

## Equality and Inclusion Impact Assessment – Stephen Hawking Fellowship

STFC and EPSRC uses equality and inclusion impact assessments as a tool to review our funding mechanisms, processes and practices to ensure they are not inadvertently presenting barriers to participation and to reduce the potential for unintentional bias.

The template below sets out the key elements of an Equality and Inclusion Impact Assessment that need to be documented.

Policy/activity being assessed	The Stephen Hawking Fellowship (SHF) Scheme
<p><b>1. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/activity</b></p>	<p>The SHF scheme aims to support excellent researchers who will make significant contributions to the field of theoretical physics and its interfaces with mathematical sciences and computer science as well as continue to spark public interest in the field(s). The applicants must demonstrate within their application how the Fellowship will support and enable their research agenda, develop their skills in public engagement and science communication, and clearly demonstrate that their skills and experience at the time of application match those outlined in the person specification.</p>
<p><b>2. Is the policy/activity relevant to equality and diversity?</b>  <i>(Advice should be sought from HR. If not relevant, record reasons and evidence; the remainder of the form need not be completed)</i></p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p><b>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?</b>  <i>(e.g. with relevant stakeholders)</i></p>	<p>STFC and EPSRC are dedicated to ensuring that the peer review process is open and inclusive. Those engaged in the process endeavor to conduct each stage in a fair manner without prejudice or bias. In line with this we follow the Nolan Principles.</p> <p>EPSRC and STFC have consulted with UK Research and Innovation and the Hawking family in relation to the scope of the scheme, drawing on relevant expertise from across the scientific areas involved.</p>
<p><b>4. Who is affected by the policy?</b></p>	<p>Stephen Hawking Fellowship applicants and potential applicants. Fellowship holders.</p>

<p><b>5. Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing actual impact of the policy</b></p>	<p>Staff running the call will, where possible, monitor delivery of each round including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual statistics on fellowship applicants, awards and success rates are gathered in respect of gender, age and ethnicity.</li> <li>• Reviewers and panel members are monitored by gender, age and ethnicity. Panel membership for each meeting is published on the STFC website and EPSRCs GoW</li> <li>• Monitoring of research areas supported through the call in the context of the wider landscape.</li> <li>• This equality impact assessment will be reviewed annually to identify any actions or interventions that are required to improve diversity and inclusion.</li> </ul>
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## Section 2 – Identifying Impact

As funders of research, EPSRC and STFC remain 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 we 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 available for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#). Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities, advertised these as 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.
- Ensure attendees and applicants have an opportunity to raise any specific requirements in advance
- 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 panels.
- Abide by the principles of peer review
- Provide unconscious Bias training for staff and clear guidance for assessors
- Handle personal sensitive information in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

<b>Group</b>	<b>Is there a potential for positive or</b>	<b>Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used</b>	<b>Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)</b>
<b>Disabilities</b>	Potential negative impact	Impact could vary on the nature of the disability. This includes physical, visual, auditory and neurological disabilities.  Data is collected regarding disability status at the application stage.	There is flexibility to make adjustments throughout the assessment process where appropriate for applicants, reviewers, panel members and staff. This may include alternative participation options such as the use of video conferencing.  Individuals are encouraged to contact staff to discuss the support available.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No known negative impact	N/A	N/A
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	No known negative impact	N/A	N/A
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Potential negative impact	Individuals may be on parental leave whilst the call is open, potentially affecting their awareness of this opportunity and ability to participate.  Panel members and applicants who are pregnant or on parental leave may find it difficult to travel to the venue and/or participate in meetings.	There will be multiple round of this call which will enable individuals on leave during earlier rounds to apply to a later round.  Clear timelines on the first round have been provided and will be provided for subsequent rounds to support potential applicants.  Individuals are encouraged to contact staff to discuss the support available.
<b>Race</b>	No known negative impact	N/A	N/A

<b>Religion or belief</b>	Potential negative impact	<p>The call coincides with a religious holidays</p> <p>Panel members or attendees may have specific dietary requirements due to religious belief.</p>	<p>The call coincides with a number of religious holidays, including Ramadan, Christmas and Easter. To minimize impacts the following steps have been taken:</p> <p>The call will open immediately after announcement to maximize time available for applicants.</p> <p>Deadlines for reviews will be amended and dates for prioritisation panels have been moved back to ensure there is no activities over the Christmas period.</p> <p>Individuals are encouraged to contact staff to discuss the support available, if there are other considerations staff need to be aware of.</p> <p>The criteria for selection of panel meeting venues includes a consideration of catering and additional facilities to enable any additional requirements.</p>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	No known negative impact	N/A	N/A
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	No known negative impact	N/A	N/A
<b>Age</b>	Potential impact	The fellowship is targeted at post-doctoral stage which could affect individuals from some age categories.	<p>There are no time bound eligibility criteria for this call, which focuses on the qualities of the applicant to determine suitability of the career stage via the person specification.</p> <p>Other opportunities are available via other schemes for individuals at other career stages.</p>

<p><b>Additional aspects (no covered by a protected characteristic)</b></p>	<p>Potentially negative impacts</p>	<p>Individuals with caring responsibilities or part time working patterns may require additional support or experience additional barriers to participation.</p> <p>Individuals returning from career breaks or in post following a career break may feel there are barriers to their participation.</p> <p>The call requires applicants, reviewers and panel members to digest large amounts of information, potentially creating high cognitive load.</p>	<p>The fellowship has been designed to be flexible and can be held part time, at a minimum level of 50% full time equivalent.</p> <p>In addition to support being available for those with caring responsibilities, such as childcare allowances and support within the requested package. The following additional changes have been made:</p> <p>The dates of the Interview panel have been moved back by a week recognizing proximity to half term</p> <p>There is an extended review process over the summer.</p> <p>Individuals are encouraged to recognize career breaks or periods of absence as part of their application.</p> <p>The call document highlights that proposals are welcomed from those returning to active research and those from non-standard career paths. Guidance on taking into account career breaks will be provided to reviewers and panel members.</p> <p>The call documents has been broken down into smaller packages to reduce cognitive load and improve clarity when reviewing the documents. Clear guidance will be provided for reviewers and panel members and staff will manage environmental conditions to minimize potential for bias.</p>
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Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	No. The application will be open to the wider UK community and applications will be reviewed and scored against assessment criteria. Reasonable adjustments will be made to the logistics to facilitate those with disabilities.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will <b>proceed</b> .		
2. You can decide to <b>stop</b> the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can <b>adapt or change</b> the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias	<b>x</b>	Changes have been made to the process and delivery of the call as stated above, therefore the call is ready to proceed.
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there 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 <b>proceed with caution</b> with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.		

**Completed by**

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