

**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed** | UKRI-Catapult Academic Engagement Network Plus |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event** | This funding opportunity will provide a mechanism to better enable and stimulate the connections between the UK research base and the Catapult Centres, to promote a more visible and impactful research collaboration ecosystem. The Network Plus will provide brokerage and promote mobility between the academic community and the Catapults, and deliver the flagship Researcher in Residence awards. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)* | Engagement across UKRI councils  Engagement with the Catapult centres |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?** | UKRI research community and the Catapult Network |
| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?** | The assessment process has been designed to  ensure compliance with UKRI’s principles for peer review.  Monitoring and evaluation has been built into the call – the successfully funded Network will work with UKRI to establish a suitable monitoring and evaluation approach and KPIs |

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** | Potential negative impact | For applicants – all information provided is in a written format.  For panel members – access requirements for panel meeting. | Funding opportunity available on website in line with EPSRC formatting guidelines.  External panel to be held remotely and reasonable adjustments made to logistics to support participation (e.g. live transcript during virtual panel). |
| **Gender reassignment** | Potential negative impact | Gender specific language within communications | Gender neutral language will be used throughout and will be encouraged at panel meetings. |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | No known negative impact | No disclosure of marital status required for any stage of the process | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process. |
| **Pregnancy and maternity** | Potential negative impact | For applicants – relatively short timescales for opening of the call affect ability to participate e.g. if on parental leave.  For panel members – additional requirements for those with caring responsibilities or pregnancy | Alongisde call going live, frequent comms using social media channels and netowks will be prioritised to enhance the visibility of this activity.  Expert panels to be held remotely to remove travel requirements.  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** | Potential negative impact | Potential risk – lack of diversity of ethnicity and race of panel members and/or applicants | Efforts will be made to convene an external panel which is ethnically diverse in line with EPSRC peer review guidance. The scheme is open to all eligible UK researcher organisations. |
| **Religion or belief** | Potentially negative impact | Participation could be affected by coincidence with religious holidays | EPSRC endeavours to select panel dates and proposal batching dates that are cognisant of major holidays. |
| **Sexual orientation** | No known negative impact | No disclosure of sexual orientation required for any stage of the process | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process. |
| **Sex (gender)** | Potentially negative impact | Gender diversity of the assessment panels. | Efforts will be made to convene an external panel which mixed gender in line with EPSRC peer review guidance. |
| **Age** | No known negative impact | No disclosure of age required for any stage of the process. | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of the process. |
| **Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)** |  | Potential mitigation of sensory/cognitive overload by holding panel virtually rather than in person (dependent on individual circumstances) | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed at all stages of 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? | Several risks and potential biases have been identified that could potentially have a negative impact on both the applicants and the panel, predominantly:   * Disability * Parental or other caring responsibilities   Several risks and potential biases have been considered when designing the call and have been mitigated as far as possible. | |
| **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 | x | We have taken steps to mitigate the barriers we have identified. |
| 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:** | **13/09/2021** |
| **Review date** (if applicable): |  |

**Change log**

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