

## **UKRI-BBSRC Discovery Fellowships and David Phillips Fellowships PI (applicant) Response Guidance**

In a change brought in this year, the Discovery Fellowships (DF) and David Phillips Fellowships (DPF) opportunities now allow for applicants to respond to peer reviewers' comments prior to their proposal's assessment by BBSRC's Committee E. This is known as the "PI Response" stage of the assessment process.

The purpose of the PI response is to provide the applicant an opportunity to respond to, rebut, or address any specific points raised by reviewers. It can be used to clarify reviewer misunderstandings or provide additional supporting information for the proposal.

In reaching its final decision, the Committee reviews the proposal documentation, reviewer comments and the applicant response, and assess these against the criteria described in the [BBSRC Research Fellowships Handbook](#).

### **Document Guidelines**

The PI Response should be submitted via Je-S in Word or PDF format, using a minimum font size of 11 point (Arial or equivalent sans serif font) and margins of at least 2cm. Further guidance can be found in the [Je-S Help text](#).

Applicants can provide relevant information in the form of diagrams or mathematical symbols as necessary. This should be done in moderation as symbols, diagrams or high-resolution images may increase the attachment file size above the allowed limit (maximum 5MB).

The PI response document has a page limit of one page per review received. How this limit is used is at the applicant's discretion. For example, if three reviews are received the applicant can use up to three pages for their response but does not need to use a page *per review*. The response must cover ALL reviews received and mention the unique Reviewer Reference for each review, even if no response is required to a particular review.

Applicants are given 5 working days to respond to reviews, however if this deadline cannot be achieved, applicants should contact the BBSRC fellowships team as soon as possible ([postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ukri.org](mailto:postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ukri.org)) to request an extension.

In some cases, additional reviews may be received either before the applicant has submitted a response, or afterwards.

If additional reviews are received before the applicant has submitted their response, they will be asked to include a response to the review with their PI response submission.

If additional reviews are received after the PI response has been submitted, the applicant will be asked to update the previously submitted response to address the new review comments. Please note that applicants must retain the response text on all earlier reviews – deleting this text will result in the response to previous reviews being lost.

For each additional review received there is an increase in the available page length permitted for the response.

Applicants can choose not to respond to reviewers' comments via the 'Does not wish to Respond' facility in Je-S.

Applicants must submit either a PI Response or a 'Does not wish to respond' notification via the 'Submit Document' functionality within the Je-S system in order for BBSRC Office to be

aware of an applicant's decision.

UKRI has signed up to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA); a key message of which is that the content of a paper is more important than the publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it was published. Where a review contravenes this (for example, describes journals in terms of quality/impact and/or names specific journals) applicants can disregard these comments and do not need to address them in their response. The Committee will also be advised to disregard these comments.

If you have any concerns that a review you have received may be conflicted or biased, please contact the BBSRC Fellowships Team. Tel: 01793 416409 Email: [postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ukri.org](mailto:postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ukri.org)

Please contact Je-S Helpdesk should you require assistance with this or any other Je-S System related matter. Tel: 01793 444164 E-mail: [JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org](mailto:JeSHelp@je-s.ukri.org)