



[REDACTED]

27 August 2024

Dear [REDACTED]

Freedom of Information request: FOI2024/00654

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 26 July in which you requested the following:

Your request:

Please release the data of the last 5 years about BBSRC panel A success rate.

These data should be broken down into each year's call (e.g. 24RM1) and indicate the success rate of the funded grants for both normal and new investigators.

Please also release the adopted procedures from Panel A about the choice of the reviewers and the choice of the number of reviewers, e.g. a minimum of 3 reviewers and the inclusion on an additional reviewer up to a total of 5 if there is substantial disagreement between the first 3 reviewers.

Please indicate the instructions the Panel uses to interpret the reviews (e.g. length of review, keywords etc.). Please indicate the weight system used to assign to each review on a given grant.

Our response

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

Please release the data of the last 5 years about BBSRC panel A success rate.

"These data should be broken down into each year's call (e.g. 24RM1) and indicate the success rate of the funded grants for both normal and new investigators."

The following table being provided is broken down by Panel reference, Overall success rates, and new Investigator (NI) Success scores.

Please note the following:

- The "Overall Success" rates represents all assessed applications. The second column is for applications that were assessed as NI only.
- The success rate within the NI dataset is affected by the small numbers involved as we have a small number of applications submitted to our NI opportunity, hence the success rates can vary significantly because of this.
- These figures are subject to change, but only in extenuating circumstances and any changes are likely to be minor on a case-by-case basis.

Table 1 – BBSRC panel A success rate

Panel ref:	Overall Success	NI Success
19RM1 A	22%	0%
19RM2 A	22%	30%
19RM3 A	22%	0%
20RM1 A	22%	0%
20RM2 A	24%	27%
20RM3 A	22%	14%
21RM1 A	25%	17%
21RM2 A	25%	40%
21RM3 A	27%	25%
22RM1 A	27%	0%
22RM2 A	25%	50%
22RM3 A	28%	38%
23RM1 A	26%	0%
23RM2 A	26%	14%
23RM3 A	23%	13%
24RM1 A	20%	43%

Please also release the adopted procedures from Panel A about the choice of the reviewers and the choice of the number of reviewers, e.g. a minimum of 3 reviewers and the inclusion on an additional reviewer up to a total of 5 if there is substantial disagreement between the first 3 reviewers.

Reviews are sourced so that we achieve a minimum of 2 quality reviews per application. From 24RM1 onwards we do not use applicant nominated reviewers.

We source reviewers with relevant and complementary expertise to cover the key areas of the proposal using a number of different methods including using Dimensions scientific database, team knowledge of the field, online tools (including google scholar, Gateway to research, Academia.net, PubMed) and suggestions provided by committee members.

We ensure applications have a minimum of two good quality reviews before progressing to panel assessment.

Whenever possible, in situations where there is a large discrepancy or disagreement between reviewers (as demonstrated by the score they assign) we try to source an additional reviewer. However, it is not always possible to source additional reviewers in every instance. From 24RM1 onwards we do not use applicant nominated reviewers.

The expectations of our reviewers can be found on our website: [How reviewers use the UKRI Funding Service – UKRI](#).¹

Please indicate the instructions the Panel uses to interpret the reviews (e.g. length of review, keywords etc.).

This is the guidance the panel receives in the Method of Working about interpreting reviews and assessing applications:

When assessing an application, we ask you to consider the application documentation, reviewer comments and applicant response as a collective whole, and to assess it against the criteria using your own knowledge and experience to reach a tensioned final score. It is important that you do not independently re-review the application, as the applicant will not have the opportunity to respond to any new comments. When consulting the reviews and assessing the applicant rebuttals, please focus upon the details of the reviewer comments rather than the score they provide.'

¹ <https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/how-to-apply/how-reviewers-use-the-ukri-funding-service/#:~:text=Carrying%20out%20your%20review,when%20carrying%20out%20your%20review.>
UK Research and Innovation, Polaris House, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1FL

Additionally, panel members are provided training as part of their induction into the pool of experts. More information about our panels and committees can be found on our website: [Committee and Pool membership – UKRI](#)²

Please indicate the weight system used to assign to each review on a given grant.

We ask that reviewers and panel members consider all scoring criteria but do not prescribe a weight system. As described in our panel guidance, we advise our panel members to focus on the content of reviews, and not the score in question.

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](#)³.

Yours sincerely,


Information Governance
Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
foi@ukri.org | dataprotection@ukri.org

² <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/bbsrc/board-and-panel-membership/research-committees/committee-and-pool-membership/>

³ <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>