

# Panel Meeting Guidance

## Contents

<b>Procedure.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1. Arranging a Meeting.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Discovery Science Moderating Panel meetings .....</b>	<b>2</b>
2.1 Discovery Science moderating panel.....	2
2.2 Composition.....	2
2.3 Domestic arrangements .....	2
2.4 Selection of Meeting members and Chairs.....	2
2.5 Inviting members and Chairs to meetings .....	4
2.6 Final list of Moderating Panel.....	4
2.7 Assigning introducers.....	4
2.8 Assigning Readers.....	5
2.9 Preparation for moderating meeting.....	6
2.9.1 Meeting papers .....	6
2.9.2 Weeding list .....	6
2.9.3 Pre-Scores.....	6
2.9.4 Adding and Inviting Introducers for pre-scores .....	6
2.9.5 Running order.....	7
2.9.6 Chair's brief.....	8
2.9.7 Record of the Meeting.....	8
<b>3. Research Programme Meetings.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. Studentship Competition Meetings.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>4.2 Obtaining Pre-scores .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5. Attending a Meeting .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5.1 Room layout and logistics.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5.2 Roles and Responsibilities.....</b>	<b>10</b>
5.2.1 Discovery Science .....	10
5.2.2 Research Programmes.....	11
5.2.3 Studentship Meetings.....	13
<b>6. Post-Meeting.....</b>	<b>13</b>
6.1 Feedback.....	13
6.2 Travel and Subsistence Claim Forms.....	18

## **Procedure**

### **1. Arranging a Meeting**

For Discovery Science meetings the grants team will deal with the room booking for the panel meeting and will book all refreshments. They will also be available on the day to collect panel members and other attendees from reception and take them to the room.

For research programmes HOST can carry out the same tasks.

The grants team can deal with all accommodation bookings and will arrange panel dinners when required.

As part of the call setup on Siebel a meeting will be automatically generated and proposals assigned to it when they are imported into Siebel. Additional meetings can also be requested if they are needed.

### **2. Discovery Science Moderating Panel meetings**

#### **2.1 Discovery Science moderating panel**

A discovery science moderating panel is an assembly of Peer Review College members who use the comments and gradings obtained from the referees (PRC and external), and the response from PIs to them (if appropriate, depending on scheme) to assess and assign a final grade to each proposal. After discussion, ranked lists of proposals are produced from each moderating meeting. The Director, Science and Innovation will make the final funding decision.

It should be noted that moderating panels do not make funding decisions, only recommendations to NERC.

#### **2.2 Composition**

Typically there will be up to 20 PRC members on a moderating panel, depending on the number of proposals to be considered and the breadth of expertise required to cover them, roughly made up of 50% core panel members and 50% non-core panel members. Each Panel member will “introduce” a number of proposals, giving a brief description of what the proposal is about, summarising the comments provided by the referees, and highlighting any problems to the rest of the panel.

#### **2.3 Domestic arrangements**

Dates for the meetings will be chosen a few months in advance. The grants team will book meeting rooms, lunches and teas/coffees and organise the accommodation for panel members and the panel dinner (if required).

#### **2.4 Selection of Meeting members and Chairs**

Each Programme Manager is responsible for choosing the members to attend the meeting for which they are responsible. Each panel has an allocated chair for each discovery science scheme.

What to do:

- Draw up a short list of potential members, it may be useful to have a list of each proposal title and any conflicts of interest (institutions, PRC members) associated with it, and write a few key words next to each one. Group the proposals into similar topic areas to see how many members may be needed for each area.
- Try to ensure each of the members are from different institutions (to avoid bias) if possible.
- Select members based on the science and institutions covered by the proposals, the expertise of the PRC members and demand from other meetings.
- As potential members are allocated, tick off which proposals they could “introduce”; this may help with ensuring that each area of science is represented at the meeting and to highlight which areas of science may need a few more PRC members.
- Although not a NERC policy, try and avoid selecting PRC members who are a PI or Co-I on a proposal being discussed at the meeting.
- If there are a lot of proposals from one organisation, try to avoid a member from that organisation.
- Finalise members with other PMs who are leading on the other panels. It is up to individual PMs to resolve any conflicts and to reach a compromise, based on the number of proposals that they would require the person in question for and the other PRC members at the meeting.
- The College Team should approve final membership lists before invitations are sent; this is to ensure that their availability/ meeting usage and suitability is thoroughly checked beforehand.

**N.B:** In an ideal world, the perfect membership would be selected, but unfortunately availability, available expertise, demand and conflicts of interest mean that this is not often possible. It is not realistic to expect each proposal to be introduced by an expert in that particular area; PMs should remember that PRC members have been trained and should be able to “introduce” proposals that are not necessarily in their science area, although this can be a problem if there are no high expertise reviews of a proposal. If expertise is required in a particular area and there is no-one suitable available from the PRC then it is possible to invite non-PRC members to attend panels. This should, however, be as a last resort and PRC members should be used wherever possible.

**N.B:** Some people find assigning introducers easier at this stage rather than coming back to it later.

For standard grants panel secretaries should identify and invite a number of core panel members up-front. This is to ensure that up to half of the panel is in place early whilst the core panel members still have availability. The remainder of the panel is then selected once the proposals have been received. If the core panel members which were initially selected are no longer appropriate then they do not have to be used as part of the final panel composition. Where this is the case the panel

secretary should contact the relevant panel member to explain why they are no longer needed.

## 2.5 Inviting members and Chairs to meetings

The panel Chair will have been made aware of the meeting dates by the College team.

Once the panel members have been approved by the College Team, the list should be emailed to the Chair for suggestions or amendments before members are invited. The PM will email panel members to invite them to the meeting.

If PRC members decline their invitation, alternatives may have to be selected. Let the College Team know who has declined and why (for performance monitoring). Alternative choices must be discussed with the College Team before approaching them.

## 2.6 Final list of Moderating Panel

Once their panel membership is finalised the PM should notify the grants team of the panel members (including their Contact PINs) and they will then add them as meeting participants in Siebel (SOP G2.2.F Add Meeting Participants).

Once finalised, send a list of members names and Contact PINs, as well as the date of the meeting to the College Team who will organise for them to be posted on the NERC website: <http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/assessment/panelmembership.asp>

## 2.7 Assigning introducers

The PM should now assign a 'lead' and second "introducer" to each proposal. These are members who will present each proposal at the meeting, starting the discussions by giving a brief description of what the proposal is about, summarising the comments provided by the referees, highlighting any issues to the rest of the members and suggesting a grade.

What to do:

- Aim to spread the workload as evenly as possible, within reason. Each member should introduce at least 3 proposals, and about 8 at the very most, depending on their relevance to the science areas and the total number of proposals being discussed within the panel. Try to ensure an even balance between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> introducer roles for members.
- The introducer should ideally be someone who is familiar with the area of science covered by the proposal.
- Do not use members with a conflict of interest. They will have to leave the room while the remaining members discuss the proposal. The same conflict of interest rules apply as when choosing referees.
- Do not use a member who was one of the initial College referees to introduce a proposal. They can be a Reader.
- Try to avoid members who have not attended a meeting before having to introduce one of the first few grants, so they can see how meetings are run first.
- Once you have allocated introducers you should send your running order to the grants team who will assign the introducers and readers (see below) for

each proposal on Siebel following procedures in SOP G2.2.J Select and Approve Introducers.

## 2.8 Assigning Readers

The PM should also assign additional readers to proposals to assist with the grading and discussion of proposals during the meeting. In an ideal world the readers would have expertise related to the proposal but this may not be possible in all cases. For Discovery Science two (2) additional readers should be selected.

What to do:

- Email a table to the members showing who is assigned to introduce and act as readers for each proposal, prompting them to respond as soon as possible with any conflicts of interest or problems. Proposals may then need to be re-allocated, as necessary. In reality members often read through the proposal and highlight any conflicts of interest a few days before the meeting, so be ready to reallocate at very short notice!
- Email the panel members an external Travel and Subsistence Claim form and the panel guidance. The guidance notes are updated every round and will be finalised by the scheme lead and then circulated to the other meeting secretaries.
- The members should be encouraged to:
  - 1) Stick closely to the definitions of science grades to ensure consistency across fields and moderating panels.
  - 2) Keep comments brief, summarising the strengths and the weaknesses of the project, the referee's comments and the response from the PI.
  - 3) Consider whether the referees have identified the important points and whether the PIs have responded accordingly.
  - 4) Make their own analysis and judgement of the project based on the above.
  - 5) Not be misled by the referees grades; they frequently do not reflect their comments.
  - 6) Not be over influenced by the cost - we are looking for excellence in science and this should be the dominant criterion.
  - 7) Assess whether the resources requested are well- justified and necessary to fulfill the aims of the project
  - 8) Read as many proposals as possible, not just those they are introducing.

If an Introducer is no longer able to introduce a proposal(s), the PM responsible for the meeting should reassign another Introducer to the Proposal and then let the grants team know so that they can update Siebel following the procedures in SOP G2.2.R Reassign Introducer. This does not remove the name of the Introducer from the meeting but just reassigns responsibilities.

## 2.9 Preparation for moderating meeting

### 2.9.1 Meeting papers

The grants team are responsible for preparing the meeting papers for the panel meeting. These are generated by running an eVolume on Siebel and are made available electronically to panel members (hard copies are no longer available).

The meeting papers include:

1. The proposals
2. All referee comments and grades, and the PIs response to each referee comment

Panel members who have a conflict of interest with a particular proposal will have had the relevant papers removed from their eVolume.

### 2.9.2 Weeding list

Before the eVolume is generated, the PM should provide the grants team with a weeding list. This is a table showing who has a conflict of interest for each proposal. It will be used for weeding the meeting papers. The PM will have compiled this information when assigning introducers and readers (see 2.8)

If it is not obvious, or immediately apparent, members must inform the PM acting as Secretary to the meeting, or the Chair, of the exact nature of their conflict of interest.

### 2.9.3 Pre-Scores

For standard grants not all proposals will be discussed in detail at the moderating panel meeting and NERC will ask introducers to submit scores for Research Excellence (pre-scores) prior to the meeting and these will be used to prioritise proposals for discussion.

Once the final eVolume has been produced, panel members should be emailed a list of all the proposals showing who has been assigned to act as introducers and readers for each proposal. Note that readers are not required to submit pre-scores. Introducers should be added and invited on Siebel using the process below to enable them to submit their pre-scores through Je-S.

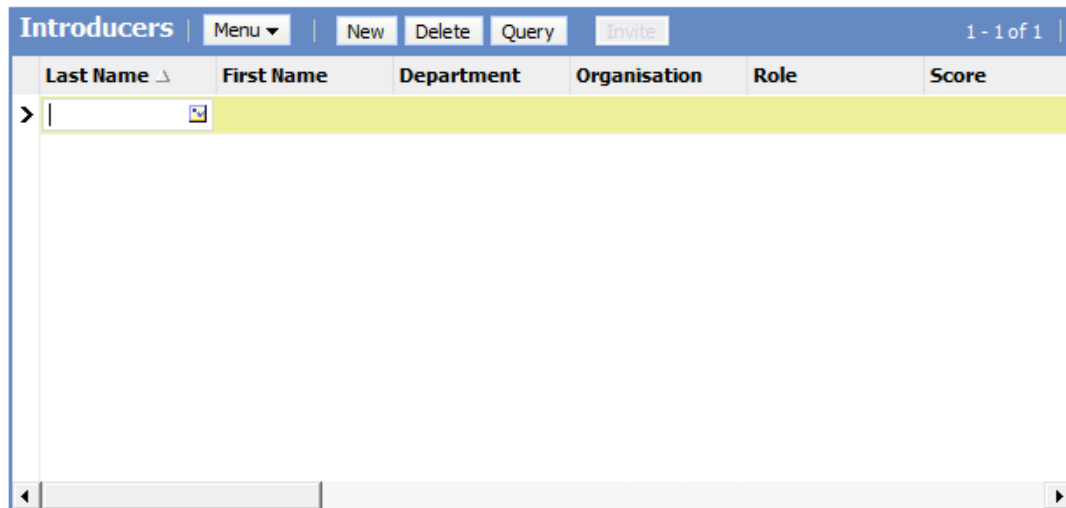
The college team are responsible for collating the submitted pre-scores and chasing any panel members who do not submit them on time. Once the pre-scores have been collated a recommendation for which proposals should be discussed at the meeting will be sent by the college team to the panel chair for final agreement.

### 2.9.4 Adding and Inviting Introducers for pre-scores

The grants team will add and invite the introducers on Siebel.

To add Introducers, go into the 'Introducer Detail' tab in the meeting. You should then see four boxes on the lower half of the screen – All Grants, Introducers, Conflicts of Interest and Introducer Summary.

Ensure that the correct grant is highlighted. Introducers can then be added to the Introducers box. Click 'New', and then click on the button under 'Last Name'. This will bring up a list of all of the meeting participants and you can then select the introducer.



The screenshot shows a window titled 'Introducers' with a menu bar containing 'Menu', 'New', 'Delete', 'Query', and 'Invite'. Below the menu bar is a table with the following columns: 'Last Name', 'First Name', 'Department', 'Organisation', 'Role', and 'Score'. The 'Last Name' column is highlighted in yellow. A search icon is visible in the first row of the table. The table is currently empty, and the status '1 - 1 of 1' is displayed in the top right corner.

Scroll along and amend the 'Assessment Due Date' to the required pre-scores due date.

Once the introducer has been added, amend the status from Selected to Approved.

Once you have added all of your introducers you can then invite them. Highlight the appropriate row, and then click the Invite button (which should not be greyed out). This should then invite the introducer via Je-S. You only need to invite each introducer once, as Siebel should pull together all of the introducer requests for that person. The reviewer's status should then change to Invited.

DO NOT manually change the introducer's status from Approved to Invited. This is only done for manual requests and if you do this, an invitation will not go out via Je-S.

### 2.9.5 Running order

Once a final agreement has been made on which grants will be discussed at the meeting a revised running order (with the grants not being discussed greyed out) should be sent to the panel.

It is useful for each member to have a copy of the running order to indicate which member is introducing which proposal, conflicts of interest amongst the participants, any other issues to be highlighted etc. It can also be used to make notes on and as an *aide memoire* when they come to ranking at the end. This should be e-mailed to the members before the meeting and a copy can be left on the meeting table for each member. There is a specimen of a moderating panel running order.

#### 2.9.6 Chair's brief

The PM will brief the Chair before the meeting, highlighting specific issues, reminding them to mention the NERC conflict of interest policy, confidentiality etc.

To ensure consistency, PMs should agree amongst themselves and with the scheme lead any key issues that should be included in the brief. The scheme lead will usually circulate a draft Chairs brief to the panel secretaries.

#### 2.9.7 Record of the Meeting

A funding meeting spreadsheet will be created ahead of the meeting that can be used to keep a running total of allocated funds. The spreadsheet will be managed by the Grants Team member attending the meeting and will serve as the record of the meeting. It should include assessment of the science, new conflicts of interest declared in the meeting and funding cuts that were agreed in the meeting. The funding meeting spreadsheet will be stored in the funding round file in ERMS. The funding meeting spreadsheet should be the basis for the .csv file of meeting outcomes (decision, score, ranking) that the grants team will upload onto Siebel. (SOP G2.2.O Manage Outcome).

### 3. Research Programme Meetings

3.1 Research Programmes may decide to have a sift stage in cases of high volume of proposals received eg. ESPA. The programme may also opt for an outline bid stage when anticipating large calls or when the science is quite broad and recommendations from the outline moderating meeting will help provide a steer to bids invited to submit their full proposal. For Outline proposals, the Programme Executive Board (PEB), depending on the nature of the call, may review outline proposals with the Chair and/or Members of the Programme Advisory Body(ies). In cases where the outline proposals need rigorous scientific scrutiny, an assessment meeting will be set up with members selected according to their expertise. This meeting is likely to be separate from, and give advice to the PEB. Using the same assessment criteria for full proposals, the review meeting will grade proposals according to potential scientific excellence and fit to programme priorities and will recommend to NERC which proposals should be invited to submit full bids. At the outline bid stage, the meeting may identify changes to proposals to strengthen their ability to deliver the programme's priorities, and changes may include cuts, additions and mergers.

3.2 For Full proposals, a Moderating Panel Meeting will be set up by the Programme Administrator, under the advisement/approval of the PEB. Selection of Panel Chair and members will be based on expertise and candidates may come from the Peer Review College, the Programme Advisory Body, co-funders, stakeholders and others with the scientific expertise to assess proposals. If the Chair has a conflict of interest with any of the proposals a Deputy Chair should be identified to Chair for those proposals. If the PM wishes to approach PRC members to be on the panel the Programme Administrator should liaise with the College Team to check that the PRC member can be invited. It is good practice to try and have a couple of PRC members on the panel.



3.3 The moderating/assessment meeting will be convened as a one-off with the Chair chosen by the PEB.

3.4 For large funding rounds, it is sometimes necessary to schedule two-day meetings (or sometimes 3-4 days for very large calls such as ESPA). If the membership of the meeting is not the same for all meeting days, care must be taken to ensure comparable grading. For this reason it is recommended that the first few proposals on the second day are introduced by members who were also present on the first day.

3.5 When selecting members:

- Try to ensure that each member is from a different institution (to avoid bias) if possible
- Although not NERC policy, try to avoid selecting individuals who are PI or Co-I on an proposal being discussed at the meeting

3.6 Once the panel composition has been finalised the same processes as for Discovery Science should be followed.

3.7 For large, collaborative proposals it is usual to invite each proposal to send two representatives (usually the PI and a CoI) to the meeting, to give a presentation on their proposal and answer questions from the panel (this is analogous to the interview stage for Large Grants)

#### **4. Studentship Competition Meetings**

4.1 Depending on the nature of the competition the panel composition could be made up of either PRC members or non-PRC members e.g. members of the NERC Training Advisory Group. Once selected the pre-meeting process is the same as for grants meetings.

##### **4.2 Obtaining Pre-scores**

Introducers may be asked to send their pre-scores into the PM prior to the meeting – generally at least a day before, so the scores can be combined and can inform the Chair in terms of which proposals will need little discussion (scoring very low – unfundable, or very high – well into funding frame) or more discussion (on funding borderline or diverse scores).

#### **5. Attending a Meeting**

##### **5.1 Room layout and logistics**

Most panel meetings will be held in NERC Swindon Office.

If required boards can be set up with the Research Excellence scores (0-10). This will be used for the ranking of the proposals at the end of the meeting.

For Research Programmes, depending on accessibility and arrangements with partners, meetings may be held outside of Swindon, usually London.

## 5.2 Roles and Responsibilities

### 5.2.1 Discovery Science

#### Roles and Attendance

The PM acts as Secretary to the meeting and is responsible for taking notes of the final agreed grades and any issues that arise, answering questions relating to reviewing, and ensuring that the meeting runs smoothly. A member of the Grants Team is also present to answer questions on NERC policy.

The PM and Grants Team representative are responsible for keeping track of the finances in general, including any cuts made, recording the scores and answering questions on standard rules. The Grants Team representative will also have cards for each grant number and will mark the scores on these as the meeting progresses. They will put these cards on the board at the end of the meeting for ranking.

Other members of staff, especially new PMs may attend for part of the meeting. They can help with fetching panel members with conflicts of interest from outside of the room.

#### Start of the meeting

The Grants Team representative will open the meeting by welcoming the members and thanking them for their help. The Chair will then brief the members on their role and remind them of confidentiality and conflicts of interest policy, etc.

#### Meeting proceedings

The proposals will usually be discussed in numerical order, each one being introduced by two panel members.

During the meeting, the chair will invite the introducers of proposals that have been prioritised according to the pre-scores to lead the discussion by summarising their comments and making reference to reviewers' comments and any PI responses. The discussion will then be opened up to the panel by the chair and a final score for Research Excellence agreed. Panel members are asked NOT to introduce information to the discussion that has not been previously raised by the reviewers, unless a serious issue has been identified. This is primarily because the applicant will not have had an opportunity to respond to the additional information, and its introduction may raise serious risks of prejudicing the decision made by the panel. It also ensures that all proposals are treated on an equal basis.

The participants will agree on the final score for the science excellence of the proposal and for any proposals in the funding zone they will make any recommendations for cuts (e.g. equipment, staff time) and make a final decision on whether the pathways to impact is appropriate.

The PM and the Grants Team representative should both keep a note of all cuts, recommendations and scores for each proposal, and compare notes afterwards to ensure consistency.

Members/Chairs with a conflict of interest will be asked to leave the room during the discussion of the proposal and, if a Co-I or PI, during the ranking of their proposal at the end. They may only remain at the discretion of the Chair to comment on matters of fact.

#### Ranking of proposals

Based on the reviewers' assessments and the applicant's response to any issues raised, the meeting must assign a Research Excellence grade of between 0 and 10 (highest) to each proposal. The PM places the cards for each proposal under the Research Excellence score (0-10) headings. Those scored 7-10 must be ranked. Any proposals where the PI or Co-I is present on the Panel are not ranked until the very end, when they leave the room. Links to the moderating panel guidance documents for the Discovery Science schemes can be found on the [NERC website](#).

The Chair then closes the meeting.

#### End of the meeting

The first introducer is responsible for providing the consolidated panel feedback for each proposal discussed during the meeting. This should be provided to the PM on the template feedback form within one week of the meeting.

### 5.2.2 Research Programmes

#### Roles and Attendance

The panel will have a Chair chosen by the PEB (or the Executive for small programmes without a full PEB composition) and a Meeting Secretary (Programme Administrator) who is responsible for taking notes to provide feedback for applicants and ensuring that the meeting runs smoothly.

#### Meeting Proceedings

The running order of the day will be specific to each meeting but the following paragraphs could provide guidance on roles and responsibilities at the meeting.

Guidance on Research Programmes panel meetings can be found on the [NERC website](#).

Given the usual fierce competition for funds, there is little value in members engaging in lengthy discussion and debate on proposals unlikely to be funded. Discussion should, therefore, concentrate on:

- proposals in the funding frame; ie. those graded 7 – 10
- proposals where there is disagreement
- proposals at grade boundaries.

During the meeting, the chair will invite the introducers to lead the discussion by summarising their comments and making reference to reviewers' comments and any PI responses. The discussion will then be opened up to the panel by the Chair and an overall grade for Excellence agreed. Where a peer review stage has been held,

panel members are asked NOT to introduce information to the discussion that has not been previously raised by the reviewers, unless a serious issue has been identified. This is primarily because the applicant will not have had an opportunity to respond to the additional information, and its introduction may raise serious risks of prejudicing the decision made by the panel. It also ensures that all proposals are treated on an equal basis.

The panel must assign an Excellence grade of between 0 and 10 (highest) to each proposal. The panel must also assign a Fit to Scheme score of between 0 and 6 which takes into account the fitness of the proposed research to the objectives and requirements of the particular Research Programme as outlined in the relevant Announcement of Opportunity. The panel reserves the right to assign a 0 for Excellence if the proposal in question fails to fit the objectives and requirements of the Programme. Thus in effect, the proposal is rejected.

For all proposals graded within the funding frame the panel must agree whether or not the Pathways to Impact is acceptable.

The meeting participants are also asked to identify any costs not specifically justified in the research proposal. The panel may recommend a change in the funds requested in individual projects but must support such decisions with sufficient explanation to allow the Programme Administrator to provide constructive feedback to applicants. When major funding cuts are imposed, the objectives that can be achieved within the new limit must be agreed with the applicant before an award can be made.

Members/Chairs with a conflict of interest should leave the room during the discussion of the proposal.

### Ranking

Once all proposals have been graded, the panel will be asked to produce a list of proposals ranked in funding priority order (It is not necessary to rank proposals that lie outside the funding frame). In the assessment of Research Programme grant proposals the primary criteria are Excellence and Fit to Scheme.

The panel is then asked to decide which proposals to recommend for funding, taking into account the total amount of funding allocated to the current funding round.

### RO Amendments

Exceptionally, the panel may recommend deferring a final funding recommendation on a proposal. This option should be reserved for proposals where there is a strong strategic fit to the Programme Science Plan, and the science is generally excellent, but clarification/revision of a specific element is required. This recommendation will be passed on by the Programme Administrator to the Programme Executive Board for decision.

### Financial Monitoring

The Programme Administrator is responsible for keeping track of the finances in general, including any cuts made, recording the scores and answering questions on NERC policy.

### End of the meeting

The first introducer is responsible for providing the consolidated panel feedback for each proposal discussed during the meeting. This should be provided to the PM on the template feedback form within one week of the meeting.

## 5.2.3 Studentship Meetings

### Start of the Meeting

A member of NERC will open the meeting by welcoming the participants and thanking them for their help. They may also tell the members how many studentships are likely to be funded. The Chair will then brief the members on their role and remind them of confidentiality and conflicts of interest policy, etc.

### Meeting Proceedings

The proposals will be discussed in numerical order, each one being introduced by two members, who may have previously sent in pre-scores to the RC officer. Members will be asked to state their recommended scores first, and if the scores do not agree or if they are over a certain threshold (determined prior to the meeting from the pre-scores), the proposal will then be discussed. Unless there is a contentious issue, there is not sufficient time to discuss proposals scored below the threshold, so the agreed score is just recorded. The members will agree on the final score for the proposal.

Once the proposals have been scored, the Meeting Secretary displays the final scores in a spreadsheet (through a data projector) and the participants focus on ranking those proposals which are at the borderline of the funding frame. The top few proposals which are well in the funding frame can just be ranked using the score (with differentiation within the score not being required). The Meeting Secretary must capture all discussions surrounding the proposals to ensure that they have enough detail on each proposal to give constructive and accurate feedback to each applicant, if requested. Points of confusion should be clarified with the members/Chair at the time (or by e-mail or phone if issues require clarification afterwards).

Members/Chairs with a conflict of interest should leave the room during the discussion of the proposal and if they are an applicant then also during the ranking of their proposal at the end.

## **6. Post-Meeting**

### 6.1 Feedback

Previously feedback letters were produced by PMs following panel meetings. Feedback should now be provided to applicants and their ROs via Siebel by adding a feedback note.

Previously introducers completed introducer forms which were then used by the panel secretary to formulate the feedback letter. We are now putting the onus on the lead introducer to provide consolidated feedback on behalf of the panel as a whole. It is the

responsibility of the first introducer for each proposal to provide a summary of the **panel's** discussion of the proposal as feedback to the applicant(s) and as a record of the justification for the panel scores and decisions.

The feedback form is provided to panel members when the panel guidance and other documents are sent out to the panel. Feedback forms only need to be completed for proposals that are discussed at panel. For Standard and New Investigator grants that are rejected following the pre-score stage or Fellowship applicants rejected at the sift stage feedback forms do not need to be completed. For these proposals a new general note of type 'Feedback' should be added using text appropriate to the scheme (see examples below). Once the feedback note has been added the 'shared' box also needs to be ticked. When the proposal is rejected the feedback will appear in the rejection email.

Following the panel meeting the lead introducer should return the completed feedback form to the panel secretary within one week of the meeting. It is the responsibility of the lead introducer to consult with the second introducer, readers and other panel members, if necessary, when completing the feedback form. For Discovery Science meeting fees will be withheld until panel members have returned all their completed feedback forms.

The consolidated feedback should be added, by the panel secretary, as a new general note of type 'Feedback' in the format provided below. Once the feedback note has been added the 'shared' box also needs to be ticked. The consolidated feedback will be provided to the applicant and RO once a decision on the proposal has been made on Siebel. It will be included in the reject/approval email. When adding the feedback note to Siebel the panel secretary should check the layout and wording of the feedback e.g. to make sure it is not simply a list of strengths and weaknesses and gives the context to the key factors that led to the proposal getting the score it did. For joint proposals feedback notes should be added to the component proposals as well as the lead.

For standard and NI proposals the Peer Review Administrators are responsible for adding the feedback notes for those proposals that did not get discussed at the panel meeting.

The Peer Review Administrators should save the feedback form to the appropriate grant record in Siebel as a document of type 'Introducer Comments'.

### **Text to add to feedback note for Standard/NI proposals rejected at the pre-score stage:**

Your proposal received a final excellence score of:

See

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/howtoapply/forms/standardandniguide.pdf> for score definitions.

When all decisions have been finalised the full results including the proposal rank order and where the funding cut-off fell are published at:

<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/howtoapply/awards/>

All proposals are assigned to two panel member introducers and prior to the moderating panel meeting they submit pre-meeting scores for Excellence based upon their moderation of the reviews and PI response. Introducers are not asked to provide any comments to feedback to applicants at this stage. To focus the efforts of the panel on competitive proposals, those proposals which receive two consistently low pre-scores are not discussed. The decision not to discuss a proposal is approved by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the panel. Your proposal fell into this category, it was rejected without discussion and as a result no further feedback comments are available.

**Additional text that should could be used to help deal with further queries relating to proposals rejected at the pre-score stage:**

As part of the pre-scores process panel members acting as introducers are not asked to provide any comments to feedback to applicants. Their role is purely to moderate the reviewer comments and PI response and based on their knowledge of the NERC excellence assessment criteria provide the appropriate score, no further assessment on the proposal is carried out at this stage. Feedback that is provided to other proposals is based on the content of the panel discussion only.

The pre-score process has been introduced based on advice from the community and represents a step forward from NERCs previous assessment system where up to 50% of proposals were rejected based on the reviewer scores and comments only with no oversight by the moderating panel. Now two introducers and the panel chairs make the decision to reject proposals without further discussion and feedback. The Standard Grant scheme is extremely competitive, the success rate for the last call was XX%, in this context proposals considered 'good' are not competitive enough for further consideration.

**Text to use for feedback note post-panel meeting for Standard/NI/Large Grant proposals:**

Panel Score for Research Excellence (0 - 10):

*ADD COMMENTS FROM FEEDBACK FORM ON RESEARCH EXCELLENCE*

Panel Score for Pathways to Impact (Acceptable/Unacceptable):

*ADD COMMENTS FROM FEEDBACK FORM ON PATHWAYS TO IMPACT*

*INSERT ANY OTHER COMMENTS MADE BY THE PANEL ON RESOURCES ETC WHICH HAVE BEEN DETAILED ON THE FEEDBACK FORM*

This feedback is provided in good faith and represents the views of the XXXX Panel only. NERC is not in a position to provide any further comments on proposals or justify Panel comments.

**Text to use for feedback note post-panel meeting for Strategic Research Programmes:**

Panel Score for Research Excellence (0 - 10):

*ADD COMMENTS FROM FEEDBACK FORM ON RESEARCH EXCELLENCE*

Panel Score for Fit to Scheme – Scientific Objectives (0 – 6):

*ADD COMMENTS FROM FEEDBACK FORM ON FIT TO SCHEME – SCIENTIFIC OBJECTIVES*

Panel Score for Fit to Scheme – Non-Scientific Objectives (0 – 6):

*ADD COMMENTS FROM FEEDBACK FORM ON FIT TO SCHEME – NON-SCIENTIFIC OBJECTIVES*

Panel Score for Pathways to Impact (Acceptable/Unacceptable):

*ADD COMMENTS FROM FEEDBACK FORM ON PATHWAYS TO IMPACT*

*INSERT ANY OTHER COMMENTS MADE BY THE PANEL ON RESOURCES ETC WHICH HAVE BEEN DETAILED ON THE FEEDBACK FORM*

This feedback is provided in good faith and represents the views of the XXXX Panel only. NERC is not in a position to provide any further comments on proposals or justify Panel comments.

**Text to use for feedback note post-sift meeting for Fellowships:**

Your proposal was not shortlisted for further consideration by the Fellowship Sift Panel. The Sift Panel guidance is available at:  
<http://www.nerc.ac.uk/funding/application/howtoapply/forms/irfsiftguidance.pdf>.

The anonymous peer review comments on your proposal will be made available in your Je-S account. You will be sent an automated e-mail when the comments are ready, which will be in approximately 1-2 days. These comments are 'Read Only' and no response is required.

No further Panel feedback is available. NERC is not in a position to provide any further comments on proposals or the Panel decision.

**Text to use for feedback note post-panel meeting for Fellowships (for unsuccessful candidates):**



The anonymous peer review comments on your proposal will be made available in your Je-S account. You will be sent an automated e-mail when the comments are ready, which will be in approximately 1-2 days. These comments are 'Read Only' and no response is required.

The panel feedback below should be read in conjunction with the peer review comments.

Panel Score for Research Leadership Potential (0 – 10):

*ADD COMMENTS FROM FEEDBACK FORM ON THE SUITABILITY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE RESEARCH EXCELLENCE*

Panel Score for Pathways to Impact (Acceptable/Unacceptable):

*ADD COMMENTS FROM FEEDBACK FORM ON PATHWAYS TO IMPACT*

*INSERT ANY OTHER COMMENTS MADE BY THE PANEL ON RESOURCES ETC WHICH HAVE BEEN DETAILED ON THE FEEDBACK FORM*

This feedback is provided in good faith and represents the views of the XXXX Panel only. NERC is not in a position to provide any further comments on proposals or justify Panel comments.

**Text to use for feedback note post-panel meeting for Fellowships (for successful candidates):**

The anonymous peer review comments on your proposal will be emailed to you separately and should be available within the next few weeks.

The panel feedback below should be read in conjunction with the peer review comments.

Panel Score for Research Leadership Potential (0 – 10):

*ADD COMMENTS FROM FEEDBACK FORM ON THE SUITABILITY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE RESEARCH EXCELLENCE*

Panel Score for Pathways to Impact (Acceptable/Unacceptable):

*ADD COMMENTS FROM FEEDBACK FORM ON PATHWAYS TO IMPACT*

*INSERT ANY OTHER COMMENTS MADE BY THE PANEL ON RESOURCES ETC WHICH HAVE BEEN DETAILED ON THE FEEDBACK FORM*

This feedback is provided in good faith and represents the views of the XXXX Panel only. NERC is not in a position to provide any further comments on proposals or justify Panel comments.

## 6.2 Travel and Subsistence Claim Forms

T&S claim forms should be passed to the grants team for processing.

When T&S claims are received you need to ensure that they have been signed by the claimant and that no ineligible costs e.g. first class travel have been included. Once this has been checked the forms need to be signed by a NERC officer in the 'Authorisation-Approver' box and each individual item coded. For discovery science the following codes should be used NE-C100-60100-XXXX-0000-0000

where the xxxx can be as follows:

- 2301: Accommodation
- 2302: Subsistence
- 2303: Mileage
- 2304: Public Transport
- 2305: Flights

Once the form has been completed it should be scanned.

The T&S form then needs to be submitted to UKSBS via Oracle. Once logged into Oracle you need to click on 'iSupport Employee User' and then select 'Create Service Request'. Then under the expenses area you should select 'Non-employee expenses' which will then bring up the new service request. Under problem type you should select 'Submit non-employee expense claim' and under problem summary put something like 'T&S Claim for XXXXX for attendance of NERC panel meeting'. When you go through to the second screen you have the option of attaching a document and it is here that you should attach your scanned version of the T&S claim. You should also list the name/s of the people whose T&S you are submitting. Once you have submitted your service request you will receive a service request number. You should make a note of this in case you have to contact UKSBS with any queries relating to payment of the claim. Please note that it can often take several weeks for a payment to be processed.