



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	EPSRC Programme Grants
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	To process, evaluate and assess Programme Grants from submission through to award. These proposals undergo the Programme Grant funding model.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	Programme Grant Scheme Owner, Programme Grant Contacts, BIT, EDI, panel members through panel feedback questionnaires.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Applicants, reviewers, panel members and internal staff
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	Feedback is sought from those involved in the process and policies are considered in light of feedback received.

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. The Research Councils have together developed the ambitious [RCUK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) to outline our collective aspirations for working with the research community, and partners throughout the sector. For policy changes, funding activities and events EPSRC will aim to:

- Select venues that are accessible and where possible accommodate any specific requirement in our planning and organisation of an initiative to support wider participation. This includes for applicants, reviewers, panel members and staff. Included in the interview invitation letter is a request for any access issues to be notified.
- All participants in the process are asked to inform staff if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation.
- Offer support for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#).
- Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities, advertise these widely to reach the largest possible audience.
- Support and encourage panel members to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions. Staff will work closely with the Panel Chair(s) to agree approaches that are designed to minimize opportunities for bias and improve transparency of the decision making process. This includes managing environmental conditions, such as providing appropriate breaks.
- Support flexible working of stakeholders.
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels. Staff will adhere to a mixed panel policy and endeavor to achieve the minimum 30% for the underrepresented gender on the panel.

- Abide by the principles of peer review
- Provide EPSRC staff with tailored unconscious bias training for Peer Review processes and clear guidance for assessors.
- Handle personal sensitive information in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability	Negative	<p>For applicants - all information provided is in written format</p> <p>For applicants – Inability to attend interview meetings, concerns about ability to attend these may put them off applying. Documents will be provided produced in black and white and in line with EPSRC formatting guidelines</p>	<p>Attendance at events is possible virtually. Applicants will be informed of this in the recruitment process.</p> <p>Timetables for virtual meetings will take into account individual circumstances.</p>
Gender reassignment	Negative	During interview stage, potential negative impact	<p>Unconscious bias training</p> <p>Ability to join virtually</p> <p>Gender neutral language will be used throughout.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact	No disclosure of marital status required for any stage of the process.	
Pregnancy and maternity	Negative	<p>For applicants – availability to apply to certain interview rounds.</p> <p>Extensive timelines</p> <p>Availability to attend future meetings.</p>	<p>Under certain circumstances, attendance to interviews is also possible virtually.</p> <p>Timetables for virtual meetings will take into account individual circumstances.</p>

Race	Negative	Potential risk –lack of diversity of ethnicity and race of applicants and successful candidates. Anyone, irrespective of race, is eligible to apply.	A candidate is not obligated to disclose their ethnicity. Unconscious bias training
Religion or belief	Potentially Negative All panel members will be asked for dietary or other requirements in advance of meetings.	Potential dietary requirements or other requirements (access to prayer facilities) for meetings. Risk of key dates clashing with religious holidays. https://www.timeanddate.com/holidays/uk/2020	Ensure religious observances are taken into account when meeting dates are chosen, and where possible that there is a prayer room available. Deadlines are made available and the call is continuously open, enabling applicants to plan around religious holidays. The dates of interview meetings will be chosen to avoid religious holidays where possible.
Sexual orientation	None	No disclosure of sexual orientation required for any stage of the process	
Sex (gender)	Negative	Lack of diversity in applicants Risk of bias in selection process	Gender neutral language will be used throughout and will be encouraged at meetings
Age	Negative	Due to ‘best with best’ aspect of this scheme, there could be a potential hindering aspect related to age Proposals will be reviewed and panel members selected irrespective of age. It will only be used to monitor the diversity of	Unconscious bias training

		applicants and will not be made available during the assessment process.	
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	Caring responsibilities	Recruitment is open over the COVID-19 lockdown period where many have additional caring responsibilities.	Efforts to increase flexible in as many as possible of the stages of the process have been put in place. Timetables for virtual meetings will take into account individual circumstances.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	<p>Yes. There have been several cases identified whereby the proposed activity could unfairly disadvantage some people. However, appropriate steps have been taken to mitigate this. COVID-19, at the time of writing, has led to many families having to take up childcare responsibilities. To mitigate this, the exercise deadlines have been extended and a more flexible approach has been introduced in an effort to remove any potential negative impact.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 to ensure we can support anyone who wishes to apply.</p>	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .		
2. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there	X	

<p>appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.</p>		
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<p>Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:</p>	Yes
<p>Date completed:</p>	17/6/2020
<p>Review date (if applicable):</p>	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Luis López-Bracey	When published	1	