



[REDACTED]

19 March 2024

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2024/00060

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 22 January in which you requested the following:

Your request:

- 1. Comprehensive Assessor Information: Please provide a comprehensive overview of all individuals involved in the assessment process of my current and previous applications, including any external consultants or advisors. This information is vital for a complete understanding of the decision-making process and to ensure that all perspectives and areas of expertise were adequately represented.*
- 2. Disability Access Training: Given the nature of my work in metaverse technology and mental health, and the significance of inclusive and accessible technology, I request information on the disability access training that assessors and other involved personnel have undergone. This is crucial to understand their proficiency in evaluating projects that require a deep understanding of accessibility and inclusivity, especially in the context of mental health technologies.*
- 3. Disability Access Policies: Additionally, I would like to inquire about the disability access policies that are in place within Innovate UK and how these policies influenced the assessment of my application. It is important to ensure that such policies are not only in place but also actively guide the evaluation process, particularly for projects like mine that are at the intersection of technology, mental health, and accessibility.*
- 4. The specific criteria and scoring metrics used by each assessor.*

Our response

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) holds some information relevant to your request. Please see the information below and attached.

In relation to part 1 of your request for 'Comprehensive Assessor Information' we can confirm that given the breadth of the scope of our competitions and the need to have independence and consistency between assessors, where possible Innovate UK aims to match assessors to applications based on their skills and expertise relevant to individual projects. The assessors are experts from across business and academia.

Innovate UK's quality assurance process ensures that the skills and qualifications of all assessors are appropriate to the selected competition. As further reassurance on the fairness of the process, the assessors that reviewed your project applications had knowledge and experience within the desired range of the innovation areas for the relevant competitions.

Further information on the assessment process for the following competitions you expressed an interest in are provided in the table below:

Competition Identified	Information relevant to Part 1 of your request
1.Unlocking Potential: Build	A link to General Guidance ¹ that provides information on the assessment process A link to how successful applications are selected for funding ² and related video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyHggGjxeCU
2. Unlocking Potential: Begin	A link to General Guidance ³ that provides information on the assessment process A video link to How assessors assess -
3. Innovation in Professional & Financial Services R2 Single	A video link to Find out more about how our assessors assess and a video link to how we select applications for funding
4. Innovation in Professional & Financial Services R2 Collaborations	A video link to Find out more about how our assessors assess and a video link to how we select applications for funding
5. Mindset – Extended digital reality for mental health Strand 1	A link to General Guidance ⁴ that provides information on the assessment process. A link to the application assessment criteria ⁵ that includes guidance and scoring used by assessors when reviewing applications.
6. Mindset – Extended digital reality for mental health Strand 2	A link to guidance on the post application process including interviews ⁶ . Information on what happens after the interview is provided at this link including the assessment panellists individually score ⁷ applications and these will be averaged for the overall interview score. More information is provided at the video link Find out more about how our assessors assess and video link how we select applications for funding

For information in relation to part 2 of your request for ‘*information on the disability access training that assessors have undergone*’, the relevant guidance UKRI has issued which relates to overall Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training is included in the three attached documents:

- FOI2024-00060 3_EDI_Assessment_Redacted
- FOI2024-00060 EDI case 1_Redacted
- FOI2024-00060 EDI Details_Redacted

Information in relation to part 3 of your request for ‘Disability Access Policies’ is provided in the attached document ‘FOI2024/00060 POL012_Policy_Reasonable_Adjustments 1_Redacted’.

Information for your further request for the ‘specific criteria and scoring metrics used by each assessor’ is provided in the document ‘FOI2024-00060 Assessor Briefing – Mindset Strand 1 and 2_Redacted’.

¹ https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/what-happens-after-you-have-submitted-your-application/?_ga=2.211988756.1899740277.1709718432-913296546.1689323201#contents-list

² <https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk/competition/1657/overview/428ee709-8802-4277-bcd3-e9c6f212ef7c#how-to-apply>

³ https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/what-happens-after-you-have-submitted-your-application/?_ga=2.211988756.1899740277.1709718432-913296546.1689323201#contents-list

⁴ <https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/what-happens-after-you-have-submitted-your-application/#contents-list>

⁵ <https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk/competition/1739/download/16191>

⁶ <https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/what-happens-after-you-have-submitted-your-application/#contents-list>

⁷ <https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/what-happens-after-you-have-submitted-your-application/#contents-list>

Some information has been redacted and some withheld in the attached documents. This has been applied where the information contains:

- Personal data, such as names and email addresses,
- Screenshots and extracts from individual applications, which contain confidential and commercially sensitive information, such as finance information, feedback and scoring data.
- Information that is not in scope of your request such as housekeeping details

Section 40(2) personal data

Information such as names of individuals, job titles and email addresses has been withheld under section 40(2) personal data of the FOI Act. Disclosing this information would contravene the first Data Protection Principle as defined under Section 86 of the Data Protection Act 2018 and Article 5 of the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR).

Section 40(2) is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

Section 41(1) information provided in confidence

The screenshots and extracts contain information from actual applications, which we consider as exempt under Section 41 of the FOIA, information provided in confidence. For example, the extracts contain financial information, feedback examples and scores. To explain further, applicants submit their grant applications in confidence, with the understanding that details of their application will remain confidential to protect research and development plans, intellectual property, and other commercially sensitive or market information provided in the proposal. If this information was released, we believe it would result in an actionable breach of confidentiality.

Section 41 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

The criteria and scoring matrixes for the other competitions detailed in the table above fall under the exemption at Section 43(2) commercial prejudice of the FOIA. This exemption is used where disclosure would likely result in a person's (an individual, a company, the public authority itself or any other legal entities) commercial interests being prejudiced.

Section 43(2) is a qualified exemption, meaning that a test was carried out to determine whether the public interest in disclosure outweighs the requirement for commercial confidentiality.

Public interest in favour of disclosure

- There is a general public interest in the disclosure of this information to ensure transparency and openness of a public organisation.
- There is also a public interest in transparency in order to ensure the accountability of public organisations and how they spend public funding.
- It would be in the public interest to view the scoring matrixes as public monies are used to fund this activity. Seeing copies of the scoring matrix enables the public to independently assess that Innovate UK is consistent and compliant with their own processes.

Public interest in favour of withholding the information

- The assessor scoring matrixes relate directly to the assessment process for these competitions and are neither publicly available nor routinely provided to all applicants. The scoring matrixes will be utilised for future competitions, and we therefore believe that releasing this information would negatively affect the commercial interests of all applicants who do not have access to this information and give those applicants with access an unfair advantage in future competitions. It is our view that the release of this information would not enable fair competition between the organisations that apply.

- As the scoring matrixes are intended to be used in future competitions, the unfair advantage that would be likely to occur from disclosure in this way would in turn affect the integrity of Innovate UK competitions. This would negatively impact on the commercial interests of Innovate UK and our responsibility to conduct a fair and transparent competition process.
- If the process is undermined, it is likely to harm the trust in the Innovate UK application process. This would adversely affect the application processes for future calls and could damage the reputation and commercial interests of Innovate UK and future investments.

Taking the above arguments into consideration, we reached the decision that the need for commercial confidentiality outweighs the public interest in disclosure, therefore the information is exempt from disclosure.

As part of our duty to provide advice and assistance you may find the information at the following webpages of interest:

[Mindset Strand 1](#)⁸

[Mindset Strand 2](#)⁹

[General Guidance](#)¹⁰

If you have any queries regarding our response or you are unhappy with the outcome of your request and wish to seek an internal review of the decision, please contact within the next 40 working days:

Head of Information Governance


Email: foi@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: www.ico.org.uk.

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see UKRI's complaints policy: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-policy/>

Yours sincerely,


Information Governance
Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
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⁸<https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk/competition/1739/overview/53c09fdc-f0f7-46f7-84ca-83aacc484f65#supporting-information>

⁹ <https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk/competition/1740/overview/613697a9-8b6d-42c9-88fc-5728dd117bc8#supporting-information>

¹⁰ https://www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/guidance-for-applicants/general-guidance/what-happens-after-you-have-submitted-your-application/?_ga=2.112436356.1427179216.1708950285-156671975.1704975370#contents-list