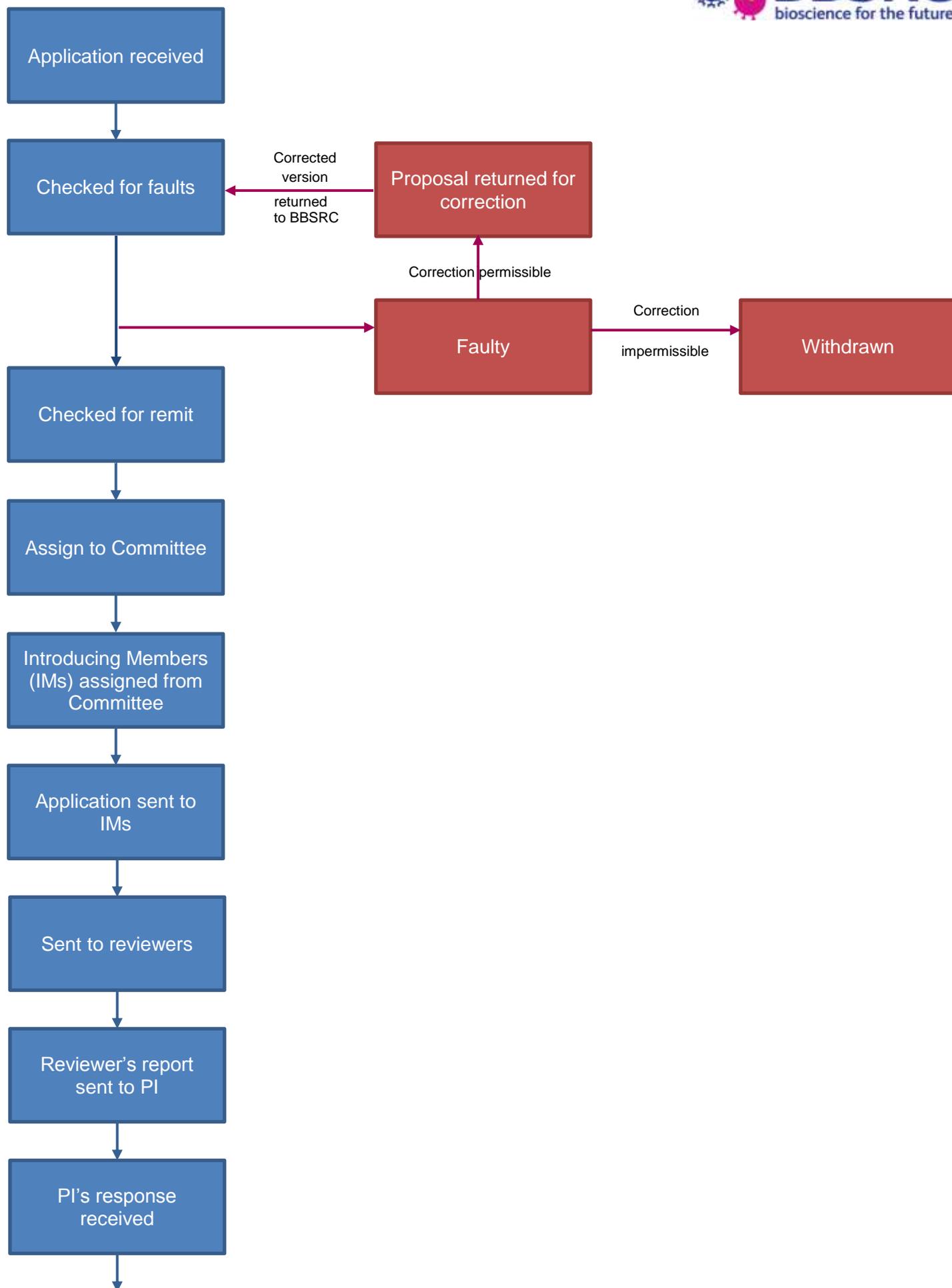
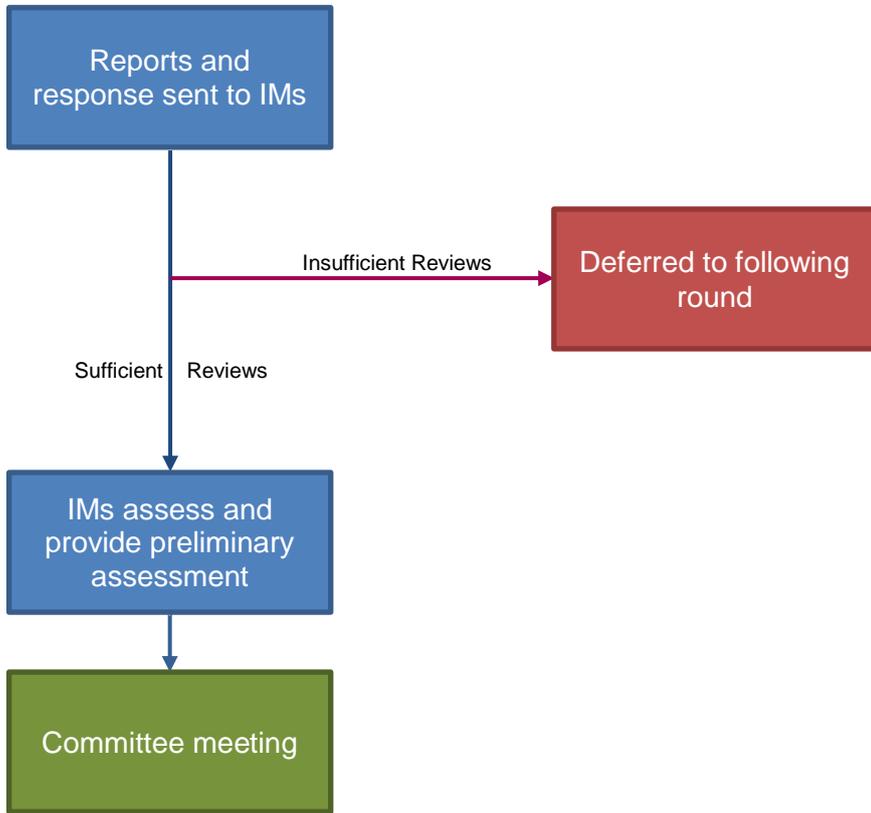


# Application to Committee meeting flowchart





## Application received

Applications are made to the Research Councils' [Joint electronic Submission \(Je-S\) system](#). They are then transferred to the BBSRC grants system, which gives each application a unique identification code, for example:

- ✦ BB/G003456/1
  - BB refers to the BBSRC (Je-S is cross-Council)
  - G is the year the record was created (F = 2007, G = 2008 etc.)
  - The other 7 digits are the unique identifier

Applicants should receive an acknowledgement with the identification number within 5 working days of correct receipt of the application. This number should be quoted on any further correspondence.

If amendments are required to the application it will be returned to the institution's submitter pool for actioning. An e-mail notification will be sent if this happens.

## Checked for faults

UK SBS check if:

- ✦ Application forms have been completed correctly

Our Peer Review teams check applications on the following:

- ✦ Forms checked to ensure they abide by BBSRC guidelines
- ✦ Eligibility of institutions and applicants
- ✦ Uninvited resubmissions

Applications that have obvious "faults" are logged accordingly and the applicants notified with a strict deadline (normally 1 week) to correct faulty applications. BBSRC specific requirements can be found on the [Joint electronic Submission \(Je-S\)](#) website.

Any previously unsuccessful research grant applications must not be resubmitted. Resubmissions will be considered where they have been invited by the Committee, or if the application is substantially different in terms of objectives and/or work to be carried out. Permission from the Committee peer review staff must be obtained and the application must include a covering letter declaring it as a resubmission, detailing the modifications which merit its re-consideration. Uninvited resubmissions will be rejected.

## Checked for remit

The scientific remits of the Research Committees are designed to cover the full range of science that we support. A delivery team of both administrative and scientifically-qualified staff support the Committees, who review all applications for fit to Research Committee and BBSRC remit.

If the application is considered to be within the remit of another Research Council, the Peer Review Officers will discuss the research objectives with scientific colleagues in these Councils. If deemed to be within their remit and not BBSRC's, the application will be withdrawn and the applicant advised to re-submit.

See: [Cross-council funding agreement](#)

## Assign to Committee

Four Research Committees are responsible for considering applications for basic, strategic and applied research within our portfolio.

In completing the application form the Principal Investigator will indicate which Research Committee best fits with the remit of the application. Our Peer Review Officers will review the application for remit and assign the application to the appropriate Committee for peer review. The Office decision is final and the applicant will be informed which Committee assessed the application once final funding decisions have been made.

See: [Research Committees](#).

## Introducing Members (IMs) assigned from Committee

Applications are normally assigned to at least 2 committee members, called 'Introducing Members' (IMs).

IMs are assigned to applications based on scientific expertise and balance of workload, also taking into account any conflicts of interest. IMs are sent their assigned applications to comment on the appropriateness of the reviewers and suggest additional reviewers.

The Committee's membership comprises both core and pool members to ensure that the appropriate scientific expertise is available for all applications being considered. Membership will be different for each grant round.

Members are nominated and appointed using our Appointments Board process and a register of conflicts of interest is maintained. Further details regarding conflicts of interest can be found in the documents linked below.

See: [Research Committees](#) and [Handbook for Council, Board, Panels & Committee Members \(PDF 474KB\)](#).

## Sent to reviewers

### *Reviewers selected*

Applications are sent to a range of reviewers including those nominated by applicants, Peer Review Officers and suggested by IMs. We endeavour to ensure that at least one is not from applicants' nominations. BBSRC grant holders are required to undertake reviews of research grant proposals submitted to BBSRC when requested.

When selecting reviewers these general rules are applied:

- Conflicts of interests are avoided - the reviewer must not be from the same institution/organisation as any of the applicants or collaborators
- Normally only one reviewer from a particular institution would be used on an application
- Applicants can request that specific individuals are not approached to review their applications and, wherever possible, the Office endeavours to respect their wishes. Applicants should provide reasons in their cover letter, why they do not wish their applications to be sent to the individual in question.
- Reviewers' comments remain anonymous
- For multidisciplinary applications, reviewers may be asked to comment on specific areas of the proposal. BBSRC will ensure that a range of reviewers will comment on all areas within the proposal

## **Applications sent to chosen reviewers**

Applications for research grants undergo assessment of research quality by UK and overseas experts in the field from academia, government or industry. Reviewers provide qualitative comments on the scientific strengths and weaknesses of the application against the following assessment criteria:

- ✦ Scientific excellence
- ✦ Strategic relevance, industrial and stakeholder relevance
- ✦ Economic and social impact
- ✦ Timeliness and promise
- ✦ Value for money
- ✦ Staff training potential

Reviewers reply within 3 weeks, although shortened deadlines are (by necessity) given to additional reviewers approached close to the date of the committee meeting. Reviewers that have not responded are automatically sent a reminder once their deadlines have been reached.

The office prioritises obtaining 2 or more review assessments for each application. Where an application has less than two review assessments prior to the committee meeting, the applicant will be asked to decide whether the application should still be considered at the meeting or deferred to the following one.

## **Reviewer's reports sent to PI**

Applicants are given an opportunity to respond to reviewers' assessments prior to the committee meeting.

Note that the reviewer number on these assessments does not correspond to the numbering of the nominated reviewers on the application nor to the order of receipt of comments.

The office continues to send out late reviewers' comments until shortly before the committee meeting date.

Reviewer comments are sent to applicants approximately 6 weeks before the meeting. However, this is dependent on the required number of reviewer comments being obtained.

## **Reports and response sent to IMs**

At least 2 weeks before the committee meeting, members are sent all applications, reviewers' comments and applicants' responses, so they are able to take part in discussion on any application at the meeting. The exception to this is where a member has a potential conflict of interest on an application, in which case they receive restricted grant information to view.

Reviewers' comments or applicants' responses received prior to the meeting will be made available to the committee to take into consideration.

Reviewers' reports are obtained for the assistance of the committee. Although the committee takes into account their comments, they do not form the sole basis for its decisions. The committee should indicate where its recommendations differ from those of the reviewers.

## **IMs assess and provide preliminary assessment**

There is limited time for discussion at the committee meetings so IMs are asked to send their preliminary assessment to the office in advance of the meeting.

Applications for which IMs' preliminary scores are both clearly outside the funding range are not usually discussed at the meeting, however any member of the committee can request that an application is discussed. Applications that are very highly rated by both IMs may not be discussed in detail.

## Committee meeting

Each Committee has a Chair and Deputy-Chair who attend all three annual Research Committee meetings.

In addition the Committee is supported by:

- ✦ A core membership of between 20 and 30 members of which approximately half attend each meeting
- ✦ Pool members who attend meetings on an invitation basis

Core and pool membership will differ between each Committee meeting reflecting the expertise required to assess the portfolio of grants into each specific round. The number of pool members assigned to a Committee depends on the number of applications and the diversity of expertise required.

New Committee members are appointed following open advertisement by the Appointments Board, which considers inter alia applicants' expertise and standing within the community.

## Assessment process

Research Committees assess applications against the following criteria:

- ✦ Scientific excellence
- ✦ Strategic relevance
- ✦ Industrial and stakeholder relevance
- ✦ Economic and social impact
- ✦ Timeliness and promise
- ✦ Value for money
- ✦ Staff training potential

In conjunction with assessment of the science, the committees are also required to:

- ✦ Judge the ability of the applicant to carry out the proposed programme, take into account the track record of established applicants
- ✦ Comment on the relevance of the work in relation to the strategic priority areas
- ✦ Examine the level of resources requested
- ✦ Assess Pathways to Impact
- ✦ Review Data Management Plans
- ✦ Address ethical and social concerns, including animal usage

At the meeting, IMs give an overview of the application, highlighting its merits and any potential problems. Discussion is then open to other members who wish to comment. After the discussion the Chair will agree the overall score with the committee.

The committee is asked to comment on the level of resources requested only for applications likely to be within the funding range.

In some cases the committee may recommend conditions to a grant or invite a resubmission.

## Ranking

At the end of the meeting office staff will produce an initial rank-ordered list. The committee will finalise the ranking, especially those falling close to the likely margin for funding. The final rank order represents the consensus view of the committee taking into account all of the assessment criteria not just the preliminary assessment of the IMs.