

Equality Impact Assessment – UK Research and Innovation Future Leaders Fellowships Scheme

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is committed to promoting equality and participation in all their activities, whether this is related to the work we do with our external stakeholders or whether this is related to our responsibilities as an employer. As a public body, we are also required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations when making decisions and developing policies. To do this, it is necessary to understand the potential impacts of the range of internal and external activities on different groups of people.

What is an Equality Impact Assessment and when might UKRI use it?

Equality Impact Assessments may be employed by UKRI as a tool to enable us to consider the likely impact of our strategies, policies and activity on different groups of people. For example, we may conduct an Equality Impact Assessment when developing a new scheme, or considering changes to an existing one. We expect that very rarely our actions will create barriers to participation. The assessment may however flag issues that are not of UKRI's making but we will, where it is in our remit to do so, recommend actions and adjustments. Some impacts may not be exclusive to the scheme or change that is being evaluated and may need to be addressed throughout our organisation. In some cases, we may not have enough expertise and we will consult with others.

Our leadership and building on good practice

It is our ambition to be recognised as a leader in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and to build on our record of achievements to date, following on from the RCUK, Innovate UK and HEFCE action plans. These plans are updated from time to time and Equality Impact Assessments may help us to prioritise actions.

Current good practice that is relevant to the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships Scheme includes our:

- *Grant terms and conditions*, including recognition for sick leave and all forms of parental leave
- Commitment to Unconscious Bias Training for all peer reviewers
- Annual publication of application and success rates by demographic. We commit to publish and evaluate application and success rates for Future Leaders Fellowships competitions after each round.

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships scheme
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships (UKRI FLF) will attract and support researchers and innovators with outstanding potential in Universities, businesses, and other research environments. Future Leaders Fellowships applicants may apply from within academic, business, or public sector organisations in the UK and from overseas, and may propose research based in any appropriate UK environment. The support offered will be long-term and flexible: up to seven years' support will be provided (with an option to end at 4 years), along with intellectual and financial freedom to develop and change research direction and partnerships over this period.</p> <p>These fellowships will be particularly important in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attracting or retaining the best researchers to work in the UK, offering a competitive package of support to bring new talent and ideas into the research base. • Encouraging researchers to explore new research opportunities, providing the long-term funding and flexibility to tackle difficult or multi-disciplinary areas, and a supportive, seamless, review and ongoing development process. • Supporting excellent research and innovation in new ways across industry, academia, and public services, funding the best eligible projects regardless of where they originate, and facilitating movement of people and projects between sectors. Cross-sector links and research collaborations in the UK and internationally will be encouraged.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>The initial concept for this programme originated with Sir John Savill (Chief Executive, MRC) and Phil Nelson (Chief Executive, EPSRC) and was discussed and encouraged by Sir Mark Walport (Chief Executive, UKRI) and was signed off for development by the UKRI Board in November 2017. Under the auspices of the RCUK/UKRI Research and</p>

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	<p>Innovation Strategy Advisory Board, a project team comprising senior representatives from across UKRI Councils, UKRI Strategy team and BEIS, working with the National Academies and other key stakeholders, developed the evidence base for intervention at this particular stage of the research career. As the scheme develops, leaders in the Higher Education and Business Sectors are being consulted. AdvanceHE have already provided advice and commented on the section on Race.</p>
<p>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>Early Career Researchers and Innovators who have the potential to be future leaders.</p> <p>This scheme will provide long-term stability and flexible funding. It will promote collaboration between universities, businesses and the public sector and overseas. Fellows will receive strong support from their host organisation to develop their career.</p> <p>The early stages of a research/innovation career are often marked by regular (either international, institutional or disciplinary) moves. International collaboration and mobility is associated with higher research impact and productivity¹. This scheme aims to stimulate and support these moves within a strongly supported framework and the objective of the EIA is to consider this particular fellowship scheme through this lens.</p>
<p>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>This is being developed in parallel with the delivery of the first round of investment, and will necessarily be advised by the outputs from the early learning from this programme.</p>

¹ Paragraph 3.3.3, *International Comparative Performance of the UK Research Base*, 2016, Elsevier/BEIS.

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 potential negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability (we include mental and physical disabilities)	Possibly, negative	<p>Movement and mobility, short or longer term, are key elements of the scheme. We expect that this will be harder to achieve for those with a disability.</p> <p>In addition, UK employment law requires employees to serve a minimum term before eligibility to paid sick leave. This is likely to impact on disabled applicants who may experience more sickness.</p> <p>The application system Je-S does not comply with disability accessibility schemes. There are no plans to update, in anticipation of a new application system being delivered by the RIFS (Research and Innovation Funding Service) project.</p>	<p>Care needs to be taken that applications from researchers who identify themselves as having a disability are assessed commensurate with their needs and opportunities.</p> <p>We will ensure that locations and venues for interviews are accessible to those with limited mobility, and are supportive of those applicants with cognitive impairment.</p> <p>Hosts must make reasonable adjustments as required to support their fellows.</p> <p>We ask that UK employers do not apply a minimum qualifying period for paid sick leave.</p> <p>We will publish and review application and success rates after each round and consider if additional steps need to be taken to reach all eligible applicants.</p>
Gender reassignment	Possibly	Using government guidance for employers we think we need to consider:	UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature. All UKRI fellowships allow extensions to the fellowship to take account

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		<p>Absence as a result of medical treatment or other absence related to transition.</p> <p>Adjustment of UKRI records (including Gateway to Research) and any communication materials (case studies etc).</p>	<p>of absences due to medical/compassionate leave as a result of reassignment.</p> <p>As the main UKRI terms and conditions are currently written this would be done under the 'exceptional circumstances' clause at the discretion of the Research Council. The Future Leaders Fellowships team will be advised to automatically consider this an exceptional circumstance. In parallel we will work with the UKRI Grants Business as Usual Group (GBAUG) to move towards changing the wording within the main UKRI terms and conditions.</p> <p>We will not refer to this as sickness absence.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	Possibly, negative (assumed that we are considering long term relationships, whether they are formally recognised under law such as marriage, or not)	An (international) career move can impact on partners and dependants. In our experience, in the case of physical relocation, the partner often needs to relocate their career as well.	We will ask all employers to provide such a service. Where there is not yet such a provision, organisations can approach UKRI for sign posting.

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		Data from the UK HESA database suggests that the majority of researchers holding a UK work visa is male. The UK allows 'dependants' of visa holders to work on that same visa, but entering a new labour market is not always straightforward. This uncertainty and change could have an impact on families.	
Pregnancy and maternity	Possibly, negative (assume all parental leave irrespective of sexual orientation. Where the response refers to pregnancy we include surrogacy and adoption as well).	There are structural and financial impediments to taking parental leave: UK law requires employees to serve a minimum term before they become eligible for paid parental leave (over and above statutory benefits). New starters or their partners who fall pregnant or are pregnant at the time of application would thus receive little pay during their parental leave. Some employers have moved to a nil qualifying period for maternity or parental leave in recognition of this detriment.	UKRI ask that UK employers do not apply a minimum qualifying period for paid parental leave (in all its forms, without reference to sexual orientation) for the FLF scheme.
Race	Possibly, negative and positive	To date, relatively little is known about Race in Research and Innovation.	We have consulted AdvanceHE (formerly Equality Challenge Unit) to learn more about race in Higher Education

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		<p>Successful submissions to the UK Race Equality Charter are publicly available and suggest that BME researchers are at a disadvantage when considered for recruitment, promotion, pay and development.</p> <p>HEFCE research shows that BME researchers are less likely than their counterparts to progress to a postdoctoral research career. The impediments at future career stages are not yet known but representation of BME researchers at the more senior levels of academia suggests that this attrition continues later on.</p> <p>Non-UK BME staff have better career outcomes than UK-domiciled BME staff. UK-domiciled BME researchers are somewhat more likely to be working at non-research intensive universities².</p>	<p>We will publish and review application and success rates after each round and consider if additional steps need to be taken to reach all eligible applicants.</p>

² HESA 2016-7 staff record, comparing Russell Group mission universities to post-92 mission universities, (7.9% v 9% resp., 'teaching and research contracts').

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		As the scheme aims to attract researchers from around the world it is likely that national and ethnic diversity will be positively affected.	
Religion or belief	No		
Sexual orientation	Not enough information to assess		
Sex (gender)	Yes, negative and positive	For a fuller discussion of gender vis-à-vis mobility see above. Fellowships are targeted at Early Career Researchers and in several fields we start to see evidence of a decrease in female applicants at this career stage ³ . Increased funding that is flexible in nature could increase the number of opportunities available to women researchers in our sector.	UKRI will publish and review application and success rates after each round. We will work to understand and describe the composition of the applicant pool and, in time, will set a gender diversity target.
Age	Possible indirect impact.	Fellowships are targeted at Early Career Researchers who tend to be younger in age. Increased funding may go	Assessment of candidates will be against the objective criteria for the scheme, commensurate with the opportunities available

³ <https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/publications/rcuk-diversity-headline-narratives-march2017-pdf/>

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		<p>towards increasing career progression for researchers at that career stage.</p> <p>Traditionally, career stage was measured by the number of years that have passed since completion of the PhD. This disadvantages those who have differing career paths which may include 'discipline hopping', careers breaks, flexible working patterns etc.</p>	<p>to the applicant, and not based on the years elapsed since completing a PhD (or indeed whether a PhD was undertaken: in some disciplines as this is not a pre-requisite for an academic career). As well as advantageous to underrepresented groups, early evidence from MRC shows that this encourages interdisciplinary researchers to apply.</p>

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	As illustrated above	
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	X	As above
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 proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.		
Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	Yes	
Date completed:	FINAL: 04/06/2018	
Review date (if applicable):	After Round 2.	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Linda Holliday	January	1	UKRI Shadow EDI group discussion: suggested changes to descriptions of possible impact of the scheme on disability, gender reassignment and age.
Linda Holliday	February/March	2	Future Leaders Project Board: Contextualise EIA and draw out existing good practice from across the Research Councils.
David McAllister	March	3	Revisions based on Board discussions
Linda Holliday	April	4	Revisions based on discussions with Advance HE. Other administrative changes such as hyperlink updates.
Linda Holliday	April	5	Final revisions for sign off from Programme Board.
Linda Holliday	June	FINAL	Approved by Programme Board
Kirsty Grainger	July	FINAL Updated July 18	Programme Lead – reviewed, minor changes to wording for clarity.