

A checklist for funder experiments with partial randomisation



This checklist is meant as a support for funders looking to experiment with partial randomisation. It helps to ensure that all elements have been considered in the three phases of the experimental process.

1. Diagnose the problem.
2. Design the solution using partial randomisation.
3. Evaluate.

1

Diagnose the problem

A

What problem are you going to solve?

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B

Define the problems you want to solve in relation to:

- Applicants.
- Applications.
- Funded researchers.
- Funded projects.
- Reviewers' ability to distinguish middle field proposals.

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2

Design the solution using partial randomisation

- A** **Make sure partial randomisation is the right measure for the problems you have identified.** ☐
- B** **What are the expected outcomes?** ☐
 Keep in mind that partial randomisation mitigates: ☐
- Conservatism, lack of diversity in awarded applicants and applications. ☐
 - Reviewers' conscious or unconscious bias. ☐
 - Limited scientific expertise of review panel. ☐
 - Reviewers' fatigue. ☐
 - Grey zone dilemma. ☐
- C** **Will randomisation stand alone?**
 You might want to use partial randomisation together with other changes to your evaluation and selection procedure, e.g., anonymising applications and short applications. ☐
- D** **Check legal issues**
 Check that applying partial randomisation to the distribution of public funding is legal in your country (particularly for public funders). ☐

E

Choose the tool you will use for the randomised procedure and find out its cost.

Seek approval

- Prepare slides or bulleted documents including the facts, e.g., statistics on the gender, ethnicity, discipline, and geographical distribution of applicants and of funded projects.

- Summarise the main pros and cons about partial randomisation for your board. You might want to share the case studies from this manual.

Involve reviewers

11

Selection of reviewers

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Reviewer guidelines

2

Design the solution using partial randomisation (continued)

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|----------|--|--------------------------|
| J | Application guidelines
Explain the motivation, goals and selection procedure in the application guidelines. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| K | Drawing process
Decide who will physically do the draw or run the randomisation software. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| L | Film the physical draw
You might want to film the physical draw so everyone can see it in case of complaints. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| M | Save a list of funded projects
If you are using R or a similar software, make sure you save the list of funded projects also in a document, e.g., an Excel table, so it is available for later checking. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| N | Disclose who was selected
Decide whether you will disclose to the successful applicants who was selected by the reviewers and who by the lot. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3

Evaluate

A **How will you assess or verify the success of the experiment?**

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B **Take a decision on:**

- When the evaluation will start and end.
- Which aspects to evaluate.
- Whether the results of the evaluation will affect the continuation of the experiment.

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C • Who will carry out the evaluation.

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D **Collect feedback**

Collect feedback on the procedure from the reviewers and the applicants.

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Share your experience

Share your experience in publications or on your website for others to learn from it.

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