

Review Process

- how to ensure your review is effective



Arts & Humanities
Research Council

AHRC Schemes

- Responsive Mode – 4 main schemes
 - Research Grants – general, large scale grants
 - Leadership Fellows – transformational, leadership potential
 - Research Networking – networks, networking events
 - Follow-on Funding – non-academic impact from another AHRC or UKRI grant
- Highlight Notices
 - Often based on Responsive Mode criteria with some exceptions to criteria
 - Generally based on a particular theme
- Thematic (sometimes know as Direct/Hypothecated/Strategic) Calls
 - Newton Fund
 - Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF)
 - Industrial Strategy Research Fund (ISCF)
 - Other strategic areas of focus

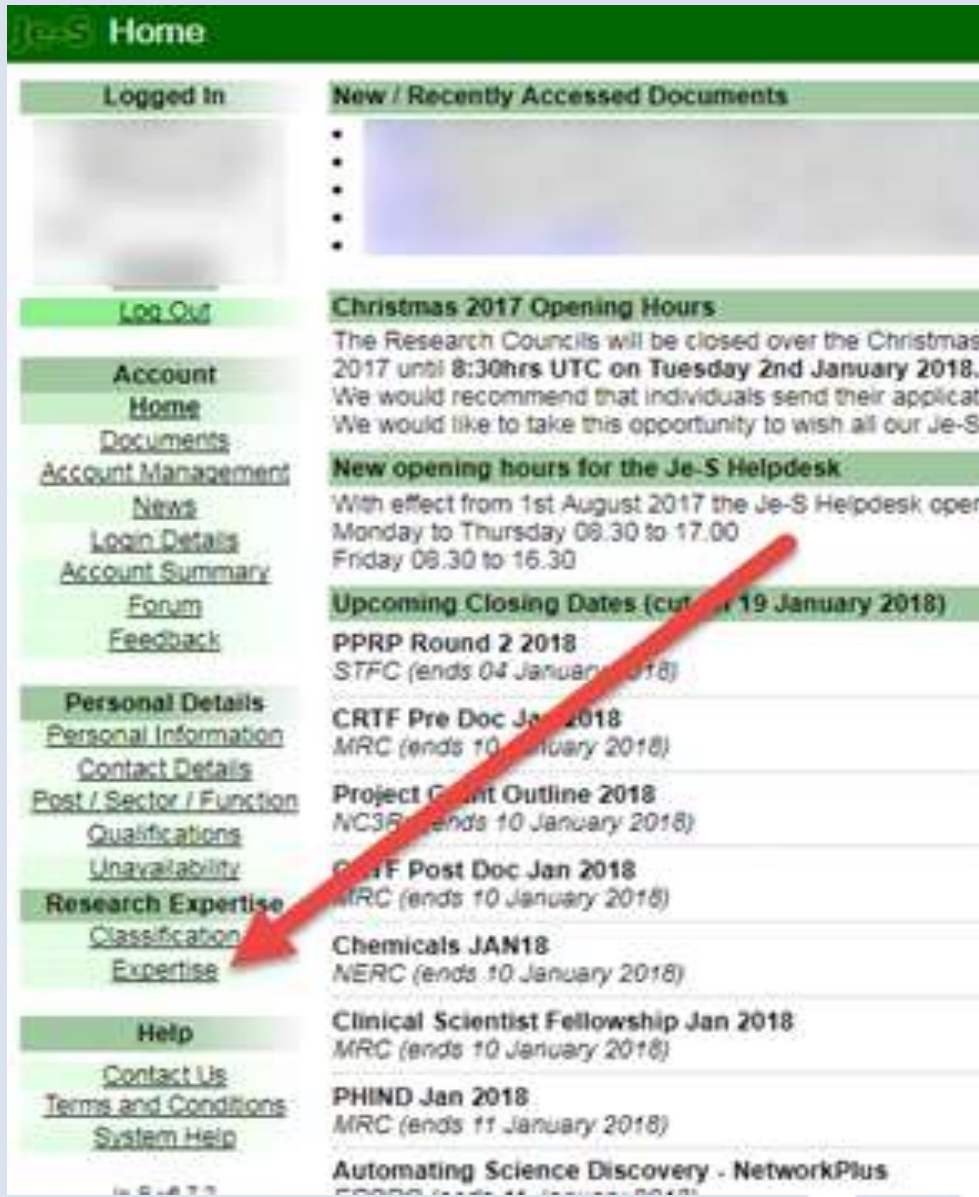
Reviewing applications

- 2018 figures
 - Number of review requests – 2796 invitations
 - Average of 3.2 invitations per member
 - 46% decline rate
 - 34% outside area of expertise
 - 38% too busy
 - 10% conflict of interest
 - 12% other
 - 6% did not respond
- Unusable reviews
 - Unusable – conflicts after review; returned for amendment with no response
- Only 48% of reviews are usable from initial invitation
- 15 working days target; average – 20 working days

Reviewer Matching

- Tool compares classification of application with PRC members' classifications
- Higher the number of classifications matched, higher up the list of potential reviewers
- Can further drill down to an individual's qualifiers and keywords
- Cross matched with description in proposal summary document
- Other checks
 - Unavailability
 - Number of current review invitations
 - Max 8 in last 12 months
 - Conflicts of interest

Research Expertise



The screenshot shows the 'Je-S Home' page. On the left is a navigation menu with categories: 'Logged In', 'Log Out', 'Account Home' (with sub-links for Documents, Account Management, News, Login Details, Account Summary, Forum, Feedback), 'Personal Details' (with sub-links for Personal Information, Contact Details, Post / Sector / Function, Qualifications, Unavailability), 'Research Expertise' (with sub-links for Classification, Expertise), and 'Help' (with sub-links for Contact Us, Terms and Conditions, System Help). On the right, there are several news items under the heading 'New / Recently Accessed Documents'. A red arrow points from the 'Expertise' link in the 'Research Expertise' section of the menu to the 'New opening hours for the Je-S Helpdesk' news item.

Logged In

New / Recently Accessed Documents

Log Out

Account Home

[Documents](#)

[Account Management](#)

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[Account Summary](#)

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Personal Details

[Personal Information](#)

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[Post / Sector / Function](#)

[Qualifications](#)

[Unavailability](#)

Research Expertise

[Classification](#)

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Help

[Contact Us](#)

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Christmas 2017 Opening Hours

The Research Councils will be closed over the Christmas 2017 until 8:30hrs UTC on Tuesday 2nd January 2018. We would recommend that individuals send their applications before this time. We would like to take this opportunity to wish all our Je-S users a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

New opening hours for the Je-S Helpdesk

With effect from 1st August 2017 the Je-S Helpdesk opening hours are: Monday to Thursday 09.30 to 17.00 Friday 09.30 to 16.30

Upcoming Closing Dates (cut-off 19 January 2018)

PPRP Round 2 2018
STFC (ends 04 January 2018)

CRTF Pre Doc Jan 2018
MRC (ends 10 January 2018)

Project Grant Outline 2018
NC3R (ends 10 January 2018)

CRTF Post Doc Jan 2018
MRC (ends 10 January 2018)

Chemicals JAN18
NERC (ends 10 January 2018)

Clinical Scientist Fellowship Jan 2018
MRC (ends 10 January 2018)

PHIND Jan 2018
MRC (ends 11 January 2018)

Automating Science Discovery - NetworkPlus
EPSRC (ends 11 January 2018)

- Up to date and comprehensive – regularly review, think about how your expertise/areas in which you work might change
- Used in generating your review requests
- Low/High number of requests – raise with AHRC

Expertise screen – AHRC view

▼ Classifications

- ↳ Drama and theatre studies
 - ↳ **Theatre & History ***
 - ↳ **Theatre & Society**
 - ↳ Languages and Literature
 - ↳ Post-colonial studies
- [*] - primary classification

Asterisk signifies primary research area in a Je-S account

Bold - Application's primary research area

▼ Qualifiers

- ↳ Approach
 - ↳ International Comparative
- ↳ Geographic Area
 - ↳ Africa
 - ↳ Central America inc Caribbean
 - ↳ North America
 - ↳ UK & Ireland
- ↳ Time Period
 - ↳ 20th Century

▼ Keywords

creolisation
race
translating cultures
connected communities
transnationalism
diaspora
black British theatre
African American theatre
African theatre
Caribbean theatre
postcolonial literature

▶ College Membership

▼ Expertise

My primary research area is contemporary theatre, particularly dramas by black African, American, British and Caribbean

Review process - initial action required

- Prompt response to invitation
 - accept/decline/extend as soon as possible after invitation receipt
 - AHRC can then manage finding alternative reviewers
- Extensions
 - depends on meeting dates, but may be possible
 - could be a possible alternative to declining
- Chase emails
 - system automated
 - follow up by AHRC staff
- Check conflicts of interest
 - On receipt of invitation and **prior** to starting a review
 - If in doubt, ask AHRC
- **PLEASE DON'T** – request an extension and then decline as the extension date is reached

Review process – What makes a good review?

- Comment on the match of the application to aims of the call/scheme
- Use of grading descriptors for the relevant scheme - is the project worthy of the score you suggest for each section and overall?
- Evaluate rather than reiterate the application content
- Provide evidence to support observations
- Ensure detail relates to headings of each section
- Pick out strengths and weaknesses of the application
- Contextualise application content within current work in the field
- Comment on interdisciplinary coherence
- Provide comprehensive comments for comparison at panel
- Be open to new ideas and approaches/methodology proposed
- Highlight issues requiring PI clarification
- For non-expert panel members – ensure they can understand comments and grading
- Avoid unconscious bias relating to any aspect of the application: **Note:** it can be useful to read the Case for Support first to understand the aims of the project, before being fully aware of the applicants and their institution

Review process – returned reviews

- Contradictory comments and grades
 - E.g. Comments indicating unfundable quality but fundable grade
 - Grading Descriptors should be used for specific scheme
- Appearing to advise the applicant in how to run the project more effectively
- Questioning remit of proposal – will have passed AHRC checks
- A reviewer's comments are too brief
 - Insufficient detail for PI response
 - Not enough for panel to use
- Confrontational, emotive tone and language or overly personal comments
- Specific comments regarding AHRC processes and policies
- Comments made are speculative or don't relate to the content or context of the proposal
- Inconsistent Confidence levels and comments
 - expert understanding of the proposal but mark as low level of confidence.
- **Online training:** <https://ahrc.ukri.org/peerreview/peer-review-resources/> - detailed information by form category

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The UK Research Councils are committed to eliminating unlawful discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity and good relations across and between the defined equalities groups in all of their relevant functions.

Accordingly, no eligible job applicant, funding applicant, employee or external stakeholder including members of the public should receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of: gender, marital status, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, race, colour, nationality, ethnicity or national origins, religion or similar philosophical belief, spent criminal conviction, age or disability.

All proposals must be assessed on equal terms. Applications must be assessed on their merits, in accordance with the specified assessment criteria and the aims and objectives set for the scheme or funding call.

Summary

- Accept/decline on receipt of invitation
- Make use of extension requests
- Check for conflicts on receipt of invitation, before starting review
- Be aware of the specifics of scheme/call
 - Responsive Mode (Open calls) & Thematic calls
- Utilise your own expertise and knowledge
- Raise questions for PI where applicable
- Comprehensive comments, match grading
- Use of Funding Guide, Online training, Peer Review Handbook, AHRC staff
- **PUT YOURSELF IN THE APPLICANTS' SHOES**