

● Demand management - Funding the best social science in the most efficient and effective way: Response from the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

The Royal Geographical Society (with The Institute of British Geographers) is the learned society and professional body for geography. Formed in 1830, our Royal Charter is for 'the advancement of geographical science'. The Society is a charity that seeks to develop, promote and support the discipline of geography and its practitioners in the areas of research and higher education, teaching and fieldwork, policy and wider public engagement.

The Royal Geographical Society (with The Institute of British Geographers) welcomes this opportunity to comment on the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)'s consultation on "demand management - funding the best social science in the most efficient and effective way."

Q1. Which main demand management options are worthy of further development and why?

We recognise the current volume of submissions is unsustainable, and some form of demand management is appropriate. Amongst those who responded in the geographical community ((Heads of Geography Departments across the UK) there is a stronger support for a system that is based on individual researchers rather than institutional quotas or institutional penalties.

Q2. How might those options be further developed and refined?

No further information supplied.

Q3. Which, if any of the main demand management options, would you not consider for further development and why?

We hope that the ESRC will adopt an approach that does not rely on institutional quotas. Institutional quotas would necessitate the introduction of internal peer review systems in universities that are complex and expensive to organise. Additionally, there is a risk that institutional politics could have too great an effect on which proposals get reviewed by ESRC, or that this initial screening stage would not be as rigorous as the ESRC process. This would not be in the interest of social science generally, particularly if, for example, early career scholars were disadvantaged or if imaginative but riskier proposals fell at the first hurdle for 'safer' proposals.

Q4. Overall, which of the options offers the best opportunities to effectively manage demand whilst ensuring the flow of high-quality research applications?

A system based on individual researchers rather than institutional quotas or institutional penalties.

Q5. Are there any further options which are not included in this paper which should be considered by us as part of our demand management strategy?

No further information supplied.