

CHOBE/ARCOM Built Environment Early Career Researchers (ECRs) Workshop Demystifying EPSRC & ESRC ECRs Grant Schemes

University of the West of England (UWE Bristol), 20th June 2017

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Background

Research funding streams for built environment (BE) research, particularly in UK, remain scant and very competitive. BE researchers, including early career researchers (ECRs), compete fiercely with researchers from other disciplines for limited research funding from funding bodies including the Engineering and Physical Sciences and the Economic and Social Research Councils ([EPSRC](#) and [ESRC](#)). Whilst EPSRC and ESRC grants are competitive, the EPSRC and ESRC ECR grant schemes provide a good opportunity for BE ECRs to maintain a good research trajectory. In view of this, the above workshop was organised with the support of the [Council of Heads of Built Environment \(CHOBE\)](#) and the [Association of Researchers in Construction Management \(ARCOM\)](#). The workshop, hosted by the [Centre for Architecture and Built Environment Research at the University of the West of England \(UWE\)](#) had the following aims:

- to raise awareness of the [EPSRC First Grant](#) (which was replaced by the [New Investigator Award](#) in July 2017) and [ESCR New Investigator Grant](#) (formerly Future Research Leaders Award) amongst BE ECRs; and
- most importantly for the ECRs to gain rich insights about the grant application and review processes in order for them to be able to prepare high quality research proposals for these schemes.

To achieve the above aims, the workshop brought together BE portfolio managers from EPSRC and ESRC, recipients of EPSRC First Grant (now New Investigator Award) and ESCR Future Research Leaders Grant (now New Investigator Grant), and BE academics from EPSRC and ESRC peer review college to share experiences and lessons that reflect the entire grant application process. At the workshop, participants were also given a pack containing: key requirements of the EPSRC First Grant and ESCR New Investigator Grant; and excerpts from a successful EPSRC First Grant proposal. This was to enable participants relate better to the contents of the various sessions at the workshop.

It should be noted that from 25th July 2017, the EPSRC First Grant was replaced by the New Investigator Award. Whilst the insights from the workshop are relevant to the new scheme, it is important for applicants to familiarise themselves with the specific requirements of the new scheme.

Workshop (Videos)

The workshop initially attracted 87 registrants (including speakers and facilitators) and subsequently 51 attendees. The workshop composed of an introduction session which was followed by four main sessions. The sessions including the chairs, speakers and **video links** for the talks are shown below.

Feedback from 19 out of the 51 participants indicated that the workshop was useful. Further information about the feedback as well as photos from the workshop are available in the ARCOM Newsletter, September 2017 Issue – see <http://www.arcom.ac.uk/newsletters.php> .

Session	Speakers	Video Links
Introduction – Chair - Dr Patrick Manu (UWE)	Welcome address Prof Paul Olomolaiye (UWE Bristol, Pro-Vice-Chancellor & Executive Dean) About CHOBE & ARCOM Dr Paul Chan (ARCOM & University of Manchester) About ARCC Network Roger Street (ARCC Network)	https://vimeo.com/223295899/9c7c30e8d1 https://vimeo.com/223295841/bf7a9eb654 https://vimeo.com/223295793/280da06fe1
Session A – About EPSRC & ESRC ECRs Grant Schemes Chair – Dr Colin Booth (UWE)	Talk by EPSRC & ESRC Portfolio Managers Dr Jakob Sprickerhof (EPSRC) Ms. Charlotte Dormer (ESRC)	https://vimeo.com/223296689/41920b40de https://vimeo.com/223296513/16fbee53c9
Session B - Making the Grant Application Chair – Dr Chika Udejaja (ARCOM & University of Salford)	Talk by EPSRC & ESRC ECR Grant Recipients Dr Ashish Shukla (Coventry University) Dr Patrick Manu (UWE Bristol) Dr Ian Ewart (University of Reading) Dr Vedran Zerjav (University College London)	https://vimeo.com/223295693/a7158f91cd https://vimeo.com/223296388/d7d3e272f4 https://vimeo.com/223296248/4c4a989e79 https://vimeo.com/223295581/c7c6e14d15
Session C - Evaluation of the Grant Application Chair – Dr Jessica Lamond (UWE)	Talk by EPSRC & ESRC Peer Review College Members Prof Lamine Mahdjoubi (UWE Bristol) Prof Andrew Dainty (Loughborough University) Prof Runming Yao (University of Reading) Dr Libby Schweber (University of Reading)	https://vimeo.com/223296139/f38826f782 https://vimeo.com/223296044/6c799eacdc https://vimeo.com/223296869/e0738da3ef https://vimeo.com/223295984/c976923f6f
Session D – Plan My Proposal Chair – Dr Paul Chan (ARCOM & University of Manchester)	Individual ECR Reflection & Small Group Discussion	<i>This session was not videotaped. In this session, the ECRs individually reflected on the contents of the three previous sessions and then started to map out what they would do next regarding applying for the EPSRC and ESRC ECR grants. Following the individual reflection, the ECRs discussed their plans in small groups. A member from each group subsequently fed back to the audience the keys things they would do after the workshop.</i>

Acknowledgement

We are grateful to [ARCOM](#) and [CHOBE](#) for sponsoring this workshop, and to the [Centre for Architecture and Built Environment Research at UWE](#) for hosting the workshop. We thank all the session speakers, session chairs, and [Mr Steve Brown \(UWE\)](#) for videotaping the workshop. We also thank [Dr Abdul-Majeed Mahamadu \(UWE\)](#), [Ms Karen Duka \(UWE\)](#), and [Ms Millicent Asah-Kissiedu \(UWE\)](#) for assisting with organising the workshop. To all the attendees, we also say, “Thank you for attending”. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the following individuals for their encouragement and support for this workshop: [Dr Simon Smith, University of Edinburgh](#); [Dr Apollo Tutesigensi, University of Leeds](#); and [Mr Kevin Burnside](#), [Ms. Elena Marco](#), [Professor Paul Olomolaiye](#) and [Professor Glenn Lyons \(UWE\)](#).