BBSRC GUIDANCE NOTES FOR FELLOWSHIP REVIEWERS USING THE JE-S SYSTEM

These notes are intended to provide reviewers with specific guidance for the completion of the fellowship reviewer form. They should be read in conjunction with the reviewer protocols. Specific guidance is available for each individual section of the report that you are asked to complete.

A full justification for your assessment, indicating the strengths and weakness of the proposal, should be provided. In identifying the strengths and weaknesses you should clearly state which should be accorded the greater significance and why. It is also helpful to raise issues or concerns with the proposal in the form of explicit questions which can be used for short-listed applicants at the interview stage.

You should note that your review will be provided, unattributed, to the applicant on request.

Reviewer Self-Assessment:
Comments in this section will not be sent to the applicant but will be provided to the Peer Review Committee or Panel.

Knowledge of the Applicant

Indicate briefly in what capacity you know the applicant(s) and their work. If there are any potential conflicts of interest, please contact the BBSRC Office before reading the proposal. Examples of a conflict of interest include:

- Employed by the same institution as the applicant(s)
- Actively involved in research collaborations with the applicants(s)
- Working closely with the applicant(s), for example as a co-author or PhD Supervisor, or has worked closely in the last 4 years
- Holding a current position on the governing body of or an honorary position within the institution(s) of the applicant(s)
- In receipt of personal remuneration in excess of £5,000 per annum from the applicant's organisation
- Personal/family relationship with the applicant(s)

Your areas of expertise

Indicate briefly the areas of your expertise that are relevant to your assessment. Please indicate any areas of the proposal that you consider you are not qualified to assess.

Proposal Assessment:
ALL comments in the following sections will be sent, unedited, to the applicant on request. Your identity will not be revealed.

Suitability of Applicant

BBSRC David Phillips fellowships are designed to support outstanding scientists in the early stage of their research careers who wish to establish themselves as independent researchers. In making these awards, BBSRC is seeking to identify scientists who could be expected to be among the leaders of their generation of bio-scientists, and where applicants can demonstrate that a BBSRC David Phillips fellowship will be of benefit to them, their science and BBSRC. There is therefore a strong emphasis on the scientific potential of the candidates. In particular, candidates should be assessed against the following criteria:

- Research achievements to date;
- Number and quality of publications;
- Personal achievements e.g. prizes, awards, honours, presentations, student supervision, collaborations etc;
- Scientific independence.

Choice of Host Institution

Comment on whether there is evidence that the applicant has given full and careful consideration to the choice of host institution. Reasons should be related to the scientific infrastructure and research environment of the proposed host and the reasons for that choice should be made clear in the proposal.

Scientific Excellence

It is not necessary to extensively restate the programme plan other than as an aid to making critical comment. Proposals should not be over ambitious or of a complexity that would not allow researchers to make progress or to develop new ideas. Proposals should explain clearly the expected programme of work with a sensible timetable, objectives and clear milestones, and well thought through experiments. Scientific excellence will be paramount, although allowance may be made for less experienced researchers in the presentation of their proposal.

- **Clarity of hypotheses, aims, and objectives**

Comment on whether the aims and objectives are understandable and unambiguous, and whether it will be clear when the objectives have been achieved. If the work is proposing or testing hypotheses, please comment on whether these hypotheses are clear and appropriate for meeting the objectives.

- **Strengths and weaknesses of the experimental design**

Comment on the strengths and the weaknesses of the experiments that are proposed.

- **Feasibility of the work programme, given the track-record of the applicant**

Comment on the skills and experience of the applicant and team (including project partners) to deliver the proposed research. Applicants must be able to demonstrate if awarded a fellowship that they will be genuinely working independently of senior colleagues with whom they might previously have collaborated or for whom they might have worked in a supporting role. There should be indications within the research programme that this will be the case. Short-listed applicants will be tested on this at interview.

Strategic Relevance

- ***Relevance to industry and other stakeholders -*** Comment on any relevance the application may have in providing underpinning science which meets industrial needs, or addresses the potential policy requirements for other BBSRC stakeholders.

- ***Relevance to BBSRC strategy -*** BBSRC has a set of Council-wide strategic priorities (research and policy) that are applicable to all aspects of our funding; as described here http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/funding/priorities.html. Comment on whether and to what extent the proposal addresses the research and policy priority areas of BBSRC.

Economic and Social Impact

Impact refers to the benefits scientific research has on the economy, society and knowledge. Examples of impact outputs are available at http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/science/impact/index.html. A key element in this factor will be the arrangements that exist within the project to achieve the necessary interaction with relevant users that will ensure that these aims are realised.

You should comment specifically on the Pathways to Impact, giving consideration to the following:

- Have the key areas where impact should be explored by the researchers during the course of the grant been clearly identified?
- Have clear, realistic and appropriate objectives been given?
- Are the proposed activities appropriate to the research, are both routine and novel ways of engaging end-users proposed and are the activities likely to generate very significant potential for impact.
- Has the management of the impact activities been well thought out?
- Is the ability to achieve the impact objectives clearly evident?

Value for Money

Fellowships now awarded by the UK Research Councils reflect the introduction in universities of full economic costing (fEC) at project level. Referees may wish to comment on the extent to which the resources requested, relative to the anticipated scientific gains, represent an attractive investment of BBSRC funds. Resources under Directly Incurred, Directly Allocated (except estates costs) and Exceptions can be assessed for their necessity and appropriateness. Estates and Indirect costs must not be considered, and the overall costs of the fellowship should not normally affect your assessment of its quality.

Interview Questions

Please indicate any questions or issues that you think should be addressed by the applicant if they reach the interview stage.

Overall Assessment

Please indicate an overall score for this **APPLICANT**, taking into account the definitions of each score. Please tick **one** box only.

Score	Description	Definition
6	**Exceptional** Fundable	**In the top 1%** Candidates who are of the highest all round standard, and who have already indicated that they are capable of working independently
5	**Excellent** Fundable	**In the top 5%** Candidates who are of the highest all round standard, and who have already indicated that they are capable of working independently
4	**Very Good** Fundable	**In the top 10%** Candidates with strong positive qualities but who do not as yet exhibit outstanding potential as an independent researcher
3	**Good** Fundable	**In the top 20%** Candidates with strong positive qualities but who do not as yet exhibit outstanding potential as an independent researcher
2	**Not Competitive** Fundable	**In the top 50%** Candidates with strong positive qualities but who do not as yet exhibit outstanding potential as an independent researcher
1	**Unfundable** Not Fundable	**Below 50%** Candidates who do not reach the required standard in relation to either past contributions or future potential

Please indicate an overall score for the **SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH PROGRAMME**, taking into account the definitions of each score. Please tick **one** box only.

Score	Description	Definition
6	**Exceptional** Fundable	High quality science, which is of high-scientific merit, novel, timely and likely to make a contribution to the understanding of the subject
5	**Excellent** Fundable	
4	**Very Good** Fundable	Worthy science, but not of a level to have a significant impact on the understanding of the subject
3	**Good** Fundable	
2	**Not Competitive** Fundable	
1	**Unfundable** Not Fundable	Flawed science, or science with lacks novelty, making only a marginal contribution to our understanding of the subject area or has serious technical deficiencies