



**Royal Academy  
of Engineering**

**Guidance notes:  
Research Chairs and Senior Research Fellowships 2022/23**

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## **Introduction**

The Academy's [Research Chairs \(RC\) / Senior Research Fellowships \(SRF\)](#) scheme aims to strengthen the links between industry and academia by supporting exceptional academics in UK universities to undertake use-inspired research that meets the needs of the industrial partners.

The scheme has a three-stage assessment process:

- Stage 1 Expert Review
- Stage 2 Sift Panel
- Stage 3 Interview

The aim of this review stage is to provide expert peer review to the Panel to enable the selection of candidates for interview. Reviewers should give each application a score out of 7, and a Yes/No recommendation on whether they should proceed to the interview stage.

The reviews should be submitted online through the Academy's Grant Management System (<https://grants.raeng.org.uk/>).

## **Confidentiality**

Applications and reviews are submitted to the Academy in confidence.

### Reviewers

- Reviewers should not discuss or share the application with any third party, without prior approval from the Academy
- Reviewers should not discuss the application or have any contact with the applicant
- Reviewers should not retain any copies of application documents once their role as reviewer has been completed
- The identity of reviewers will not be made known to applicants, but may be revealed to other members of the assessment process

### Panel Members

- Panel Members should not act upon any of the information they obtain through the applications, and should not engage with applicants if approached about their review
- Any hard copies of application documents, or any electronic versions of application documents saved locally, must be destroyed/ deleted upon submission of the review.

## **Conflict of Interest**

Reviewers should inform the Academy if they believe they have any conflict of interest or could be perceived by others to have a conflict of interest, which may affect their ability to provide a fair and independent review of an application. The Academy will then decide on the appropriate course of action. Conflicts include, but are not limited

to, knowing the applicant outside of or through work, having a working relationship with their organisation, or having a commercial interest relevant to the application.

## **Diversity**

The Royal Academy of Engineering is committed to diversity and inclusion and welcomes applications from all under-represented groups across engineering. It is the Academy's policy to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged or receives less favourable treatment because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation. For more on Academy diversity activity and policy please visit: <http://raeng.org.uk/about/diversity/default.htm>.

## **Part-time and flexible working**

The Academy wants to support applicants to achieve a balance between their personal and work demands and will consider individual requirements and part time and other flexible working arrangements.

## **Impact of COVID-19**

During these uncertain times, the Academy understands that some applicants will have their research activities severely hampered, or in some cases stopped, due to Covid-19 restrictions. We will try to ensure that individuals are not penalised for any disruptions to their careers that may have been caused by the pandemic. With this in mind, here are some general principles for reviewing applications:

Please take into consideration the unequal impacts that COVID-19 related disruptions might have had on individuals, universities and industry partners and bear in mind that they may not have chosen to disclose information.

Reviewers should assume that any changes that arise from the COVID-19 pandemic, post-submission, will be resolved and these should not affect their scores.

## **Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)**

The Academy's research programmes are aligned with the Declaration on Research Assessment ([DORA](#)), which is a set of principles aiming to improve the ways in which the output of research is evaluated by funding agencies, academic institutions, and other parties. The outputs from research are many and varied, and as a funder of engineering research the Academy needs to assess the quality and impact of these outputs in order to make awards - it is thus imperative that research output is measured accurately and evaluated wisely.

In the assessment of research output, we would like to emphasise that all outputs are welcome and considered valuable to the Academy. Outputs can include open data sets, software, publications, commercial, entrepreneurial or industrial products, clinical practice developments, educational products, policy publications, evidence synthesis pieces and conference publications. With regard to research articles published in peer-

reviewed journals, the scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it was published.

We value and appreciate the time and effort that reviewers give to support our research programmes. A good, helpful review for the Academy is one which assesses research on its own merits rather than by surrogate measures, such as on the basis of the journal in which research is published.

### **The scheme**

Over the last thirty years, the Academy's highly prestigious Research Chairs (RC) / Senior Fellowships (SRF) scheme has successfully supported numerous academic appointments and enhanced internationally renowned centres of excellence.

The Academy's Research Chairs (RC) / Senior Research Fellowships (SRF) scheme aims to strengthen the links between industry and academia by supporting exceptional academics in UK universities to undertake use-inspired research that meets the needs of the industrial partners.

Awardees are expected to:

- Establish or enhance a world leading engineering research group
- Deliver 'use-inspired' research that meets the needs of their industrial partners
- Disseminate the outcomes of their research for appropriate academic impact.
- Become a self-sustaining research group by the end of the award (by securing substantial external grant income: RCUK, EU, industry, charities, etc.)

Universities are expected to:

- Adopt appropriate mechanisms to ensure only the highest calibre of candidates are submitted to this scheme
- Adopt a proactive approach in encouraging researchers from unrepresented groups, especially women, to apply
- Evidence their commitment to equality and diversity if requested by the academy. They must be in a position to demonstrate that their selection criteria do not unlawfully discriminate or disadvantage candidates because of their personal characteristics or background

### **Online grant system**

Applications have been submitted through the online grants system at <https://grants.raeng.org.uk> and reviews must also be undertaken on the system.

You may already have an account with the Academy, e.g. from being a Fellow or when you applied for events or grants, and the same login details should be used.

Once logged into the system, you will be presented with the application you have been allocated to review. Clicking on the application reference number (in the format RCSR2021\11\xx) will take you through to the application summary page, where you can view the application and access the review form.

A visual step-by-step guide on using the system has been sent to you along with this document.

**Please save your reviews as often as you can, making use of the Save buttons beneath each scoring criterion.** Furthermore, please avoid having multiple Flexi-Grant windows opened at the same time. **If you do not click the 'Save' buttons at least once within 120 minutes, the system will timeout and you will lose your work.**

Once a review form is completed, the 'submit review' button will become available at the bottom right corner of the form. Please note that the submitted review form cannot be altered and will be read by the selection panel members only.

## **The review form**

The review consists of the areas given below, and a score out of seven. Each application will be peer-reviewed by at least **three** experts in the subject area (usually Fellows of the Academy).

Following peer-review a selection panel (comprising of Fellows of the Academy) will be convened to evaluate all applications and select candidates for interview.

### 1 Quality of the Candidate

- Quality of the applicant's research track record and the academic quality of the underpinning basic research.
- Quality of the applicant's research vision and their potential to establish or enhance a world leading research group at the host university in their chosen field of engineering.

### 2 Quality of the Collaborative Research Programme and vision

- Quality and significance of the proposed 'use-inspired' collaborative research programme (including: timeliness, novelty, vision and ambition).
- Quality and effectiveness of the proposed planning and management, and whether the requested resources are appropriate and have been fully justified.
- Adequate consideration of diversity and inclusion in research design and team development

### 3 Strength of the Strategic Partnership

- Strength and long-term sustainability of the strategic partnership between the company and the university.
- Commitment and level of support from both the host university and the industry sponsor.

### 4 Beneficiaries and Impact

- Extent to which the industry sponsor and other beneficiaries will benefit from the proposed collaborative research programme.
- Potential to translate research outcomes into societal and economic impact.

## SCORE

Reviews must also give an overall score out of seven, as defined below. Reviewers are encouraged to refer to these indicators in their comments and where possible to provide evidence from the application itself as this will greatly assist the Panel in the decision making and selection process.

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Indicators</b>
<b>7</b>	Outstanding	<p>Applicant is a very strong fit for the award, a leading academic in their field, head of a world leading research group, excellent choice of host university and strong support from host including additional funding.</p> <p>Excellent choice of industry partner, based on a strong existing relationship and strong support from industry including additional funding. Proposal is novel, ambitious, achievable, and shows great potential for significant wide-reaching impact.</p>
<b>6</b>	Excellent	<p>Applicant is a strong fit for the award, a proven academic in their field, head of a potentially world leading research group, excellent choice of host university, strong support from host.</p> <p>Excellent choice of industry partner and strong support from industry. Proposal is novel, ambitious, achievable, and shows potential for significant wide-reaching impact.</p>
<b>5</b>	Very Good	<p>Applicant is a good fit for the award, a proven academic in their field, head of a potentially world leading research group, good choice of host university, strong support from host, good choice of industry partner and strong support from industry.</p> <p>Proposal is novel, ambitious, achievable, and shows potential for wide reaching impact.</p>
<b>4</b>	Good	<p>Applicant is a reasonable fit for the award, a proven academic in their field, demonstrated leadership and team building qualities, good choice of host university, good support from host, good choice of industry partner and good support from industry.</p> <p>Proposal is novel, ambitious, achievable, and shows some potential for impact.</p>
<b>3</b>	Average	<p>Applicant is not a good fit for the award, lacks evidence of proven track record and leadership ability, reasonable choice of host university, standard support from host, reasonable choice of industry partner and standard support from industry.</p> <p>Proposal is somewhat novel, ambitious, achievable, and shows some potential for impact.</p>

<b>2</b>	Below average	Applicant is a poor fit for the award, lacks evidence of proven track record and leadership ability, poor choice of host university, little support from host, poor choice of industry partner and little support from industry.  Proposal is not novel, ambitious, achievable, and shows little potential for impact.
<b>1</b>	Poor	Applicant is a poor fit for the award, lacks evidence of proven track record, poor choice of host university, little support from host, poor choice of industry partner and little support from industry.  Proposal is fundamentally incorrect and unachievable and shows no potential for impact.

#### OVERALL COMMENT

Please provide a brief summary on the overall quality of the application and your recommendation (YES/NO) on whether the applicant should proceed to interview.

The commentary provided should justify the mark given and should enable the Academy to provide constructive feedback to applicants. This information will be used to inform the decision as to which applications will proceed to the interview stage. Reviewers may be asked to provide additional information if their submitted comments do not contain sufficient information to validate the score given or for all panel members to assess and make an informed judgement.

#### Optional – Additional comments

Please add any other comments you wish to make, for Academy use only. For example, any perceived conflicts of interest, or questions to ask at interview. Once a reviewer has completed a review form, the 'submit review' button will become available at the bottom left corner of the form. Please bear in mind that once submitted a review cannot be altered. Once complete, all reviews will be accessible by the Panel.

#### **Feedback**

Where possible the Academy will provide feedback to candidates. Please ensure that any comments provided are both complete enough and specific enough to allow the Academy to derive useful feedback. Unsuccessful Applicants may well go on to be successful in other activities with the right guidance.

## **Selection Panel Review**

The Programme Manager will collate all reviewers' comments and scores into a summary table and record the applications by overall score and the Yes/No recommendations. These are presented to the selection panel for a final decision on which applications should proceed to interview stage. All applications will be moderated and discussed by the panel to ensure integrity in the interview shortlisting process.

The aim of all selection panel meetings is to agree which applicants should proceed to the next stage of selection (interview stage). Where there is disagreement between selection panel members on an application, the following process should be followed:

- Each member of the panel should be offered the opportunity to give reasons why they agree or disagree with the decision and raise any concerns.
- Following this discussion, the members of the panel will be asked to indicate clearly whether they wish for the application to proceed for interview or not. The consensus will carry the decision.
- If there is no majority, the Chair will make the final decision.

All decisions made at the meeting are final and binding.

## **Contact**

If you have any further queries on the review process or on using the grants system, please contact the Programme Manager on [diana.ojijo@raeng.org.uk](mailto:diana.ojijo@raeng.org.uk).