



# Research Funding Applications: Assessment Criteria and Evaluation Process

## BSG Grants Assessment Criteria

In evaluating applications for funding, members of the Research Committee employ a set of generic assessment criteria which apply for all of the schemes within the BSG's grants portfolio. These criteria are summarised as follows:

1. All proposals are screened to ensure that (i) they focus on some aspect of geomorphology (i.e., that proposals fall within the remit of the Society); (ii) they match the requirements of each grant scheme as listed on the BSG web site, and; (iii) that the applicant is eligible. All applications should therefore demonstrate how the proposed activities will further the mission of the BSG.
2. Assuming these hurdles are passed, proposals are graded independently by each member of the Research Committee on a scale from 5 (highest priority for funding) to 1 (flawed). Final grades are assigned based on discussions of the respective scores by the Research Committee (see Evaluation and Post-Award Process, below).
3. For all funding schemes the primary criterion used is the **quality of the science**, evaluated based on the case for support and, in the case of postgraduate applications, the associated reference.
4. For all funding schemes, the secondary criterion used is **value for money**, evaluated by scrutinising proposals to ensure that all requested resources are adequately justified, and (where applicable) by assessing the level of resource currently available to the applicant from other funding sources. In some cases, value may also be added if proposals can demonstrate matched or partial funding from other sources, though the Research Committee recognises that this is not always possible or appropriate. In all cases, where funds are not justified, or where requests are made for inappropriate items, the Research Committee will decide whether to reject the proposal or deduct these items from the maximum award.
5. Specific funding schemes employ additional criteria, as follows
  - a. **Full Member Research Grants** - Applications should make it clear how the proposed research relates either to ongoing research and/or whether the research will be used to **pump-prime other activities**. In cases where the proposal indicates that the research is intended to lead to a future grant application (e.g. to NERC), the Research Committee will make an assessment on whether such applications have the potential to be successful. Note that while it is not a condition that research project grants should lead to future grant applications, this criterion may be used to differentiate between applications that are equal in other respects.
  - b. **Early Career Researcher Grants** – All ECR grant applications must include a description of how an award would help support the development of the grant-holder's career. In contrast to Research Project Grants (see above), all ECR application must make it clear how the proposed research will be used to **pump-prime other activities**. In cases where the proposal indicates that the research

is intended to lead to a future grant application (e.g. to NERC), the Research Committee will make an assessment on whether such applications have the potential to be successful.

- c. **Postgraduate Research Grants** – This grant scheme aims to provide additional research funds for postgraduate researchers to extend the scale and scope of their PhD projects. It should not be used to fund standard Ph.D. fieldwork activities. Applications should be explicit in how the proposed research extends the scale or scope of the PhD.
- d. **Postgraduate Conference Attendance Grants** – Applications must make clear overall value of attending the meeting for the applicant and the BSG's missions. In general, preference will be given to attendance at significant meetings by postgraduates who are in a position to present substantive research findings. Preference may also be given to applicants who have previously attended a BSG Annual Meeting. Please note that the BSG cannot retrospectively fund attendance to conferences that already happened, or will have happened at the time of the grant evaluation.

## Evaluation and Post-Award Process

The process following submission can be summarised as follows:-

- On the first working day after the deadline, a copy of all complete applications will be forwarded to each of the members of the Research Committee and to the Honorary Secretary.
- Each application is then assessed and graded independently by each member of the Research Committee following the criteria outlined above.
- All applications and their assessments are then considered at the Research Committee meeting that follows each grant round deadline (these meetings are normally held within 4 weeks of each funding deadline). The Research Committee moderates the grades for each proposal, paying particular attention to cases where there is a divergence of assessment comments and grades, and identifying instances where applications do not fully justify the requested resources.
- Assessment comments and grades are then collated, all proposals are ranked, and awards are made accounting for both this ranking and the level of funds available to the Research Committee.
- The Chair of the Research Committee (or their representative) sends notification to each applicant of the outcome of their application, normally within 5 weeks of the deadline. The decision of the committee is final and there is no right of appeal. However, applicants do have the opportunity to request feedback. The Chair (or their representative) also notifies the Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer of the amounts awarded and the recipients.
- Successful applicants should then write to the Honorary Treasurer requesting the allocated funds. Note that awards are made to individual applicants and not to their host institution(s).
- Within one month after completion of expenditure of the award, and normally within one year of its receipt, the applicant should supply an account of expenditure of the funds awarded. This should be supported by receipts (copies acceptable in the case of funding

shared with another agency). This account should be sent to: BSG Administrative Assistant, RGS-IBG, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR.

- Within one month after completion of the supported work, and normally within one year of the award, the applicant should supply a report on the outcome of the project. This should not normally exceed 1 page of A4 in 12 point font, and should refer to any intended public domain outcomes, e.g. conference presentation, submission of papers to journal, etc. This report should be sent in hard copy to the address above and in electronic form to [bsg@geomorphology.org.uk](mailto:bsg@geomorphology.org.uk).
- Reports will be forwarded with a copy of the initial application to members of Research Sub-Committee and to the Honorary Secretary. If the reports are approved, then the Honorary Secretary will forward the report to the Geophemera editor and BSG webmaster for publication. If the reports are deemed unsatisfactory, the Chair of Research Sub-Committee will write to the award recipient.
- The Report of the Chair of the Research Sub-Committee to the AGM will include an overview of the success of BSG-sponsored research projects.
- All successful applicants are required to (i) acknowledge BSG (Wiley-Blackwell) support where relevant (publications and conferences), (ii) regard *Earth Surface Processes and Landforms* as the primary outlet for publication of papers and/or special issues, and (iii) regard the RGS-IBG Book Series as an outlet for publishing authored monographs or edited volumes.