Russian and East European Studies at Oxford

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Appendix A

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING A GOOD PROJECT PROPOSAL

Your project proposal should include the following:

1. Project Title

2. Abstract: List the main objectives of the proposed research [up to 4000 chars]

3. Objectives: Describe the proposed research in simple terms in a way that could be publicised to a general audience [up to 4000 chars]

4. Beneficiaries: Describe who will benefit from the research [up to 4000 chars].

5. Dissemination: Describe plans to engage with potential users of the research, to communicate the results of the research to such users, and the potential value of the research to users outside the research community [up to 4000 chars]

6. Timeline: Description of the timetable of the research proposed [up to 4000 chars]

7. Ethics: Has consideration been given to any ethical matters raised by this proposal? Please explain what, if any, ethical issues you believe are relevant to the proposed research project, and which ethical approvals have been obtained, or will be sought if the project is funded? If you believe that an ethics review is not necessary, please explain your view [up to 4000 chars]

8. Requirements: Summary of Resources Required for Project

9. Other commitments: Please provide details of any other commitments that you will be undertaking during the period of the Fellowship.

10. Description of the project: Maximum 6 sides of A4 (minimum pt 10 character size) (see next section for further guidance).

Further guidance (extracted from the ESRC guidelines):

Ask yourself the following questions.

· Have I clearly **formulated the problem**, have I put it in context of contemporary scientific and theoretical debates, demonstrated the way in which my work will build on existing research and make a contribution to the area? Is there a clear and convincingly argued analytical framework? What will the research do, to whom or to what, and why?

· Have I established appropriate **aims and objectives**? Are they clear and concise, do they reflect intellectual aims and practical, attainable objectives?

· Have I provided a well-thought out **research design** in which there is a reasoned explanation of the scale, timing and resources necessary? Am I being realistic about these? Am I using the most relevant approach and the most appropriate methods? How will it relate to and deliver the objectives?

· What will my research design allow me to say in the **interpretation** of anticipated

results?

· Have I given a full and detailed description of the proposed **research methods**? Is there any innovation in the methodology I am planning to use? Am I developing any new methods or using established methods innovatively?

· If I am using **data collection** have I considered already existing data resources? Have I contacted the ESRC Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS)? Am I sure that access will be given where necessary, and do I have written confirmation of this? Am I convinced of its quality, validity, reliability and relevance? Have I considered the costs of cataloguing and preparing data for archiving?

· Have I demonstrated a clear and systematic approach to the **analysis of data** and how this fits into the research design?

· Have I thought about the **ethics** of what I am planning to do? Are there any sensitive issues or potential problems which need to be addressed? Have I fully consulted on these issues and obtained the approval of an ethical committee where required.

· Have I recognised and planned for the **skills and competencies** that will be required to bring the work to a satisfactory conclusion?

· Have I anticipated **potential difficulties**? Have I shown that I recognise these and discussed how they would be handled?

· Have I provided a **bibliography**? This will indicate your familiarity with the theoretical grounding and current state of the art of your subject.

· This proposal will be subject to the **critical appraisal** of my peers. Am I satisfied that I have fully defended my chosen research design and made it clear why others are not appropriate?

· Have I identified **potential users** of this research outside of the academic community; have I involved/consulted them in my planning? Have I arranged for their continuing involvement in the research process in an appropriate way?

· Have I considered the possibility of **co-funding** of the research, with ESRC being asked to provide only a proportion of the project funding?

· Have I provided a clear **dissemination strategy** for the research demonstrating how the research outcomes will be communicated to **all** interested parties including potential users of the research outside of the academic community?

Convey to the Board your genuine interest, understanding and enthusiasm for the work. Keep the following questions in mind as you plan:

· what is the story you are telling,

· what is the audience,

· why does it matter,

· why now,

· why you!

Up to 6 sides of A4 for the proposal are allowed. It is also important to make sure that you devote enough space in the proposal to describing the research you intend to conduct and the research design and methods - the Board finds it very frustrating when applicants devote pages to explaining why their proposed research is exciting but then

provide only a short and inadequate explanation of how they propose to explore this in practice.

Write in plain English. Your proposal is likely to be seen by many people, some of whom will not be versed in your particular specialisation. Detail and specification may necessitate the use of disciplinary or technical terminology and this will be clear to peer reviewers, but the ideas you wish to convey and your reasons for doing so should be apparent to a wide audience. By the same token, do take the trouble to check spelling, grammar and punctuation. These are all part of the quality of presentation and presentation matters!

Dissemination

The Council's new mission places emphasis on ensuring that researchers engage as fully as possible with the users of research outcomes. These may be other academics, government departments, public bodies, businesses, voluntary organisations or other interested parties. Try to consult with and involve people who could make a valuable contribution to the research and who could provide support and interest. Try to do this in the planning of the project and build dissemination activities into the structure of your research plan rather than give them passing reference as an after thought at the end.

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