Plans for the Future

As members will be aware, the four-year term for the current EPSRC Peer Review College comes to an end on 31 December 2009, and therefore a new College needs to be in place with effect from January 2010.

Work is currently taking place to analyse both the future requirements of EPSRC, and the future format for the College. This is expected to lead to some existing members being invited to join the next College, and previous experience has shown that a high proportion of members of one College also become members of the next.

One of the basic principles in creating the new College is that we build on the strengths of the current one, retaining its inclusive and transparent features, whilst at the same time looking to simplify the nomination process, and strengthen performance-management and incentives.

The size of the next College is expected to remain at around 4000 members, which will again include representation from UK academia, UK industry/non-academia, and overseas-based researchers. All future members will be identified as those who can offer detailed technical advice, and/or those who can offer more strategic overview advice.

As part of the exercise to create the new College, we will be taking a fresh look at the Reviewers’ Incentive Scheme (RIS), to ensure its maximum effectiveness, and exploring how to reward/recognise the contributions of those outside of UK academia.

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New Form for Reviewers

In April, several changes were introduced to our peer review process. One major change was the introduction, in response to feedback from the community, of a completely redesigned reviewers’ form. The transition to this new form seems to have gone very smoothly, and we would like to thank everyone who has reviewed for us over this period for responding so constructively. We have done a quick review of the responses received, and our impression is that reviewers are generally finding the new form appropriate and easy to complete.

We have noted however, a slightly higher proportion of reviews where the answers provided have either been very brief, or have not addressed all the elements of the question. We would therefore like to take this opportunity to remind everyone to answer all the questions as fully as possible, in order to make the review as helpful as possible to the prioritisation panel.

We would welcome feedback, particularly from those who have used the new forms. Your views on their general usability and on any way in which they might encourage or discourage full responses would be greatly valued; as would comments on, and suggestions for improving, the reviewer guidance - particularly if anything is unclear.

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Further Information

Details about EPSRC and the peer review process may be found at http://www.epsrc.ac.uk. EPSRC’s current support may be found through the easily searchable “Grants on the Web” facility at http://gow.epsrc.ac.uk