

UKRI is committed to promoting equality and participation in all their activities, whether this is related to the work we do with our external stakeholders or whether this is related to our responsibilities as an employer. As public authorities we are also required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations when making decisions and developing policies. To do this, it is necessary to understand the potential impacts of the range of internal and external activities on different groups of people.

An equality impact assessment (EIA) is an evidence-based approach designed to help organisations ensure that their policies, practices, events and decision-making processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation. This covers both strategic and operational activities.

The EIA will help to ensure that:

- * We understand the potential effects of the policy by assessing the impacts on different groups both external and internal
- * Any adverse impacts are identified, and actions identified to remove or mitigate them
- * Decisions are transparent and based on evidence with clear reasoning.

Membership Call for STFC Advisory Bodies and Peer Review Panels Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Impact Assessment

<p>1. Policy / activity being assessed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every year, a number of vacancies become available on STFC's advisory bodies and peer review panels. These bodies perform a vital function for STFC, providing advice and guidance that aids strategic direction and supports the decision-making processes. • Members of our advisory bodies and panels have the opportunity to influence STFC's strategy, policies, and funding decisions, as well as guide STFC to most effectively develop the societal impact of our investments and best support our research and innovation communities. • This equality, diversity and inclusion impact assessment relates to all STFC advisory bodies and peer review panels, including STFC National Facilities and all directorates.
<p>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy / activity</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. STFC is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI). In addition to the broader UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) position on EDI, STFC continues to develop a range of measures and objectives to support the EDI agenda. The diversity of Advisory Bodies and Peer Review Panels and is one of the key foci. 2. Each STFC Advisory Body and Peer Review Panel is responsible for the selection and appointment of members. Decisions are informed by an annual assessment of applications by the relevant STFC selection panels. 3. STFC is committed to the principles of fair and transparent decision-making. Appointments to our boards, committees and panels are assessed via an appropriate selection process, (which was reviewed in early 2020). Appointments are made according to each Programme area's requirements and in line with the published criteria, e.g. by considering an applicant's qualifications, skills, experience, behaviours, attitude, achievement and talents.

4. Responsibility for monitoring panel membership, the recruitment process and diversity profiles, rests with the STFC Membership Oversight Committee for all STFC Advisory Bodies and Peer Review Panels.
 5. Processes are designed to encourage appointments from a diverse range of applicants who are representative of the communities we work with; this promotes inclusivity and the benefit of a range of perspectives.
 6. STFC will endeavour that STFC assessors for membership recruitment will have been trained on safeguarding objective decision making. Where assessors are external STFC will draw their attention to objective decision making by asking them to access our guidance documents <https://stfc.ukri.org/files/safeguarding-objective-decision-making/>.
[Chair's Induction Document](#)
[Panel Member Role and Expectations](#)
[Safeguarding Objective Decision Making](#)
[Etiquette Guide EIA](#)
- Members of STFC Advisory Bodies and Peer Review Panels are appointed through an open, fair and transparent selection process.
The membership call will include:
- a) Advertised vacancies to attract a diverse range of applicants, from different sectors without disadvantaging or prevent participation from any particular groups.
 - b) Objective, transparent and robust assessment criteria and decision-making processes.
 - c) Making successful applicants aware of the expectations of the role.
 - d) An EDI robust governance process.
 - e) Information for applicants on availability of support and accessibility.
7. There may be some exceptional circumstances in which STFC staff may have to seek new panel members outside of the annual Call for Membership as follows:
 - a. A lack of suitable candidates meeting the experience level for a panel as described in the Call for Membership.
 - b. An insufficiently broad field of suitable candidates identified during the Selection Panel to allow a reasonable panel balance to be achieved.
 - c. The need to replace key panel member(s) who have stepped down from a panel before the end of their anticipated term.
 - d. The need to convene an unanticipated and/or short-term panel.
 - e. The need to implement specific actions that address the outstanding issues identified by the Selection Panel.
 - f. The conclusion of the Membership Oversight Committee that the outcome of a Selection Panel 'requires further attention' before the next annual Call for Membership.
- Gender – 30% target**
- Where an **existing** panel has less than 30% female representation and/or no representation from BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) members, additional strategies will be pursued, e.g. direct engagement with academic and business leaders for details of potential candidates.

	<p>A legitimate way to identify if a panel has reached its 30% target can only be achieved after the round has been completed. STFC has committed to achieve minimum of 30% female participation and will provide justification for any shortfalls.</p> <p>Having diverse perspectives in the appointments process is critical to ensuring that the communities we work with are represented and that STFC is inclusive. EDI is considered at all steps in the process to ensure that any barriers to participation are identified and mitigations are actioned.</p>
<p>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?</p>	<p>The following consultations have taken place with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STFC’s Head of Equality Diversity and inclusion to ensure that processes are inclusive and accessible, and do not create barriers for applicants. • STFC Executive Board on strategies to increase female representation and encourage applications from Industry. • STFC’s Chief Operating Officer and the Strategy, Planning and Communications team on Directorate(s) EDI objective setting for recruitment of members to STFC Advisory Bodies and Peer Review Panels. • STFC Division Heads and office staff to ensure robustness of the governance, coherence of the process and EDI objectives. • STFC Membership Oversight Committee on producing an annual action plan. • STFC HR to ensure that the assessment process is fair and equal. • Cross-council colleagues to ensure that STFC best practice is followed and adopted in line with other UKRI Research Councils. • Past and current panels members who gave feedback on their membership experiences. • STFC Science Board on potential recruitment issues, including female membership. <p>STFC is committed the principles of EDI, i.e. participation for all members of our advisory bodies and peer review panels and those who are involved in the selection and appointment processes. To facilitate this, STFC adopts the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertised the Call as widely to reach a diverse audience including in social media, town meetings, emails, virtual open days, videos, and case studies, particularly targeting underrepresented groups to increase the diversity on our panels and promote inclusive open and diverse culture. • Promote the Call in WISTEM, LGBT+ groups, the Sci-Tech WISTEM, and BAME staff and university stakeholders’ networks. • Adverts will clearly state the expectations and criteria for the roles using gender neutral language. Selection and appointments will be made against pre-published criteria. • Applicant guidance is reviewed and updated annually or more frequently. • STFC will support Applicants throughout the process, from pre-submission right through to informing them of the outcome. Language used in the advert will be clear and accessible for applicants inside and outside STEM fields. • The benefits of STFC panel membership clearly stated. • All applications are assessed using the pre-published criteria before panel balancing. • Increased opportunities for early career applicants.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The STFC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites, including the ability to adjust the text size or use a text reader on the page. • STFC will endeavour that STFC assessors for membership recruitment will have been trained on safeguarding objective decision making. Where assessors are external STFC will draw their attention to objective decision making by asking them to access our guidance documents https://stfc.ukri.org/files/safeguarding-objective-decision-making/. • STFC is committed to enabling participation for people with alternative work patterns, including flexible working and reduced working hours. • Effects of career breaks, part-time or flexible working will be accounted for in a fair way during the assessment to uphold equal opportunities. Selection panels will adopt a fair and sympathetic approach towards the effects on productivity which may, in some cases, continue beyond the return to work. • A transparent assessment process where results are systematically evaluated. • Continues improvement of the process, ensuring a positive applicant experience. <p>Actions for STFC Staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with previous applicants to understand potential barriers and act, where possible, to enable participation. • STFC staff presence during selection meetings acts as an additional assurance to manage unbiased assessment of applicants.
<p>4. Who is affected by the policy/ activity/event?</p>	<p>Anyone who applies to a position on the Advisory Bodies and Peer Review Panels. STFC staff who apply the policy.</p>
<p>5. Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing actual impact of the policy</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitoring of panel membership recruitment and EDI profiles rests with a Membership Oversight Committee. The Membership Oversight Committee report the recruitment results to the Executive Board on an annual basis. 2. STFC will review this equality impact assessment annually to identify any further actions or interventions that are required to improve the diversity and inclusion of the Appointments Process. 3. All documentation is reviewed annually, and changes are made, for example, to improve understanding, language and inclusivity. 4. Anonymised diversity data are monitored throughout the application process. <p>The data analysis covers diversity of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all applicants; • those who are recommended for a position but are not appointed; • successful applicants; • each advisory body or panel after the selection is complete. <p>These data are used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitor trends throughout each Membership Call; • evidence whether STFC processes are inclusive; • indicate where improvements can be made.

Diversity trends are also monitored over time to see if we have achieved an improvement in the diversity of our advisory bodies and peer review panels.

Actions for STFC Staff:

- monitor and analyse data to better understand the diversity of communities
- provide guidance on diversity targets
- Panel membership, institutions and years of service for each panel to be published on the website

Group	Potential for positive or negative impact?	Examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability	Yes – negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants with visual disabilities may find it difficult to access and view the electronic advert and/or complete the on-line application form. Applicants may experience health issues due to their conditions which may stop them applying. Newly appointed members with disabilities may find it difficult to access the venue and/or participate in the induction programme for Project Peer Review Panel (PPRP). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STFC will ask applicants if they have any special requirements and will provide the application form in alternative formats. If appropriate, STFC will consider extending deadlines and will accept late applications. Venues will be accessible via main rail/air links. Rooms will be accessible and appropriate. Additional breaks can be built into the agenda. Make provision for use of screen readers as per applicant’s needs. Allow for use of own laptop at interviews. Check that any presentations or materials used are accessible to all participants. STFC will endeavour to manage and minimise conditions that create bias during the assessment process to safeguard objective decision making. Where assessors are external STFC will draw their attention to objective decision making by asking them to access our guidance documents https://stfc.ukri.org/files/safeguarding-objective-decision-making/ STFC will respond to individual support needs on a case by case basis. Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing maximum preparation time.
Gender reassignment ¹	Yes – negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender reassignment information is not available to any of the participants in the process unless the individual chooses to share the information with them. Unconscious Bias may impact on the assessment of applications. 	STFC staff presence during selection meetings acts as an additional assurance to manage unbiased assessment of applicants.

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.**’

Group	Potential for positive or negative impact?	Examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about marriage or civil partnership is not collected, therefore, it is not available to participants unless the individual chooses to share the information. Unconscious Bias may impact on the assessment of applications if this information becomes available to the selection panels. 	This data is not collected within the STFC membership recruitment process, STFC staff presence during selection meetings acts as an additional assurance to manage unbiased assessment of applicants.
Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity, Nursing mothers, anyone with caring responsibilities.	Yes – negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicants may not apply due to caring responsibilities/concerns about future childcare. Potential inductees PPRP who are pregnant or on maternity may find it difficult to access the venues and/or participate at the meetings. An applicant’s career path and track record may be underestimated and under-valued due to career breaks https://stfc.ukri.org/files/handbook-for-members-of-stfcs-advisory-bodies/ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STFC will consult with all successful applicants to understand and cater for their individual requirements. As a general principal, venues are accessible via main rail/air links and meeting rooms are accommodating/accessible. Additional breaks can be timetabled. Where meetings take place outside STFC/UKRI premises, requests for reasonable adjustments or to book nursing rooms where possible will be considered. Where it is not possible to attend meetings in person, a VC connection will be organised. Ensure the attendees’ caring responsibilities are supported by STFC who will pay for additional, reasonable childcare/care costs. Indicate that it is possible to defer the appointment to the following year. 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. STFC recognise this issue and the potential impact and will consider in a fair and evidence-based way as part of the review. The Chair will ensure objective application of the assessment criteria. In assessing the effects of career breaks or flexible working, the applicant’s career trajectory and potential at the beginning of a break, relative to the stage of the applicant’s career and/or professional standing should be noted.

Group	Potential for positive or negative impact?	Examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In assessing applicants, panels will be sympathetic to, and account for the effects on productivity of a career break, or a period of flexible working, which may continue beyond the return to work. • Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing preparation for participants to cover caring and other responsibilities.
Race	Yes – negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information regarding race is not available to participants. However, it is possible that panel members already know this information (from name/surname) or could endeavour to seek it out. • Unconscious Bias may impact on the assessment of applications if names/countries of origin of applicants are accessible to the selection panels. 	STFC staff presence during selection meetings acts as an additional assurance to manage unbiased assessment of applicants.
Religion or belief	Yes – negative impact	Potential inductees may be unable to participate in the induction meeting due to religious observances (PPRP).	<p>This data is not collected within the STFC membership recruitment process in 2021.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure religious festivals and similar commitments are accounted for when timetabling any meetings. • Potential Inductees can defer their attendance and where possible attend the next available meeting or alternative arrangements can be made, e.g. recording meetings. • Ensure venues cater for all dietary requirements.
Sexual orientation	Yes – negative impact	Information regarding sexual orientation is not made available to participants. However, it may be possible that panel members already know this information or could	See section on gender reassignment above.

Group	Potential for positive or negative impact?	Examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
		endeavour to seek it out. Unconscious Bias may impact on the assessment of applications if this information becomes available to the selection panels.	
Sex (gender) ²	Yes – negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants may not consider themselves for panel membership. • Applicants may find it difficult to apply if they have caring responsibilities. • Selection panel members may underestimate and under-value track records and publication histories which have been impacted by career breaks https://stfc.ukri.org/files/handbook-for-members-of-stfcs-advisory-bodies/ • Negative perceptions of an applicant’s gender may be expressed by a selection panel member. • Potential inductees may find it difficult to attend if they have caring responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly communicate in advertising that STFC values diversity and welcomes all applicants. STFC acts as a role model and motivates its communities to promote women and diversity in all aspects of its business, including STFC panel membership. • STFC will aim to organise open recruitment days / virtual sessions where past and existing panel members can share their experiences and where applicants can ask questions. • STFC to provide support such as extension of deadlines, accepting late applications, reimbursement for cost of childcare/caring. • Vacancies will be advertised widely and in publications targeted at women, through WISE and the Athena Swan network. • STFC staff presence during selection meetings acts as an additional assurance to manage unbiased assessment of applicants. • Ensure that the location is convenient to allow easy return home. • Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing preparation for participants to cover caring and other responsibilities. • Ensure school holiday dates are considered where possible when timetabling the induction meeting and that the cost of additional caring responsibilities while on STFC business can be reclaimed.

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.

Group	Potential for positive or negative impact?	Examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Age	Yes – negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection panel members may cite age in terms of lack of experience or in terms of near retirement. • Early Career applicants may not apply. • Newly appointed Early Career panel members may find difficult to settle in their roles. • Early Career applicants may be rejected by the selection panels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STFC staff presence during selection meetings acts as an additional assurance to manage unbiased assessment of applicants. • Clearly state in adverts who the opportunities are open to. Encourage communities/Panels to promote recruiting early career members. Ensure that panel membership vacancies and expectations are well communicated by STFC and applicant guidance is provided. • STFC will aim to organise open recruitment days / virtual sessions where past and existing panel members can share their experiences and where applicants can ask questions. • STFC to ensure that early career members are well supported by the office and other panel members. STFC office to encourage senior panel members to mentor their younger peers. • The selection panels must evidence following the set criteria for selection. • Survey potential early career cohorts to establish what would attract them to panel membership roles. Use this information for advertising and continuous improvement.