# Equality and Inclusion Impact Assessment

| 1. Policy / activity being assessed | Nuclear Physics Feasibility Call 2021  
A small grants (<250k per grant at 80% FEC, up to 800k in total) call to fund research and development projects in the nuclear physics area |
| 2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy / activity | This funding scheme is intended to develop the capacity and capabilities needed to underpin UK science and technology leadership in future Nuclear Physics projects. This call will provide funding for research and development projects which have the potential to enable STFC to deliver the future science programme.  
The aim of the scheme is to identify project opportunities that have come out of the Nuclear Physics Roadmap and provide a small level of support to a few projects that have the potential to be further developed into longer term project that would be considered by STFC.  
Subject to budgets and affordability, STFC ultimately expects an additional larger project to be selected for support through a Science Board led activity. Projects that get supported through this scheme will not be automatically be supported beyond this phase. |
| 3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? | STFC is dedicated to ensuring that the peer review process is open and inclusive. Those engaged in the process endeavour to conduct each stage in a fair manner, without prejudice or bias, in line with this we follow the Nolan Principles. Additionally, comments and suggestions received as part of the peer review survey are implemented where possible to improve the process.  
The current scheme is based on previous Project Research and Development Calls which was run until 2016, when it was temporarily paused. A review of the pause in was carried out in 2020. This review was carried out by an external panel. Recommendations from this review were taken forward where appropriate for this nuclear physics specific call. |
### For Applicants:
- The call is advertised widely to reach the largest possible audience
- The call text and guidance provides detailed guidelines to Applicants about the process and links to the Research Grants Handbook, which has clear eligibility and assessment criteria
- STFC will make available hard copies of documents when required
- The STFC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites
- STFC will support Applicants throughout the process, from pre-submission right through to informing them of the outcome.

### For Panel Members:
- Pre-meeting discussions take place, STFC staff will work closely with the Panel Chair to agree approaches that are designed to minimise opportunities for bias and improve transparency of the decision making process
- A presentation on Objective Decision making will be presented reminding panel members of the roles and responsibilities required for them and office staff and to highlight best practice.
- STFC will ensure that assessment criteria are clear and easily accessible throughout the process, including at the meeting.
- Everyone involved in the decision-making process is aware of Unconscious Bias and encouraged to undertake training.
- STFC endeavour to achieve the minimum 30% female participation and will justify if this isn’t the case. The gender balance for of the panel in unknown at this stage as there is a need to receive expression of interests to appropriately manage any conflicts before agreeing the panel membership/composition.
- The panel will take place virtually via zoom
- STFC enable participation for people with flexible working patterns, including reduced working hours
- Panel members are asked to inform STFC if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation
- STFC will schedule appropriate breaks and provide refreshments for Panel members

### For STFC Staff:
- All STFC staff involved in the process will be aware of unconscious bias, and will raise awareness of conditions that may impact upon objective decision making.
### 4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Potential for positive or negative impact?</th>
<th>Examples of any evidence/data used</th>
<th>Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability</td>
<td>Yes – negative impact</td>
<td></td>
<td>STFC will take all reasonable steps to make adjustments to the assessment process in order to enable participation. As examples, this may include the use of video conferencing or equivalent tools, tailored timing of the meeting schedule, or provision of specific facilities to enable an applicant or panel member to be comfortable in the meeting environment. During the Covid-19 pandemic, panel meetings will be held via videoconferencing facilities such as Zoom (the UKRI Primary VC choice). STFC will take all reasonable steps to make adjustments to enable participation in virtual meetings. This can include, for example, use of screen readers, closed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender reassignment</td>
<td>Information regarding gender reassignment is not made available throughout the peer review process.</td>
<td>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may</td>
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<tr>
<td>Area</td>
<td>Answer</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Additional Information</td>
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<td>Marriage or civil partnership</td>
<td>Yes – negative impact</td>
<td>Bias may be voiced in relation to new partners starting a family therefore not given as a high a priority</td>
<td>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity, Nursing mothers, Caring responsibilities?</td>
<td>Yes – negative impact</td>
<td>Panel members who are pregnant or on parental leave may find it difficult to access the venue and/or participate in meetings.</td>
<td>For virtual meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic, STFC will make all reasonable efforts to ensure the timing of the meeting is convenient for any requirements relating to the current homeworking environment, for example, adjusted working hours, caring and childcare responsibilities. Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance as early possible. STFC consult with all Panel members to understand and cater for their requirements for participation. As a general principle, venues are easily accessible to main rail links.</td>
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<td>Race</td>
<td>Yes – negative impact</td>
<td>Information regarding race is not made available throughout the peer review process. However, it may be possible that panel members already know this information or could endeavour to seek it out.</td>
<td>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</td>
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<td>Religion or belief</td>
<td>Yes – negative impact</td>
<td>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</td>
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</table>
| Table | Panel members may be unable to participate in meetings due to religious observances  
Panel members or attendees may have specific dietary requirements due to religious belief. | Consideration will be given to the timing of panel meetings so that Panel members (applicants) from different religious communities can attend if requested.  
STFC consult with all Panel members to understand and cater for their requirements for participation. Ensure the venue caters for all dietary requirements. |
| Sexual orientation | Yes – negative impact | Information regarding sexual orientation is not made available throughout the peer review process. However, it may be possible that panel members already know this information or could endeavour to seek it out.  
Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review. |
| Sex (gender)$^2$ | Yes – negative impact | Panel members, reviewers may criticise track record, publication history which could be as a result of extended maternity, paternity leave.  
Negative perceptions of an applicant’s gender may be expressed by a peer reviewer or a panel member.  
STFC are committed to ensuring that Panel Chairs are briefed on how to handle such situations.  
Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review. |
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       | Yes – negative impact | Panel members, reviewers may cite age in terms of lack of experience or in terms of near retirement | Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.

Appropriate terminology will be encouraged during the peer review process. For example, not using words such as ‘young.’

The Assessment criteria for Nuclear Physics Feasibility call are not linked to age |

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1 ‘A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person’s sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. Gender reassignment also includes a person who identifies as non-binary or gender fluid.’

2 Although the definitions of the Equality Act 2010* are set out as per above comment, at UK Research and Innovation we recognise all gender identities and sexualities including asexual and intersex people. The definition of gender reassignment was extended in September 2020 to include people who identify as non-binary or gender fluid – recognising that gender is a spectrum.