

## Call for expressions of interest to join the EPSRC Associate Peer Review College

### Quick Reference

**Please read the full Call document for guidance before submitting your proposal**

**Closing date: 10 May 2016**

EPSRC is the UK's main agency for funding research in the engineering and physical sciences. We invest around £800 million a year in research and postgraduate training to help the nation handle the next generation of technological change.

Peer review is a vital part of our assessment process, ensuring that we support the highest-quality research across the range of our portfolio. As part of our College refresh programme, we are inviting expressions of interest to join our Associate Peer Review College. The selection criteria are set out in this document. We will select new members based on individual knowledge, the need for expertise in particular areas and our ambition for a more diverse College.

### Key Dates:

Activity	Date
Deadline for Expressions of interest	10 May 2016 (16:00)
Completion of College Refresh Process	August 2016
Decision on Associate College Membership	August 2016
Start of Associate College Membership	September 2016

### Contacts:

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Engineering and Physical Sciences  
Research Council

## **Call for expressions of interest to join the EPSRC Associate Peer Review College**

**Closing date: 10 May 2016**

**Call type: Expression of interest**

**Related themes: Digital Economy, Energy, Engineering, Global  
Uncertainties, ICT, LWEC, Manufacturing the Future, Mathematical  
Sciences, Physical Sciences, Quantum Technologies, Research  
Infrastructure**

### **Summary**

EPSRC is the UK's largest supporter of academic research in engineering and the physical sciences, with an annual budget of approximately £800m and an overall investment in research and training worth approximately £4.6bn. Our Peer-Review College is a vital part of our assessment process, ensuring that we support the highest-quality research across the range of our portfolio. As part of its College refresh programme taking place in summer 2016, EPSRC invites expressions of interest from candidates who wish to join its Associate Peer Review College. This call is open to anyone who fulfils the initial selection criteria set out in this document. Final selection of candidates from the pool of expressions of interest will be on the basis of individual knowledge, need for expertise in particular research areas and the structure of the new EPSRC Delivery Plan (published in spring 2016). As part of this programme we aspire to better reflect the diversity and experience of our science base. We also wish to increase our access to expertise in cross and multi-disciplinary areas. However, all applications will be assessed on individual merit. Final decisions on those invited will be made centrally within EPSRC.

### **Background**

Peer review is a fundamental part of the assessment process we use to evaluate the diverse range of funding proposals submitted each year. The expert knowledge provided through this process allows our panel members to make appropriate, considered funding decisions. Our Peer Review College consists of over 4,000 experts in the fields of engineering and physical sciences. Associate College and College membership includes training in peer review. In return for this, members are expected to commit to undertake a number of reviews per year and may be approached to be part of a funding panel. Where possible, we will use Associate College and College members to conduct peer review of proposals as part of our commitment to a high quality, robust, transparent peer-review process.

As part of an independent review of the peer review process in 2013, we recognised that the College, while effective, was being underused and was not representative of the engineering and physical sciences community. Through this

exercise, we aim to provide a pool of reviewers with broader knowledge and experience with which to inform our peer review process. Over time the overall College membership is not expected to increase markedly.

All College members must first become an Associate College member; graduation to full College membership will be dependent on the individual completing a set number of usable reviews, completing the on-line training (as well as any future revisions) and maintaining an up to date personal profile to help identify them as suitable to review particular proposals. College members will be expected to keep their training and profile up to date and should complete a minimum number of reviews (should they be asked to do so). College members who fulfil the relevant criteria will be invited to continue their membership at the end of each Delivery Plan period (approximately five years).

For more information about EPSRC's portfolio and strategies, see our website: <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/>

Funding is not available as part of this call. Reviews are provided to EPSRC on a voluntary basis as and when requested. This is subject to the reviewer being capable of providing a review based on their expertise and the available time to provide the review. Those attending prioritisation meetings are eligible to receive a daily fixed fee.

## **Equality and Diversity**

Through this exercise, we have particular aspirations to:

- increase the international, business, charities and government representation on the College
- improve the diversity of the College

Applications will be assessed following the published process. Applications from women, those with a disability and members of minority ethnic groups, who currently are under represented on the College, are therefore especially welcome. Applications from international, business, charity and government colleagues are also particularly encouraged.

In particular, we aspire to improve the gender balance of the College in keeping with EPSRC's overall goal of achieving at least 30% participation of women on each of our advisory, peer review bodies and reviewer pools.

**We will use increasing diversity in our selection criteria.**

## **Eligibility and person specification**

Associate College members should have sufficient scientific expertise to be able to offer a credible opinion of the scientific merit of proposals for funding submitted to EPSRC in at least one of the EPSRC Research Areas (for more information see <http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/researchareas/>). The opinions expressed as a reviewer should be knowledgeable, impartial, neutral and above all, informative. Peer Reviews and the response of the Principal Investigator are the main sources of information by which Panel members reach their prioritisation recommendations; good quality reviews

facilitate this process and provide confidence to the community in the decisions made.

In becoming an Associate College member (and by implication a full College member in time), you are committing yourself to reviewing up to eight proposals in a year. This will vary depending on the nature of the proposals we receive and you may not be approached at all in the course of a year. The standard time allowed to provide a review is three weeks. In this time you will be required to read the proposal and associated documentation and provide full comments based on criteria such as scientific quality and national importance.

You are not obliged to accept all of the reviews we ask you to undertake, but we would review your membership in the event of persistent declining to review.

Once you gain experience as a reviewer you may also be approached to participate in assessment panels. Unless your experience is highly appropriate to the panel concerned, this is unlikely to occur in the early stages of your College career.

The purpose of the Associate College is to provide the opportunity to develop essential skills in peer review, a vital component of our funding mechanism without which we cannot operate effectively. The Associate College will also ensure that we have a dynamic vibrant and diverse College that is fit for purpose now and for the future.

In undertaking peer-review on behalf of EPSRC, the reviewer has an opportunity to gain an insight into up-to-date scientific research in the UK and recognition as a member of the EPSRC Peer Review College.

## **How to apply**

### **Submitting an application**

Anyone wishing to apply should do so via the embedded form on the call page at the EPSRC website:

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/calls/associatepeerreviewcollege/>

The survey contains the following sections:

- Personal information (e.g. name, institution, contact details)
  - Expertise (defined by EPSRC Research Areas – for more information visit <https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/researchareas/> (*Applicants may select at least one and up to five Research Areas*))
- Free text sections
  - Why are you interested in joining EPSRC's reviewer pool? (500 characters)
  - What expertise can you offer to EPSRC as an EPSRC Associate College Member? (1500 characters)
  - What evidence can you provide to demonstrate this? (750 characters)

Please complete all sections. Expressions of interest should be received by **16:00 on 10 May 2016**.

## **Assessment**

### **Assessment process**

This will be an internal assessment process in association with a wider refresh of the EPSRC Peer-Review College. There will be no external peer review of applications.

Expressions of interest will be placed into a pool of potential Associate College members. Portfolio Managers responsible for each of the 115 Research Areas will conduct an assessment of the need for new College members. This will take into account: current demand for reviews, the implications of the new Delivery Plan and **our aim to increase diversity**. A final decision on those applicants who will be invited forward to join the Associate College will be made centrally within EPSRC.

### **Assessment criteria**

**The criteria used to select new members will depend on the background of the applicant.** Once applicants have met the quality criteria below, we will also consider the overall goal of increasing the diversity of the college:

- **Academic** – A track record in at least one EPSRC research area, as shown by:
  - Publications: recent (last three years) peer reviewed journal publications in journals recognised as leading in the field with a high impact factor for the research.
  - Experience or significant presence in your community (invited presentations, keynote talks at major conferences, presentations at leading conferences in the field).
  - Evidence of a research portfolio (This does not have to be specifically with EPSRC) or having previously held responsibility for research programmes would be desirable.
- **Business** – A background in a relevant sector with a business, charity or policy making focus as shown by:
  - At least five years of experience in business research and development with good technical knowledge.
  - Management experience (as well as, not instead of) business experience may be advantageous if it can be shown to be relevant in judging academic research proposals.
  - Experience of co-working with academics.
  - A broad understanding of the wider academic innovation and business landscape.

- **International** – Non-UK resident but fulfils the criteria of one of the categories described above.
  - Evidence of understanding of the UK academic funding landscape would be helpful but is not essential.

## Moving forward

The College Refresh process will take place in the period April – August 2016. Applicants to this call will be notified of the outcome of this process and whether they have been invited to join the Associate Peer Review College. Successful applicants will need to complete their reviewer training and create their expertise profile: the expertise profile is very important as it helps Portfolio Managers identify you as a potentially suitable reviewer. Note that the need for reviews will be dictated by the nature of applications submitted. Once an Associate College member has undertaken online training, completed their expertise profile and produced usable reviews they will be elevated to the full Peer Review College.

## Key dates

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