

**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed** | Manufacturing: Instrumenting the Future – Call |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event** | To fund proposals focussed on producing novel manufacturing instrumentation. This is a one-stage process. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders* | This call has been discussed within the Manufacturing the Future (MtF) team and the MtF Strategic Advisory Team (SAT). There has also been consultation with Research Infrastructure. |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?** | Those who work in the manufacturing research community. Also, specifically those who are asked to review proposals and be a panel member. |
| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?** | The results of this call will be reviewed within the team and the SAT. If appropriate ResearchFish and other outputs could be used for an impact study and/or evaluation. |

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. 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](https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/caringresponsibilities/).
* 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.

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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** | Potentially negative  Potentially positive | Access to events for panel members  Accessibility issues associated with a physical meeting could be removed with holding the panel meeting virtually | All panellists will be asked to inform EPSRC if they have specific requirements and reasonable adjustments will be made.  The venue for the prioritisation panel will be chosen with any requirements considered.  Panellists will be informed if a panel meeting is to be held virtually as far in advance as possible. If this happens, we reserve the right to change the timetable of the meeting to allow for individual circumstances and additional time for breaks and technical issues.  Full guidance in call document of EPSRC’s policies. |
| **Gender reassignment** | No known negative impact |  | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.  Gender neutral language will be used throughout and encouraged during the peer review process – at both review stage and the panel. |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | No known negative or positive impact |  | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. |
| **Pregnancy and maternity** | Potentially negative | Participation in activity (as applicant, reviewer, or panel member) could be restricted due to availability | Accommodations will be made for individuals if required at all stages of the process.  Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance as early possible.  EPSRC policies for offering support to those support with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these.  Panellists will be informed if a panel meeting is to be held virtually as far in advance as possible. If this happens, we reserve the right to change the timetable of the meeting to take into account individual circumstances and allow additional time for breaks. |
| **Race** | Potentially negative |  | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.  Appropriate language (written and spoken) will be used throughout.  Actions will be taken to minimise the effect of unconscious biases, especially during the peer review process when identity of the applicant is known. |
| **Religion or belief** | Potentially negative |  | Date of the panel meeting will be checked and chosen to avoid clashes with major religious events where possible.  The call will be open for as long as possible to allow for completion of applications. |
| **Sexual orientation** | No known negative or positive impact |  | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. |
| **Sex (gender)** | Positive – panel member selection  Potentially negative – assessment process | EPSRC policy for 30% panel membership target for those in the under-represented gender | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed regarding panel member selection – positive action will be taken.  Gender neutral language will be used throughout (written and spoken) and encouraged during the peer review process – at both review stage and the panel. This is part of the actions taken to minimise the effect of unconscious biases. |
| **Age** | No known negative or positive impact |  | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed including minimising effects of unconscious bias equating age and experience.  Appropriate terminology will be encouraged during the peer review process. For example, not using words such as ‘young.’ |
| **Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)** | Caring responsibilities – potentially negative | Panellists and applicants may have reduced availability due to COVID-19 pandemic if they must care for a vulnerable person or schools close  as part of Government Guidelines. | In mitigation, closing date for this call falls outside the school summer holiday period. Applicants have 11 weeks (from opening to closing date) to submit their proposal.  Peer review stage is being carried out over a longer period of time to assist with reviewer workload.  Dates for the panel will be outside of school holidays wherever possible.  Panellists will be informed in advance if a panel meeting is to be held virtually.  Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists as far in advance as possible. |
|  | Zoom Panel Meetings – Potentially Negative |  | Guidance will be provided to panellists on best practice and tools that can be used such as the hand raising and mute functions.  Extra time will be allowed to assist with cognitive load and ‘short term’ technical difficulties.  Contingency plans will be put in place if Zoom cannot be used.  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? | There is a potential, as outlined above, that some individuals may be disadvantaged. | |
| **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 |  |  |
| 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. | ✓ | This activity must go ahead and so everything has been done to be as fair and flexible as possible to all applicants. We will promote and inform the community of this call as early as possible, and take personal circumstances into due account when necessary. |

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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:** | 16/06/2021 |
| **Review date** (if applicable): |  |

**Change log**

| **Name** | **Date** | **Version** | **Change** |
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| Becky Cheesbrough | When published | 1 |  |