



Open Research Area Scheme Criteria for Proposal Assessment

Proposals to the ORA scheme will be assessed according to the criteria listed below. This text is taken directly from the guidance document provided to peer reviewers and panel assessors.

1. **The originality and potential contribution to new knowledge, practice, theory and/or methodology;**
 - Is the proposed research likely to make an original and significant contribution to theory, methods or knowledge?
 - Is there similar/related work not mentioned in the proposal of which the applicant(s) should be aware? Please specify.

2. **The appropriateness of the research design, work plan, research team;**
 - Does the proposal have clear conceptual and theoretical foundations?
 - Are the research methods and framework for analysis suitable to the aims and objectives; are they clearly defined, rigorous and feasible?
 - How innovative is the research methodology?
 - Is the timescale and scheduling of the work appropriate and realistic?
 - Are the qualifications and competencies of the participating researchers to conduct the research clear and appropriate to the research? Relevant preliminary work and related previous publications should be of high quality.
 - Is the joint working well identified? Have the applicants demonstrated clearly the added value of the international collaboration?
 - Is the research feasible? The research should be clearly demonstrated as logistically feasible in terms of both reasonable access being assured to any necessary data, research materials and infrastructure, and the resource plan and funding request for these, including the staffing requirement proposed, being reasonable to meet them.

3. **The costings and value for money of the research;**

In looking at value-for-money it would be helpful if you could focus on the following issues:

 - **Overall Value for Money**
 - Is the research proposed overall good value-for-money for the total cost involved? The key issue here is whether the core potential of the research, and the likely contribution to the advancement of knowledge, understanding and/or methodology which it will make, either narrowly within its particular focus, or more broadly across its particular discipline or the sciences more generally, is likely to be sufficient to justify the costs involved.
 - **Individual Aspects of resourcing the Proposal**
 - Are the specific funding requests in the following areas essential/sufficient for the proper conduct of the research proposed?
 - The overall length of time for the project; the amount of time to be devoted to it project by the proposed principal and co-investigators, and their level.

- The amount of time for research, technical and support staff and the level of appointment for such staff
- The equipment, consumables and other directly incurred costs such as travel and subsistence
- Costs of collecting, establishing, providing or organizing the necessary data and research materials
- The costs of research dissemination.
- Access to institutional research facilities
- **Areas where you should not comment**
The four agencies participating in the ORA scheme have different rules for which research costs are allowed and appropriate. You should therefore not comment on difference in cost structures between national partners. Some costs are for decision as to true economic cost between Research Councils and other relevant bodies. You should not comment therefore upon the level of estate costs in different institutions; the level of indirect costs; charging rates of institutional or other research facilities which are not open market provisions; nor on specific salary levels in individual institutions.

4. Any ethical issues involved?

- Are any ethical issues raised by the proposed research addressed appropriately and comprehensively by the research proposal and the project design?
- Have applicants made appropriate plans for data storage and providing access to data for other researchers?

5. Communication plans and likely impact of the work?

- Is the planned output of the research appropriate; have the applicants made adequate plans to disseminate the results of the research?
- Where relevant, have appropriate arrangements been made for engaging potential users of the research at relevant stages of the project?
- Is the research likely to have significant impact beyond the academic community?