**Guidance for Peer Reviewers – Use of the Internal Peer Review Proforma**

The Peer Review Proforma has been structured similarly to external peer review forms for UKRI and can be used as a guide by internal peer reviewers. The following points can assist in reviewing grants.

In general, grant reviews should focus on 3 main questions:

1. Does the grant address **important** questions or **significant** gaps in current knowledge?
2. Is there potential for significant **scientific progress**?
3. Are the resources requested **justified and essential** to deliver the scientific potential of the work?

In order to assess the above, the following points should be considered:

**Title**

* Is the title descriptive, specific, appropriate, and reflect the importance of the research?

**Summary/Abstract**

* Is the lay summary readily understandable by the “generalist” and avoid technical jargon?
* Does the summary accurately reflect the scale of the problem being addressed, the hypothesis, specific aims and the research plan and the significance of the expected results?
* Does the summary leave the reviewers with a sense that the proposal is unique, important and worth supporting, have the study impacts been identified?

**Background**

* Is the relevant background information provided with all facts, figures and statements from general literature supported with references?
* Is the study relevant to the field of research
* Does the study have the potential to lead to a significant new understanding in the field?
* Does the project clearly contribute to the strategic objectives of the research programme with which it is associated?
* Has appropriate supporting evidence for the importance of the research proposal?
* Is the pilot data adequate to justify the approach and has it been presented clearly?

**Research Question**

* Is there a clearly defined and answerable research question or hypothesis?
* Are there identified and appropriate specific objectives or aims detailed that will address the research question?
* Are the research questions/aims listed in a logical order and indicate priorities?
* Does the hypothesis fit with a longer term vision for the research, including achieving intended impacts of the research?

**Research Plan**

* Are the research methods described clearly and appropriate to address the aims of the proposal?
* Has the study been designed to minimise the risk of bias?
* Are the outcomes measures proposed appropriate and achievable?
* Where research participants are to be recruited are the methods to identify, approach, recruit and consent them clearly described? Are inclusion/exclusion criteria described and appropriate? Are control groups defined and appropriate? Is the recruitment rate achievable?
* Where animals are being used, is the species defined and appropriate? Is there appropriate argument for the use of the species described?
* For human and animal work, are numbers clearly described and appropriate power calculations given to show significant findings will be detected with the defined sample size?
* Is the work ethically acceptable? Are ethical issues identified and been considered, including review by the appropriate ethical body?
* Has the study been designed to minimise risk, have risks been identified, and where identified steps described to mitigate risk?
* Is the research plan feasible taking in to account the track records of the applicants, environment, resources requested and any pilot data shown?
* Is a project timescale/milestone chart shown, is it realistic and does it match the aims and the resources requested?
* Is the expertise and track record of the applicants appropriate to the project proposed? Are there collaborators? If there are named research staff, do their skill set match the proposed research?
* Is the research environment and location of the proposed research appropriate?
* Is the research plan appropriately laid out/formatted, with descriptive section titles, use of diagrams/figures/tables and straightforward for the reviewer to follow?
* Are there any major flaws or risks that have not been identified or mitigated adequately?

**Resources Requested**

* Are the funds requested essential and justified by the importance and scientific potential of the research?
* Is the investigator/applicant time appropriate?
* Does the proposal represent value for money in terms of resources requested and potential for outcomes?
* Is any animal usage appropriately costed and justified in terms of need, numbers to be used, space required and conforming to guidelines?
* Are access charged included any appropriate?
* Is any equipment requested justified in terms of the research aims?

**Data Management Plans**

* Are the types of research data to be generated described and is there a clear plan for managing the data throughout the award, and are these plans appropriate for the scale and complexity of the data, and the long term value of the data, for example, with a view to data sharing?
* Are the appropriate funders’ and institutional policies quoted, has the digital research team been consulted where appropriate?
* Is there appropriate detail on information security and ethics requirements?
* Are the data sharing plans in line with funder expectations?

**Impact**

* Is there a clear route to impact described, with the potential beneficiaries identified?
* Is any contribution to realistic improvements to human, population, quality of life or animal health identified and an appropriate route to achieve this described?
* Are potential impacts described in order of priority and described timelines appropriate?
* Are public engagement opportunities described?
* Are costs for impact activities included and adequately justified?