

Applicant guidance for Membership of STFC Advisory Bodies and Peer Review Panels

Deadline for applications submission 18/05/2025 (23:59 BST)

Introduction

Every year, a number of vacancies become available on STFC's advisory bodies and peer review panels. These bodies perform a vital function for STFC, providing advice and guidance that aids our strategic direction and supports our decision-making processes.

Appointments to the STFC Advisory Bodies and Peer Review Panels are made on merit and informed by the advice needs of STFC. We welcome applications from a wide range of communities and career stages: academia, industry, the third sector, charities, government and non-government organisations and various institutes relevant to STFC's grant programmes and from the communities supported by STFC facilities. Submissions from scientists who are STFC employees are also welcome. Irrespective of career stage, members of STFC advisory panels and peer review bodies are expected to have in-depth knowledge of their disciplinary remits, and a good understanding of the wider UK and international context in their field.

Drawn from across STFC's stakeholder groups, panel members are expected to act as 'generous generalists' and to bring a broad strategic view when called upon to advise the office. Members are **not** required to act as representatives of their own organisation, research area or sector, and are expected to adhere to the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#) in their activities for the Advisory Bodies.

STFC Peer Review and Allocation Time Panels

- Assess and make recommendations to the STFC executive on all research grant applications.
- Make recommendations to the Science Board where appropriate.
- Provide clear concise feedback to applicants.
- Advise the Science Board and the STFC executive as required on all issues relating to research grants, including monitoring the level of funding allocated to grants per round.
- Consider the allocation of facility using time and associated travel and subsistence costs in support of those allocations for a range of various facilities for the UK community.

The purpose of the Advisory Bodies

Members of our advisory bodies and panels have the opportunity to influence STFC's strategy, policies, and funding decisions, as well as guiding STFC to most effectively develop the impact of our investments and best support our research and innovation communities. Members are also able to expand their professional networks and explore a wide range of challenges related to investment in UK science and engineering.

The change of the STFC Governance structure

In 2023, to streamline and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our advisory structures we conducted a review of STFC's Governance. The updated advisory structure is based around the establishment of two new Science Boards both with distinctive remits. Both boards feed into STFC Council which provide strategic advice across all of STFC's research and innovation activities.

The list of STFC Advisory Bodies and Peer review Panels can be found [here](#).

Promoting Diversity

STFC is committed to equality and inclusion. We recognise that diverse ideas, experiences, background and perspectives are fundamental to successful science and innovation, and we are committed to ensuring that our Committees, Panels and Boards are representative of our

community. We want to encourage a diverse range of applicants to all our panels and have a specific target (30%) in relation to women on our panels. In addition to the [UKRI principles on EDI](#) STFC continues to develop a range of measures and objectives around EDI. The diversity of our panels is one of our key foci. We would like to encourage everyone to consider this opportunity. We would also urge colleagues to share these details with everyone in their networks and teams – including any specific diversity networks that exist within their institution.

We are seeking applications from academia, government, industry, the ‘third sector’ or civil society communities (including charities) relevant to STFC’s grant programmes, and from the communities supported by STFC facilities. Submissions from STFC employees (for example scientists / technologists / project managers and / or engineers) who meet the criteria for Panels are also welcome.

Irrespective of career stage, members of STFC Bodies are expected to have in-depth knowledge of their disciplinary remits and ability to understanding of the wider UK and international context in their field.

We collect other diversity related information, to understand whether our panels are more broadly representative and to inform any future action we might take in this area. We therefore encourage all applicants to share information about themselves. This information is used to assess how effectively we deliver our EDI objectives and meet our public sector equality duty in particular to remove barriers and promote equality of opportunity. Whilst it is voluntary to share this information, doing so enables us to better understand the diversity of our applicants. We need your help and co-operation to enable us to do this but filling in this form is voluntary. All data will be treated in confidence and in line with the UKRI's data protection procedures and can be found on the UK Research and Innovation Privacy Notice (<https://www.ukri.org/about-us/privacy-notice/>). Only STFC designated staff who do not participate in the assessment process will see the equal opportunities information for monitoring purposes.

Please note that at the final appointment stages, where applicants are similarly qualified on merit, the selection panel will seek to achieve a balanced membership in terms of, for example, diversity, expertise and experience.

We are also highlighting the opportunity for early career candidates to apply for certain vacancies. This has been clearly indicated in the text for specific panels.

The specific requirements for each vacancy are clearly listed, and all applications will be assessed via an appropriate review process.

Assessment

Assessment of suitability for panel membership will be made by individual selection panel(s) who will assess the evidence provided in applications against their selection criteria and relevancy to their programme area by considering an applicant’s qualifications, skills, experiences, and behaviours.

The selection panel(s) may consist of: STFC Office staff managing panels, the Chairpersons of those Panel(s), a Division Head, and a member of the Executive Leadership Team. All decisions regarding appointments are made by the above selection panel(s) by scoring the evidence provided against their selection criteria.

STFC is committed to the principles of fair and transparent decision-making. The specific requirements for each vacancy are clearly listed.

The relevant staff managing STFC advisory bodies and peer review panels set the appropriate selection criteria. The required expertise is reflected in the selection criteria of the peer review panels and may depend on the upcoming call’s topic/theme and current balance of membership.

Consequently, the required expertise may differ each year. As with peer review panels, the selection criteria of the advisory bodies depend on the STFC strategy, objectives, and research programme areas.

It is very important to read the role profiles and expertise requirements for the positions and provide evidence of how your expertise and experience address these criteria.

Examples of type of evidence (not comprehensive) could be:

- Presence in the community e.g. invited presentations, keynote talks at major conferences.
- Research outputs and contributions to your area of research, for example patents and software development or publications.
- Industrial, business and innovation experience.
- Participation on assessment committees, boards, or panels.
- Experience in broad multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary working across in STEM fields and more widely.
- Work with potential discoveries, technological, societal, or economic impact of research.
- Experience of the development of infrastructure, technologies, software, data management, standards etc.
- Work with stakeholder groups relevant to the aims of UKRI and STFC.
- Project management, particularly of large or complex projects.

We also take into consideration the balance on our panels and other factors for example:

- Expertise - breadth / type of expertise
- Institutions – it is advisable to discuss your application within your institution / research group / community before applying to ensure that there is no institutional overrepresentation
- Diversity

Operation

This is an annual call and as a result, membership may commence at different times. For all committees, members will be appointed for three years unless otherwise stated. Some panels may initially appoint their panel members for one year with the possibility to extend the membership up to three years. Please note, self-applications must be made by the individual applying.

Please view our [HANDBOOK FOR MEMBERS OF STFC'S ADVISORY BODIES](#) which will help applicants to understand our expectations of a panel member. The handbook also includes useful information on other topics such as equality and diversity, conflicts of interest, confidentiality and our policy on travel, subsistence, and meeting fees.

Possible conflict(s) of interests

Any possible conflict(s) of interests should be declared. This can include an institutional or project conflict. Any possible conflict(s) of interests should be declared. This can include an institutional or project conflict. You can find out more information on why STFC needs to be informed of conflict(s) of interests from the UK Research and Innovation statement <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/how-we-are-governed/conflicts-of-interests/> and the Conflict of Interest Policy <https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-declarations-of-interest-policy-and-guidance/>

Suitability for appointment. Please note if you successful we will contact you regarding further disclosure of conflict of interests and research integrity. More information about [Research Integrity](#),

Policy and Guidelines on [the Governance of Good Research Conduct](#), and [Bullying and Harassment](#) can be found on the [UKRI website](#).

How to Apply

Applications should be made via this [portal](#) and submitted by 23:59 BST on 18 May 2025.

All selection outcomes will be communicated to applicants in October – November 2025

*Please note we may send you a reminder prior the deadline if your application has not been submitted. The application form automatically saves information you enter.

Applying for Innovation and Business Board (IBB)

This Board aims to bring together leaders of major partners in innovation and industry to leverage their industrial experience and networks into STFC's activities and to provide guidance and feedback for new business engagement strategies. After submitting your online application please email a copy of your CV encrypted to psg@stfc.ukri.org. Submission of CV is only a requirement to those candidates who apply to IBB. The shortlisted candidates will be invited for the informal interview.

Applying for Project Peer Review Panel (PPRP)

Candidates who are in very early stages of their career and or whose expertise is in theory are unlikely to meet the criteria for PPRP membership. If you have opted for 'Other', please specify in your statement how you meet the criteria laid out in the advert otherwise your application may be rejected.

Reserve Pool of Applicants

Since 2020 we introduced a reserve pool. If your application is found to be high quality but we are unable to appoint you for whatever reason (institutional / project conflict, diversity, or expertise balance) we will keep your details for one year.

We encourage research communities to share these opportunities with their networks and colleagues, to apply directly. Please pass on the weblink <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/stfc/how-we-are-governed/advisory-boards/call-for-applications/>

Frequently Asked Questions

How long will panel members serve?

Initially, panel members may be appointed for one year, which can be extended up to three years. The duration of the panel membership can be various but usually it lasts for three years. However, the membership for the Innovation and Business Board is 2 years.

What are the benefits of being a panel member?

- An opportunity to broaden professional networks and experience
- Input into the development of STFC's strategic priorities
- A role in developing and delivering national and international science programmes
- Influencing research culture in the UK and abroad.

You can find the short clips [what panel members say about STFC Panel Membership](#) and [testimonies of STFC Panel Members](#).

How do panel members get paid?

Panel members are eligible for a daily meeting fee. STFC also reimburses the expenses associated with the public tasks. Please note that STFC staff or contracts funded for more than 50% by STFC are not eligible. The full details can be found in the [HANDBOOK FOR MEMBERS OF STFC'S ADVISORY BODIES](#).

How many meetings do panel members have to attend?

The minimum requirement is 1-2 meetings a year. However, the total number of meeting depends on panel's remit. For example, the Science Board (PPAN) meets 4-6 times a year.

Why does STFC collect information about disability?

We collect this information to be able to support you. We do not need to know what the disability is, but the impact it has, and any adjustment(s) required. If you require support/adjustments to enable you to perform your membership role, please email us or contact relevant to the panel(s) STFC staff.

The Equality Act 2010 considers a person disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment or disability that has lasted, or is likely to last, at least 12 months which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities – examples include: a specific learning difficulty e.g. dyslexia, being blind/partially sighted, being deaf/having a hearing impairment, being a wheelchair user/having mobility difficulties, having mental health difficulties, having an autistic spectrum disorder, having an unseen disability, e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, having multiple disabilities.

How else can panel members be supported?

Panel members who have careering responsibilities / commitments can claim reasonable costs. Panel members are required to arrange their carer cover which costs STFC will reimburse. Full details can be found in the [HANDBOOK FOR MEMBERS OF STFC'S ADVISORY BODIES](#).

How is ED&I data processed?

All panels' diversity profiles are held centrally by delegated staff who have access to the equality data. All ED&I data of individuals is collected for monitoring purposes.

At the final appointment stages, where applicants are qualified on merit, the selection panel may seek to achieve a balanced membership in terms of, diversity, expertise, and experience with the aim to reach 30% target for women. However, the selection panel(s) will not see the gender identity sensitive information.

What are the current STFC diversity panel membership profiles?

Women are currently underrepresented on our panels. We are committed to continuing our work towards increasing these numbers and also other diversity characteristics on our panels.

What is STFC's recruitment of panel members oversight process?

The monitoring of panel membership recruitment processes and ED&I profiles rests with the membership oversight committee, currently consisting of a team of senior management representatives from STFC's directorates and national laboratories. The membership oversight committee usually reports the recruitment results to the Executive Board on an annual basis.

What are most common reasons of a panel membership application being unsuccessful?

The most common reasons are:

- A lack of evidence within application which makes the application assessment difficult for the selection panels. We would like to see detailed information demonstrating your suitability against all the selection criteria, and how your evidenced experience aligns with purpose and remit of the panel you are applying for.
- Other candidates scored higher against the criteria specified in the advert.
- Institutional imbalance (overrepresentation).

Online form troubleshooting

Your progress with the form can be saved for completion later if you use the same device. You must press the 'First' button at the bottom of the page to ensure that your response to a particular question is saved. You will need to use 'First' and 'Continue' buttons in the application form rather than those on your web browser.



This online form is secured; it should display 'a lock' next to the weblink. Once the form is submitted, amendments or additions cannot be made.

Information will not be saved if the history/cookies of your web browser are deleted on your device before submission.

Any text beyond the indicated word count limit will be automatically truncated and not seen by the office. You may choose to draft your personal statement in a separate document such as word.doc or equivalent, copy and paste it to your online form.

Only one application form is allowed per submission.

Our contact details

Please email to psg@stfc.ukri.org:

- For further information on the vacancies or the work of the STFC Advisory Bodies and Peer Review Panels
- Send your feedback, ideas, comments on the membership call application process
- If you require support/adjustments to enable you to perform your membership role, please let us know or relevant to the panel(s) STFC staff
- If you have not been contacted regarding outcome of your application
- If you would like us to update your data for any reason
- If you need any further assistance with the application form, or you have submission issues, or use different device or different IP address, or need to use multiple devices to complete the form, please email us and state the nature of your issue.