



## EPSRC – Grant types & Peer review

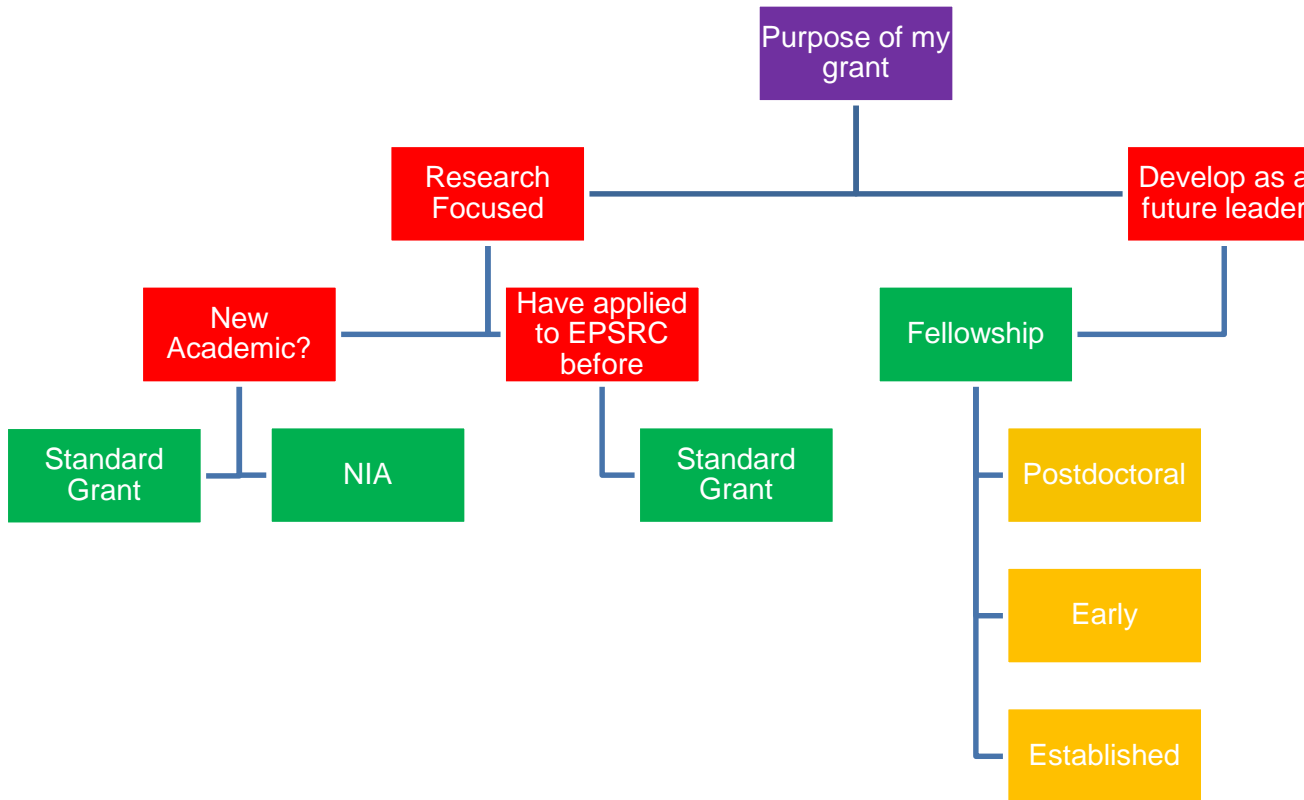


# Funding Opportunities by career stage

Career Stage	Funding Opportunities
PhD Students	Doctoral Prize (EPSRC funded only)
Postdoctoral Researchers	Postdoctoral Fellowship Researcher Co-I Named PDRA on an EPSRC grant
New Academics	New Investigator Awards
Early Career	Early Career Fellowship Standard Grant
Established Career	Established Career Fellowship Standard Grant Programme Grant
Conditional	Specific Calls



# Which grant is for me?



Other grants are available; Workshop grants, Network Grants and Overseas travel grants.  
(Apply via Standard Grant mode)



# New Investigator Awards



- ■ ■ Funding aimed to kick start an academic career.
- ■ ■ No arbitrary time limits
- ■ ■ No arbitrary funding limit
- ■ ■ Host Organisation Statement important
- ■ ■ Exemplars are under development, Frequently Asked Questions have recently been updated to provide more support



- ■ ■ First lectureship position
- ■ ■ Applicants transitioning from industry to academia are welcome
- ■ ■ No Experience running a research group
  - ■ ■ No previous grant above 100k (FEC) that includes PDRA time
  - ■ ■ Application must be first to EPSRC as PI except
    - ■ ■ post doc fellowship
    - ■ ■ travel grants
- ■ ■ Flexible working patterns to accommodate needs of applicant allowed
- ■ ■ Career breaks
- ■ ■ Justification of fit to person spec should be in the cover letter
- ■ ■ Refer borderline cases to theme contact prior to making submission
- ■ ■ Refer to FAQs on the website as many questions answered there.



- ■ ■ Self contained
- ■ ■ Single research vision
- ■ ■ Clearly defined objectives and outcomes
- ■ ■ Duration designed to effect delivery
- ■ ■ Modest in scope befitting an early career stage
- ■ ■ PI time appropriate for management and contribution to research
- ■ ■ Staff time commensurate with self contained project (1-3 PDRA years?)
- ■ ■ Equipment should be project specific and modest
- ■ ■ Travel, impact activities, facilities etc need to be fully justified in terms of career development and results dissemination



- ■ ■ Describes the university's commitment to developing the applicant's research career
- ■ ■ Commitment should be over and above salary, premises etc
- ■ ■ Confirms the applicants appointment details
- ■ ■ Provides detailed explanations of
  - ■ ■ applicant's fit within departmental strategy
  - ■ ■ support for applicant's progression
  - ■ ■ host organisation appraisal process
  - ■ ■ evidence for applicant's ability to manage resources
  - ■ ■ support over and above standard career development
- ■ ■ Insufficient host support may jeopardise application





# Standard Grants



- ||| Flexible funding route which supports a wide range of research programmes.
  
- ||| Key Features:
  - ||| No fixed length
  - ||| No fixed value
  - ||| No closing dates – Applications can be submitted all year round
  - ||| No constraint on field of research, provided it is within EPSRC remit!
  
- ||| Things to consider:
  - ||| High Risk/High Return proposals are encouraged.
  - ||| Embracing new concepts or techniques.
  
- ||| Relevant activities funded via this route:
  - ||| Long term proposals aimed at developing critical mass.
  - ||| Feasibility studies.
  - ||| Overseas Travel Grants.
  - ||| Workshops.



# Fellowships



- Applicants are expected to demonstrate how they fulfil each of the expected attributes:
  - Research excellence
  - Setting the research agenda
  - Strategic vision
  - Profile and influence
  - Inspirational team leader
  - Communication and engagement skills



# Fellowships – Career Stage differences

Resource	Postdoctoral	Early	Established
Duration	Up to 3 years	Up to 5 years	Up to 5 years
Salary Requested	From 50-100%	From 50-100%	From 50-100%
Travel & Subsistence	Yes	Yes	Yes
Staff	No	Yes	Yes
Visiting Researchers	Yes	Yes	Yes
Equipment	Small items	Yes	Yes
Consumables	Yes	Yes	Yes
Facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes
Public Comms training	Yes	Yes	Yes

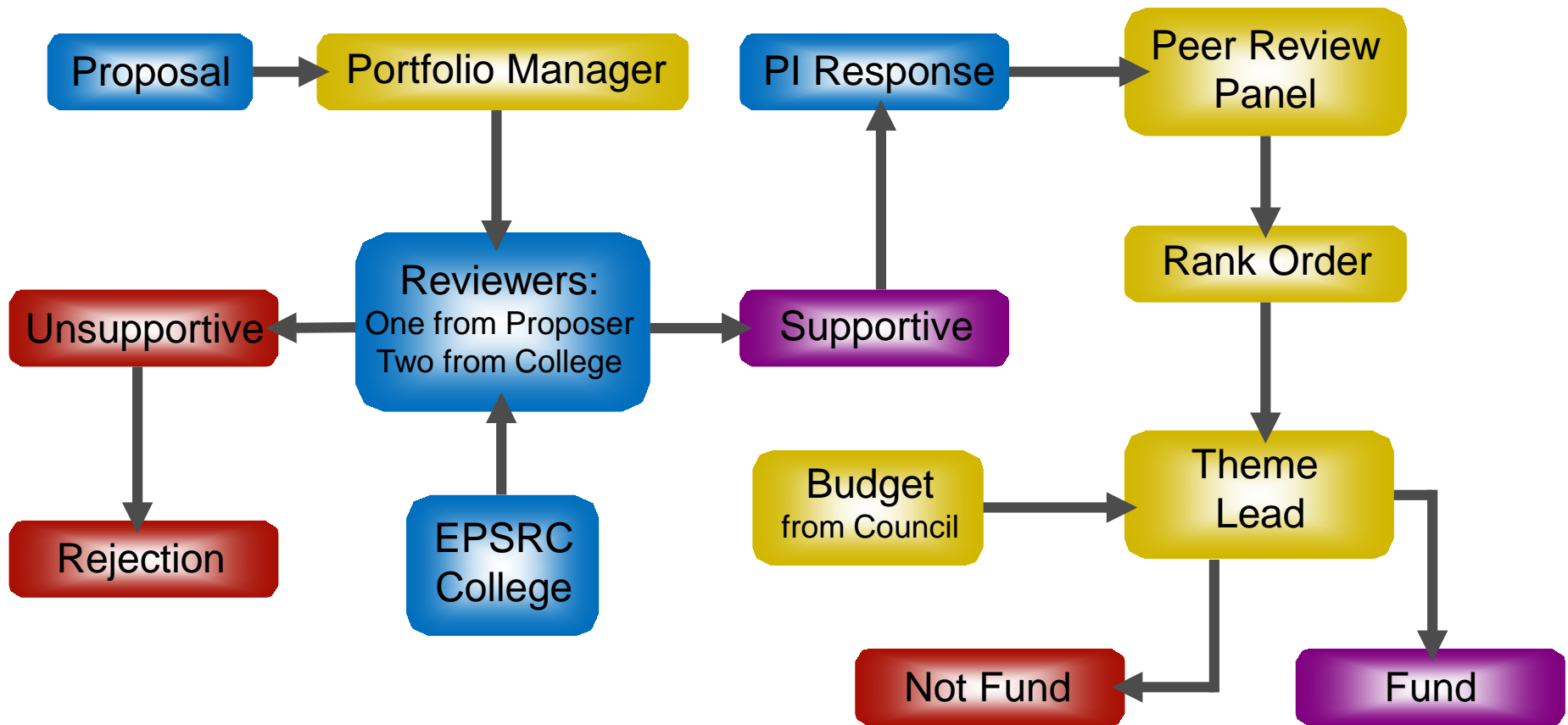


# Fellowships – Priority Areas

<b>Postdoctoral</b>	<b>Early Career</b>	<b>Established Career</b>
Statistics and Applied Probability	Statistics and Applied Probability	Statistics and Applied Probability
Intradisciplinary Mathematics	Intradisciplinary Mathematics	
New Connections from Mathematics	New Connections from Mathematics	New Connections from Mathematics
Continuum Mathematics and Advanced Materials in the Mathematical Sciences	Continuum Mathematics and Advanced Materials in the Mathematical Sciences	
Mathematical Aspects of OR	Mathematical Aspects of OR	



# The Peer Review Process



||| <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/assessmentprocess/>

||| <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/assessmentprocess/prprinciples/>



# Proposal





- ■ ■ Make sure you are eligible for the specific grant

- ■ ■ **Seek out more details:**

  - ■ ■ Online

  - ■ ■ Colleagues

  - ■ ■ Research Office

  - ■ ■ Call us at EPSRC!

- ■ ■ **Seek out constructive criticism:**

  - ■ ■ Find colleagues who don't know your research  
(so they don't paper over the holes unconsciously)





THE WRITER WHO BREEDS  
MORE WORDS THAN HE NEEDS  
IS MAKING A CHORE  
FOR THE READER  
WHO READS.

**Dr. Seuss**



- ■ ■ Cover Letter – for EPSRC only
- ■ ■ Proposal Form
- ■ ■ Case for Support
- ■ ■ Justification of Resources
- ■ ■ Team – CVs required for certain researchers and grants
- ■ ■ Host Organisation Statement – for New Investigator Awards



## Objectives

- Your audience is reviewers and EPSRC
  - It has to stack up for your peers
  - It needs to be intelligible to the educated non expert
- Clear definition of the outcomes of the key objectives

## Summary

- Your audience is non-technical public browsing GoW
- This is an executive summary for general publication
- Should communicate the what and how in an engaging way
- Should **not** be copied from the Case for Support background
- Remember this is the equivalent to your elevator pitch to the bank manager!



## Beneficiaries

- Opportunity to demonstrate a broad understanding of the context of your research
- Not just immediate but also secondary beneficiaries
- Be ambitious and imaginative
- Don't over claim

## Impact

- This describes the short and long term effect of success in your research
- Should consider both horizontal and vertical (i.e. peers in related disciplines and steps towards resolving societal challenges)
- This should demonstrate a clear understanding of your 'market' and its context



## Resources

- Resources
- The reviewers know how much research costs
- Don't ask for too little or too much
- Consider every cost
- Don't apply for ineligible items
- Remember you will have to justify all costs

## Partners

- Partners
- Partners pay into the project in cash or in kind
- Usually they expect to benefit from the output of the research
- Project partners cannot financially benefit from the grant
- Project partners can write letters of support



## Case for support

- First two pages is all about the team:
  - Summarise the results and conclusions of your research
  - Expertise at host and associated organisations
  - Relevant past collaborative work with industry and other beneficiaries
- Subsequent 6 pages is the full technical pitch:
- Background section
  - Introduce academic and industrial context
  - Demonstrate understanding of related work in the UK and abroad
  - National importance
  - Explain the impact and the long term effects of the proposed research
- Academic impact
- Research hypothesis, objectives, programme and methodology
- Clearly identify risks and mitigation strategies



## Justification of Resources

- Every line on the JeS form should be justified
- Don't just list what is already there
- Think, "if they challenge this figure, can I defend it without embarrassment!"

## The Team

- Already covered descriptively in case for support
- For Fellowships, CV of the PI must be added (about the person)
- For Visiting researchers, CVs must be added (to justify their value as contributors to the project)





## Assessment Criteria

- ■ Primary: Quality
- ■ Major Secondary: National Importance
- ■ Secondary: Pathways to Impact
- ■ Secondary: Applicant's ability
- ■ Secondary: Resources and management

**All judged by peer review...**



Remember this is a pitch, communicate enthusiasm!

Assessment Criteria:

■ ■ ■ Look at funding guidance:

<https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/>

■ ■ ■ Look at reviewers forms:

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/assessmentprocess/review/rev/>

Use your critical colleagues again:

■ ■ ■ Does it make sense?

■ ■ ■ Do they understand it?



# Peer Review

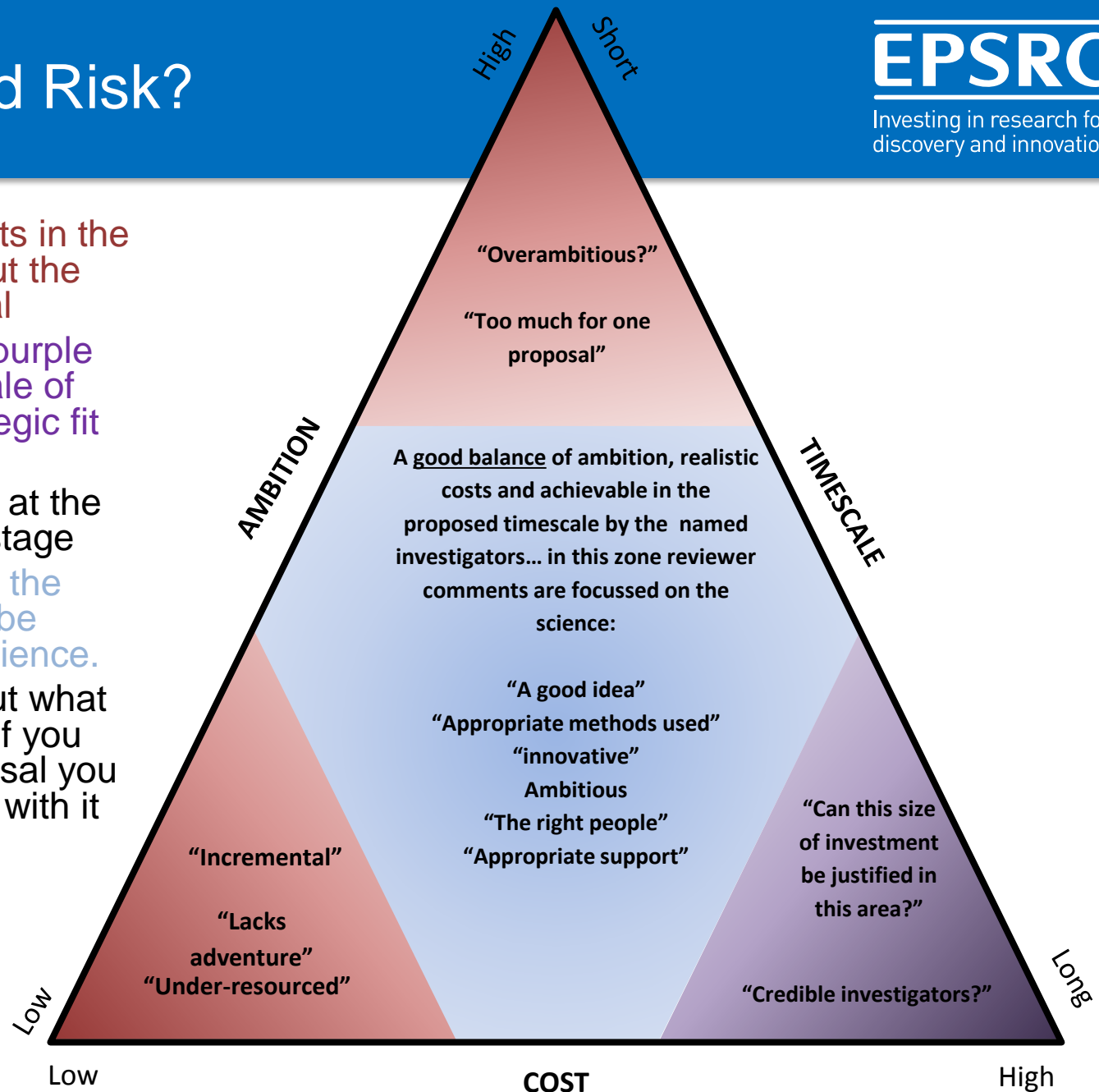


- ■ ■ 3 expert reviewers review proposal against the assessment criteria
- ■ ■ Applicant can suggest 3 reviewers, 1 will be used if possible
- ■ ■ Who should you choose as an applicant reviewer?
  - ■ ■ Experts in the field
  - ■ ■ Not a collaborator (current or past)
  - ■ ■ At different institutions
  - ■ ■ Likely to be familiar with EPSRC process



# Adventure and Risk?

- The reviewer comments in the red areas are not about the science in the proposal
- The comments in the purple area are about the scale of the proposal and strategic fit to EPSRC
- These can be avoided at the proposal preparation stage
- Negative comments in the blue area are likely to be about the proposed science.
- Think Objectively about what a reviewer might ask: if you address it in the proposal you shouldn't have to deal with it in the PI response



**Ideally you will have answered all questions before they're asked!**

## What you should do:

- ■ ■ Be factual
- ■ ■ Be specific
- ■ ■ Back-up comments with facts
- ■ ■ Throw away your first attempt
- ■ ■ Agree to follow-up suggestions if appropriate

## What you shouldn't do:

- ■ ■ Write nothing at all
- ■ ■ Criticise the reviewer
- ■ ■ Ignore certain criticisms
- ■ ■ Use positive comments to counter negative ones
- ■ ■ Repeat all the good points!

**Remember who your audience are – the Panel, not the Reviewers!**



- ■ ■ Seek out critical friends
- ■ ■ Address what is being asked
- ■ ■ Consider your audience
- ■ ■ The PI response is one of the most important documents
- ■ ■ 'Research Quality' is primary criteria
- ■ ■ 'National Importance' is your chance to sell
- ■ ■ 'Impact' doesn't mean overselling



# Panel





- ■ ■ Every application has 3 introducers.
- ■ ■ They read the reviews and the response of the applicant to the issues raised and assign a score out of 10 for several categories and an overall score.
- ■ ■ They do not re-review a proposal.
- ■ ■ They do read the proposals to make a decision as to whether points have been addressed.
- ■ ■ There is a form to fill in for every proposal introduced.
- ■ ■ The average of the overall scores will be used for a first ranking of the proposals.
- ■ ■ Panellists tend to read as many of the other proposals as possible.
- ■ ■ Time: Approximately 2 hours per proposal and 6 hours to finalize your scores.
- ■ ■ Panellists have guidance notes for scoring and are conscientious



- ■ ■ Conflicted panel members leave the room
- ■ ■ The first introducer gives a brief summary of the proposal, their score and justification of that score
- ■ ■ 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> introducers make additional points
- ■ ■ A consensus as to final score is reached after discussion with input from all panel members
- ■ ■ A rank ordered list is prepared
- ■ ■ At the end of the meeting this list is signed by the panel chair



# Interacting with EPSRC



- ■ ■ Make a Je-S account.
- ■ ■ Fill in and update your research interests. You have to talk the EPSRC language (example).
- ■ ■ Provide plenty of keywords that can help the Council to choose you as an appropriate reviewer.
  
- ■ ■ Read the proposal and answer the questions in a clear way. Be polite.
- ■ ■ Be honest. You need to check feasibility of the project. Don't fabricate problems.
- ■ ■ Book time in your schedule to do this properly. If you cannot do the job just say no.
- ■ ■ Keep in mind that the names of the reviewers can be seen by the panel.
- ■ ■ Giving well written and considered reviews helps build your reputation.
- ■ ■ A review that is minimal in comments and justification is useless to the panel.
- ■ ■ Don't be a bad reviewer. Give appropriate information.

