Approaching the Review Process and Panel Interview

Reflections based on experiences

Egrove Park, Oxford 20-21st January 2016
• Need for a plan to produce the proposal with a timeline

• Build on an understanding of the call and its requirements

• Include time to:
  
  o Make and engage the appropriate connections;
  
  o Prepare and seek advice and feedback;
  
  o Review and revise; and
  
  o Submit – appropriate support

• Recognise the multiple pulls on your time
Engagement

Clearly identify who are the stakeholders and collaborators – roles within the process and delivery need to verified with them

• Understanding (mapping) stakeholders and beneficiaries – nature and scope and linking to pathways to impacts (PTI)

Engage early to seek their support

Who are the others that you need to engage in the development of your proposal and when

• Peers, reviewers (clearly identify why they are being asked to review)
• Research service advisors, research council contacts
• Departmental leads
Demonstrate a clear understanding of the call

Read the specification – requirements and criteria

• Organise your thoughts and the information to be provided – clear, succinct and logical storyline

• Key messages of your offer – storyline to emphasise these

Demonstrate how your offer is relevant

• Recognise the nature of the review process

• Do not try to stretch to fit

• Do not try to throw everything into the offer - relevance
Demonstrate ambition and innovation

Clearly reflect ambition and innovation in your proposal - storyline and key messages

Flexibility – emerging and quickly evolving areas of research and of networks

• How will you address new challenges and the evolving area of research and impacts?

Demonstrate how you will grow and learn, including working with others

• Particularly important in areas where there may be a weakness
• Also need to consider research and financial management, risk management

• Do not leave PTI to the end – use to inform the design of the research
  • Consider aspects and mechanisms to enhance impacts from beneficiaries perspective – where and how you will achieve the best outcome in relation to the research being proposed, and not just to where it is most popular.
  • PTI for the proposed research versus past successes

• Engage peers and other experts to appropriately cost your proposal
Addressing the assessment criteria (ECR)

Research Quality
- Degree of novelty, track record in research and delivering impact, research vision (team) recognition

The applicant
- Evidence of leadership, to work broadly and potential to act as an ambassador/advocate

Importance
- Contribution to research, national strategic needs, and fits with other UK research, including EPSRC portfolio

Research Environment
- Vision for how your team will deliver and develop, justification for host organisation and level of support
Impact

• Who may benefit, how they benefit and what will be done to ensure they benefit – pathways to impacts and evidence as to how you will draw on your experience and networks

Resources and Management

• Justify the planning and project management, including management of staff, and justification of resources (appropriateness), and risks and mitigation plan

Fit to Strategic priorities

• Evidence of alignment to EPSRC strategic priorities as identified by individual Capability and Challenge Themes

https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/research/ourportfolio/themes/
• Your responses are part of the review panel’s consideration

• Make effective use of limited space to respond

• Responses consistent with what you have to offer – key messages and storyline

• Criticism of the reviewers is not effective – respond constructively

• Respond, set aside and then evaluate prior to sending – review in terms of the overall message your response provides
• Clearly understand the expectations – scope, timeframe

• Seek clarity on the nature of the interview panel
  o Criteria and guidance available on the EPSRC website

• Prepare an outline for your presentation
  o Identify areas you would like to highlight
  o Seek feedback and feedback – this is your presentation

• Prepare a draft then practice, review with colleagues, practice
Consider the possible types of questions

• Comments from reviewers, critical review of your proposal, suggestions from colleagues, go back to the call/specification

• Prepare responses and practice – mock panel and self critique

Interview of team

• Consider well in advance how you will split responsibilities (presentation and response to questions) during the interview – all should have a role

• Practice as a team

• Recognise that the relationships demonstrated are part of the interview panel’s considerations