

University of Nottingham

NERC Standard and New Investigator Grant Internal Bid Selection Process Autumn 2016

V2 27.9.16

From the July 2015 round of applications NERC introduced demand management measures to restrict the number of applications to the Standard Grant and New Investigator schemes. The restriction of applications is achieved by the imposition of an institutional cap on the number of applications that can be submitted per round for institutions whose average success rate for the previous 6 rounds falls below 20% (Details of the NERC methodology for calculating success rates and caps can be found here: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/available/researchgrants/demand/>). For the previous two rounds Nottingham's average success rate was above 20% so no cap was applied in July 2015 and January 2016.

On 29th January 2016 NERC informed the University that our success rate was just below the 20% threshold and that we would be limited to a maximum of 3 applications per round for the July 2016 and January 2017 rounds.

The University piloted a full panel review process for applications on a voluntary basis for the January 2016 round and successfully implemented this for summer 2016 applications. This same panel review process will be used to select those applications that will be submitted in the upcoming autumn 2016 round. Details of this process and timescales can be found below.

Process for January 2017 NERC closing date

Please note that as proposals with the lead Research Organisation (RO) outside the UoN, but with a separate Je-S submission led by a Nottingham member of staff, count in determining the university's success rates, such proposals will only be considered under exceptional circumstances. The normal route should be full submission through the lead RO (following their internal review processes), with the subsequent transfer of resources to Nottingham should the bid be successful. The resulting NERC income will still be fully credited to the Nottingham PI for REF and other purposes.

Presentation event

Following on from previous years, an initial presentation session where prospective applicants can present their proposal to an academic panel and other colleagues will be held **approximately ten weeks before for the NERC submission deadline**. This presentation session will be mandatory for all applicants seeking to submit in January 2017. Presenters will be given clear guidance on what proposal presentations need to contain. On the basis of the presentations, the panel reserve the right to restrict the number of full applications accepted for panel review.

Submission of full bid for internal panel review and selection

Applicants should submit a full bid for internal review by **Monday 28th November 2016**. This bid should be considered in a complete state as if ready to submit within Je-S, including the Je-S proposal form sections, Pathways to Impact, Justification of Resources and other attachments, as well as the Case for Support (as outlined in the NERC Grants Handbook). It is important that complete bids are submitted at this stage to ensure that the Panel is considering the application as it would be seen in the external peer review process and to ensure a fair comparison between all proposals.

Specialist Review

Ahead of the panel meeting a specialist review will be undertaken to comment on the scientific quality of the proposal. **It is the applicant's responsibility to nominate at least one appropriate reviewer from within their Faculty/School/discipline and ensure that they are available to undertake the review in the short timescales permitted.**

For obvious reasons, reviews will not be anonymous and reviewers are free to forward their comments to the applicants directly as well as to the panel.

Panel review

The panel will be composed of senior academics with relevant NERC/RCUK panel experience and/or a NERC funding track record and chaired by a senior academic with such a track record who does not have any conflicts of interest with the proposals under-consideration. Where conflicts of interest are identified for other panel members they will recuse themselves before consideration of that proposal (as for RCUK panels).

The panel will consider each application individually on its merits and likely competitiveness at NERC panel. Applications not approved through the internal process will not be signed off for submission.

New Investigator Grants

In order to encourage and support New Investigator (NI) applications, for rounds where NI proposals are invited by NERC, the panel will, subject to the quality of applications received, hold open one slot per round for a New Investigator proposal. This will not apply where no NI applications are deemed to meet the quality threshold or where an NI application has been ranked in the top 3 proposals directly. This will apply for the upcoming (January 2017) round.

Outcome of panel

The panel will produce a ranked list of proposals along with identifying those who have been selected to proceed to submission. The panel may also indicate a 'first reserve' if that is deemed appropriate. All applicants will receive feedback on their applications from the panel.

Successful applicants will be asked to finalise their submissions (incorporating any feedback received) and go through institutional approval processes ahead of the submission deadline of 17th January 2017.

Unsuccessful applicants will be given feedback on where their proposal could be improved for future rounds.

Timeline for internal process:

Proposal presentation event	Week commencing 24 th October 2016
Applicant submits full proposal for review	Monday 28 th November 2016
Specialist reviewers submit review	Monday 5 th December 2016
Internal selection panel	Week commencing 5 th December 2016
Announcement of selection and provision of feedback	As soon as possible following panel meeting
Internal deadline for final (RBDO) checks	Monday 9 th January 2017
NERC submission deadline 16:00	Tuesday 17 th January 2017, which is strictly applied.