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**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed** | Sustainable Manufacturing – Full Proposal Stage |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event** | Aim of this call is to fund awards focussed on sustainable manufacturing research. By this we mean research related to:   * Resource efficiency and multi-level optimisation * Design and manufacturing for a more circular economy * More efficient recycling and recovery of products and materials |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)* | * Manufacturing the Future Theme * Manufacturing the Future Strategic Advisory Team |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?** | * Applicants invited to submit a full proposal * Research office institutions/staff * External reviewers and panel members |
| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?** | Outcomes will be submitted through ResearchFish; these could be used for an impact study if appropriate. The EIA will be monitored throughout the activity to ensure that it is being followed and remains fit for purpose. |

As a funder of research, EPSRC 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](https://epsrc.ukri.org/links/councils/uk-research-and-innovation-ukri/diversity-ukri/) 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.
* Offer support available for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/caringresponsibilities/)
* Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities
* Ensure attendees have an opportunity to raise any specific requirements in advance e.g. cover letter and joining instructions
* Support for flexible working of stakeholders
* Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels
* Abide by the Principles of peer review
* Unconscious Bias training for EPSRC staff and clear guidance for assessors
* Handle personal sensitive information in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018

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| **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** | Potential Positive  Potential negative | We expect the panel to be held virtually. This will remove any accessibility issues associated with a physical meeting.  The virtual environment could disproportionately disadvantage attendees with some disabilities. If held in person, accessibility or travel for panel members may be a concern.  Uncertainty over whether panel is to be held virtually or not could put some panellists off attending. | Any reasonable adjustments for specific requirements will be made. We reserve the right to change the timetable of the meeting to take into account individual circumstances and allow additional time for breaks and technical issues.  Documents will be produced in line with EPSRC formatting guidelines.  Panel is likely to be virtual. If not fully virtual, the option to attend virtually will be available.  Accessibility will be considered if/when choosing a physical venue. Panellists will be informed if a panel meeting is to be held virtually as far in advance as possible.  We will ensure regular breaks to minimise sensory/ cognitive load.  If required, we will be able to use the accessibility features of Zoom (e.g. supports many common screen readers; closed captioning options, etc.) to aid visually impaired participants |
| **Gender reassignment** | It is not expected that this policy will have any particular impact. |  | Gender neutral language will be used throughout and will be encouraged at panel meetings. |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | It is not expected that this policy will have any particular impact. |  | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. |
| **Pregnancy and maternity** | Potential Negative | Applicants may be on parental leave during the application process or grant. Panel members may have additional requirements associated with caring responsibilities or pregnancy. | Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists as far in advance as possible.  Panel isare likely to be virtual. If not fully virtual, the option to attend virtually will be available.  Accessibility will be considered when choosing physical venue. Panellists will be informed if a panel meeting is to be held virtually as far in advance as possible.  We reserve the right to change the timetable of the meeting to take into account individual circumstances and allow additional time for breaks and technical issues.  EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these. |
| **Race** | It is not expected that this policy will have any particular impact. |  | Panellists will be made aware of actions to take to minimise the effect of unconscious biases, in line with standard EPSRC policies. |
| **Religion or belief** | Potential negative | Participation in panels could be affected by the dates of religious holidays. – [2021 religious festivals - Resources - The Inter Faith Network (IFN)](https://www.interfaith.org.uk/resources/religious-festivals) | Date of panel will be chosen to avoid religious holidays where possible.  Call will be left open long enough that completion of proposals does not conflict with any religious holidays. |
| **Sexual orientation** | It is not expected that this policy will have any particular impact. |  | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. |
| **Sex (gender)** | Panel member selection – positive  Assessment process – potentially positive |  | Existing EPSRC policies regarding diversity of panel members and assessment of proposals will be followed. Panellists will be made aware of actions to take to minimise the effect of unconscious biases, in line with standard EPSRC policies.  Gender neutral language will be used throughout and will be encouraged at panel meetings. |
| **Age** | It is not expected that this policy will have any particular impact. |  | Efforts will be made to make panellists aware of unconscious biases, in line with standard EPSRC policies. |
| **Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)** | Inability of panel members to attend due to caring responsibilities – potentially negative | Applicants and panel members may have reduced availability due to COVID-19 pandemic if schools have to close or they have to care for a vulnerable person. | Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists as far in advance as possible.  Date of panel will be chosen with the dates of school holidays taken into account.  We reserve the right to change the timetable of the meeting to take into account individual circumstances and allow additional time for breaks and technical issues.  EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these. |
|  | Zoom Panel Meetings – Potentially Negative effect on ability of panels to uphold principles of peer review | Panellists may experience higher cognitive load than at an in-person panel. This could increase the likelihood of unconscious bias.  Panellists may find it difficult to engage with panel process due to unfamiliarity with the technology. | Guidance will be provided to panellists – best practice and tools that can be used such as the hand raising and mute functions.  ‘Test runs’ will be offered to those who have not used Zoom before. Contingency plans will be put in place if Zoom cannot be used.  Extra time will be allowed for panel to assist with ‘short term’ technical difficulties.  Learning from virtual panels held prior to this will be incorporated to improve the process. |

**Evaluation:**

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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? | This funding activity should not discriminate or unfairly advantage people provided standard EPSRC policies are followed and deadlines and panel dates are made available sufficiently far in advance. | |
| **Final Decision:** | **Tick the relevant box** | **Include any explanation / justification required** |
| 1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will **proceed**. |  |  |
| 1. You can decide to **stop** the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups |  |  |
| 1. You can **adapt or change** the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias | √ | EPSRC policies regarding panel assessments will be followed. |
| 1. 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. |  |  |

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| **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:** | **30/4/21** |
| **Review date** (if applicable): |  |

**Change log**

| **Name** | **Date** | **Version** | **Change** |
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| Stephen Gilligan | 30/4/21 | 1 | Version on publication. |
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