



**Engineering and
Physical Sciences
Research Council**

EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Lead energy demand research as the Energy Demand Champion Funding Opportunity
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	UKRI are looking for an Energy Demand Champion to lead the next stage of energy demand research in the UK.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	Internal discussions with Head of Theme in Environment (ESRC). Head of Energy and Decarbonisation and EDI representative (EPSRC). Deputy Directors from both councils have been involved in writing this funding opportunity
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Applicants for the role of Energy Demand Champion Panel members for the Energy Demand Champion Call 2021. EPSRC and ESRC staff delivering and attending the sift panel meeting for the Energy Demand Champion Call. EPSRC and ESRC staff conducting interviews for the call 2021
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	Lessons Learnt will be gathered by the portfolio managers, and the scheme itself will be in regular contact with UKRI staff throughout the grant lifetime. It will be regularly monitored with annual documents and advisory boards.

Standard Grant Terms and Conditions:

- UKRI standard Grant Terms and Conditions comply with UK equality legislation and include provisions designed to mitigate against potential negative impacts (e.g. sick pay, parental and adoption leave, the possibility of part-time and flexible working, and grant extensions).
- Research Organisations are subject to equality legislation and have a duty to comply with it. RGC 8 states that 'The Research Organisation must assume full responsibility for staff funded from the grant and, in consequence, accept all duties owed to and responsibilities for these staff, including, without limitation, their terms and conditions of employment and their training and supervision, arising from the employer/employee relationship.' Universities are therefore required to make reasonable adjustments as required to support their staff.

As a funder of research, UKRI 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](#).
- 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 endeavour 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.

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	Je-S does not currently comply with disability accessibility schemes. This will be picked up by the Funding Service (TFS_ project. Applicants should seek support from their RO's research support office.	Solicit information from panel participants (in confidence) about any additional requirements they may have in order to fully participate. Under current COVID-19 restrictions, all meetings will take place virtually via Zoom and will include closed captions for those who are hearing impaired. The considerations listed below will be taken into account only if working conditions change which means that meetings take place in person.

			<p>Depending on the needs identified, considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accessibility for wheelchair users and people with impaired mobility;• Induction loops for the hearing impaired;• Adequate lighting, alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers for the visually impaired;• Dietary restrictions for those with coeliac, diabetes etc <p>Provision of documents in sans-serif, dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoiding colours, lighting etc that may trigger migraines, epilepsy;• Ensuring that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda;• Ensuring sufficiently bright and spacious rooms;• Ensure that venues are easily accessible to main transport links.• Consider (on a case-by-case basis) paying T&S for carers or support workers to attend alongside the participant, where this is required and not covered by the Individual's own employment contract.• Where there are particular constraints consider opportunities for participants to engage in a different way (via video-link, Zoom or
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			teleconference for instance).
Gender reassignment	Potentially negative	UKRI records may show the wrong gender. Trans people may be absent from work as a consequence of transition.	Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted. UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature and absence as a result of medical treatment. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the RO's sick policy and strongly encourage Ros to treat absence relating to transition like any other sick absence
Marriage or civil partnership	No		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative	Parental leave may prevent people from attending the panel, or feeling that they cannot participate due to caring for children/attending appointments.	Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave, and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions. We shall ensure the use of gender-neutral language – parental leave. The costs of additional childcare for grantholders, beyond that required to meet the normal contracted requirements of the job, and that are directly related to the project, may be requested as a directly incurred cost if the institutional policy is to reimburse them. However, childcare costs associated with normal

			<p>working patterns may not be sought. (See RCUK FEC FAQs)</p> <p>If the Panel meeting is taking place via Zoom, breaks will be provided to provide breaks for breastfeeding/expressing mothers if necessary. If the Panel meeting is not taking place via Zoom, consider whether the venue for the commissioning panel meeting is able to provide facilities for breastfeeding/expressing mothers if necessary. If the Panel meeting is not taking place via Zoom, reimbursement of additional childcare costs (on a case-by-case basis) if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend (this could include childcare at the venue, additional hours of childcare in the child's usual setting or paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children)</p>
<p>Race</p>	<p>Potentially negative</p>	<p>There could be potential for discrimination because it is known to somebody (either a peer reviewer, panel member, a research applicant) has a particular race.</p>	<p>Whilst panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on expertise, we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership. Final decisions take into account trying to balance the panels by gender and geography and seek to ensure a diversity of career stage and institutions. We will only make recruitment decisions which compromise diversity when it is objectively justified by the necessity to ensure the required</p>

			breadth of subject expertise with high quality candidates. Unconscious bias will be discussed during the panel.
Religion or belief	Potentially negative	There could be potential for discrimination because it is known to somebody (either a peer reviewer, panel member, a research applicant) has a particular belief or faith	Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings. If the Panel meeting is not taking place via Zoom, considerations might include: Scheduling meetings to avoid major religious festivals; (if impossible to avoid then consider mitigations – ie. during Ramadan ensuring that meetings finish early so that participants are able to get home to break their fast, awareness of the sensitivities around offering meals during periods of fasting); • Accommodating dietary restrictions (ensuring that there is sufficient choice to allow all participants to eat – recognising that some groups cannot eat pork or beef or shellfish, that others avoid caffeine, ensuring that vegetarian food is available if Kosher or Halal food is not provided) etc.; • Not scheduling meetings such that they would require travel late on Friday evenings (Jewish Sabbath) or on Fridays (Friday prayer, Islam) • Allowing prayer breaks if requested
Sexual orientation	Potentially negative	There could be potential for discrimination	Whilst panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on

		<p>because it is known to somebody (either a peer reviewer, panel member, a research applicant) has a particular sexual orientation.</p>	<p>expertise, we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership. Final decisions take into account trying to balance the panels by gender and geography and seek to ensure a diversity of career stage and institutions. We will only make recruitment decisions which compromise diversity when it is objectively justified by the necessity to ensure the required breadth of subject expertise with high quality candidates. Unconscious bias will be discussed during the panel.</p>
<p>Sex (gender)</p>	<p>Potentially negative</p>	<p>There could be potential for discrimination because it is known to somebody (either a peer reviewer, panel member, a research applicant) has a particular gender</p>	<p>Whilst panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on expertise, we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership. Final decisions take into account trying to balance the panels by gender and geography and seek to ensure a diversity of career stage and institutions. We will only make recruitment decisions which compromise diversity when it is objectively justified by the necessity to ensure the required breadth of subject expertise with high quality candidates. Unconscious bias will be discussed during the panel.</p> <p>UKRI will try and ensure that the panel split is at least 30% underrepresented gender.</p>

<p>Age</p>	<p>Potential positive or negative depending on the scheme eligibility requirements</p>	<p>Early career researchers* may be disadvantaged as they don't have the same track record to draw on as an experienced researcher. (*It is assumed that early career researchers are generally younger than their more experienced peers, although this by no means always the case. This is why this point has been included under 'age').</p>	<p>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 research. Use of a variety of different communication strategies including social media to ensure that our messages reach the widest possible target audience.</p>
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Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?		
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified; therefore activity will proceed .		
2. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias	X	
4. 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.		

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:	15/12/2021
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
	When published	1	