



Call to recruit new members to the Peer Review College – 2021

Contents

Introduction	1
What do we ask of College members?	2
What do College members receive in return?	3
How to apply	4
Selection process	5
Contact us	5
Appendix A: AHRC Peer Review College eligibility criteria	6
Early Career Researchers (ECRs)	6
Appendix B: Success criteria for AHRC Peer Review College recruitment 2021.....	7

Introduction

The AHRC Peer Review College membership reflects the breadth of disciplines and subjects within our subject domain and, by joining us, College members take on a fundamental role in the peer review process, ensuring that the highest quality research proposals receive funding in accordance with robust and transparent decision-making processes. College members can also be invited to further draw upon their expertise by participating in wider AHRC activities, for example, training the next generation of peer reviewers or aiding in the development of new policies or processes.

AHRC is committed to promoting the values of equality of opportunity, diversity, and inclusivity. Earlier in 2021, we launched an [EDI statement and action plan](#) with a commitment to ensure that EDI is embedded both at all levels of our organisation and in the portfolio of research that we fund and support.

We are now inviting applications to join our Peer Review College, with a key objective to further diversity [our membership](#) and cement plurality of voices in our decision-making processes.

Applications are invited from eligible individuals at all career stages, including from Early Career Researchers (ECRs), who can demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria for College membership (see Appendix A). This is an open recruitment call and AHRC is inviting direct applications from individual applicants via Survey Monkey, which must be submitted by the deadline of **4pm on Thursday 25th November 2021**. Nominations from colleagues and/or organisations are not possible, though Research Organisations, learned societies, industry organisations and other key stakeholder groups should continue to encourage and support eligible colleagues to apply.

Applications across our disciplinary remit are strongly encouraged from persons who identify as an ethnic minority, persons with disabilities, persons of diverse gender identities and expressions, and persons identifying with other groups who are currently underrepresented.

Applications are also encouraged from people with specific arts and humanities-relevant professional experience and expertise that is currently underrepresented on our College, including:

- Industry experience, particularly within the creative industries, cultural institutions and archaeological, conservation and heritage practitioners who may or may not be lab-based
- Galleries, libraries, archives and museums experience, including but not limited to: researchers, librarians, archivists, curators
- Practice-based research, including but not limited to: art, music, dance, fashion and textiles
- (In)equalities, including but not limited to: diversity and inclusion, modern slavery, decolonisation
- Public engagement, including but not limited to: co-design and knowledge exchange as well as impact-led public engagement initiatives
- Partnership working and co-design, including that which crosses multiple sectors (i.e. public, private, third) and/or has policy-driven outputs or outcomes
- Cross-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work within our remit and that which intersects the remits of other UKRI research councils
- Experience in emerging methodologies, including but not limited to: gamification and digitisation
- International collaboration and collaborators, including those based outside the UK (including in LMICs), and those with experience reviewing applications in an international context
- Health, including but not limited to: mental health, health-related service design and architecture, social prescribing, digital health, cultural contexts of health and wellbeing
- Environment, including but not limited to: landscape, climate change, adaptation, arctic, blue humanities
- Ethics and law, including but not limited to: bioethics, digital and AI, history of technological regulation
- Experience applying for and managing doctoral training awards, i.e. DTPs, CDPs and CDTs
- Work that intersects with the above list and relates to the SDGs, where a clear arts and humanities contribution can be made.

Outcomes from this recruitment call are anticipated by the end of January 2022 and appointments made will be in place from **1 March 2022**. Appointees will be required to attend a one-day induction training course prior to undertaking any peer review activities. We will run induction training courses virtually and in person (travel and subsistence expenses will be paid by AHRC) throughout March 2022 at locations across the UK. Details will be released to appointees in February 2022.

What do we ask of College members?

College members may be asked to review up to eight proposals in any 12-month period. This commitment is reduced if serving as a panel member. Reviewers and panel members assess each

proposal on its own merits, providing an expert, objective and evidence-based assessment of its quality.

College members are appointed for an initial term of four years. They may be reappointed for further term(s) of two or four years, normally to a maximum membership period of eight years but occasionally for longer.

During their tenure, College members can indicate periods of unavailability during which time they will not be asked to undertake peer review activities. This could be for any reason, and may include: parental leave, long term illness, career breaks. College members are not penalised for indicating periods of unavailability and doing so does not alter term length.

When a College member's tenure ends, they are required to step down from the College for a minimum of two years before becoming eligible to reapply should they wish. This enables AHRC to ensure that funding recommendations are informed by as wide a cross-section as possible of the research and innovation community.

College members must adhere to the AHRC Peer Review College [Standards of Service](#).

The [Peer Review Handbook](#) offers an in depth look at AHRC peer review policies and processes, and the main stages of this process are summarised in [this flowchart](#).

What do College members receive in return?

Whilst planning this recruitment campaign, we reached out to some current members to ask about their experience being part of the Peer Review College. Hear from them in their own words –

“Peer review is a cornerstone of research. It’s about how we listen, how we converse, how we adapt, and how we respond. The ecosystem we are part of is dependent on the dialogue that peer review facilitates and enables, and it is at the heart of the AHRC’s Peer Review College. Being part of the PRC – as a reviewer, a panel member and panel chair – has been about contributing to a dialogue about the directions we set and prioritise for Arts and Humanities research. It is quite simply about forging the future of our disciplines.” – **Professor Maria Delgado, Director of Research, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London**

“I have been a member of the Peer Review College since 2010. During this time, I have been part of a committed, disciplined and fair-minded community of academics and College officers. Together, we have read, assessed and moderated a wide range of research project proposals from across our disciplines and beyond to ensure that the very best research is recognised and funded. Being part of the AHRCs Peer Review College is a rewarding experience. By considering the work of others you get to learn about and refine your own skills of argument and presentation and undertake the work of collegiality.” – **Professor Rajinder Dudrah, Interim Associate Dean for Research, Innovation and Enterprise and Professor of Cultural Studies and Creative Industries at Birmingham City University**

“I’ve been part of the Peer Review College for more than 10 years – there is no better training for writing compelling and fundable proposals to the AHRC than reviewing and moderating applications, to see how the best (and the worst) are set out and how they make their case. Whether I’m looking at applications in my own research specialism or moderating proposals relating to public engagement and to my professional and curatorial expertise, being part of the Peer Review College

also helps me keep my sector knowledge sharp and current, too.” – **Dr Catherine Eagleton, Director of Libraries and Museums, University of St Andrews**

“There are lots of benefits to reviewing for the AHRC – I started reviewing proposals as a non-PRC reviewer – and the experience of PRC membership is fulfilling in a lot of ways, including the peer recognition that comes with it. Being a member of the PRC has provided me with a unique perspective to gain a better understand of how the AHRC works. Also, the knowledge gained from reviewing proposals for the AHRC enables me to provide better feedback and support to colleagues at my institution when they are developing research proposals.” – **Dr Kene Igweonu, Academic Dean for the Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries, Middlesex University, London**

“It has been a great honour to be involved in evaluating a wide range of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary research projects for AHRC. As a reviewer and panel member, I have been able to gain an in-depth understanding of the funding criteria and processes of various schemes from the assessor’s perspective. This insight has helped me improve my own funding proposals and advise colleagues on their external grant applications. Overall, the experience is invaluable in broadening my knowledge of the latest developments in arts and humanities research in the UK.” – **Professor Rex Li, REF Coordinator of Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Liverpool John Moores University**

How to apply

Supporting our objective to further diversify our Peer Review College membership, we have reviewed our application processes in consultation with equality, diversity and inclusion specialists across the research and innovation sector. We identified several measures to reduce administrative burden and eliminate unnecessary barriers to entry:

- Unlike previous years where senior colleagues nominated prospective College members, applications will be accepted directly from individuals who wish to nominate themselves; it is no longer possible for colleagues and/or organisations to nominate individuals on their behalf. Please note, as part of our ongoing engagement with Research Organisations, a list of successful applications from each organisation will be shared with that organisation.
- Also unlike previous years, applicants need only fill in a single application form; we are not asking for Je-S submissions for this round. Please be aware that it will be a requirement for successful applicants accepting an offer of College membership to create a Je-S account if they do not already have one. Instructions will be sent with offers of membership.

Applications are invited from eligible individuals at all career stages, including ECRs, who can demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria for College membership (see Appendix A).

Applications should be submitted via the Survey Monkey application form for this recruitment:
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/AHRCPeerReviewCollegeApplicationForm2021>.

Your application will be submitted upon seeing the final screen “Thank you for completing our survey”. Please note you will not receive a separate email confirmation to say your application has been submitted.

Applications must be submitted by 4pm, Thursday 25th November 2021. Late applications will not be accepted.

Whilst the AHRC Peer Review College is single membership body of many and varied research expertise, it has been structured into several different sub-groups. We are reviewing this structure and anticipate merging these sub-groups in 2022. This structural change will enable us to identify individuals with the requisite experience for peer review activities on a more flexible and targeted basis.

All new members recruited during this call will be appointed as AHRC Peer Review College members; if successful in your application, you may be called upon for any expertise identified from your Je-S profile.

Selection process

Step 1: Applications will be assessed against the stated eligibility criteria based on the evidence provided within application forms. Individual EDI data will not be provided to assessors. Assessment will be completed by: experienced arts and humanities peer reviewers, EDI specialists from inside and outside UKRI, AHRC operational and programmes staff.

Step 2: Assessment outcomes will be reviewed by a panel, who will consider the balance across College membership and may, where applications are of equal merit, take positive action to prioritise applicants where their characteristics or expertise is underrepresented. Individual EDI data provided by applicants will only be used during this step of the process.

Step 3: A list of recommended appointments will be provided to AHRC's Senior Management Team, who will be asked to ratify decisions and seek assurance that appropriate processes have been followed.

Step 4: Once ratification has taken place, successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified of AHRC's decision. This is expected to be by the end of January 2022. Please note, individual feedback on applications will not be provided but we may publish general feedback on our website.

Contact us

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the AHRC Peer Review College team: peerreviewcollege@ahrc.ukri.org.

Appendix A: AHRC Peer Review College eligibility criteria

All applications are submitted to join the single body of the Peer Review College and assessed against the same eligibility criteria.

Essential criteria

- Experience as an academic researcher **and/or** experience collaborating with academic researchers or using the results of academic research in a professional setting. This could include: advancing knowledge, delivering impact, stakeholder engagement, community leadership and/or meeting the needs of industry and/or society.
- Experience in project management, in a research setting and/or in a relevant industry/non-academic setting, that can be applied in assessment of the management of research proposals.
- Professional expertise relevant to the AHRC's [subject coverage](#).
- Ability to apply expertise to objectively assess the strengths and weaknesses of a research proposal, understanding the context and issues within your subject discipline or area.
- Ability to work collaboratively and productively with other College members in assessment exercises, e.g. panel meetings.

Desirable criteria

- Knowledge of equality, diversity and inclusion activities being undertaken in the UK and internationally, and a demonstrated commitment to making progress on equality, diversity and inclusion issues, with experience of improving outcomes.
- Experience of formal or informal peer review activities to assess academic research.
- (For this recruitment call,) Professional experience and expertise that is currently underrepresented on our College (for a list, see p.2).

Early Career Researchers (ECRs)

It is not necessary for applicants to hold an academic appointment; however, they must meet the essential criteria for membership as outlined above.

An Early Career Researcher is defined as someone who is either:

- Within 8 years of the award of their PhD or equivalent professional experience, or
- Within 6 years of their first academic appointment.^{1 2}

These durations should exclude any period of career break, e.g. for family care or health problems or reasons consequent upon the COVID-19 pandemic such as home schooling or increased teaching load.³

¹ By 'first academic appointment', this is a paid contract of employment, either full-time or part-time, which lists research and/or teaching as the primary function.

² Where some or all of this period was a paid contract of employment to work part-time, the period may be adjusted accordingly.

³ The AHRC defines a career break as any extended period of time during which the applicant is not actively engaged in scholarly research or teaching at a Higher Education Institution. In such cases the AHRC reserves the right to decide which particular activities may or may not constitute an ECR eligible career break.

Appendix B: Success criteria for AHRC Peer Review College recruitment 2021

AHRC will monitor applications received and tension this against current Peer Review College membership, with the objective to further diversity our membership and cement plurality of voices in our decision-making processes.

We will be measuring this against the following success criteria. By the end of this recruitment activity, if successful, the College membership will –

- a. Comprise sufficient members to provide reviews and panellists, ensuring:
 - i. Minimum 1300 members⁴
 - ii. Ratios of responsive mode applications received to College membership (as of October 2020) are maintained or bettered
- b. Map to arts and humanities HESA data:
 - i. Disciplinary/thematic
 - ii. Equality, diversity and inclusion
- c. Map to applications received by AHRC to all calls and schemes over the last two years (excluding ODA – GCRF and Newton):
 - i. Disciplinary/thematic
 - ii. Equality, diversity and inclusion
- d. Aim to comprise at least 14% Black, Asian and minority ethnic members⁵
- e. Reflect AHRC's strategic priorities for subject disciplines and themes
- f. Include leaders in the field, for each discipline and theme
- g. Overrecruit in areas that are difficult to obtain reviews

⁴ Internal analysis shows that this is a suitable membership size to meet our needs, though we may exceed it.

⁵ This is aligned with [Race in the Workplace: The McGregor-Smith Review](#) and [UKRI Detailed ethnicity analysis of funding applicants and awardees 2014-15 10 2018-19](#).