

NATIONAL IMPORTANCE IN PEER REVIEW



FORMAT FOR THE SESSION

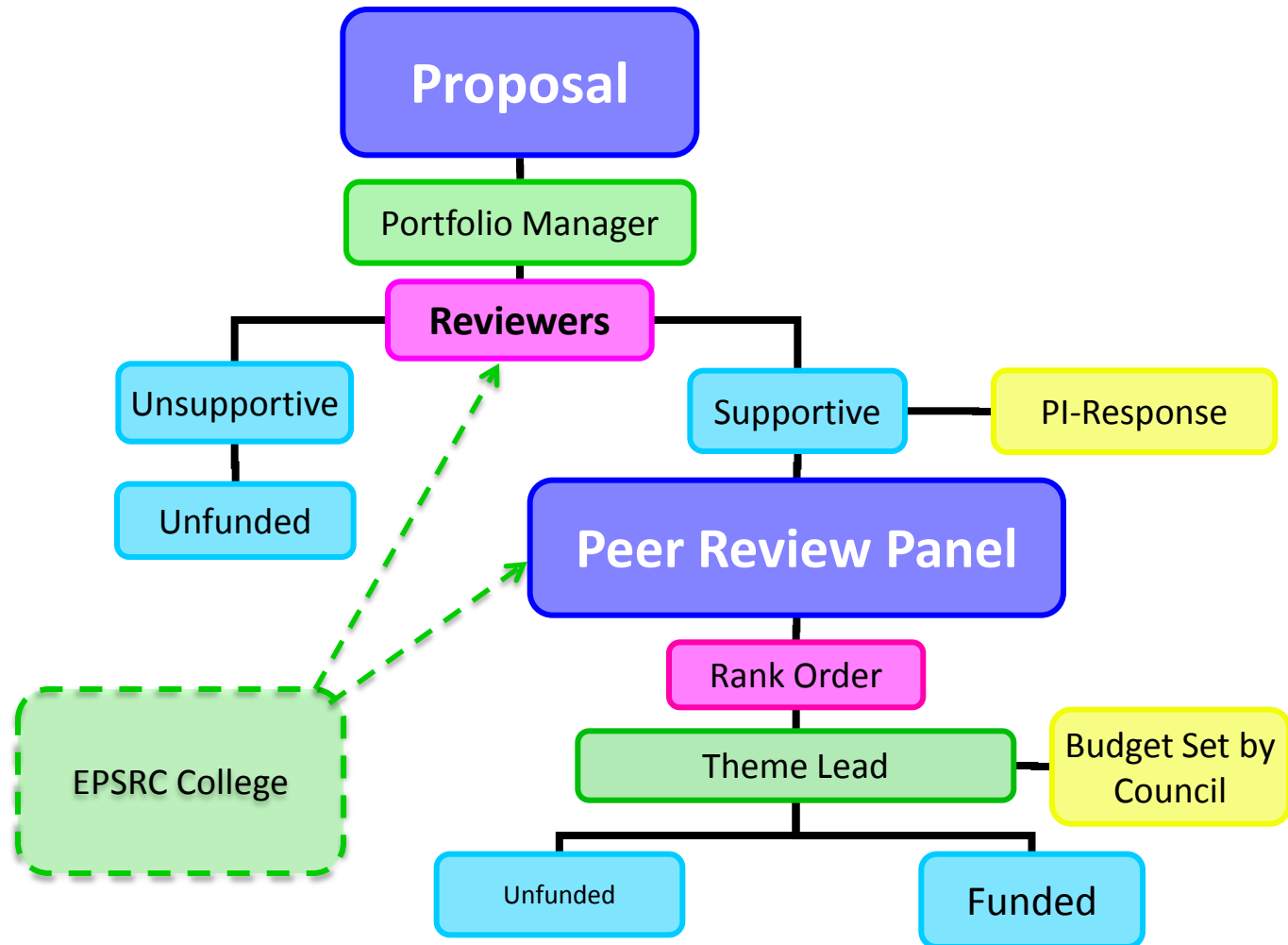
- Peer Review – overview
- National Importance – a new peer review assessment criterion
- Workshop Session 1: Understanding National Importance
- Workshop Session 2: Identifying National Importance



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CURRENT PEER REVIEW PROCESS



PRINCIPLES OF PEER REVIEW

It is important peer review is operated consistently and with integrity so EPSRC operate the following principles:

- Transparency
- Appropriateness
- Managing Interests
- Confidentiality
- Expert Assessment
- Prioritisation
- Right to Reply
- Separation of Functions
- No parallel Assessment



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ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

All proposals are assessed against a set of core assessment criteria:

- Research Quality
- National Importance
- Pathways to Impact
- Track Record
- Resources & Management

Some funding schemes and calls for proposals also have additional criteria.

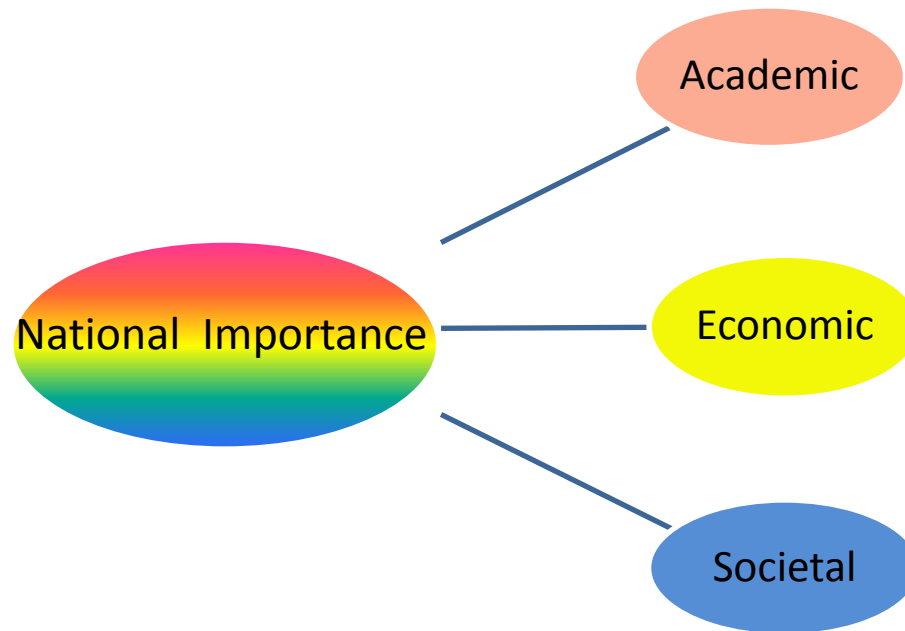
NATIONAL IMPORTANCE: A NEW PEER REVIEW ASSESSMENT CRITERION

- Applies to all EPSRC funding schemes and mechanisms;
- Will be used in conjunction with existing criteria: Research Quality; Pathways to Impact; Track Record; Resources & Management;
- Research Quality remains pre-eminent criterion
- National Importance is a major factor in all assessments;
- All proposals received on or after 15th November 2011 must address this requirement.

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WHAT IS NATIONAL IMPORTANCE?



- Maintain health of other disciplines
- Contributes to success of existing industry base
- Contributes to development of emerging industry
- Address Societal Challenges : Resilient Economy, Energy, Healthcare, Digital Economy, Environmental Change

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ASSESSING NATIONAL IMPORTANCE (1)

- Applicants should demonstrate the importance of their proposed research project to the UK in relation to other research in that area;
- Importance now with impact in 10 – 50 years;
- 10 – 50 years is the normal timeframe over which benefits from EPSRC funded research might be realised;
- Benefits are potential rather than actual;
- Should however be realistic and credible



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ASSESSING NATIONAL IMPORTANCE (2)

- Relative rather than absolute assessment to reflect type of research – one size does not fit all;
- Should be assessed against what is a reasonable expectation for that type of research – a highly fundamental or theoretical study will make a different type of case to a project directly addressing a real world problem.

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WORKSHOP SESSION 1

UNDERSTANDING NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Working in table groups:

- Write a paragraph/bullets that set out your understanding of national importance
 - What would you expect to see in the case for support?
- Indicate any significant differences across the range of disciplines in your group (20 mins)
- Feedback: report back a brief summary of your discussions (10 mins).
- Time available – 30 Minutes

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FEEDBACK FROM YOUR COLLEAGUES

“Research is global. So what can research of ‘national importance’ be? I take the ‘national’ as meaning that it tackles problems of pertinence to the UK, or develops understanding and tools which will beneficially impact the UK.....I take ‘importance’ to mean that the work has contributed to a change in direction, in practice, in application, or in understanding of a discipline or its use.”

“To me, judgments about national importance should consider how the research will benefit the UK in the context of strong and rapidly growing international competition. This applies whether the perceived importance is fundamental in nature or more applied.....

“As a reviewer, I think it is going to be quite hard to address the National Importance criteria, especially if the proposal is not in one’s own precise research area. In the first instance, I would therefore expect the Investigators to appreciate this, and to put the national importance of their research area into context, both clearly and concisely.

“When considering how to evaluate the national importance aspect of a proposal I would be looking for the applicant(s) to set out the current landscape that their proposal fits within and use evidence to support their interpretation of this landscape.



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WORKSHOP SESSION 2

IDENTIFYING NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

Working in two groups per table :

- Read the abstract provided, then as an applicant, write a paragraph/bullets describing the National Importance of the project (20mins);
- Swap your abstract and proforma with the other group on the table. Read the new abstract, and validate/review the “applicant’s” paragraph on National Importance (15mins);
- Regroup and have a quick discussion on the key learning points (5mins);
- Feedback: report back one key learning point from the process (10mins).
- Time available – 50 Minutes



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ROLE OF THE REVIEWER

- Reviewers are
 - experts in the field of the proposal
 - advise on the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal
 - Comment on the basis of an individual proposal

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ROLE OF THE PANEL

- Panel Members:
 - Are expert within a broad area relevant to the proposal but not to the topic of individual proposals
 - Assess the merits of each proposal relative to the other proposals being considered
 - Make their judgements on the basis of reviewer reports, not their personal expertise

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PEER REVIEW COLLEGE

EPSRC Operates a Peer Review College:

- Membership ~ 4000
- Identified by community as appropriate to review
- Primary source for both reviewers and panel members
- Annual refresh of membership (~10% pa)
- Balanced across research community by:
 - Research expertise
 - Age, gender & ethnicity
 - Geographical area/region
 - Organisation
 - UK academic, User (industry, charity, Govt Lab), Overseas

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Q & A

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