

1.0 Grants & Awards Committee of the British Society of Soil Science – Terms of Reference

1.1 The British Society of Soil Science (BSSS) is a membership organisation whose mission is 'to advance the study of soil and to promote a better understanding of soil, nationally and internationally.' BSSS is a company limited by guarantee under The Companies Act 2006. It is also a Registered Charity (No. 1134456) under the Charity Act 2006. The Governing Documents for the Society are the [Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association](#) (the Articles) incorporated on 21 December 2009 and [Bye-Laws](#) adopted by the Trustee Board on 1 November 2017.

1.2 The Grants and Awards Committee support BSSS to deliver its aims as set out in the documents listed at 1.1. BSSS members are entitled to join and participate in the Grants and Awards Committee. Details of membership and a Code of Conduct for Members of the Society are set out in the Society's Governing Documents above.

2.0 Functions of the Grants and Awards Committee

2.1 The functions of the Grants and Awards Committee are:

- a) To assess and approve applications to BSSS for all types of grant funding
- b) To periodically review the range of grants offered by BSSS along with their objectives and eligibility criteria and to recommend to Council any changes or additions they consider would assist the society in achievement of its strategic plan
- c) In conjunction with the Executive Office, raise awareness of the range of grants and awards provided amongst BSSS members and non-members.

3.0 Grants and Awards Committee Members

3.1 The Grants and Awards Committee shall comprise a committee of between four and nine BSSS members usually including a Chair and Past Chair and member specifically representing the Brian Chambers Soils Fund Working Group. The Executive Director is a de facto member of the committee.

3.2 Members may also join on an ad hoc basis to contribute to specific Grants & Awards Committee activities.

3.3 The committee will choose one existing member to act as Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) champion and consider this alongside the committee's activities.

4.0 Method of Working

4.1 As far as possible, the Grants and Awards Committee shall be representative of society members and have a range of membership types represented on the committee.

4.2 A minimum of 50% of committee members is required to make the meeting quorate.

4.3 The Chair of the Grants and Awards Committee shall not hold the office of Chair for more than two years in succession but shall then be eligible for re-election to a different committee post.

4.4 Committee members may take parental leave of up to one year on the birth or adoption of their child. Committee members will be able to rejoin the committee with the same membership tenure as the day they left for leave.

4.5 Committee members may take leave of up to one year for caring responsibilities. Committee members will be able to rejoin the committee with the same membership tenure as the day they left for leave.

4.6 Committee members shall not hold their post for more than three years, but after three years shall be eligible for re-election.

4.7 A diverse representation of members on the committee is encouraged, in line with the Society's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

4.8 Elections of Grants and Awards committee members shall be carried out by the Grants and Awards committee. Nominations shall be submitted to a Grants and Awards committee meeting, where the Group should consider and agree the outcome for each nominee.

4.9 Nominations for the Grants and Awards Committee Chair should be submitted to a Grants and Awards committee meeting, where the Group should consider and agree their preferred Chair. The nomination for the preferred Chair should be submitted to the next BSSS Council meeting for ratification and an election should take place at the next General Meeting.

4.10 The committee must be quorate to elect new members.

4.11 If a committee member, including the Chair, does not attend 50% of meetings in any given year, the Chair may remove the committee member from their post. This decision should be made by the Chair in conjunction with the committee. In the case of the Chair, this decision will be made by the Society President.

4.12 The Grants and Awards Chair will be a member of the BSSS Council.

4.13 The Grants and Awards committee will meet at least twice annually.

4.14 All members of the Committee shall be Society members in good standing.

4.15 The Grants and Awards committee shall report to the Council and Trustee Board at least once in every financial year of the Society.

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5.0 Committee Operations

5.1 Members will independently assess grant and award applications as specified in the [relevant guidance](#), as and when applications are submitted.

5.2 Applications will be blind reviewed to avoid unconscious bias.

5.3 If a committee member becomes aware of a conflict of interest with any grant recipient or applicant, they must withdraw from the awarding process.

5.4 Grants will only be awarded once the committee is satisfied that:

- a) The application meets the published eligibility and other criteria
- b) The objectives of the application are relevant to soil science and the aims and objectives of the society as outlined in the current strategic plan
- c) The quality of the details supplied in the application meet all requirements as specified
- d) The sum applied for is appropriate to the applicant's needs and is within the published grant ceiling.

5.5 Four members of the Grants and Awards committee must agree the decision for it to be carried.

5.6 The Executive Office will inform applicants of the committee's decision and if relevant, will provide guidance on why the application was rejected.

5.7 The committee will request and approve a report from all successful candidates detailing:

- a) How the grant has been used
- b) The benefits derived from the grant
- c) The ways in which BSSS' support has been recognised and publicised.

If the committee is not satisfied with the submission, a revised report will be requested.

5.8 Each successful grant recipient should also present their poster or oral presentation at a BSSS Meeting (Regional groups, Annual or Early Career Researchers) within 12 months of grant being approved.

5.9 If the committee does not receive a report to the required standard, it will write to the institution of head of department, where relevant, asking for their involvement in reaching a satisfactory solution. If a satisfactory solution is not reached, the institution will be notified that no further applications will be approved from them, or their students, until such time as the issue is resolved.

5.10 As required, the Chair will recommend to Council changes of operating methods, process or funding patterns in light of external or internal factors.

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