



[REDACTED]

20 May 2025

Dear [REDACTED],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2025/00405

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 13 April, and subsequent clarification received on the 24 April, in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I would like to request the latest quinquennial or the institute review, whichever takes place, by BBSRC or UKRI of the Quadram Institute.

Your clarification:

Thank you for your response and for explaining what information is available and what isn't. I was hoping BBSRC-funded research institutes such as the Quadram Institute would have undergone quinquennial or institute reviews, and there would be information available similar to, for example, the quinquennial review of The Alan Turing Institute. (<https://www.ukri.org/publications/quinquennial-review-of-the-alan-turing-institute/>).

From your response, I understand that BBSRC doesn't hold such information for the Quadram Institute, as no such review has ever taken place.

I am not interested in the strategic programme grant application made by the Quadram Institute as part of the institute assessment exercise. However, I would like to request any feedback that was given to the Quadram Institute at the latest institute assessment exercise.

Our response:

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

As explained in our clarification request, the [Quadram Institute](#)¹ is a partnership bringing together four partners; the University of East Anglia, the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) and Quadram Institute Bioscience.

The Quadram Institute Bioscience applied for funding from BBSRC to cover a five-year period, which is referred to as an Institute Assessment Exercise (IAE). This IAE is relevant to one of the four partners and not the Quadram Institute partnership as a whole. We have therefore interpreted your request to be for *the feedback that was given to Quadram Institute Bioscience in response to the latest IAE*, as this information is not held in relation to the Quadram Institute partnership.

We have determined that this information falls under Section 41 of the FOIA, information provided in confidence. As research organisations submit funding applications in confidence, we consider that their applications and feedback produced as part of the assessment process are exempt under Section 41 of the FOIA.

¹ <https://quadram.ac.uk/about/governance/>

To explain further, organisations apply for funding in confidence with the expectation that their bid information, including related data, intellectual property and application documents, will be treated in confidence by any individuals or organisations involved in the assessment process. As feedback is part of the assessment process, there is an expectation that this will also remain confidential. These expectations are set out in the [UKRI principles of assessment and decision making](#)², as well as in the 'Confidentiality' section of [Use of Grant Proposal & Training Grant information addendum](#)³. Feedback contains and refers to confidential information which was provided by the organisation in confidence as part of their application.

Furthermore, applications are reviewed and feedback provided by an independent expert Institute Assessment Panel (IAP), which is established for each applying institute. IAP members are chosen for their expertise in areas of science covered by the institute and in leading large programmes of research, as well as driving capability, connectivity or improving research culture as highlighted in the [BBSRC Institute Strategy](#)⁴. For the 2022 IAE, each IAP included representation from international academics and industry/users and appointments were approved by the BBSRC Appointments Board, taking into account EDI considerations.

There is a duty and expectation of confidence in that feedback will only be provided to the applying organisation, which is underpinned by the expectation of panel members around how information is managed. This enables panel members to express their opinions freely. Both applying organisations and assessors therefore took part in the IAE on the clear basis and understanding that these expectations of confidentiality would be maintained during and after the completion of the IAE.

We therefore conclude, that if the requested information was released, it would result in an actionable breach of confidentiality. Section 41 is an absolute exemption and does not require a public interest test.

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:

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](#)⁵.

Yours sincerely,


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

² <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-principles-of-assessment-and-decision-making/>

³ <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/UKRI-310321-Use-of-grant-proposal-and-training-grant-information-addendum-V2.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/BBSRC-120721-InstituteStrategy.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target>