
R&I Shared Services Collaboration Fund Assessment Panel: Terms of Reference

Purpose

1. The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has established a R&I Shared Services Collaboration Fund Assessment Panel (“the Panel”) to assess each SSCF proposal against assessment criteria to determine those suitable for funding.
2. The Panel will provide recommendations to SFC’s Executive Team (ET) of proposals suitable for funding and the level of funding to be awarded.

Remit

3. The Panel will have the following remit:
 - To read all SSCF proposals.
 - Individual members to consider and assess between 3-6 proposals (assigned by the executive) in depth against the assessment criteria as set out in [R&I Shared Services Collaboration Fund – Call for proposals](#).
 - To provide recommendations to SFC’s ET of proposals suitable for funding and the level of funding to be awarded.
4. It is expected that the Panel will arrive at final decisions through discussion and that outputs will reflect the panel’s decisions as a collective.

Outputs

5. The expected outputs of the Panel are:
 - Recommendations for SFC’s ET about which SSCF proposals are suitable for funding and the level of funding to be awarded.
 - Advice to inform feedback on each proposal.
 - SFC executive will capture key decisions and points made during discussions and draft a report for sign off by the Panel.

Timeline and Approach

6. The Panel will convene in person for one day, Friday 26 September 2025 with a short virtual meeting required pre-Panel meeting.
7. Key information (SSCF proposals, assessment guidance, Panel Terms of Reference, Register of Interests) will be circulated when they become available to allow adequate preparation time. Members will be expected to have read all paperwork and prepared for

the September Panel meeting in advance.

8. Panel members will access key information via SFC's SharePoint site and will be required to register and access the site prior to key information being available to ensure any IT issues are resolved before accessing proposals.
9. The proposed timeline for the Panel's programme of work is:
 - SharePoint registration and agreement of Panel Terms of Reference via correspondence (August 2025).
 - SSCF application deadline (Friday 29 August).
 - Panel to receive SSCF proposals to inform recommendations (w/c 9 September 2025).
 - Initial virtual briefing meeting to explain the background and aims of the assessment exercise (early mid September 2025).
 - Panel in person meeting Friday 26 September 2025 to discuss and assess SSCF proposals. Panel will agree recommendations for SFC's ET on which SSCF proposals to fund and the level of funding to be awarded.

Conflicts of Interest

10. Panel members must complete and return to the SFC executive a Registration of Interests form which will be published on SFC web site.
11. Where applicable, introducers will not be assigned to applications from their own institution and are required to remind the Chair of any conflicts in Panel discussions.

Confidentiality

12. The proposals and information shared with the Panel and outputs and discussions provided by the Panel are confidential. Panel members must not disclose information concerning the SSCF including proposals, evaluations, or Panel deliberations with anyone outside of the Panel members. Nor can Panel members use this confidential information for their own benefit or anyone else's benefit or disadvantage.
13. Panel members should also not discuss the deliberations of the Panel with applicants, their own or other institutions or third parties. Enquiries from any applicant, institute or third parties regarding the assessment procedure or outcome should be referred to SFC Panel executive.
14. Once the assessment has been completed, Panel members are required to destroy all documents and any copies made of them. Confidentiality must also be maintained after the assessment process has been completed.
15. Information is subject to confidentiality and Freedom of Information requirements and will be managed in accordance with normal SFC practice.

Membership

16. The Panel will be Chaired by Professor Lesley Yellowlees, Chair of SFC's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and SFC Board member. If the Chair should not be available Helen Cross, Director of Research and Innovation, SFC, will deputise.
17. Membership of the Panel will be made up of SFC Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee/Board members, SFC, and UK research funding organisations. It will comprise of:
 - **Prof Lesley Yellowlees (Chair)**, Chair of RKEC and SFC Board Member
 - **Prof Tom Brown**, Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation) and School of Physics and Astronomy, University of St Andrews
 - **Helen Cross**, Director of Research and Innovation, SFC
 - **Dr Chris Gibson**, Head of University Sector Insights, Research England
 - **Dr Maria McPhillips**, Challenge Programmes Director (Research Services), University of Glasgow
 - **Prof Brian Walker**, Professor of Medicine & Strategic Advisor (Executive Office), Newcastle University
 - **Dr Tony Weir**, Assistant Director – Research and Knowledge Exchange Services, University of Strathclyde

SFC executive will provide secretariat support.