

BIOSCIENCE FOR INDUSTRY STRATEGY PANEL

MEETING: 2 MARCH 2009

SUBJECT: CHANGES TO BBSRC STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

SUMMARY

In October 2008, BBSRC's Research Committees were restructured. These Committees assess responsive mode funding applications and in order to make the assessment process more flexible and multidisciplinary, the peer review process and the Committee's structure was revised. BBSRC's remit and commitment to excellent science remains unchanged, and the new structure is intended to enhance the organisation's ability to support cutting-edge research. A review of the structural changes to the Committees and peer review process can be found in **ANNEX 1**.

ANNEXES

Annex 1 Review of Changes to BBSRC Research Committees

ACTION

The Panel is invited to **NOTE** the changes to BBSRC structures and processes.

Innovation and Skills Group
March 2009

BBSRC Research Committees

In Autumn 2008, BBSRC responsive mode Research Committees were revised. The Research Committees will be the major vehicle to deliver BBSRC's policies, and aim to deliver excellent science with impact, including more multi- and inter-disciplinary and strategically-focused science.

The overall remit of BBSRC remains unchanged. The remit is covered by four Research Committees: A, B, C, and D. These Committees do not have individual remits, but examples of the science areas covered by the four Committees are available at <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/grants/areas.html>.

Each Committee has a core membership that is complemented by additional members for each meeting, who will be assigned from the BBSRC Pool of Experts once the list of applications for consideration is known. These additional members will ensure appropriate expertise to assess all the applications being considered is present at the meeting. The ratio of Core to Pool members at each meeting will vary; however, the number of Core members will always exceed the number of Pool members. Core and Pool members are equally valued by BBSRC. In order to be open and transparent, BBSRC will publish the composition of each Committee on the BBSRC website following each meeting.

Under the new structure, the principles of the peer review process remain unchanged; applications are first assessed by referees and the applicant has the opportunity to respond to these comments. The applications are then assessed by a Research Committee, and a ranked list of applications is produced. The criteria for peer review remain unchanged; referees and the Committees are asked to consider scientific excellence, economic and social impact, cost effectiveness, investment in people and skills, timeliness and promise, industrial/stakeholder relevance, relevance to BBSRC strategy, and are asked to comment on animal usage (where applicable), ethical and social concerns, and data sharing.

BBSRC has always used responsive mode as one way to deliver strategic priorities. Information about the strategic priorities (research and policy) that apply to all areas of BBSRC funding is available at <http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/priorities.html>. Excellence in science remains the key assessment criterion. The Research Committees will view research in the priority areas favourably, provided the research is scientifically excellent. BBSRC will monitor delivery of the research and policy priorities, this evaluation will be an indicator of the effectiveness of the new Committee structure.

For enquiries about the peer review process or the Research Committees, please contact the Science Delivery Managers :

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