

Equality Impact Assessment – BBSRC Discovery Fellowships

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	BBSRC Discovery Fellowships (DF) Scheme – the annual advertisement, selection process including the application, shortlisting and interview stages for the award of DFs.
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>DFs provide support for researchers wishing to undertake independent research and gain leadership skills. The DF will support the transition of early-stage researchers to fully independent research leaders.</p> <p>The DF represents part of BBSRC’s commitment to the supply of highly skilled professional scientists to the UK.</p> <p>Proposals are assessed by BBSRC’s Committee E.</p> <p>The scheme is aimed at researchers who are in the early stages of their careers who have the desire to conduct their own independent research within a host laboratory. The Call is open to any individual who has completed a PhD, gained equivalent research experience, or is expected to have completed their PhD viva exam by the date published in the call documentation.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with the BBSRC events management team to ensure that the committee meetings allow attendance and participation from as diverse a range of individuals as possible. To note. It is pertinent in the 2022 Call to recognise that as a result of the ‘New Ways of Working’ in COVID-19, there is potential for the committee meetings to take place over Zoom or an online platform. • Consultation with meeting attendees (including staff and those assessing applications) to understand potential barriers and act, where possible, to enable attendance and full participation. • BBSRC in 2019 consulted with the EDI group TIGERinSTEMM to improve the inclusivity of the language used in call documentation to reduce barriers to application.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DF applicants • Individuals involved in the reviewing and assessment of the applications – committee E and the BBSRC Office
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBSRC will review this equality impact assessment before commencing each new call of the DF. • The protected characteristics voluntarily submitted by applicants during the submission process are monitored for each round. Success rates are monitored for each round. • Multiple feedback sessions take place during each round for BBSRC staff and committee E members.

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	<p>Impact varies depending on types of disability which may include neurological, visual, auditory, or other physical disability. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals with visual disabilities may find it difficult to access and view electronic documentation. • Individuals with disabilities may find it difficult to access the meeting venue and/or participate in the meeting. • When considering the neurodiversity of participants, it is recognised that some people may feel more comfortable engaging in different ways or with an adjusted environment. • Individuals with disabilities may find it difficult to engage with online platforms and virtual assessments both as applicants and the Committee members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will aim to ensure that locations and venues for interviews are accessible and adapted for those with limited mobility and are supportive of individuals with cognitive impairment. • As a general principle, venues should be easily accessible from the main public transport and rail/air links. • Meeting rooms should be comfortable, light and well ventilated and meetings timetabled to allow for adequate breaks. • Electronic information should be accessible to all participants. • Adjustments are made throughout the assessment process where appropriate e.g. regarding interview attendance to assist individual applicants. This may include e.g. the use of video conferencing. • At interview stage, Committee members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are annually refreshed regarding the conditions that can result in unintentional bias. • Adjustments are made throughout the assessment process where appropriate e.g. ensure that applicants and/or Committee members who do not wish to use Zoom can use an alternative online platform. • Training will be provided and documentation to help with using online platforms to ensure that all individuals are comfortable if online assessments/interviews are required.
Gender reassignment	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unintentional bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At interview stage, committee members are required to follow procedures in line with BBSRC annual unintentional bias training
Marriage or civil partnership	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unintentional bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At interview stage, committee members are required to follow procedures in line with BBSRC annual unintentional bias training

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Pregnancy and maternity	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who are pregnant or on maternity or paternity leave may find it difficult to access the venue and/or participate in Committee meetings Individuals may be on parental leave whilst the Call is open, potentially affecting their awareness of this opportunity and ability to participate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The timeline is published ahead of time to increase opportunities for participation. The call is recurring on an annual basis enabling individuals to apply to subsequent rounds. Adjustments are made throughout the assessment process where appropriate e.g. regarding interview attendance to assist individual applicants. This may include flexibility in the timing of interview or the use of video conferencing.
Race	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintentional bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At interview stage, committee members are required to follow procedures in line with BBSRC annual unintentional bias training
Religion or belief	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Call may coincide with a religious holiday. Participants may be unable to take part in Committee meetings due to religious observances. Participants may have specific dietary requirements due to religious beliefs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The timing of closing dates, panel meetings and interviews avoid religious holidays as much as possible, enabling individuals from different religious communities to attend. Any unforeseen conflicts should be communicated to the BBSRC office for future consideration. If catering is provided it should allow for religious observances, we will ask panel members to provide any details of dietary requirements ahead of time.
Sexual orientation	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintentional bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At interview stage, committee members are required to follow procedures in line with BBSRC annual unintentional bias training
Sex (gender)	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintentional bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At interview stage, committee members are required to follow procedures in line with BBSRC annual unintentional bias training
Age	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintentional bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career breaks, changes of career etc. are considered throughout the process to ensure applicants are not penalised for following alternative career paths. At interview stage, committee members are required to follow procedures in line with BBSRC annual unintentional bias training.

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Other (e.g. Parenting /Caring/ Guardianship responsibilities)	Potential negative impact	Applicants and panel members may be cautious about committing to attend meetings that may conflict with these responsibilities (e.g. school holidays) or incur additional costs for additional care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some meetings will be held virtually to minimize the required time commitment and provide flexibility. • When in person meetings are required dates will be communicated in advance and UKRI Policy states that the cost of additional caring responsibilities while on BBSRC business can be reclaimed.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	There is potential that some groups may be disadvantaged but with the mitigations stated above in place this has been minimised. Support will be provided to individuals where they are identified.	
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	✓	There is potential that some groups may be disadvantaged but with the mitigations stated above in place this has been minimised. Support will be provided to individuals where they are identified. Our monitoring process will enable us to identify unforeseen barriers and address them through adaptation if necessary.
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:	3 February 2022
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change