

# ESRC RESEARCH FUNDING GUIDE

Standard conditions of ESRC research awards

These conditions apply to all research awards unless specified otherwise in the formal offer letter



## 1 Eligibility of Institutions

### 1.1

ESRC responsive mode schemes (Research Grants, Research Seminars, ROPAs and Fellowships under the Research Grants Board) are open to the following:

- UK universities;
- colleges of higher education;
- independent institutes approved by the ESRC.
- All other funding schemes are also open to the following:
  - certain government research establishments;
  - executive agencies in the public sector;
  - other not-for-profit bodies established to conduct research for the public good, where the results are clearly available in the public domain.

The ESRC Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) is also open to all small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), defined as independent legal entities, with fewer than 250 employees, annual turnover not exceeding £26m, or a balance sheet total not exceeding £17m.

### 1.2\*

An independent research institute is defined by ESRC as follows:

- (i) it must not be in receipt of Higher Education Funding Council funds, as is a university or university college, nor must it be maintained from public funds, as are executive agencies. The institute must fall into one of the following categories:
  - (a) be a limited company registered under the Companies Act where the articles of association state that it is a not-for-profit organisation which are charities, or constituent parts of charities, registered with the Charities Commission, or associations which are eligible for exemption from corporation tax under Schedule 508 of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988;
  - (b) be established under a trust as a charitable body registered in England and Wales with the Charities Commission;
  - (c) be recognised in Scotland and Northern Ireland as a charity by the Inland Revenue;
- (ii) it must not, in its primary role, be a funding body in its own right, nor an institution wholly owned or primarily funded by another funding body;
- (iii) it must be able to demonstrate in-house independent research and training capability: this would normally involve at least three permanent or long-term staff, with at least four years social science post-doctoral research experience and recognised research publications at least at national and preferably international level, who are capable of leading innovative research projects, directing other post-doctoral researchers, and providing necessary professional training and supervision at this level;
- (iv) it must be financially viable in its own right, with either three years' audited accounts showing adequate income to maintain, independent of the ESRC, the level of posts indicated above, or have guaranteed income over the next three years to maintain such posts.

### 1.3

Requests for eligibility for independent institute status normally need to be submitted to the ESRC Finance Officer at least three months prior to any intended application for funds. Full supporting documentation needs to be enclosed. Eligibility under these procedures will be subject to periodic review.

### 1.4

An institution may be in receipt of more than one award from ESRC at any one time.

Institutions in receipt of ESRC awards must make provision for research careers which is at least equivalent to the full terms and conditions set out in the Research Councils/Universities and Colleges *Concordat on Contract Research Staff Career Management 1996*.

Institutions are particularly requested to seek to ensure that provisions are in place so that:

the training needs of all staff are identified and recorded, and that an annual staff training plan exists to address these needs

advice is available on future career opportunities, both inside and outside academia, with guidance on the appropriateness of different options

bridging opportunities and continuity opportunities are discussed with staff, and that they are involved in the future planning research, where this is applicable

promotion opportunities are available where the capacity for such work is demonstrated

permanent or rolling contract appointments are available to such staff, especially where they have proven track records in research in excess of six years.

## **2 Eligibility of Applicants**

### **2.1**

Applicants are eligible whether or not they are established members of a recognised institution. Applicants for research awards who are not established members of a recognised institution must be accommodated by the institution and provided with appropriate facilities to carry out the research. (These requirements also apply to all individuals named as co-applicants). They and other staff engaged upon the research are normally expected to reside within reasonable travelling distance of the institution when not engaged in fieldwork. For such applicants, the institution must provide a covering statement on the research proposal form to the effect that, in the event of an award, it will provide accommodation and facilities for the applicant such as would be provided for established members of staff.

### **2.2**

The applicant should normally be the person undertaking responsibility for directing the research and for the observance of all the terms and conditions, as well as being actively involved in carrying it through. The number of hours that the applicant expects to spend on the research, and the extent of other commitments, must be stated on the research proposal form.

### **2.3**

Research proposals may be submitted jointly by more than one applicant. In such cases, one person must be regarded as the principal applicant taking the lead responsibility for the conduct of the research and the observance of all the terms and conditions. Such joint proposals are normally limited to a maximum of three applicants. All correspondence regarding the research application and award will be addressed to the principal applicant only. All co-applicants must make a significant contribution to the conduct of the research.

### **2.4**

The principal applicant's institution should normally be the same as the administering institution. Co-applicants may be sited at different recognised institutions provided that the principal applicant's institution takes responsibility for administering the award and the disbursing funds as appropriate.

### **2.5**

Research proposals will not normally be accepted from persons who have failed to produce evidence of satisfactory conduct on any research previously supported by the ESRC. A full report on current ESRC research must accompany the proposal, unless an end-of-award report has already been submitted to the ESRC.

All applicants and named research staff must be able to meet fully the time commitment to the project as stated in the application. Where research staff are to be employed on an award it is assumed as part of the application that they do not have, and that they or any replacement will not have, any further employment which in total, with that involved with the award, exceeds 100% of their time. Applications which involve any over-commitment of time will not be approved. The submission of applications to different ESRC funding schemes which will result in parallel processing of the same or substantially similar applications is not allowed. Applicants have a duty to report immediately in writing to ESRC if at any time this regulation is likely to be breached.

Any applicants employed as staff for more than 20 per cent of their time in an ESRC Research Centre or ESRC Resource Centre must obtain a supporting statement from the Centre Director to accompany their application. This is in addition to the normal endorsements from the head of department and the institution. The Director needs to confirm that the project is not part of the Centre's contracted programme of work and provide a clear explanation of how the project will enhance or complement the Centre's programme. The Director will also

confirm that the applicant has time to supervise the project without prejudice to the Centre's contracted programme of work. The Director's statement is not required if the starting date of the project is planned to fall outside the period of Centre funding. Staff employed by ESRC Research Centres for less than 20 per cent of their time must state the percentage commitment on the application form.

Applicants for the ESRC Post-Doctoral Fellowship Scheme must also have completed (have had accepted) their doctorate not more than 24 months prior to 1 October following the call for proposals, unless exceptionally there have been interruptions to their careers for family or health reasons. (In such cases details of the interruptions must be provided with the application, and ESRC reserves the right absolutely to decide whether these are acceptable). Applicants who have not submitted their PhD theses for examination, but are anticipating this, must achieve submission by 1 October following the announcement of the annual competition, and ESRC must have received confirmation that the PhD will be awarded by the following 31 March. Established members of staff of HEIs and IRIs are not eligible for this scheme. Contract researchers may be eligible if they meet the preceding criteria and their current funding will end before the commencement of the fellowship.

### **3 Remit**

#### 3.1

Applications relating to borderline subjects will be dealt with in consultation with the relevant Research Councils. If in doubt, applicants need to consult with one of the Research Councils in advance. Only one Research Council should be approached. Duplicate applications must not be submitted.

#### 3.2

Duplicate applications may be submitted to any other award making body, apart from other Research Councils, subject to declaration on the application form.

### **4 Completion of Application Forms**

#### 4.1

Application forms can be downloaded from the ESRC Website: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk>. Forms should be submitted electronically through the "Despatcher" facility where the lead institution has been signed on to this facility. Otherwise forms may be submitted as hard copy through the post. Applicants should be alert however that ESRC expects to move during 2002 to accepting electronic applications.

Prior to completion of application forms, applicants are asked to consider timing and planning of the research to allow sufficient time for recruitment, arrangement of fieldwork, setting up of surveys and access to data, and the completion of dissemination activities included within the project. Applicants are advised that decisions in principle from ESRC, if not set to a pre-notified timetable, may take between 11 and 26 weeks to be announced, dependent upon the size of the application. Award letters for successful applications should be issued within 2-4 weeks of the decision of the application. However some decisions are conditional, and experience suggests that 4-8 weeks (and exceptionally somewhat longer) are required to resolve such conditions. Beyond this institutional requirements (for example recruitment) may take 6-14 weeks. Between 25 and 52 weeks may therefore be necessary between the date of an application and a realistic date when resultant project might substantively commence.

Guidance on the presentation of applications should be sought from the institution's research grants and contracts office. Careful and well-justified costings will speed the time taken to issue an award should one be recommended.

## **Direct Costs – Contents**

General

Staffing

Replacement costs for applicants

Salary costs for research staff

Retired academics

Technical, administrative and other support staff

Travel and subsistence

Residence abroad

Conference and dissemination expenditure

Consumables

Exceptional items

Equipment

Ownership and usage of equipment

Inadmissible items

Indexation and cash-limiting of awards

## **Direct Costs – 5.1 General**

### 5.1.1

The ESRC will meet the full costs of the research it is supporting apart from those associated with established academic staff and premises.

Established academic staff are deemed to be those with permanent appointments or period appointments of not less than two years, in posts whose funding, for teaching or research, is derived from or attributed to institution general funds including funds received from the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFCs) in England, Scotland and Wales, and the Department of Education Northern Ireland. [See further paragraph 5.4]

Where a post is only part-funded from such funds the ESRC will, in exceptional cases, whether or not the rules for established academic staff should apply. The ESRC ruling in such cases will be final. As a minimum, in order to consider cases of part-time established staff, ESRC must receive in writing an assurance from a senior officer of the University (normally the Registrar, Director of Finance, or equivalent) that the person concerned:

is not in a permanent post funded more than 50% from general funds

has not been funded more than 50% from general funds over the last three years

was not entered in the last Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) as Category A staff funded from general income more than 50%

will not be entered in the next RAE as Category A staff funded from general income more than 50%

### 5.1.3

Direct costs are those which can be uniquely and unambiguously identified with a particular research project where expenditure exceeds certain identified thresholds (see paragraph 5.11) and can be clearly audited as relating to a particular project. The requirement for such costs must be clearly explained and justified in the application for funds.

### 5.14

The ESRC will not, as a general rule, meet costs associated with the following:

- (i) employment of established academic staff;
- (ii) general premises costs;
- (iii) construction and maintenance of buildings;
- (iv) animal houses and glasshouses;
- (v) land purchase/lease;
- (vi) refurbishment/renovation/adaptation;
- (vii) basic services and utilities (including heating and lighting)\*;
- (viii) office furnishings\*;
- (ix) leases/rent/rates\*;
- (x) insurance;
- (xi) cleaning/portering/security/safety;
- (xii) central computing costs.

\*For ESRC- recognised independent institutes up to five per cent of staff costs may be requested towards the cost of these under 'exceptional items'.

## **Direct Costs - 5.2 Staffing**

### 5.2.1

Research awards are intended to cover staff costs required to carry out a programme of research as approved by the ESRC. These may include:

- (i) replacement staff (salary and employer's cost of National Insurance and superannuation will be met);
- (ii) additional research staff;
- (iii) laboratory, technical or data support staff (including secretarial and clerical staff).

These funds will normally attract a 46 per cent addition as a contribution towards indirect costs. This does not apply to Research Fellowship awards.

#### 5.2.2

Funds are provided in accordance with the current agreed salary scale for the grade approved, index-linked as set out in paragraph 5.15. They may take into account incremental progression, where this is possible, and anticipated promotions during the award, if appropriate. The terms and conditions, including grade, salary increments and promotion, must be in accordance with the normal practice of the institution. Where starts on awards are delayed from that set out in the award letter the award will not be supplemented. Where this leads to (slight) additional incremental costs these may be charged to the award if funds are available within the cash limit, but otherwise will be responsibility of the Institution.

#### 5.2.3

Applications which use salary scales **other than** those of the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) of the Universities and College Employers' Association (UCEA), or the Lecturers' Common Interest Group (LCIG), must be accompanied by a copy of the relevant salary scale as used in the application. When using JNC or LCIG scales references to scale points should be to the spine point of the national scale rather than to any local variants thereof.

#### 5.2.4

There is no barrier to the recruitment of research staff from overseas, providing that they have permission to work in the United Kingdom. The institution is solely responsible for the procurement of work permits. The time taken to obtain these need to be taken into account in determining the preferred start date.

### **Direct Costs - 5.3 Replacement Costs for Applicants**

#### 5.3.1

Applicants who are established members of staff of HEFC institutions (see paragraph 5.1.2) may apply for full-time release from their normal duties where this is required consecutively for not less than three months and not more than two years, only in the following circumstances:

- (i) where it is necessary for the success of the research for established members of staff to work on it themselves. This can be for a number of reasons, such as contributing expertise, or because the research involves residence abroad or supervision of a large number of research workers;
- (ii) where established members of staff wish to work independently on research of a theoretical or open-ended nature which will advance social science knowledge. Proposals need to demonstrate that the research will clarify and consolidate existing knowledge, or elaborate and develop methods and concepts, or introduce new ideas, perspectives and models;
- (iii) where the member of staff will be replaced by a full-time appointment (ESRC will not re-imburse the cost of hourly paid or part-time staff).

#### 5.3.2

A strong case for release needs to be made in the research proposal. The ESRC needs to be satisfied that normal leave requirements are not available and that the research cannot be undertaken as part of normal duties. Applicants would continue to receive their salary from their institution, with a replacement, funded by the ESRC, being appointed to the institution to undertake the applicant's normal duties. In such cases ESRC reserves the right to request evidence that such extra costs have actually been incurred. A statement is required from the administrative authority of the applicant's institution providing an assurance that, in the event of an award, the applicant's salary will be paid by the institution as normal. This statement must accompany the research proposal.

#### 5.3.3

The cost of a replacement is limited to the salary of the replacement at an appropriate level, normally not above spinal point 7 of the University Academic and Related Staff Salaries Scale, plus the employer's cost of National Insurance and superannuation.

#### 5.3.4

Part-time release for established academic staff (see paragraph 5.1.2) will not be funded, except where (a) the need for this has arisen as a result of a requirement from ESRC or (b) as part of the funding of Centres these



requirements are essential at senior managerial level. Decisions on such exceptions will be wholly at the discretion of ESRC.

### **Salary Costs for Research Staff**

#### 5.4

Applicants (and other research staff) who are not established members of staff may apply for their salary to be paid from a research award, provided that a statement is made by the institution on the application to the effect that the institution will provide the necessary accommodation and facilities for the conduct of the research. Such staff will also be required to reside within reasonable daily travelling distance of the institution. Where institutions are claiming salary for non-established staff they must, when providing the signature of the central administrative authority, note that they are thereby confirming that these posts are not financed from general income, they have not been so financed in the previous two years, and were not attributed to general funds at the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise. In any case of doubt ESRC must be consulted.

##### 5.4.1

The ESRC will fund the relevant number of appropriately experienced research staff on all awards. The salary cost of research staff to be claimed must be fully justified in the application. Funds will be provided to support research staff at the grade and level approved by the ESRC, taking advice from peer review committees as appropriate. Applicants are advised to take particular care with this aspect of applications: on the one hand the nature of the work and fostering new expertise might only require support for staff at RA1B or the lower half of the RA1A scale; on the other hand, where support is sought for appointments of staff above the level of RA1A spine point 6, details should be included in the application to explain the higher level appointment, referring to factors such as the need to retain or secure particular expertise. While the norm for research salaries may be at the level of RA1A spine point 6, the case should also be set out for appointments requested at this level.

##### 5.4.2

Where staff are named in an application a curriculum vitae should be included. The application should also explain the appropriateness of such staff.

##### 5.4.3

Applications may include provision for promotion during the lifetime of the award where there is a clear case for doing so, where it has been foreseen at the time of the application, has been approved by the employing institution, and is justifiable to the ESRC.

##### 5.4.4

Where maternity leave or long-term sick leave (beyond three months) occurs the costs may be charged to the award. The ESRC should be advised in writing as soon as it is known that such circumstances will occur during the course of an award. They should be met wherever possible from the funds available within the award. Where this leads to an overrun in the cash limit of the award, the ESRC will meet the additional costs.

### **Direct Costs - Retired Academics**

#### 5.5 Retired academics

Salaries for retired academics and other retired personnel in receipt of a pension may be included on ESRC awards, but superannuation costs may not be claimed. Salaries in these cases must be abated to reflect receipt of pension. In such cases the appropriate salary should be set at the level justified by the nature of the duties required on the project, and by the researchers' demonstrable skills and experience to undertake those duties. The appropriate salary must then be abated by the pension being received. If the post required justifies a salary of £30,000 for example, and the retiree is in receipt of a pension of £15,000, then only £15,000 may be claimed against the ESRC award.

### **Direct Costs - Technical, Admin and other Support Staff**

#### 5.6 Technical, administrative and other support staff

Research awards may include costs for full-time and part-time technical, administrative and support staff which may be for periods as long as or shorter than the lifetime of the award. Provisions for accommodation, residence, higher levels of salary, promotion, and maternity and long-term sick leave, as set out for research staff, apply equally to support staff. For casual assistance please refer to exceptional items (paragraph [5.11](#)).

## **Direct Costs - Travel and Subsistence**

### 5.7 Travel and subsistence

Travel and subsistence costs in and outside the UK, which are essential to the conduct of the research, may be included. The costs involved must be justified in the application. The subsistence rates payable will normally be at the same rate and under the same conditions as are customary in the institution. Travel should be undertaken in the most economical way, whether by air, sea or land. The following points need to be borne in mind.

#### 5.7.1

The mode of travel and destinations need to be specified and properly justified in terms of the research proposed. In countries where public transport cannot be used, consideration will be given to paying the depreciation on vehicle purchase, maintenance tax and insurance, or vehicle hire if this is more economical.

#### 5.7.2

Where no institutional subsistence rates are available as a reference point, applicants are asked to make realistic estimates of the amount of subsistence required to live at a reasonable standard compatible with the norms of the country they wish to visit. Full details and justification need to be provided with the research proposal. Applicants are advised that they must take out adequate medical insurance for themselves, research assistants and dependants, if applicable. The costs of this and insurance for personal belongings and equipment need to be included in the proposal costings.

## **Direct Costs - Residence Abroad**

### 5.8 Residence abroad

In cases where the research funded by the ESRC involves residence abroad, consideration can be given to requests for the payment of travel and subsistence costs of dependants. Normally this will only be granted where the researcher is abroad for an unbroken period of not less than one year. The dependants' stay abroad must also normally be not less than one year. Prior approval must be sought from the ESRC, and will only be given where there is no reasonable alternative to the dependants accompanying the researcher. Particular scrutiny will be given to the subsistence costs claimed, which will only be met when the researcher is clearly out of pocket. Full justification must be provided in the research proposal

## **Direct Costs - Conference and Dissemination Expenditure**

### 5.9.1

The cost of holding a conference or a workshop during the period of an award will be considered when it is proved to be an integral part of the research or for the primary purpose of disseminating the results of the research.

### 5.9.2

Costs for attendance at conferences will be agreed at the time the award is made, following advice from the peer review committee, and will be allowed for up to two people if the case for each attendee is fully justified in the application. Where the case for two attendees is not considered as fully justified costings for only one person will be allowed. To justify any costs for conference attendance the application must demonstrate that:

- (i) the conference is of direct relevance to the research;
- (ii) attendance is of specific benefit to the development of the research, or for dissemination purposes.

### 5.9.3

Provision for further conferences, unknown at the time of application, may be made by funds vired from another heading. The justification for such virement will need to be given in the end-of-award report.

### 5.9.4

Costs for seminars and publications intended primarily for non-academic audiences may be included in an application, up to five per cent of the total costs in the proposal.

## Direct Costs - Consumables

### 5.10 Consumables

The following may be claimed where they are essential to the research and can be fully justified:

- (i) items such as audio or video tapes and stationery;
- (ii) specialist publications not obtainable through the institution;
- (iii) computing, including recurrent costs dedicated to the project such as software licences, computer consumables and directly attributable specialist access to external or central computing;
- (iv) equipment items costing less than £1,000 including VAT;
- (v) equipment maintenance (external contracts/agreements);
- (vi) equipment relocation/installation;
- (vii) equipment rental/access charges;
- (viii) general consumables (must be specified).

## Direct Costs - Exceptional Items

### 5.11 Exceptional items

The following may be claimed where their use is specifically related to the project. Where total project costs are below £100,000 they may be claimed irrespective of the thresholds set out below, as long as the other conditions are met. Where the total project costs exceed £100,000 these items can only be charged directly where they exceed the thresholds and meet the conditions. Otherwise they will be seen as part of the overheads of research met through indirect costs.

- (i) telephone, fax and specialist postal costs. These can be included where dedicated or separately metered lines and/or specialist postage requirements are directly related to the project and individual costs exceed £1,000 p.a. Off-site costs are not subject to the threshold;
- (ii) cartography/photography/reprographic services. These can be included where total costs are likely to exceed £2,500 over the lifetime of an award;
- (iii) equipment insurance where an additional or enhanced premium in excess of £1,000 pa is specifically related to the project;
- (iv) consultancy fees for essential specialist services required from outside the institution(s) involved in the project (daily rate to be specified);
- (v) payment of fees to subjects/informants where their co-operation is essential to the research. Payments within the UK will only be made under exceptional circumstances, and only in the case of payments to experimental subjects. These will only be allowed where the scientific justification, and the basis of the estimated expenditure, are fully set out in the application, and the case accepted by ESRC;
- (vi) casual assistance, such as for interviewing, transcription or typing (hours and hourly rate to be specified);
- (vii) discrete survey costs: survey costs, involving external data collection which is not being carried out as an integral part of the work of the research team, should be estimated with the basis of the estimation carefully explained. Where these exceed £25,000 they must be subject to full competitive tender (see paragraph 5.12.6 below) that enables participation by small and medium-sized enterprises under the Small Business Research Initiative. [Note: Where integrated survey work is being undertaken within the research team incurring staff costs in excess of £25,000, the scientific case for this decision needs to be clearly set out in the application. In such cases the costings of staff time involved need to be clearly explained, and the application also needs to demonstrate that this represents best value-for-money to obtain the necessary quantity and quality of work required. ESRC will expect that such work, where over £25,000, will be subject to external tendering procedures unless an overriding case, on scientific or value-for-money grounds, is clearly established. Any such cases will be very carefully examined by ESRC before agreement.]
- (viii) assistance in the preparation of material for computer processing, especially prior to deposition in the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) (see paragraph 17);

- (xi) the cost of senior social scientists from institutions abroad who will make a significant contribution to the research;
- (x) the cost of producing reports and working papers within the period of the award;
- (xi) exceptionally, the ESRC will consider requests for funds to meet the cost of producing additional copies of the end-of-award report for distribution to individuals who have helped in the research;
- (xii) reprints and page charges; award-holders should, however, attempt to avoid using journals which impose such costs;
- (xiii) budget costs associated with preparation of archived qualitative data (such as making paper-based materials machine-readable or transcribing audio/visual tapes for the purpose of re-analysis), where the case for this archiving is made and accepted.

## **Direct Costs - Equipment and Major Purchase Procurement**

### 5.12 Equipment and Major Purchases Procurement

#### 5.12.1

Applicants can request the provision of equipment where this is not available in the host institution. In making a case, applicants must be able to demonstrate that the equipment is essential to the effective conduct of the research, and is not already available within the host institution. It is unlikely that equipment will be allowed for awards of less than one year's duration.

#### 5.12.2

The ESRC can meet 100 per cent of the cost of equipment dedicated to a research project, where this is more than £1,000. In the case of equipment used only partially for a project, but nonetheless vital to it, costs can be charged to the ESRC as long as the percentage usage required for the project is more than ten per cent and the resultant charge to the ESRC exceeds £1,000. Equipment costing less than £1,000 should be claimed under consumables regardless of the percentage usage (see paragraph 5.10). If equipment is allowed, it is expected that it will be purchased at the beginning of the award. Equipment cannot be purchased during the last six months of an award. The costs of equipment installation and software can be claimed under consumables (see paragraph 5.10). ESRC does not normally expect to provide new standard PC equipment for awards of less than three years in duration. Where such equipment is requested the costs of the equipment may only be claimed on a pro rata basis for each year of use, i.e. for a one year award ESRC will only contribute one third of the costs. Where exceptional equipment, of use only for the proposed project, is required, the explanation must be fully set out, and ESRC will only meet the added cost for the exceptional items, if these are agreed.

#### 5.12.3

ESRC approval of a grant is subject to the expectation that purchasing of equipment, services or other commodities is subject to achievement of value for money (VFM) and propriety. The ESRC would expect the Institution to have in place approved procedures, separation of duties and authorities to ensure these general principles are met (see also paragraph 14.6). The ESRC reserves the right to examine the operation of such systems.

#### 5.12.4

ESRC expects that institutions will follow the guidance for procurement and purchasing set out in "CVCP/HEFCs' JPPSG Procurement Guidance" published in 1998. In particular it draws attention to the suggested procedures and thresholds for quotations and tenders:

Under £1,000 - one quotation, written or oral

£1,000 - £3,000 - two written quotations

£3,000 - £25,000 - three written quotations

£25,000 and above - full tendering procedures with normally at least four invited tenders, in consultation with the institution's procurement office

£100,000 and above - the institution's procurement office must always be involved in appropriate procedures for all such purposes

Where costs are likely to be above 200,000 Euros (currently approximately £135,000) then EU Public Procurement Directives must be followed.

The procedures set out above should be followed for purchases under ESRC awards unless authority for variation has been obtained in writing from the ESRC Finance Office.

#### 5.12.5

ESRC is content that tender procedures need not be performed where the institution has established call-off procedures with suppliers which have already satisfied competitive tendering objectives.

#### 5.12.6

For purchases exceeding £25,000 competitive tendering procedures must be used, in consultation with the institution's procurement office (see 5.12.4 above). Payment from ESRC for these items must be invoiced separately, outside the ESRC instalment payments system.

The invoice must be submitted by the institution's finance officer, providing documentation of the tendering procedure (including the invitation to tender, the list of tenders invited, and tenders received). The selected supplier should normally be the lowest tender, or otherwise the tender demonstrating best value-for-money. [Note: For discrete survey costs involving small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), involved with the Small Business Research Initiative, the recommended tender is subject to final decision by ESRC, and must be referred to ESRC before the outcome is notified to tenderers.]

Where the selected tender is not the lower then a full explanation by the tender board of why it judged a higher tender to be better value-for-money must be included in the tender documentation. ESRC reserves the right not to meet the cost of higher tenders where it is not convinced of the value-for-money case.

Where the final tender cost for such items over £25,000 is less than the sum provided in the award ESRC will only meet the actual cost. It will however consider requests for virement of any savings to other headings in the award, and will allow these where a reasonable case is made.

#### 5.12.7

For purchases between £3,000 and £25,000 the ESRC gives the institution authority to select other than the lowest tender provided the reasons for such a selection are carefully recorded on file, and are available for the ESRC to see if necessary. Where the circumstances involve any matter of principle or are novel/contentious, the ESRC's Finance Officer should be advised.

#### 5.12.8

Wherever possible, quotes and tenders should be obtained in advance of submission of the application so that the award can be set to include agreed amounts. However, to avoid unnecessary costs prior to the application succeeding, tendering and quotation procedures can be implemented after the issue of the formal award. For all items in excess of £25,000 the application must include full evidence of how the estimate of cost has been constructed, and of procedures adopted to ensure that this is the most economical estimate of such items for their intended purpose. Failure to include this may lead to the allowance for the item being significantly curtailed. In cases of items over £25,000 a maximum figure will be included in the formal award, and a clause will be added to the effect that competitive tendering must take place and that no funds will be released for the item under tender until the ESRC's requirements are met.

### **Direct Costs - Ownership and Usage of Equipment**

#### 5.13 Ownership and usage of equipment

Equipment and materials purchased with ESRC funds belong to the institution from the date of purchase, subject to the reservations below:

##### 5.13.1

- (i) The ESRC must be informed if, during the life of the research award, the need for the equipment diminishes substantially or the equipment is not used for the purpose for which it was funded. The ESRC reserves the right in the circumstances to determine the disposal of such equipment and of the proceeds of any sale;
- (ii) any proposal to transfer ownership of the equipment during the lifetime of the award will need to be referred to the ESRC;
- (iii) notwithstanding (i) and (ii) above and paragraph 5.13.2, the ESRC may, in certain circumstances, wish to retain control of ownership for a longer period. Such arrangements will be the subject of a specific notification.

### 5.13.2

- (i) Overriding priority in usage is given to the research award for which the equipment was purchased;
- (ii) spare capacity can be made available to other users in the following priority order:
  - research supported by any of the Research Councils;
  - use by academics for other research and teaching;
  - Research Council students for their postgraduate training;
  - work by other users;

the institution is required to record usage of spare capacity by category as indicated above. The basis for charging (if any) for usage needs also to be recorded.

All equipment purchased with ESRC funds must be accounted for within a fixed asset register or inventory record, which should be open to inspection by ESRC when and as required.

### **Direct Costs - Inadmissible Items**

#### 5.14 Inadmissible items

The following items cannot be included in the costings of applications, nor incurred as costs on ESRC awards:

- (i) payments for hospitality or entertainment purposes;
- (ii) contingencies or miscellaneous expenditure;
- (iii) travel for the purposes of general study;
- (iv) the cost of books or other literature normally obtainable from, or through, the applicant's own institution or other convenient public collections;
- (v) the cost of typing the manuscript of books arising out of the research;
- (vi) publication costs of books, or similar material, other than covered under paragraph 5.9.4;
- (vii) the cost of copies of books, pamphlets, etc. arising from the research to be provided for interested enquirers;
- (viii) production of films, unless they form an integral part of an award supported by the ESRC;
- (ix) consultancy payments within the institutions of applicants or co-applicants.
- (x) Mobile phones

### **Direct Costs - Indexation and Cash-limiting of Awards**

#### 5.15 Indexation and cash-limiting of awards

##### 5.15.1

All applications to ESRC must be in current prices at the time of the application. Awards once approved will be index-linked and cash-limited for the period of the award.

##### 5.15.2

The indexation applied will be based on the GDP deflators as announced by HM Treasury in November each year. All headings will be indexed, with the exception of equipment.

##### 5.15.3

Awards will be cash-limited to this indexed level. They will not be supplemented by the ESRC other than for exceptional circumstances as set out in paragraph 5.4.3. Award-holders will have virement within these cash limits to supplement or decrease particular headings if this is required (see paragraph 13.3).

### **Indirect Costs**

#### 6.1

The ESRC will make a contribution towards indirect costs through a standard percentage addition of 46 per cent to the staff element of direct costs. Staff claimed under exceptional items will not attract the 46 per cent addition (see paragraph 5.11). Indirect costs are defined as those central and departmental costs that underpin the research activities. They include the following:

- (i) financial services (finance, accounting, tendering, marketing);

- (ii) personnel services (including welfare support, career counselling and short-term sick leave up to three months);
- (iii) recruitment costs (including advertising, interviewing and relocation);
- (iv) staff facilities (transport, health and safety, welfare and laundry);
- (v) staff development (including training);
- (vi) public relations;
- (vii) central institutional libraries;
- (viii) departmental services (including administration, secretarial and local finance);
- (ix) minor consumables/printing/stores items.

## 6.2

Letters offering awards will include an amount for indirect costs based on the value of salaries awarded. The actual amount paid will be calculated using the actual staff costs incurred.

## **Submission of Application Forms**

### 7.1

Where a closing date is specified it will be strictly enforced. A postmark on, or before, the closing date is accepted proof of despatch for that closing date. Applications sent by fax will not be accepted. For applications sent electronically, the time of receipt by ESRC, as recorded by "Despatcher" system, must be before 5pm on the closing date.

### 7.2

Applicants who attempt to lobby or canvass ESRC Board members or ESRC staff on behalf of any current application, or of applications about to be made in current competitions, in such a way as to seek to influence improperly the prospects of the application, will be disqualified. Board members are required to notify the Director of Research about any such lobbying or canvassing.

### 7.3

The ESRC reserves the right to decline to consider any application. Applications lacking the required signatures will not be accepted. Applications must be submitted electronically until all relevant signatures have been obtained by the Institution's "Despatcher" authority.

### 7.4

The ESRC will not normally accept additional material or amendments to applications after formal submission.

## **Notification of Awards**

### 8 Notification of awards

Notification of decisions will normally be accompanied by unattributed referee comments. These will be sent to the principal applicant. This does not, however, constitute a formal offer of award. The formal offer of award with the final cash limit is made to the institution with a copy sent to the principal investigator. Applicants who hold an existing award which terminates during the processing of a new application are advised that a formal offer of award will not be made until the end-of-award report has been received and accepted. Prospective award-holders must not commit expenditure until the formal offer of award is made and accepted and the period of award has commenced.

## **Responsibility of the Institution**

### 9.1

The institution is responsible for the conduct and administration of research awards and will provide those facilities required for the research which do not form part of the ESRC's contribution.

### 9.2

The institution will employ the same methods to ensure value-for-money when administering ESRC funds as those used for HEFC-funded activity. Non-HEFC funded institutions must take all reasonable action to secure the most economical, effective and efficient use of public funds.

### 9.3

The institution must consult the ESRC at the earliest possible date if difficulties occur which threaten the viability of the research. If ESRC has not been consulted in advance, or not given its agreement, before a decision has been made by the Institution, which threatens or undermines the viability of the research, then ESRC reserves the right to terminate the award with immediate effect, and to require the Institution to reimburse any money already paid.

## Liabilities

### 10.1

The ESRC accepts not responsibility, financially or other wise for expenditure or liabilities arising out of the research it funds, other than that specifically covered by the conditions of the award and which has been incurred during the period covered by it. Any expenditure relating to activities, goods and services incurred before an award has formally been announced, or retrospective payments for such expenditure before an approved starting date of an award are the responsibility of the Institution and are ineligible for ESRC funding.

### 10.2

Any expenditure in excess of the approved award Cash Limit, or expenditure incurred after the end date of the award, are also the responsibility of the Institution, and ineligible for ESRC funding. Expenditure properly incurred during the lifetime of an award, but for which bills or invoices are unavoidably after the end date, can properly be charged to an award. However expenditure relating to activities, goods or services commissioned during the period but for delivery after the end date are NOT eligible, and must be the responsibility of the Institution.

### 10.3

The ESRC accepts no responsibility for any redundancy, severance or compensation payments, for which the institution may become liable as an employer, unless expressly agreed in writing by either the Finance Officer or Director of Resources at the ESRC, and no other person.

## Start Dates

### 11.1

The preferred start date requested in the application form should be at least 13 weeks after the date by which a decision is expected (i.e. the announced Decision Date for a particular competition), or otherwise at least 25 weeks after the date of submission for applications up to £40,000, and 44 weeks for applications above this level. Applicants should bear in mind the time needed to recruit staff, particularly where work permits are required. Following a decision to make an award, the ESRC will confirm the preferred start date or agree a revised date with the award-holder. The ESRC reserves the right to impose a start date when necessary.

All applicants should understand that under no circumstances may the start date for an award be earlier than the date of the issue of the award. Also, no expenditure may be incurred before the start date specified in the formal offer of award. If it is incurred before a formal start date, it may not be charged to ESRC.

### 11.2

Once an award has been issued, award-holders are required to make every effort to start on the agreed date. It is recognised, however, that this is not always possible due to unexpected difficulties in, for example, recruitment or data access. In circumstances where such a delay is unavoidable, the ESRC allows a degree of flexibility where awards may commence within three months of the agreed start date on the award letter. Confirmation of the actual start date must be sent to the ESRC as soon as the research commences, using the start certificate form enclosed with the formal offer of award. The formal award letter will include a profile of incidence of expenditure which totals to an overall cash limit for the award. Any change to a start date will not affect the cash limit even if the start date moves to a new financial year.

#### 11.3.1

ESRC must receive the start certificate for an award within one calendar month of the date on which expenditure actually commences, and within four months of the start date indicated in the award letter. It must also receive an abstract of research on the project, for submission to the ESRC REGARD database, within this period. ESRC will not commence to meet any expenditure on award until these two documents have been received.



### 11.3.2

ESRC will also not accept responsibility for any expenditure undertaken more than a month prior to receipt of these documents. Award holders and institutions should be aware therefore that late delivery of these documents may incur financial penalty.

### 11.3.3

If a research award has not commenced within three months of the date stated in the issue of the award (and the abstract and start certificate not received within four months), and a later date has not been approved, the offer of award will stand withdrawn. The award may not then proceed without further written confirmation from ESRC that it has been re-issued.

### 11.4

Indications of possible offers of awards, which have not commenced within twelve months of the notification to investigators that an award has been recommended, lapse automatically at that point if a formal letter has not been issued. Where formal award letters have been issued the provisions of paragraph 11.3.3 apply.

## **Revision of Costings and Forecast Expenditure**

### 12.1

Following notification of the award details the ESRC will calculate a forecast of expenditure and payment schedules on individual awards, based on the financial data in the application, any changes to this in the award, the indexing of future costs, and any revision in forecast starting date. The institution's finance officer and the principal investigator will be provided with a schedule of forecast expenditure and proposed payments, as an annex to the formal offer of award.

### 12.2

Where expenditure during a year is likely to be 15 per cent more or less than the forecast (for example because of delayed starting dates, or loss or resignation of staff) a revised payments schedule may need to be agreed. The institution must advise ESRC of these circumstances in writing at the earliest possibility. If the ESRC is not advised in these cases then instalment payments may be withdrawn or reduced, with annual claims only being met at the year-end.

## **Changes to Awards**

### 13.1 General

#### 13.1.1

Research awards provide support for the research proposals submitted by the investigator and accepted (or modified) by the ESRC. The research award is made on the understanding that the ESRC's contribution to the cost will not be increased. The funds available within any award may only be applied to meet the objectives and outputs of the award approved by ESRC, and may not be diverted to any other purpose. They may not be used for items listed as inadmissible in paragraph 5.14.

#### 13.1.2

Award-holders may encounter circumstances forcing them to modify their research plans which compromise the prime objectives of the research as approved in the award. There may also be circumstances where modifications are proposed to take advantage of new opportunities or new technology. In such cases award-holders must obtain the prior approval of the ESRC before the implementation of any modifications.

### 13.2 Extensions

It is not possible to claim for any expenditure incurred before the actual start date of an award, or after the end date of the award. Under certain circumstances ESRC may allow no cost extensions to the duration of the award. These will however only be considered in the following instances:

Extended sickness absence (more than six weeks)

Maternity leave

Death

Termination of employment of the principal investigator or a co-investigator where there is more than three months remaining on the award; or of someone employed on the award more than 50% time with more than three months of their employment remaining

Where data gathering or fieldwork has been unavoidably delayed for reasons wholly beyond the control of the research team

Extensions to the duration of an award without additional funding will normally be limited to six months (up to 12 months in exceptional circumstances) and must have the prior agreement of the ESRC. Extensions will not be awarded automatically or retrospectively. Award-holders are required to provide requests well in advance (a minimum of three months and preferably six months) of the termination date of the award.

### 13.3 Virements

#### 13.3.1

The institution must not over-commit expenditure against the research award as a whole. However, in order to allow maximum flexibility, award-holders are allowed to vire funds between headings (other than savings from purchases of items over £25,000 - see paragraph 5.12.6) without prior approval of the ESRC, subject to the funds being required for the effective and economical completion of the research, that they are being used only for admissible items, and that the prime objectives of the research are not put at risk (see paragraph 13.1.2).

#### 13.3.2

Indirect costs may only be vired alongside direct staff costs, as indirect costs are not applicable until staff costs are incurred. When the staff heading is increased by transfer from other headings, funds must also be transferred to the indirect costs heading so that indirect costs of 46 per cent of staff costs can be met from within the award.

#### 13.3.3

Award holders are expected to provide details of virements on ESRC claim forms. The ESRC reserves the right to seek full justification of any virements. Virements to purchase equipment may not be made in the last six months of the award.

### 13.4 Teaching

Prior approval of the ESRC is required if the institution wishes to adjust the salaries of staff required to do teaching, demonstrating, or part-time employment on work not funded by the award. The institution needs to be able to assure the ESRC that a research worker is employed full-time on the project or should make a pro-rata adjustment of the time charged to the award. Nonetheless, it is recognised that occasional teaching, not to exceed six hours per week inclusive of preparation (normally not more than two hours' contact time), could enhance the value of a project. The ESRC will therefore not object when this can be done without detriment to the principle of full-time employment, or to the conduct of the research.

### 13.5 Registering for higher degrees

Prior approval of the ESRC is required if the award-holder or any researcher employed on the award proposes to register for a higher degree by research. Approval for registration will normally be given provided that:

(i) the institution gives an assurance that the person concerned will continue to commit the agreed effort to the research project;

in the case of full-time registration where the research undertaken for the higher degree is an integral part of the project, approval will only be given if the department concerned offers a higher degree programme which is recognised by the ESRC. It is expected that the researcher registered for the higher degree will follow the recognised higher degree programme unless they have already completed an appropriate Masters course or postgraduate diploma.

### 13.6 Transfer of awards

When an award-holder takes up an appointment at another institution before the award finishes, the ESRC normally transfers the balance of the award subject to the agreement of the institutions concerned. Exceptionally, the ESRC will approve the transfer of responsibility to another individual at the same institution. Award-holders proposing transfers are required to seek approval as early as possible, supplying written agreements from the institutions involved. Responsibility for the conduct of the award remains with the original institution until such time as the transfer has been agreed by all parties concerned and until the date of transfer.

When two institutions agree to a transfer they must between them settle both the date of the transfer (DDMMYY) and the amount to be transferred. ESRC will assume that the amount to be transferred (the default transfer) will be the sum of the money in the established profile for the award, to be incurred after the date of transfer (DDMMYY): ESRC will advise both institutions what this amount is, as soon as ESRC is advised of the agreement in principle and the transfer date.

Unless the two institutions agree between them that a different figure should be transferred, and they advise ESRC of this in writing within TEN working days of the notification of agreement in principle ESRC will issue a new award to the receiving institution within 20 working days, with this default figure as a sum to be transferred from the agreed date.

In agreeing the transfer the first institution thereby agrees NOT to claim from ESRC any amount which is in excess of the original cash limit less the default transfer or the amount they mutually agree to be transferred. If the Institution later establishes that it has incurred costs beyond this limit they may not be claimed from ESRC. They may, with the agreement of the second Institution, be claimed from it. The second Institution may however only pass these costs on to ESRC as long as all claims by it (including these amounts) do not exceed the cash limit for transferred award.

Where there are savings on transfer because the salary scales at the second Institution are, on nationally agreed scales, lower than those in the first, and also as a result the indirect costs have to be paid at a lower rate, then the sum to be transferred will normally be reduced to reflect the lower costs of the award during the remaining period of the award. Where the cost of award requires additional funding because of such increased costs, ESRC will seek, but cannot guarantee, to provide the additional costs required. If additional costs cannot be provided then the second Institution must complete the award within the remaining available cash limit.

## Reimbursement

### 14.1

Each award letter issued will give an overall cash limit for the duration of the award. For Centre awards cash limits are also applied to each individual financial year. Payments made against the cash limit will commence following the award being formally accepted and confirmation from the institution that the research has commenced in accordance with the award details. Unless specified in the award details, reimbursement will be made through the ESRC's instalment payment system, except for major purchases over £25,000. Payments for these items will be made against invoice, supported by documentation on the use of appropriate tendering procedures ([see paragraph 5.12.6](#)). (*Link to Doc 130*)

### 14.2

Instalments will be paid in August and December each year, and will be based on forecasts of expenditure within the limits determined by the ESRC and set out in the annex to the award letter, subject to [paragraph 12.2](#). (*Link to Doc 140*) In addition, the ESRC requires the institution to make an annual claim at the beginning of each financial year, detailing all actual expenditure on the award in the previous financial year. The amount due for payment will be the difference between the total expenditure and the value of instalment(s) already paid. Claim forms will be sent to institutions in April each year, and must be completed and returned to ESRC by 30 June. The ESRC reserves the right to withhold instalment payments if the annual claim is not submitted by 30 June, and to withhold settlement of the annual claim if it arrives after this date.

### 14.3

The starting and finishing date of the award will determine the pattern of instalments:

1. an award commencing between 1 March and 30 June will receive its first instalment in August;
2. an award commencing between 1 July and 31 October will receive its first instalment in December;
3. an award commencing between 1 November and 28 February will receive its first payment through the annual claim between April and June;
4. an award terminating between 1 May and 31 August will not receive an August instalment but will be settled on the basis of a final claim;
5. an award terminating between 1 September and 31 December will not receive a December instalment but will be settled on the basis of the final claim;
6. an award which terminates between 1 January and 30 April will receive a December instalment with further expenditure being reimbursed on the basis of the final claim.

#### 14.4

Final claims will be sent to institutions at the end of the award period. In all cases, final claims must be completed and returned to the ESRC within three months of the termination date. The ESRC reserves the right to withhold settlement of the final claim in the following circumstances:

1. pending a satisfactory final report being submitted to and accepted by the ESRC (see paragraph 16.1); pending the deposition of data, where datasets are involved, to the required standard at the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) within three months of the award ending (see paragraph 17.2)
2. submission of a claim more than three months after the end of the award. The ESRC reserves the right not to accept supplementary final claims;
3. where the final claim amount added to previously paid amounts exceeds the overall cash limit for the award announced in the offer letter at the start of the award. In such circumstance the ESRC reserves the right to reduce the final claim by the amount necessary to ensure that the cash limit for the award is not exceeded;
4. where either the final claim or the end-of-award report on an award has not been submitted to ESRC **within three months** of the termination date ESRC reserves the right not to meet the final claim;
5. for awards issued after 1 October 1999, where the final claim or end-of-award report has not been submitted **within six months** of the termination date, ESRC also reserves the right to reclaim up to 25% of the value of the award, and to deduct this sum from any future payments due to the institution on any awards from ESRC.

#### 14.5

Claims can only be submitted on the official forms as individually supplied by the ESRC. Photocopies of old forms will not be accepted. Correcting fluid should not be used on any claim form.

#### 14.6

The books, records and financial procedures of the institution shall be open to inspection to the ESRC or any other body or individual engaged by the ESRC for the purposes of such inspection.

#### 14.7

The institution will, on request by the ESRC, provide accounts for the award, independently examined by an auditor who is a member of a recognised professional body, certifying that the expenditure of the grant has been in accordance with all ESRC conditions.

### Right to Terminate

#### 15.1

The ESRC reserves the right:

- (i) to revise or amend at any time the conditions of the award;
- (ii) to suspend or terminate an award at any time.

#### 15.2

In reserving these rights the ESRC will, where possible, seek to ensure that in the event of changes or termination, reasonable notice is given to the institution and award-holder. The minimum notice will be six months.

#### 15.3

In appropriate cases, the ESRC will consider paying such final instalments as may be necessary to cover outstanding and unavoidable commitments.

### Reporting Requirements

#### 16.1 End-of-award reports

- 16.1.1 It is a requirement that an end-of-award report is submitted on all the ESRC research awards within three months of the end of the award period. Forms will be sent to award-holders three months prior to the end of award. The preparation and submission of the end-of-award report is the responsibility of the award-holder/s. Further research applications to the ESRC will not normally be accepted from any award-holder who has an outstanding end-of-award report outside of the three months due date.

Award-holders will be expected to provide an explanation in the final report where the use of funds has been significantly different from that anticipated at the start of the award. The final payment on an award will be withheld by the ESRC until a report is submitted which meets the criteria laid down in the guidelines which accompany the form (see paragraphs 14.4).

- 16.1.2 The report will normally be assessed through peer review, and the assessment may be taken into account in the event of any further funding request from the award-holder and co-award-holders. (See paragraph 8.)
- 16.1.3 After assessment, the end-of-award report will normally be deposited in the British Library Document Supply Centre (BLDSC) and thus made available for public borrowing. Acceptance of the conditions of award implies that the award-holder empowers the ESRC to do this. It is also a condition of award that the award-holder authorises the ESRC and the British Library to disseminate the report by copying, microfilm, microfiche or other means. Award-holders are asked to note that this procedure constitutes a form of publication.
- 16.1.4 The ESRC Research Awards Database at the University of Bristol holds information on awards that began or were supported from April 1985 onwards, and on all research outputs arising from those awards. Award-holders will be sent a database publication survey questionnaire with the end-of-award report form. Award-holders must complete and return the questionnaire so that the ESRC may achieve a comprehensive record of all its funded activities. At a later stage, award-holders will be sent a comprehensive record of the bibliographic data on their work held in the database and asked to confirm its accuracy. Completion of these enquiries for up to three years after the end of the award is a condition of ESRC funding. Further advice will be available on how researchers can ensure that the database is kept up-to-date after this period.
- 16.1.5 Award-holders will be required as part of the end-of-award report to indicate the training and career development opportunities provided to staff employed on the award for a period of one year or longer, to indicate the staff's own assessment of this, and to provide data on such staff's next employment.

## **16.2 Other Requirements**

- 16.2.1 Award-holders will provide, on request, a description of their work for publication in any of the ESRC's publications.
- 16.2.2 In the interests of minimising the administrative load on researchers, the ESRC does not require annual progress on all awards as a matter of course. It does nevertheless reserve the rights to obtain such reports on certain awards. The ESRC exercises discretion on which awards must submit progress reports, but they will generally include large and/or complex awards and all awards funded as part of Research Programmes. Researchers will be notified at the time of awards if a progress report is required on their project.
- 16.2.3 The ESRC will normally require a short (one or two-page) report on progress on any current ESRC awards held by applicants who then apply to the ESRC for further funding.

## **Datasets policy**

### 17.1

The datasets policy reinforces and emphasises the ESRC's stated position relating to the acquisition and use of datasets. The requirements of the datasets policy are now a condition of ESRC research funding. Some key points of the policy for applicants for research funding are outlined below, but applicants are advised to consult the full document which is available from the Secretary to the Research Resources Board.

### **17.2 Dataset deposit requirements**

#### 17.2.1

The ESRC supports two Resource Centres with responsibilities for the cataloguing and archiving of data. The Data Archive is responsible for a machine-readable data. These data tend to be quantitative data, but increasingly include qualitative data. The Qualitative Data Archival Resource Centre (Qualidata) is also based at the University of Essex and has responsibility for qualitative data both machine-readable and non-machine-readable form. Qualidata catalogues datasets at the Essex site but the data are stored elsewhere, at a relevant specialist repository (including the Data Archive).

### 17.2.2

The ESRC requires all award-holders to offer for deposit copies of both machine-readable and non-machine-readable qualitative data to Qualidata within three months of the end of the award. This relates not only to datasets arising as a result of primary data collection, but also to derived datasets resulting from ESRC-funded work. These data may be held in one or more formats, for example interview transcripts; diaries; field notes; observational recordings; audio tapes; audio-visual recordings; photographs; press clippings; personal documents, etc. The dataset must be deposited to a standard which would enable the data to be used by a third party, including the provision of adequate documentation. Depositors are advised to contact the Qualidata at the earliest opportunity should the nature of the data be such that it may be difficult to lodge the data with a public repository or archive.

### 17.2.3

The ESRC will withhold the final payment of an award if any machine-readable dataset has not been deposited to the required standard at the Data Archive within three months of the end of the award, except where a modification or waiver of deposit requirements has been agreed in advance (see paragraph 17.2.6).

### 17.2.4

In order to assist award-holders to deposit their data, the ESRC is prepared to allow a time period within the award, and adequate funding for the preparation of data for archiving. This should be specified in the application.

### 17.2.5

Applicants who are likely to produce a dataset of any kind as a result of their award are recommended to contact the Data Archive or Qualidata, **prior** to making their application. From here, applicants can obtain details of deposit requirements so that adequate provision for preparation of data for deposit can be made in the application. The staff of the Archive or Qualidata will be pleased to offer advice to applicants at this stage. Specifications for the data and documentation are laid down in the Archive's Data Preparation Manual available from the Archive and in the guidelines for Depositing Qualitative Data available from Qualidata. At the time of deposit, the award holder will be asked to sign a licence contract specifying conditions of access, including the degree of confidentiality to be observed in making the data available to others. Enquiries should be addressed to: The Director, Data Archive, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ or The Director, Qualidata, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ.

### 17.2.6

Should any problem relating to the deposit of the data be foreseen, award holders should contact the Director of either the Data Archive or Qualidata, or the ESRC at the earliest opportunity. Problems may include issues of confidentiality; data ownership; copyright; subject anonymity, etc. It is possible that a request for a modification or waiver of the deposit requirements may be granted by the ESRC, as advised by the Director of the Data Archive or Qualidata, should there prove to be a strong case for doing so.

## 17.3 *Use of datasets in ESRC-funded research*

### 17.3.1

Any applicant whose research proposal involves funds for primary data collection, or for access to existing datasets, must establish in their application that the required data are not already publicly available. This is to ensure that the ESRC does not duplicate its funding effort, for example, by funding the acquisition of part of a dataset, which is already available from the Data Archive or some other data repository. The Data Archive holds not only specific datasets, but also information about where datasets not held at the Archive may be found. Qualidata does not store datasets but has information about qualitative data can be found and how the data can be obtained. Both The Data Archive or Qualidata will be pleased to advise applicants on the availability of datasets within the academic community.

### 17.3.2

Both Resource Centres have extensive WWW pages describing its services, and providing access to their respective catalogues. These web pages can be accessed at:

Data Archive <http://dawww.essex.ac.uk/>

Qualidata <http://www.essex.ac.uk/qualidata>

### 17.3.3

In order to promote awareness of datasets, and encourage their use, the ESRC encourages applicants to cite any datasets used for, or produced as part of, ESRC-funded research in any published materials.

## Communication policy

### 18.1

Effective communication is an integral part of quality research in the social sciences. Our communication policy aims to enhance the communication of ESRC-funded research to potential users and beneficiaries of the research — especially potential users outside of the academic community. Adherence to the policy is a condition of the receipt of funds from an ESRC research award.

The communication policy provides for the following obligations:

- (i) providing the ESRC on receipt of funding a 200-word abstract of the research project for use in ESRC publications;
- (ii) giving initial publicity for an award, together with the host institutions(s) — although the ESRC reserves the right to make its own announcement after consultation;
- (iii) acknowledging ESRC support as far as possible;
- (iv) giving the ESRC, where possible, advance notice of likely newspaper articles or media appearances, and advance notice and sight of press releases;
- (v) communicating the research findings to potential users and beneficiaries, especially users in business, government and voluntary organisations, through appropriate national and international publications, the media, seminars, conferences and electronic outlets;
- (vi) providing a 1,000-word summary of the research findings contained in an end of award report submitted within three months of the end of the period of the award.

Prior permission must be sought before the ESRC's name can be used in connection with the title of any unit, centre, department, etc. which the ESRC is supporting either wholly or in part. The words 'ESRC project' may not be used as a titular heading in correspondence, reports or questionnaires.

## Commercial Exploitation

### 19.1 Policy

It is the ESRC's policy that potentially valuable results or products arising from ESRC-funded research should, where practicable, be exploited for the benefit of the UK economy, the quality of life of the nation, the institution, the award-holder and the UK social science community. This policy applies to all forms of results or products, regardless of the nature of the intellectual property rights involved.

### 19.2 *Intellectual property, royalties and income*

#### 19.2.1

The ownership of the intellectual property arising from a research project should be clear from the outset. The ESRC will assume that this will rest with the university or institution receiving the ESRC award, unless otherwise stated to the contrary.

#### 19.2.2

The distribution of royalty/income sharing also needs to be clear from the outset. Whoever holds the intellectual property, it should be clear what the distribution of any income might be. For income up to £10,000 the ESRC will assume that this will normally rest with the principal investigators and the research team, unless otherwise stated to the contrary. For income between £10,000 and £50,000 the ESRC will assume that the major part will accrue to the university or institution, but the ESRC reserves the right to reclaim up to one third of the total, up to the value of its original award. For income over £50,000 the ESRC requires that the major part of any income should accrue to the university or institution, and again reserves the right to reclaim up to one third of the total up to the value of its original award.

### 19.3 *Exploitation procedures*

#### 19.3.1

In ensuring maximum exploitation the ESRC requires that the joint Research Councils' Guidelines for Arrangements on Exploitation (set out at Annex G) will be followed at all times.

In particular it is important that the award-holding institution has a central point for advice on potential exploitation, and that there is early consultation during the period of award between the principal investigators and this central advisory role on how to maximise the application and exploitation of any practical outcomes.

Institutions should also ensure that adequate procedures and resources are in place to maximise the exploitation of any research. These might include support for:

networks, conferences and roundtables which ensure regular contact between researchers and those who will have an interest in its practical application

databases and information services, included regularly up-dated web pages, which give easy access to those outside the institution to research work which will have a broader application.

rewards in terms of salary and promotion opportunities for staff successfully promoting and engaging the users of research in their work.

the development and maintenance of databases, computer models, and computer software resulting from research projects, which may have wider application

advice on patenting and licenses which may be important in some areas

publication in professional journals and magazines which may increase the outreach of the research

#### 19.4 *Reporting on exploitation*

##### 19.4.1

The requirements for annual reporting are set out in Annex 1.

#### 19.5 *Computer software*

Whilst computer software, firmware and related documentation are governed by the general conditions outlined above, the ESRC requires award-holders to take particular care to protect the value of any computer software, firmware and related documentation resulting from its awards by:

- (i) confining public statements about the software or firmware merely to what it does without revealing details of the software or firmware itself;
- (ii) ensuring that copies are not supplied to third parties except to individuals who have undertaken to keep them confidential and not to use them for commercial purposes.

#### 19.6 *Institutional responsibilities*

The institution must ensure that all those associated with the research, whether staff, students, fellows or visitors are aware of and accept these exploitation requirements. Institutions are advised to ensure that all such personnel are clear about what intellectual property rights might accrue to the individual, and what rights are governed by the terms and conditions of the ESRC award and, for example, by the institution's terms and conditions of employment.

### **Applications for Super Computing Time**

#### 20.1

Applicants wishing to use national supercomputing facilities located at either the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory or at the Manchester Computing Centre should first obtain a copy of the relevant application form: either NS1 or NP1. These are available from the two supercomputing Centres or from local university computer centres and set out the project's supercomputing requirements. This form should be completed in full, attached to the application form and submitted to the ESRC, where it will be peer-reviewed as part of the application. If an award is agreed by an ESRC Board the ESRC will inform the Computer Centre that it intends to make an award. The award-holder and the Computer Centre will then confirm access terms.

#### 20.2

Applicants are advised to discuss their needs with their local university computer centre and with the chosen national Computer Centre before submitting their application to the ESRC.

#### 20.3



Further information on the national supercomputing facilities which are available, and on application procedures, can be found at: [http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/hpc/national\\_hpc\\_programme.html](http://www.epsrc.ac.uk/hpc/national_hpc_programme.html)

## **Complaints and Appeals Procedures**

### 21.1

A complaint addresses the performance not the policy of the Council and requests an investigation and response about:

- (i) unacceptable response times to enquiries or correspondence\*;
- (ii) discourteous or unhelpful correspondence (written, oral or telephonic);
- (iii) inadequate supply of information within a reasonable time-scale\*;
- (iv) a decision perceived as perverse in the light of available facts and procedures;
- (v) any other apparent breakdown in the standards of service or operation of procedures by the ESRC.

\* Unless the published timetable for response for particular schemes or programmes indicate otherwise, the ESRC aims to meet enquiries within 20 working days. If this is not possible an acknowledgement will be sent and a timetable established within 20 working days.

An appeal is defined as a request to vary a decision of the ESRC in the light of available facts. Appeals may not be made against the judgements of ESRC Boards, Panels or other bodies taken under due procedures, unless it is argued that the judgement is perverse or that due procedure has not been followed. An appeal may be paralleled or succeeded by a complaint, but individuals making appeals against ESRC decisions should indicate separately in writing if they also wish to make a complaint.

Complaints and appeals will also be distinguished from critical comments. The last will not be treated as a complaint or appeal unless formally lodged as such with the Director of Research or Director of Resources.

### 21.2 Complaints procedure

#### 21.2.1

Anyone wishing to raise a complaint should normally write to:

- The Director of Research where it concerns awards from Research Programmes, Research Resources, Centres, Groups and Networks
- The Director of Policy and Resources where it concerns Research Grants or Fellowships
- The Director of Finance where it concerns the details of a research award or payment

Where the complaint concerns the Director, please contact the Clerk to the Council who will advise on the ESRC point of contact (the Clerk to the Council can also advise on the formulation and procedures of pursuing complaints and, if internal procedures are exhausted, on recourse to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration).

#### 21.2.2

The letter should state the complaint clearly, that it wishes an investigation of and response to the complaint, and the reasons for the complaint following the categories in the definitions. A response will normally be made within 20 working days.

### 21.3 Appeals procedure

Anyone wishing to make an appeal against a decision should write to the Director of Research citing the specific decision and setting out clearly the substantive basis of the appeal. A response will normally be made within 20 working days.

## **Research Ethics and Confidentiality**

### 22.1

As an important source of public funds for social science research and as a body charged with encouraging, supporting, undertaking and advising on such research, the ESRC recognises that it has a special obligation towards the general public and academic community to try to ensure that the research which it funds will not

give rise to distress or annoyance to individuals. It therefore attaches considerable importance to the maintenance of high ethical standards in the research it supports.

## 22.2

Where ethical considerations arise in the design or conduct of the proposed research, applicants are asked to address these explicitly in their proposal. These considerations are taken to include, at a minimum:

honesty to research staff and subjects about the purpose, methods and intended and possible uses of the research, and any risks involved;

confidentiality of information supplied by research subjects and anonymity of respondents;

independence and impartiality of researchers to the subject of the research.

## 22.3

Applicants should demonstrate that full consideration has been given to the ethical implications of their research, and justify their means of resolving the ethical issues arising. If applicants are proposing to refer to a professional code of ethics governing research in their area, this should be specified and the appropriate part of the code appended to their application.

## 22.4

The ESRC reserves the right to impose special conditions on any awards involving particular ethical issues. The ESRC Boards and Council may refer applications for funding and research in progress for advice on ethical issues to the Ethics Advisory Panel of the ESRC.

## 22.5

The requirements of paragraphs 21.1 to 21.3 extend to those submitting tenders for ESRC consultancies and commissioned work, as appropriate.

Individuals who are implicated in ESRC-funded research, and who wish to raise a case of grievance about ethical issues in the research, should write to the Secretary of the Ethics Advisory Panel citing the circumstances involved. A response will normally be made within 20 working days.

## **Safeguarding Good Scientific practice**

### 23.1

ESRC also has a duty to ensure that the research which it supports is carried out to the highest standards of scientific practice.

### 23.2

All institutions in receipt of ESRC funds are required to have procedures in place to ensure sound scientific conduct in research, as set out in the statement "**Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice**", issued by the Director General of Research Councils and the Chief Executives of the UK Research Councils in December 1998 (see below).

### 23.3

In particular institutions are required to ensure that:

- practices such as fabrication and falsification of results, plagiarism, misquotation, or misappropriation of work, are wholly unacceptable
- procedures are in place within the institution for the reporting, and fair investigation, of any reasonably founded suspicious of scientific misconduct
- training is provided for all researchers, but particularly those early in their careers, on the requirements of good scientific and professional conduct
- primary data from research projects is properly secured and stored, including (but not only) the deposit of data as required in section 17 above.

### 23.4

ESRC Research and Training Boards will have responsibility to ensure the operation of good practice in the areas of their support. If there are any concerns about practices which an individual believes should be raised

with ESRC they should be addressed to the relevant Board Secretary. This should normally occur only after they have been raised with the administering research institutions.

## **ESRC Research Funding: Standard Conditions**

### **Annex 1**

#### **Guidelines for Arrangements for Exploitation**

(Joint Guidelines for BBSRC, ESRC, EPSRC, MRC, PPARC and OST, revised July 1996, based on those previously issued by the now disbanded Exploitation Scrutiny Group.)

There are no known ideal arrangements for technology transfer and exploitation. Individual arrangements differ for a number of reasons, including local circumstances. As such it is impossible to impose or even prescribe a set of rules which must be rigidly followed, as it is recognised that a great deal of uncertainty attaches to exploitation. However, it is reasonable to expect that any effective arrangements will have certain main features, and the following are guidelines for action:

1. Identification of discoveries and know-how that may be exploitable;
2. Assessment of potential for exploitation;
3. Protection of intellectual property; relationship to publication.

The main concern of the Research Councils is to ensure that satisfactory support for exploitation opportunities is provided and that responsibilities are clearly defined and understood. Much of the **initiative** for identification, assessment and protection must, and should, come from the principal investigator, Research Directors or equivalent, and the head of department.

The Research Councils expect institutions to ensure that opportunities for exploitation in current research programmes are not missed, and to establish the necessary machinery to achieve this. A significant number of mechanisms and independent external advice can be used, such as technology audits, to augment internal processes;

4. Securing exploitations: marketing, negotiations, sources of finance (including development work), etc.;
5. Providing, or buying, expertise.

These areas of activity often involve discussion and negotiations with industrial companies and other organisations, including venture capitalists and market researchers, who might have an interest in the work. It is important, and in the interests of the institutions, that competition should be allowed to operate and, in general, exclusive, monopoly or quasi-monopoly agreements should be examined closely. Some technology transfer or market research agencies may be more appropriate than others in dealing with particular market sectors. The Research Councils expect the institutions to satisfy themselves that their researchers', and their own, interests are adequately covered in any negotiations;

6. Roles of the principal investigator, researcher, institution officials and the institution; safeguards and reversion of rights.

Close involvement of the researcher during the exploitation process and in liaison with any company or agency exploiting the research is, in many cases, essential for successful exploitation. The relative level of involvement of the researcher, institution, agency, company and finance backer will need to be taken into account when forming an agreement. Any arrangement should centre on a partnership; the institution should allow the fullest scope for direct involvement and assistance of the researcher in the exploitation of the research;

7. Royalty sharing; incentives for the researcher/principal investigator.

Royalty/income sharing between the researcher(s) and the institution is usually arrived at using a formula which gives most of the income to the researcher(s) when the total is small, but with the institution taking a progressively larger share as the income increases;

8. Consequences for terms and conditions of employment.

In some cases the terms of employment of the researcher are such that the ownership of any intellectual property rights rests in the first instance with the institution. **The overriding requirement is that the results of the research should be exploited to the benefit of wealth creation and quality of life in the UK**, and that the researcher receives an incentive to ensure that this takes place. As a consequence it is best if the institution and researcher can come to an agreement on the right way forward, without the

question of actual ownership of the intellectual property rights acting as a deterrent to such an agreement being reached. The position of potential non-institution employed inventors (e.g. research students, undergraduates and retired members of staff) should be addressed by the institution;

9. Accountability; making the arrangements and guidance known to staff, students and more widely; monitoring the working and effectiveness of the institution's arrangements.

If institutions have established satisfactory procedures for dealing with these issues and made them known to staff, researchers and students, the question of individual responsibility and accountability for the exploitation process should be clear. Clearly the institution will have its own incentives for monitoring its arrangements in terms of value for money, and should make any changes which experience shows to be necessary;

10. Annual reporting.

It will be a requirement for institutions to report annually to the Research Councils on the results of their exploitation activities. The Research Councils should be able to satisfy themselves, Parliament and the wider UK public to which they are ultimately also accountable, that the institution's systems for exploiting the results of research arising from Research Council funding are working satisfactorily. In order to make this a simple process a common form has been produced for all Councils, which sets out a few key indicators in terms of the information needed. It will be a matter for the institution to decide if they wish to supplement this information with descriptions of particular successes or problems and to describe what follow-up action is proposed.

Success in relation to these criteria will depend on a number of factors, including industrial relevance of the work undertaken, the nature of the exploitation route, the timescale of revenue flows, the particular geographical and sectoral environments that the institution operates in and the institution's commitment to achieve effective exploitation. It is anticipated, therefore, that results will vary between one institution and another and will not, in the short term, be a sufficient indicator of the success of an institution's arrangements;

11. Involvement of overseas companies.

The Government stated in the 1993 Science, Engineering and Technology White Paper Realising Our Potential that decisions on priorities for support would be much more clearly related to meeting the country's needs for improved quality of life and enhancing the wealth-creating capacity of the country. The intention of the exploitation arrangements is to benefit the United Kingdom; and it is important that the exploitation of research funded by the UK Government via the Research Councils should, wherever possible, **be carried out by UK companies**. However, in a number of sectors, companies with which successful exploitation relationships can be fostered pursue their activities globally. UK-owned companies market their products internationally, and many conduct significant parts of their R&D and production overseas. Similarly, foreign-owned companies and multinationals invest heavily into the UK economy via their own R&D centres and production facilities in the UK.

The institution should always seek to work with the partners who are most able and committed to exploit its research findings efficiently. The institution should encourage UK-owned or UK-based companies or industrial R&D establishments to enter into research exploitation arrangements. However, when it is clear that the capabilities and commitment of a non-UK company are the most relevant to exploit the results of research and deliver wealth creation and quality of life benefits to the UK, then the Research Councils are pleased that the institutions work with these overseas partners.

## Safeguarding Good Scientific practice Annex 2

### A joint statement by the Director General of the Research Councils and the Chief Executives of the UK Research Councils December 1998

1. The Avoidance of Scientific Misconduct

#### 1.1 Introduction

From time to time the Chief Executives of the Research Councils, together with the Director-General of Research Councils and the Office of Science and Technology, have issued broad guidelines on topics of major concern affecting all the Research Councils.

Scientific "misconduct", and the availability of a statement of principles designed to avoid it or handle it efficiently and fairly where it occurs, are clearly topics deserving such attention. Their importance has been

emphasised by a number of serious instances of scientific fraud or other scientific misconduct in recent years. Funding bodies around the world are reviewing their regulations and guidance on scientific good practice.

## **1.2 General Principles**

It is not easy to set out comprehensive and precise definitions of scientific misconduct. There can be many forms of malpractice and it is difficult to predict their various future manifestations. Different disciplines and institutions will encounter different circumstances.

In general terms, however, scientific misconduct can be recognised to cover two broad categories, the distinction being in terms of the focus of the dishonesty. Thus the first arises where there is fabrication or falsification of the research results; the second arises where there is plagiarism, misquoting or other misappropriation of the work of other researchers. Colluding in, or concealing, the misconduct of others is, in itself, misconduct. Honest errors do not, of course, constitute scientific misconduct.

What is important is that the problem of scientific misconduct is recognised and that sound principles of good practice are set out. Within this framework, it is for each organisation (whether a funding body, a recipient of funds or, for example, a professional/learned society), and for each individual within those organisations, to ensure that good practice is maintained. Self-regulation of and by the research community is clearly the key element. Integrity cannot be prescribed.

## **1.3 Policy Framework**

As employers of researchers and major funders of research and training in the UK, the Research Councils have a particular responsibility for ensuring good scientific practice and for ensuring also that where cases of scientific misconduct arise then their resolution is properly handled. Although the principles of sound scientific conduct which follow are not all-embracing, we commend them as a framework within which we will implement policies and practices appropriate to our own circumstances. In many cases such policies already exist. For example, a number of Research Councils have already set out the detailed procedures which apply to their own, in-house research employees and others have indicated the practices they expect universities and others in receipt of their funding to have in place. Where public statements do not already exist, each Research Council will be issuing Guidance on the way it expects the principles enunciated in the document, and any other aspect of scientific good practice, to be implemented.

In the principles which follow, the term "institution" is used to refer to organisations (particularly universities, Research Establishments, etc) eligible to receive Research Council funding.

## **1.4 Distribution**

We are circulating this document, and the principles which follow, widely within the research community in the UK. Each Research Council will be adapting this general policy in ways which can most effectively meet the particular circumstances and characteristics of the disciplines and research communities they serve. The Councils can be contacted directly for their policy statements in this area.

## **2 Elements to Ensure Sound Scientific Conduct**

### **2.1 Principles of Good Scientific Practice**

Good scientific practice includes the following aspects:

- fundamentals of scientific work such as: maintaining professional standards; documenting results; questioning one's own findings; attributing honestly the contribution of others;
- leadership and co-operation in research groups;
- taking special account of the needs of young researchers;
- securing and storing primary data.

### **2.2 Implementation of the Principles within Institutions**

Institutions should formulate and disseminate codes of good scientific practice for their own use. As far as possible such codes should be acceptable to, and binding on, all the staff in those institutions, and should be a key element in training schemes and curricula; they should also be succinct and easy to comprehend.

### **2.3 Leadership and Organisation**

It is the responsibility of leaders of Institutions, their senior colleagues, and Department Heads or group leaders at the level of research groups, to ensure that a climate is created that allows research to be conducted within the principles of good scientific practice. Responsibilities should be clearly allocated.

### **2.4 Education of Young Researchers**

The education and development of young researchers is a matter of particular concern. Institutions should ensure that responsibilities for, and standards of, "mentoring" young workers exist within their codes of good practice.

### **2.5 Independent Adjudication within Institutions**

Institutions' procedures should include the provision to appoint an independent body (for example, an ad hoc body of scientific expertise) to act in cases of suspected scientific misconduct. There should be a demonstrable separation from the normal line management chain where the alleged incident has arisen.

### **2.6 The Central Role of Data**

Primary data as the basis for publications should be securely stored for an appropriate time in a durable form under the control of the institution of their origin.

### **2.7 Allegations of Scientific Misconduct**

Institutions should establish clear procedures for dealing with allegations of scientific misconduct and should ensure that they are widely disseminated and understood within the institutions. The procedures should allow for the even-handed treatment of both the complainant (the person making an allegation of scientific misconduct) and the respondent (the person against whom an allegation is made); the public presumption of innocence should be maintained until the investigation process is complete.

### **2.8 Integrity in Submitting Proposals for Research Council Support**

Principal Investigators, Institutions and Research Councils should take all reasonable measures to ensure the accuracy of information which is contained in applications for funding. Appropriately severe penalties should be applied in cases where inaccurate or even fraudulent information is submitted.

### **2.9 Use of Funds Granted by the Research Councils**

The Research Councils require institutions and principal investigators in receipt of funding to adhere to the codes of practice which have been promulgated.

### **2.10 Conduct of Referees and Panel Members**

Research Councils will ensure that referees, panel members and committee members acting on their behalf in the assessment of applications for funding understand clearly the responsibilities placed on them to treat proposals confidentially and to disclose conflicts of interest, either personal or institutional.

### **2.11 Mechanisms**

Research Councils will appoint committees or independent persons to oversee, monitor and audit the efficacy of their policies to ensure good scientific practice.