Committee Building

Process overview

Within the delivery team, Portfolio Managers (PMs) remit check the incoming applications and use the subject area classifications to determine the composition of the panel. The PMs use the Pool Core Expertise Matrix (PCEM) to find appropriate Core and Pool members to invite. Potential committee members are invited via email until the appropriate collection of expertise is achieved.

Pre-requisites:

- Remit checks completed, applications are classified in subject area tick boxes
- Calculate how many members of each discipline are required. Accounting for 3 Introducing Members per application, with a maximum workload of 10-12 applications per member.

Considerations:

- Committee Member applicants – ideally we try to avoid this if at all possible, so whilst some pool and core members are included on the Committee Building spreadsheet as we start to gather a potential membership prior to the closing date, we avoid inviting them unless we have no other option to cover the expertise they bring to the membership.
- New members – we need to ensure we utilise as many members in the Pool as possible – however, we have found that there is an optimum number of members with no previous experience of attending a Committee Meeting that can be incorporated in the Committee without causing disruption. This is because we have been asked by the Committee Chairs to not assign any applications with 3 new members as the Introducing Members, so we need to balance the expertise areas that new members cover. Thus, we try to include a maximum of 5-6 new pool members to any one Committee Meeting.
- Underusage of Pool Members – we are aware that there are some members of the pool who have not been invited or able to attend a meeting since their appointment to the pool, so we filter the PCEM for Pool Members who have attended no meetings to date, and select according to expertise and RO to be included in the list of membership as a "new" member.
- Diversity – we try to balance the gender of the Committee as evenly as possible; we have no other data regarding the diversity of protected characteristics of members on the PCEM to work with. Some areas of expertise have a higher ratio of female members than others.
- Research Organisations – we aim to not duplicate representation from a single Research Organisation – if we do need to include more than one member from the same RO, we will ensure that they cover different areas of expertise and would not assign the same applications to them.
- Geographical location of Research Organisations – we try and ensure a geographical spread of ROs across the UK, try to avoid a concentration of many ROs from London& the South East for example, and also try to include a mix of Universities and Institutes and Industry.
- Over usage – we need to consider the workload of our Committee Members and try not to invite them to more than 2 consecutive meetings. We are also aware, with the current way of working, that often our invitations for a round fall at the Discussion Board/Meeting preparation phase of the previous round. We also consider that there is a need for some degree of collective memory (in addition to the Chairs) so having some members who overlap from one meeting to the next one would be an ideal scenario.
- Expertise - When we build the committee, we use the expertise detailed in the PCEM to build a matrix for each subject area, relevant to our committee and that particular round.

For example, if we have nine applications in Diet and Health subject area, we know we need to have at least three committee members with that expertise. We would filter the PCEM by expertise and then read their self-certified expertise section or visit their personal website, to see in more detail if their expertise fits the requirement for that round. As PMs become more experienced, they remember more detail of each committee members expertise.