be disclosed; and any information we have about the source(s) of the data.

You are also entitled to be given a copy of the personal information with any technical terms explained.

To request access to your personal information, please contact our Information Manager at informationcharter@esrc.ac.uk. We will deal with your request promptly, and within a maximum of 40 calendar days.

If you feel that we have not dealt with your request in accordance with the Data Protection Act, you can take further action. You can write to the Information Commissioner, who will assess whether we have complied with the act. They may issue enforcement proceedings if satisfied that we have contravened one of the data protection principles.

Alternatively you can apply to the court alleging a failure to comply with the subject access provisions of the act. The court may make an order requiring compliance with those provisions and may also award compensation for any damage suffered as a result, and any associated distress.

Freedom of Information Act 2000: Publication Scheme for the ESRC

Classes of Information

Our Publication Scheme contains topical areas to help you find the information you need. There are easily identifiable classes of information that the ESRC publishes or intends to publish:

- who we are and what we do
- what we spend and how we spend it
- what are our priorities and how we are doing
- how we make our decisions
- our policies and procedures
- lists and registers
- the services we offer.

Any information that falls into the classes listed above will be retained in line with ESRC's retention and disposal schedules in accordance with The National Archive guidelines.

Who we are and what we do

ESRC is a non-departmental public body funded by the UK government through BIS. We employ around 120 staff located in Swindon. Below is information about our organisation, locations, contacts, constitutional and legal governance.

Class	Information and link
Roles and Responsibilities	ESRC's Mission: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/what-we-do ESRC's Strategic Overview: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/strategy-and-priorities/ ESRC's Remit: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/

Class	Information and link
Organisational Structure	<p>Governance and structure: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/</p> <p>ESRC Senior Staff Chief Executive, Council Chair, Directors and Deputy Directors: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/directors-group/</p> <p>ESRC Council and Council membership: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/esrc-council/</p> <p>ESRC Council, committee and panel members Declarations of Interest: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/esrc-council/</p> <p>ESRC committees, colleges and panels: Advisory Committees - http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/advisory-committees/</p> <p>Resources for council, committee and panel members: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/esrc-council/</p> <p>Responsive mode grant assessment process: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/advisory-committees/research-committee/responsive-mode-grant-assessment-process/</p> <p>ESRC Directorates: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/esrc-office/</p> <p>ESRC Strategic Advisory Board Terms of Reference: Governance and structure - http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/advisory-committees/</p>
Legislation Relevant to ESRC's Functions	<p>Financial Reporting Manual. The government financial reporting manual 2014-2015: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/frem_index.htm</p> <p>Managing Public Money. HM Treasury Website: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/psr_mpm_index.htm</p>

Class	Information and link
ESRC Partners	<p>Government Department:</p> <p>Department for Business Innovation and Skills: http://www.bis.gov.uk/</p> <p>Research Councils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Councils UK (RCUK): http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/ • Arts and Humanities Research Council: http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/ • Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council: http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/ • Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council: http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/ • Medical Research Council: http://www.mrc.ac.uk/index.htm • Natural Environment Research Council: http://www.nerc.ac.uk/ • Science and Technological Facilities Council: http://www.stfc.ac.uk/ <p>Non Departmental Public Bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovate UK: http://www.innovateuk.org/ <p>Charities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wellcome Trust: http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/
Contact Details for ESRC	ESRC, Polaris House, Swindon: http://www.esrc.ac.uk

What we spend and how we spend it

ESRC's Annual Report and Accounts 2014-15 summarises our work, successes and highlights during these years. They feature our key activities in Research, People, the Administrative Data Taskforce, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships, Understanding Society and Facts and Figures.

The reports also contain our Annual Accounts. These are the Remuneration Reports, Statement of Accounts and the Notes to the Accounts.

Class	Information and link
Financial Statements	<p>All ESRC Annual Reports and Accounts from 2011-12 through to 2015: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/publications/corporate-publications/annual-report-and-accounts/</p> <p>ESRC total spend from April 2015: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-standards/transparency-agenda/all-spend/</p> <p>ESRC Government Procurement Card spend over £500: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-standards/transparency-agenda/gpc-spend-data/</p>
Spending Reviews	<p>ESRC Delivery Plan 2015-16: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/publications/corporate-publications/delivery-plan/</p> <p>ESRC Scorecard 2014-2015: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/publications/corporate-publications/delivery-plan/</p> <p>ESRC demand management: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/strategy-and-priorities/demand-management/</p>
Allowances and Expenses	<p>ESRC expenses paid to Council members and Directors – October to December 2012: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-standards/transparency-agenda</p> <p>ESRC travel and subsistence for Council, Boards, Panels and staff is detailed within the annual accounts. Allowances and expenses paid to senior staff and Council members after the above date can be individualised upon request to the Information Manager.</p> <p>ESRC travel and subsistence guidance: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-standards/travel-and-subsistence/</p>

Pay and Grading Structures	<p>ESRC senior staff data and pay: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-standards/transparency-agenda/</p> <p>ESRC junior staff numbers and pay scales: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-standards/transparency-agenda/</p>
Procurement and tendering processes	<p>On 1 May 2008, all procurement procedures and contract tendering processes are now handled by the UK Shared Business Services Ltd (UKSBS). This company was set up and is wholly owned by its shareholders.</p> <p>The UKSBS http://www.ukpbs.co.uk/ has taken over the role of the former Research Councils Procurement Office.</p>

Class	Information and link
Grants awarded by ESRC	<p>Research funded by ESRC</p> <p>All ESRC funded research: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/major-investments/index.aspx</p> <p>All ESRC grants: http://researchcatalogue.esrc.ac.uk/</p> <p>Applying for ESRC Funding</p> <p>How to Apply: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/</p> <p>Apply and Review online: https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx</p>
Projects and Events	<p>UK Shared Business Services Ltd: http://www.ukpbs.co.uk/</p> <p>Events: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/events/</p>

What are our priorities and how are we doing?

Information about ESRC's strategy, performance, plans, assessments, inspections and reviews.

Class	Information and link
Strategic Plans	ESRC Strategic Plan 2015: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/publications/corporate-publications/strategic-plan/
Internal and External Performance Reviews	<p>ESRC review of strategic priorities: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/strategy-and-priorities/</p> <p>ESRC Evaluation Committee: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/evaluation-and-impact/</p> <p>ESRC Audit Committee: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/advisory-committees/audit-committee/</p>

Service Standards

ESRC policies and standards: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-standards/>

How we make decisions

Information about ESRC's policies, procedures and decision making processes.

Class	Information and link
Major Policy Proposals and Decisions	ESRC Committees, colleges and panels: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/advisory-committees/audit-committee/ Peer Review College: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-peer-reviewers/peer-review-college/
Minutes of Senior Level Meetings	Notes from ESRC Council Meetings: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/esrc-council/ Notes from ESRC Research Committee: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/advisory-committees/research-committee/ Notes from ESRC Capability Committee: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/governance-and-structure/advisory-committees/capability-committee/
Submissions to consultations and inquiries	ESRC's research plays a major role informing government policy, from welfare and benefits to health and education: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/collaboration/

Our policies and procedures

Information about ESRC's current written protocols, policies and procedures for delivering services and responsibilities

Class	Information and link
Policies and Procedures for the conduct of ESRC	ESRC Policies and standards: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-standards/

Business	<p>ESRC research funding guide: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/applicants/research-funding-guide.aspx</p> <p>Research Councils Joint Electronic Submission Terms & Conditions: https://je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/JeS2WebLoginSite/Login.aspx</p> <p>Employment at ESRC: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/skills-and-careers/work-for-us/</p> <p>ESRC Research Data Policy: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-grant-holders/research-data-policy/</p> <p>ESRC complaints procedure: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-and-appeals/</p> <p>Evaluation of ESRC funding schemes: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/evaluation-and-impact/evaluations-of-esrc-funding-schemes/</p>
Equality and diversity	<p>ESRC's equal opportunities statement: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-standards/equality-and-diversity/</p>

Lists and registers

Class	Information and link
Declarations of Interest	ESRC Council, committee and panel members: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/about-esrc/governance/

The services we offer

Information about the services ESRC provides including media releases, booklets and guidance.

Class	Information and link
Research Funding	ESRC latest funding opportunities: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding-and-guidance/funding-opportunities
Services for Business	ESRC working with business: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/collaboration/business-sector

Class	Information and link
Public Engagement	<p>Nuffield Foundation Capacity building: http://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/capacity-building</p> <p>Working with the public sector: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/collaboration/opportunities-for-public-services/</p>
Press Releases, media and publications	<p>Press Releases: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/news/</p> <p>Media Enquiries: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/news/</p> <p>Events: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/events/</p> <p>ESRC videos: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/impact-toolkit/social-media/videos/</p> <p>ESRC social media: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/impact-toolkit/social-media/using-social-media/</p> <p>ESRC Society Now magazine: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/publications/magazines-and-newsletters/</p> <p>ESRC Britain In magazine: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/publications/magazines-and-newsletters/</p> <p>ESRC eNews newsletter: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/publications/magazines-and-newsletters/enews/</p> <p>ESRC research publications: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/publications/themed-publications/</p> <p>ESRC features and case studies: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/impact-case-studies/</p>
Facilities and Services	<p>ESRC research resources: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/our-research/</p> <p>ESRC staff Contacts: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/contact-us</p> <p>ESRC help: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/sitemap/</p> <p>Terms of Use: http://www.esrc.ac.uk/terms-of-use/</p>