

**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed**
 | Financial Service Sector NetworkPlus  |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event**
 | To fund a high quality NetworkPlus that will underpin new academic – business partnerships within the Financial Services sector.  |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)*
 | The funding opportunity has been developed in consultation with a diverse set of financial services stakeholders including academia, industry, regulators and colleagues from across UKRI.  |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?**
 | Academics and businesses that perform work within or relevant to the Financial Services sector.  |
| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?**
 | The successful NetworkPlus will be required to set up an independent advisory board with a EPSRC project officer in attendance. The successful grant will also have to submit annual progress reports. |

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 impact |  | **Every attempt will be made to accommodate panel members’ and iterviewees’ accessibility requirements ahead of and during the panels** |
| **Gender reassignment** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Pregnancy and maternity** | Potentially negative impact |  | **The assessment panel will be held online to increase accessibility to panel members with mobility impairments or caring responsibilities; support is made available at EPSRC for those with caring responsibilities.** |
| **Race** | Potentially negative impact |  | **Unconscious bias** **Briefing will be given** **as part of the panel** **guidance and panel** **presentation.** **EPSRC presence at** **assessment meetings** **and during interviews** **acts as an additional** **assurance to help** **ensure unbiased peer** **review.** |
| **Religion or belief** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Sexual orientation** | No known negative impact |  |  |
| **Sex (gender)** | Potentially negative impact |  | **In line with EPSRC policy assessment panels will be mixed-gender, with a target of 30% for the underrepresented gender.****Unconscious bias** **Briefing will be given** **as part of the panel** **guidance and panel** **presentation.** **EPSRC presence at** **assessment meetings** **and during interviews** **acts as an additional** **assurance to help** **ensure unbiased peer** **review.** |
| **Age** | Potentially negative impact | Researchers that appear younger may be disadvantaged at interview. It may be incorrectly assumed they do not have the necessary experience and required track record.  | **Unconscious bias** **briefing will be given** **as part of the panel** **guidance and panel** **presentation.** **EPSRC presence at** **assessment meetings** **and during interviews** **acts as an additional** **assurance to help** **ensure unbiased peer** **review.****Panel members are briefed to make clear that they should be assessing the application in front of them and not reading between the lines. They should assess an individual’s capability to deliver their proposed network.** |
| **Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)** | No known negative impact |  |  |

**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? | A number of potentially negative impacts have been identified and considered as part of the call design. Reasonable adjustments will be made and by adhering to the standard peer review principles the risks have been/ will be mitigated as far as possible.  |
| **Final Decision:** | **Tick the relevant box** | **Include any explanation / justification required** |
| 1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will **proceed**.
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| 1. You can decide to **stop** the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups
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| 1. You can **adapt or change** the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias
 | X | Refer to the mitigations outlined above.  |
| 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:**  | **18/08/2021** |
| **Review date** (if applicable): |  |

**Change log**

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