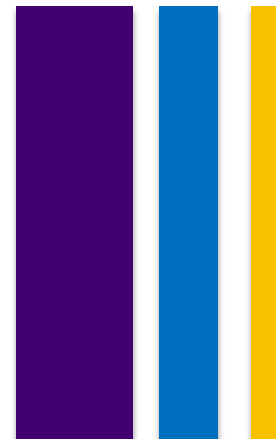




EPSRC Fundamental Elements of Peer Review and Funding Opportunities

Early Career Workshop.
Sheffield and Cardiff; February and March 2017



- Peer review process
- Research grant funding
- The application process
- The assessment process
- How to be a reviewer



Peer review is the heart of our business: all funding decisions are based mainly on expert advice from members of the College of Peer Reviewers. Peer review ensures integrity and consistency to a robust, quality process for all EPSRC funding initiatives by following a number of principles.



- ■ ■ **TRANSPARENCY:** Assessment criteria and details of the peer review process are published before applicants submit proposals.
- ■ ■ **APPROPRIATENESS:** A peer review process appropriate to the proposed research, and in proportion with the investment and complexity of the work is used.
- ■ ■ **MANAGING INTERESTS:** All participants are asked to declare interests when carrying out peer review activities so conflicts can be identified and managed.
- ■ ■ **CONFIDENTIALITY:** Proposals are treated in confidence, and we ask those who advise us to do the same.



- ■ ■ **EXPERT ASSESSMENT:** Expert peer reviewers, mainly from EPSRC's College, assess the individual merit of all proposals against published criteria.
- ■ ■ **PRIORITISATION:** Proposals that receive positive reviews are ranked for funding by assessing their merit against others.
- ■ ■ **RIGHT TO REPLY:** Principal Investigators have the right to reply to reviewers' comments before proposals are prioritised.
- ■ ■ **SEPARATION OF DUTIES:** Peer review of a proposal is separated from its funding decision: EPSRC staff make funding decisions based on peer review advice, but those acting as peers will not also be responsible for authorising its funding decision.

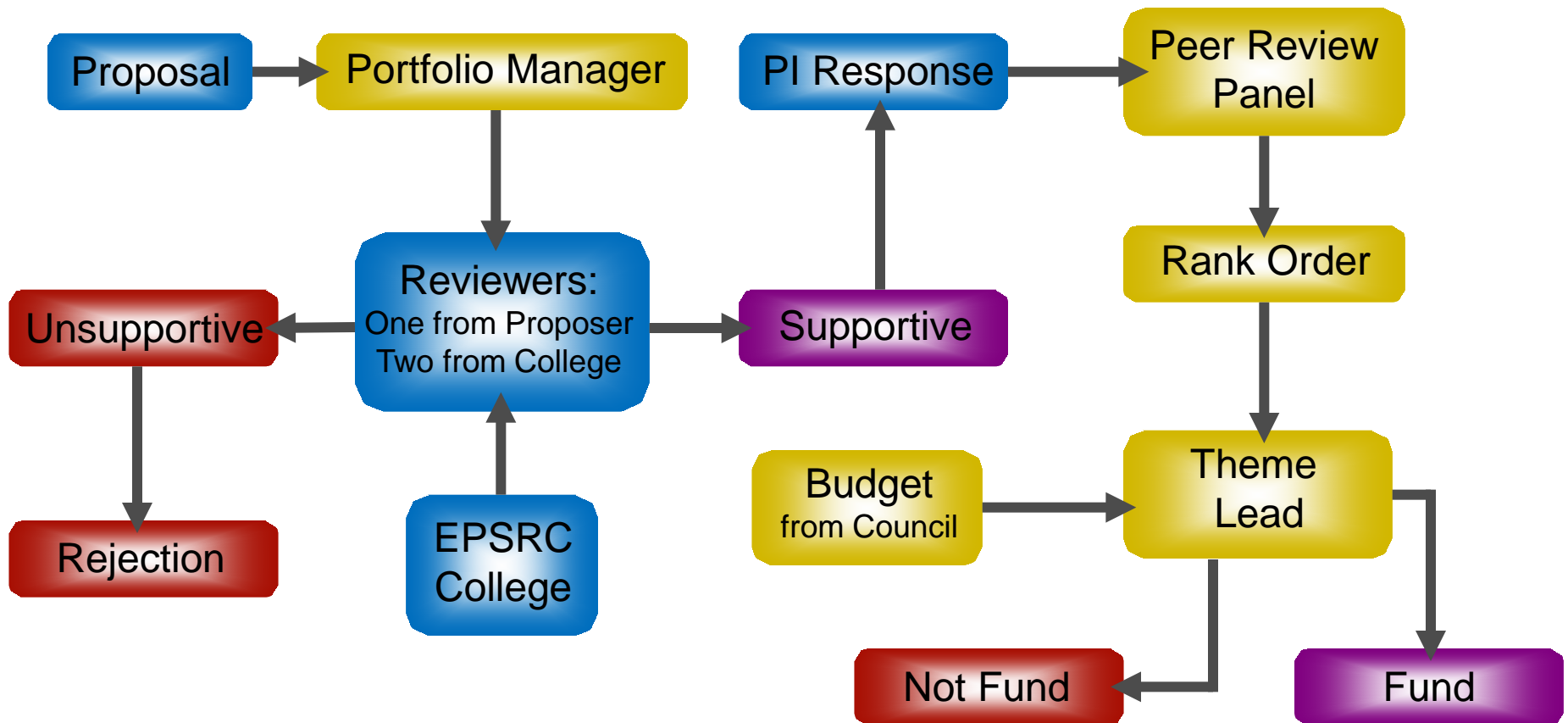


- ■ ■ **NO PARALLEL ASSESSMENT:** Multiple parallel assessments of a proposal's relative merit are avoided.
- ■ ■ **FAIRNESS:** Peer review processes used will be unbiased and not influenced by gender, ethnicity or any other protected characteristic, demonstrating EPSRC's commitment to equality and diversity. (Protected Characteristics covered by law are age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.)

These principles apply to full proposals assessed through our Standard Research funding, calls for proposals, and all grant schemes that are peer reviewed. They do not apply to schemes like Doctoral Training Partnerships, which are calculated using an algorithm.



The Peer Review Process

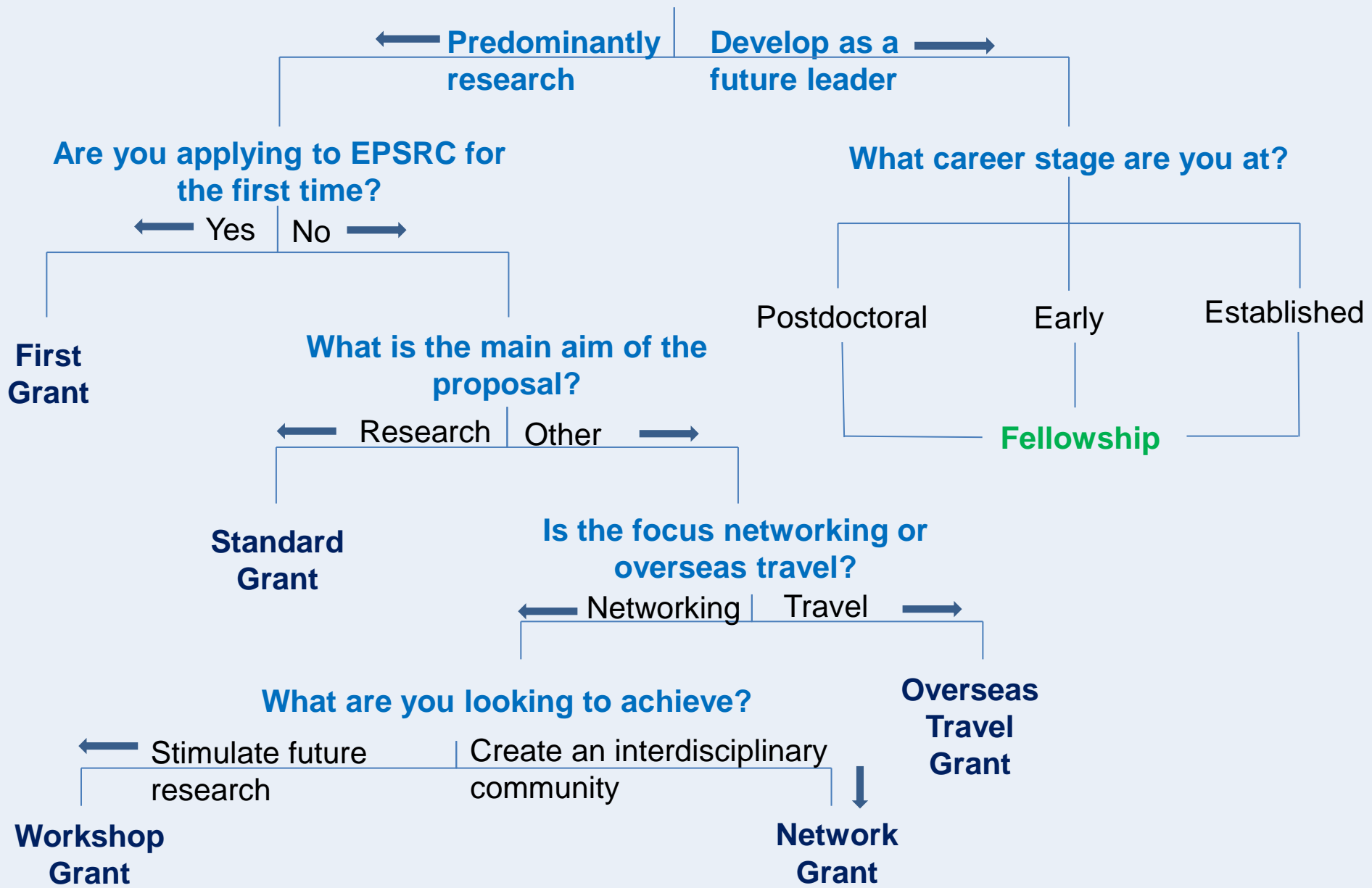


EPSRC Research Grant Funding Opportunities





What do I want to do with my grant?



First Grant Scheme

- First application to EPSRC (not including fellowships)
- Within 36 months of first academic post
- Within 10 years of completing your PhD
- Capped at **£125k** at full economic cost
- Limited duration of up to **two years**
- First Grants are only compared to other first grant applications at panel meetings
- **Contact us** if you're unsure whether you're eligible to apply!

Standard Research Grants

- Can apply anytime, for any amount of resource, for any duration
- Flexible: small travel grants to multi-million pound programmes
- Support wide range of activities:
 - Research projects
 - Feasibility studies
 - Instrument development
 - Equipment
 - Travel
 - Collaboration (including visiting researchers)
- Adventure and risk encouraged
- No closing dates



||| Fellowships

- ||| No eligibility requirement based on years of experience – **person specification** instead, **3 career stages**
- ||| Up to **5 years** duration, **50-100% FTE**
- ||| Only open in **priority areas**
- ||| No closing dates but **two rounds per year**
- ||| Proposals should be submitted a **minimum of four months** before the prioritisation panel (January and July)
- ||| No outline stage – full proposal submitted



The Application Process



Je-S Application completed online and should include:

- Track record of applicants,
- Description of proposed research,
- Diagrammatic work-plan,
- Justification of Resources,
- Impact Plan.

In addition or if required.

- Project partner statements of support,
- Equipment quotes,
- CVs for visiting researchers and named RAs

Routing classification



- Je-S Application completed online and should include:
 - Track record of applicants,
 - Description of proposed research,
 - Diagrammatic work-plan,
 - Justification of Resources,
 - Impact Plan.

- In addition or if required.

Advice:

- Project partner statements of support,
- Equipment proposals,
- CVs for visiting researchers and named RAs

- Routing classification

EPSRC website

Je-S Helpdesk

je-s.rcuk.ac.uk/Handbook/pages/Home.htm

Contact your Research Office

Give us a call



Read the rules:

- ■ ■ Eligible?
- ■ ■ Criteria?

Use colleagues:

- ■ ■ Does it make sense?
- ■ ■ Do they understand it? (especially for multidisciplinary proposals)

This enables you to address issues in advance of the reviewers assessing the proposal



The Assessment Process



What Does EPSRC Do?

- ■ ■ We seek comments from at least one nominated reviewer
- ■ ■ Comments are also sought from two other experts – normally from EPSRC College System
- ■ ■ There must be no conflicts of interest
- ■ ■ Reviewers can be academics or industrialists, UK-based or international
- ■ ■ Portfolio Managers use a database system of potential reviewers, as well as their own experience, to select reviewers



Assessment Criteria

- Quality
- Importance
- Impact
- Applicant's ability
- Resources and management

All judged by peer review...



Assessment Criteria

Look at funding guidance:

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

Look at reviewers forms:

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/assessment/assessment-process/review/rev/>

Why this? Why you? Why now?



National Importance

- ■ ■ Government has growth as a major policy target
- ■ ■ Treasury needs to see economic benefit of spend
- ■ ■ Research Councils need to demonstrate what they support meets these needs
- ■ ■ Why should the tax payer fund it?



National Importance

**Why, and to whom is your work
important?**



National Importance

The extent to which the research:

- ■ ■ Contributes or maintains the health of other disciplines
- ■ ■ Addresses societal challenges
- ■ ■ Contributes to economic success (current or future)
- ■ ■ Enables future development of industry
- ■ ■ Meets strategic needs by maintaining world-leading research activity
- ■ ■ Fits with or complements other research



Pathways to Impact

- ■ ■ Harmonised policy across all research councils
- ■ ■ Now require a clearly thought through and acceptable Pathways to Impact as a condition of funding
- ■ ■ An acceptable Pathways to Impact should:
 - ■ ■ Be project specific and not generalised;
 - ■ ■ Be flexible and focus on potential outcomes.
- ■ ■ Enables future development of industry
- ■ ■ Policy has been in effect at panels since 1 April 2015

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/newsevents/news/impactrevisedguidance/>



When you receive your proposal reviews



The PI Response

■ 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!





Multidisciplinary proposals?

- ■ ■ Make the case to peer review very clear
- ■ ■ Have the proposal read by people from outside your field.
 - ■ ■ **Is the case for multidisciplinary clear?**
- ■ ■ Use the nominated reviewers tactically
- ■ ■ Have a conversation with us about the content
- ■ ■ Make use of our funding schemes that enable collaboration.
 - ■ ■ **EPSRC strategy is to encourage multidisciplinary work!**

- ■ ■ (There is no evidence multi-disciplinary proposals fare worse in peer review)



Beyond ICT, or beyond EPSRC?

- ■ ■ No double jeopardy – one proposal, one panel
- ■ ■ Cross-Theme funding
- ■ ■ Cross-Council funding
- ■ ■ Joint reviewer selection
- ■ ■ EPSRC remit query service

<http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/howtoapply/basics/remit/remitqueries/>



- ■ ■ Ask EPSRC contact(s) if you are interested – we will send an application form

- ■ ■ If accepted onto Associate College you will need to:
 - ■ ■ Fill out your research expertise on Je-S
 - ■ ■ Complete College training
 - ■ ■ Be responsive to reviewer requests
 - ■ ■ Complete reviews within requested timescales

- ■ ■ www.epsrc.ac.uk/funding/assessmentprocess/college/



Thank You

