



[Redacted]

25 June 2026

Dear [Redacted]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2026/00463

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

Your request:

I would like to request aggregated information relating to assessors involved in the Innovate UK Women in Innovation competition for 2026.

Specifically, I request the following anonymised and aggregated information relating to assessors:

1. *The gender distribution of assessors.*
2. *The age distribution of assessors (for example by age bands, if exact ages are not held or cannot be disclosed).*
3. *The professional background or sector classification of assessors (for example: academic, investor, entrepreneur/founder, clinician, industry specialist, corporate executive, consultant, etc., according to whichever categorisation Innovate UK holds).*
4. *The proportion of assessors with direct founder or startup experience.*
5. *Any assessor training materials, guidance documents, or policies relating to:*
 - *unconscious bias,*
 - *equality/diversity/inclusion,*
 - *assessment consistency,*
 - *or evaluation criteria for Women in Innovation programmes.*

I am requesting aggregated and anonymised information only and am not seeking the identities of any individual assessors.

Our response:

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

There were 1,313 eligible applications to the Women in Innovation Awards 2025/26 funding competition. Each application was assessed by three assessors, from a pool of 421, resulting in 3,939 completed assessments. The number of applications reviewed by each assessor varies, therefore we have provided figures below for both the breakdown of the individual assessors and the total number of completed assessments.

1. *The gender distribution of assessors.*

Gender	Total Assessors	% Assessors	Total Assessments	% Assessments
Woman	159	37.8%	1,560	39.6%
Man	262	63.2%	2,379	60.4%
Total	421	100%	3,939	100%

2. *The age distribution of assessors (for example by age bands, if exact ages are not held or cannot be disclosed).*

This information is not held. Data on the age of assessors was not recorded.

3. *The professional background or sector classification of assessors (for example: academic, investor, entrepreneur/founder, clinician, industry specialist, corporate executive, consultant, etc., according to whichever categorisation Innovate UK holds).*

The only data held relating to assessor professional background is their own classification between academic and business. The table below provides this data for individual assessors, along with a breakdown by gender, and total number of completed assessments.

	Total Assessors	% Assessors	Total Assessments	% Assessments
Academic	55	13.1%	501	12.7%
Woman	18	4.3%		
Man	37	8.8%		
Business	366	86.9%	3,438	87.3%
Woman	141	33.5%		
Man	225	53.4%		
Total	421	100%	3,939	100%

4. *The proportion of assessors with direct founder or startup experience.*

There is no formal collection of data to indicate whether assessors have direct founder or startup experience. Of the 421 assessors that took part, 23 (5.5%) refer to “founder”, “start up” or “startup” in the skills section of their profiles. However, this is ‘free text’ and assessors are not specifically asked to provide this information.

5. *Any assessor training materials, guidance documents, or policies relating to:*
- *unconscious bias,*
 - *equality/diversity/inclusion,*
 - *assessment consistency,*
 - *or evaluation criteria for Women in Innovation programmes.*

Please find attached the “Assessor Briefing Women in Innovation 2025_26” document. The web recording for this presentation is available [here](#)¹.

Assessors were also sign posted to the [Assessor Guidance document](#)², which was also made available to applicants via the [IFS funding competition page](#)³.

Once assessors have attended a welcome meeting and completed IFS account set up, they are given access to the assessor resource hub that contains a series of interactive equality, diversity and inclusion quizzes and guidance.

Your rights

If you have any queries regarding our response please do let us know. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, explaining which elements of this decision you disagree with and why. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of our response and should be addressed to:

¹ <https://ukri.zoom.us/rec/share/I7qYN70uupiJ6CKyNeBFi0ioaHiv0NQVskz2q8aS3tasj5QwLkhsBGyLLycJs1Tc.f3EA8qlcsWAYHacG?startTime=1771855207000>

² <https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk/competition/2337/download/26198>

³ <https://apply-for-innovation-funding.service.gov.uk/competition/2337/overview/3750b1cd-2080-4a1c-82c0-003fbaafdd2d#how-to-apply>

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 procedure](#)⁴.

Yours sincerely,


Information Governance
Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
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⁴ <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>