

Terms of Reference – Engineering Early Career Forum

Vision:

The Early Career Forum aims to identify and support some of the most promising early career researchers in Engineering, involve them as an informal advisory stream to EPSRC, and encourage them to act as advocates for EPSRC within the community.

Members are expected to bring a broad view to bear and to act as ‘generous generalists’, consulting and informing the community, and offering opinion across the breadth of the Theme. Members are not required to act as representatives of their own organisation, research area or sector.

EPSRC’s responsibilities toward the Forum

- Provision of relevant information in a timely manner, and relaying outcomes from previous agendas and meetings.
- Listening to forum members, responding to their questions and concerns, and relaying feedback from the group to the Strategic Advisory Team (SAT).
- Management of the Forum recruitment process (annually, where necessary) to ensure that the membership broadly reflects the diversity represented in the engineering community and the regions of the UK.

Forum Members’ responsibilities toward EPSRC

- Act as an informal advisory structure providing valuable insights and additional perspectives on key strategic issues and plans from the theme.
- Regular attendance (2-3 meetings per year), willingness to host and organise speakers and meetings, and responding to EPSRC emails promptly, as required.
- Acting as advocates, proactively sharing awareness of EPSRC operation and strategy with colleagues and the wider community.

Forum Members’ responsibilities toward the community

- Being visible and informing colleagues of ECF role, disseminating key knowledge of EPSRC strategy and activities to the community and stakeholders where appropriate.
- Sharing of best practice within their own institutions.
- Providing a link, from their institutions and networks, to EPSRC to raise concerns or issues.

Operation and Governance

- Steady state of approximately 15 members, with overlap between new and existing members; initial membership length of 2 years, with scope for EPSRC to extend by 1 year.
- Membership representation across early career stages, with a particular focus on those who are working towards or have recently received their first EPSRC funding
- Open recruitment from across institutions (including industry and users of research).
- Meetings to be held in sync with SAT where appropriate.
- Agenda to be coordinated by EPSRC, having sought items from Forum members. Meeting ordinarily to be chaired by whoever leads on each item (be it EPSRC or Forum member)
- The SAT ECF representative to act as champion for the Forum and act as a communication channel to relay feedback.
- Web-page on Engineering team website to give members visibility within the community.