Equality Impact Assessment Guidance and Template

This document provides guidance when completing an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). The EIA template can be found at the end of this document.

UK Research and Innovation 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.

**What is an Equality Impact assessment (EIA) and why do we need to complete one?**

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 term ‘policy’, as used throughout this document, covers the range of functions, activities and decisions for which your organisation is responsible, including for example, strategic decision-making, arranging strategy & funding panels, conferences, training courses and employment policies.

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.

**When might I need to complete an EIA?**

Whether an EIA is needed or not will depend on the likely impact that the policy may have and relevance of the activity to equality. The EIA should be done when the need for a new policy or practice is identified, or when an existing one is reviewed. Depending on the type of policy or activity advice can be sought from either your HR team, your Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team, your Peer Review Policy team or their equivalents.

**Ideally, an EIA should form part of any new policy, event or funding activity and be factored in as early as one would for other considerations such as risk, budget or health and safety.**

**Who is responsible for completing and signing off the EIA?**

Depending on the nature of the policy, event or funding activity, the responsibility of who should complete the assessment, who should be consulted, and who should sign off the EIA will vary. Ultimate responsibility on whether an EIA is required and the evaluation decision(s) made after completing the EIA lies with the Senior Responsible Officer, budget holder, project board or the most relevant senior manager. Further advice is available from your Equality, Diversity & Inclusion contact.

**What is discrimination?**

Discrimination is where someone is treated less favourably or put at a disadvantage because of their protected characteristic. The different groups covered by the Equality Act are referred to as protected characteristics: disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, sex (gender), and age.

Discrimination is usually unintended and can often remain undetected until there is a complaint. Improving or promoting equality is when you identify ways to remove barriers and improve participation for people or groups with a protected characteristic.

**Building the evidence, making a judgement**

In cases of new policies or management decisions there may be little evidence of the potential effect on protected characteristic groups. In such cases you should make a judgement that is as reliable as possible. Consultation will strengthen these value judgements by building a consensus that can avoid obvious prejudices or assumptions.

**Consultation**

Consultation can add evidence to the assessment. Consultationis very important and key to demonstrating that organisations are meeting the equality duties, but it also needs to be proportionate and relevant. Considering the degree and range of consultation will safe-guard against ‘groupthink’ by involving a diverse range of consultees. These are the key considerations, to avoid over-consultation on a small policy or practice and under-consultation on a significant policy or an activity that has the potential to create barriers to participation.

**Provisional Assessment**

At the initial stages, you may not have all the evidence you need so you can conduct a provisional assessment. Where a provisional assessment has been carried out, there must be plans to gather the required data so that a full assessment can be completed after a reasonable time. The scale of these plans should be proportionate to the activity at hand. When there is enough evidence a full impact assessment should be prepared. Only one EIA should be created for each policy, as more evidence becomes available the provisional assessment should be built upon.

**Valuing Differences**

EIAs are about making comparisons between groups of employees, service users or stakeholders to identify differences in their needs and/or requirements. If the difference is disproportionate, then the policy may have a detrimental impact on some and not others.

***‘You are looking for bias that can occur when there are significant differences (disproportionate difference) between groups of people in the way a policy or practice has impacted on them, asking the question “Why?” and investigating further’. [[1]](#footnote-1)***

**Evaluation Decision**

There are four options open to you:

1. No barriers or impact identified, therefore activity will **proceed**.
2. You can decide to **stop** the policy or practice at some point because the evidence 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, or
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.

In most cases, where disproportionate disadvantage is found by carrying out EIAs, policies **and practices are usually changed or adapted. In these cases, or when a change has been** justified you should consider making a record on the project risk register.

**Examples of recently completed EIA templates can be found in annex 1.**

**Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed** | Digital innovation and curation in Arts and Humanities (iDAH) Digital Skills Pilots Call (Funding activity) |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event** | **Fund, through open call, a portfolio of 4-5 grants of £300k-£400k each**. Grant holders will develop tools and resources, design and pilot training programmes to build researchers’ confidence in the use of digital tools and methods. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)* | Call has been developed as part of the wider suite of funding from the UKRI Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) fund. This call derives from WP4 of the iDAH programme to ‘e*stablish 3-5 national centres to develop and embed the use of digital tools and methods across the AH user community.’* |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?** | AHRC academic community (both ECRs and established researchers). These Pilot awards will invite participants from target user communities, (ECRs with no experience of digital tools, researchers interested in applying analytical techniques to interrogate large/complex data sets). |
| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?** | The cohort of 4-5 grants awarded will have regular cohort meetings with AHRC, during the 9-12 months that the grants are active.  Outputs from these pilot projects will be scrutinized at the end of the grants and a review of final impacts will be translated into a paper to ECDG/SMT. These outputs will inform the design and implementation of a distributed national digital skills programme – in the form of 3-5 national centres. |

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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** | Possible negative impact | The projects may include working in facilities or using equipment and resources which aren’t adapted for people with disabilities.  In case of direct (i.e. in-person) interactions, participants with specific accessibility constraints may be disinclined to participate unless reasonable adjustments are made.  Documents and materials need to be accessible. | AHRC and UKRI gives the applicants and partner organisation a great flexibility to design the project to allow participation of disabled people. We encourage part-time and hybrid arrangements and we set up a wide period bracket of three months to three years for the pilot with inclusivity in mind.  The call will be live for three months, which should allow applicants with disabilities time to obtain support in the application writing process at their organisations and to discuss suitable working arrangements for their proposed project.  There is a risk of low representation of people with disabilities among the applicants and successful candidates. To avoid this, we will advertise through UKRI channels which are designed with accessibility in mind. We will also share the opportunity with relevant organisations and stakeholders. As this is a pilot we will monitor outcomes. We will use lessons learned from the pilot call to decide if positive action should be undertaken within any future AHRC calls to attract candidates with disabilities.  Online platforms of engagement and participation (e.g. Zoom) can remove physical constraints and enable greater accessibility for people with mobility issues. The use of these platforms will be encouraged, but with due consideration to the needs of people who find videoconferencing challenging (e.g. due to being neurodivergent or other reasons).  Applicants and their receiving organisations should discuss any accessibility needs in confidence. Following such conversations, AHRC expects efforts to be made by receiving organisations to provide reasonable adjustments and a welcoming work culture. This should be compliant with 2010 Equality Act and EDI policies at receiving organisations, and inspired by UKRI’s policies and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.  Any travel and subsistence expenses beyond the most economic level which are incurred due to a disability can be requested in, and covered by, the project grant. |
| **Gender reassignment** | Possible negative impact | Applicants who have had/are in the process of gender reassignment may feel disinclined to apply if our language isn’t sensitive. Therefore, gender neutral language is important to support inclusivity, equality and representation.  Applicants who have had/are in the process of gender reassignment might feel more comfortable using gender-neutral facilities. | AHRC will use gender-neutral language, e.g. pronouns such as ‘they’ or ‘you’ instead of ‘he/she’, in the call documents, in the interim reporting and in the end-of-award reporting.  By publishing this EIA, we will also encourage secondees and their receiving organisations to use gender neutral language throughout their interactions.  We encourage receiving organisations to meet best practice in relation to the employment of transgender staff such as that laid out in the Government Equalities Office guidance on [’The recruitment and retention of transgender staff](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/484855/The_recruitment_and_retention_of_transgender_staff-_guidance_for_employers.pdf)’.  Applicants and their receiving organisations should discuss any personal needs based on this protected characteristic in confidence. Following such conversations, AHRC expects efforts to be made by receiving organisations to provide reasonable adjustments and a welcoming work culture. This should be compliant with the EDI policies at the receiving organisation and inspired by UKRI’s policies and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | No impact | The call is open to all eligible applicants and there are no barriers to those who are married or in a civil partnership apart from, potentially, the need to relocate for the duration of the project and temporarily live away from their home and partner. Data on participant’s marital or partnership status will not be sourced. | Receiving organisations should agree if there is a need to relocate the secondee on a temporary basis with the secondee, in a way that’s sensitive to their family situation and civil partnership/marriage.  Applicants and their receiving organisations should discuss any personal needs based on this protected characteristic in confidence. Following such conversations, AHRC expects efforts to be made by receiving organisations to provide reasonable adjustments and a welcoming work culture. This should be compliant with the EDI policies at the receiving organisation and inspired by UKRI’s policies and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. informed by UKRI’s policies and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion, as well as EDI policies at receiving organisations. |
| **Pregnancy and maternity** | Possible negative  impact | Pregnant persons, who are on parental leave, and persons on parental leave, may miss the application deadline whilst on leave.  Pregnant persons and persons with caring responsibilities may require additional adjustments to enable participation in the projects.  On the other hand, the flexible nature of the scheme makes it inclusive and might appeal particularly to persons with caring responsibilities or pregnant. | AHRC and UKRI gives the applicants and partner organisation a great flexibility to design the project to allow participation of pregnant persons and persons with caring responsibilities.  Secondees will be entitled to maternity and parental leave in line with their current terms and conditions of employment. UKRI standard Terms & Conditions of fEC Grants will apply to awards.  AHRC will meet any additional parental leave costs that cannot be met within the announced grant cash  limit including Statutory Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Pay for secondees who are directly incurred staff. Costs for parental leave for secondees funded under the directly allocated heading should be met by the employer.  UKRI will be flexible in considering requests to suspend or reschedule projects to account for periods of parental leave including maternity, paternity and adoption leave. We encourage part-time and hybrid arrangements and we set up a wide period bracket of three months to three years for project durations under the pilot with inclusivity in mind. We leave working day arrangements to the secondees and their hosts. We expect that scheduling sufficient breaks during in-person interactions (virtual and physical) will provide a greater comfort for pregnant participants; flexibility in the scheduling of projects may similarly improve participation.  Applicants and their receiving organisations should discuss any personal needs based on this protected characteristic in confidence. Following such conversations, AHRC expects efforts to be made by receiving organisations to provide reasonable adjustments and a welcoming work culture. This should be compliant with the EDI policies at the receiving organisation and inspired by UKRI’s policies and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.  The call is going to be live for three months which is a generous duration. However, some potential candidates who are on maternity leave might miss the deadline. |
| **Race** | No impact | This call is open to candidates of all ethnic backgrounds. AHRC and UKRI designed the call to be flexible to make it inclusive and accessible. We are aware of under-representation of some BAME groups in the fields covered by this pilot call (e.g. [Black architects](https://www.bdonline.co.uk/news/just-1-of-architects-are-black-arb-survey-shows/5107075.article)) and a risk that the awards might reflect this underrepresentation. | There is a risk of low representation of Black, Asian and ethnic minority groups among the applicants and successful candidates. This might occur due to the channels used to advertise the call, and is impossible to predict as this is a pilot. To avoid underrepresentation, we will advertise through UKRI channels which are designed with accessibility in mind. We will also share the opportunity with relevant organisations and stakeholders.  As this is a pilot we will monitor outcomes. We will use lessons learned from the pilot call to decide if positive action should be undertaken within any future AHRC calls to attract BAME candidates.  Applicants and their receiving organisations should discuss any personal needs based on this protected characteristic in confidence. Following such conversations, AHRC expects efforts to be made by receiving organisations to provide reasonable adjustments and a welcoming work culture. This should be compliant with the EDI policies at the receiving organisation and inspired by UKRI’s policies and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. |
| **Religion or belief** | Possible negative  impact | Potential candidates or receiving organisations members who may be on leave due to a religious celebration may miss the application deadline.  Apart from the above, we do not anticipate a person’s religion or belief would impact on their application. Data on religion or belief will not be sourced. | The call will be live for 3 months to reduce the impact of  any clashes with religious holidays or celebrations.  Applicants and their receiving organisations should discuss any personal needs based on this protected characteristic in confidence. Following such conversations, AHRC expects efforts to be made by receiving organisations to provide reasonable adjustments and a welcoming work culture. This should be compliant with the EDI policies at the receiving organisation and inspired by UKRI’s policies and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. |
| **Sexual orientation** | No impact | We do not anticipate a person’s sexual orientation would impact on their application. Data on applicants’ sexual orientation will not be sourced. | AHRC and UKRI gives the applicants and partner organisations a great flexibility to design the project to allow participation of persons of all sexual orientations.  Applicants and their receiving organisations should discuss any personal needs based on this protected characteristic in confidence. Following such conversations, AHRC expects efforts to be made by receiving organisations to provide reasonable adjustments and a welcoming work culture. This should be compliant with the EDI policies at the receiving organisation and inspired by UKRI’s policies and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. |
| **Sex (gender)** | Potential negative | See ‘Pregnancy and maternity’. Another gender-specific barrier might occur if a candidate is going through the menopause at the point of applying or during a project, or is experiencing any sex-specific health issue, e.g. prostate cancer or ovarian cancer. The point about inclusive language made under ‘Gender reassignment’ is also important here due to persons who identify as non-binary/ gender-queer or transgender (irrespective of whether they had gender reassignment). | The duration of the call being live – three months – is generous and should allow inclusivity. AHRC and UKRI give the applicants and partner organisation a great flexibility to design the project to allow participation of all sexes and genders. We encourage part-time and hybrid arrangements and we set up a generous brackets of 3 months to 3 years. We leave working day arrangements to the secondees and their hosts.  Applicants and their receiving organisations should discuss any personal needs based on this protected characteristic in confidence. Following such conversations, AHRC expects efforts to be made by receiving organisations to provide reasonable adjustments and a welcoming work culture. This should be compliant with the EDI policies at the receiving organisation and inspired by UKRI’s policies and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion.  AHRC will use gender-neutral pronouns such as ‘you/they’ instead of ‘he/she’ in the call documents and reporting. By publishing this EIA, we also want to encourage secondees and their receiving organisations to use gender neutral language throughout their interactions. |
| **Age** | No impact | AHRC and UKRI designed this flexible scheme to make it inclusive. The flexibility might appeal to and benefit persons across a wide range of adult age groups. The scheme is open for candidates at all career stages from from early career to senior working professionals of all sectors, including academia. | The scheme is open for candidates from each career-level group above doctoral/equivalent experience. Our reviewers/assessors are going to assess applicants at all career stages/of different ages fairly and transparently, according to the same criteria and taking into consideration experience in the context of career stage.  Applicants and their receiving organisations should discuss any personal needs based on this protected characteristic in confidence. Following such conversations, AHRC expects efforts to be made by receiving organisations to provide reasonable adjustments and a welcoming work culture. This should be compliant with the EDI policies at the receiving organisation and inspired by UKRI’s policies and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. |

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| **Additional diversity characteristics for IUK** | **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)** |
| **Regional location** | Both | There could be regional or demographic issues, with either competing applications from prestigious HEIs to represent a region or only one viable institution to represent a region. | In both positive and negative cases, we will ensure that the assessment fairly factors in regional differences in terms of facilities, making sure that each region is fairly represented and that these services can be used by all HEI’s large or small.  M&E planning will also ensure fairness in reporting and governance once awards are established. |
| **Education level** | Both | Expertise for this call is specialised and may exclude parts of our academic community. | However, we will mitigate this through a fair assessment process, emphasising that successful awardholders provide a service for their region. The Pilot grants will also be tasked with providing training – inviting participants from target user communities to participate (e.g. ECRs with no experience of digital tools, researchers interested in applying analytical techniques to interrogate large/complex data sets). |

**Evaluation:**

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| **Question** | **Explanation / justification** | |
| Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people? | We cannot envisage such eventualities as the call will be judged and assessed on individual merit of applications, institutions and research teams. This call, in the nature of its design, is open to all arts and humanities researchers. There are no restrictions on discipline remit, provided that applications meet the digital skills criteria of this call and proposals are within or partially within AHRC’s remit. | |
| **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 |  |  |
| 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:** |  |
| **Review date** (if applicable): |  |

**Change log**

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

**Annex 1: Examples of recently completed EIA templates**

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| **Council** | **Activity** |
| EPSRC | [Inclusion Matters Call](https://www.epsrc.ac.uk/files/funding/calls/2017/eiainclusionmatters/) |
| EPSRC | [New Investigator Awards](http://espace/zones/do/Integrators/DL/Documents/Delivery/ECRs/Implementation%20of%20First%20Grant%20Changes%202017/process/EQUALITY%20IMPACT%20ASSESSMENT_NIA.docx) |
| EPSRC | [Policy change: Limit to the number of applications at a standard panel](http://espace/zones/do/Integrators/DL/Documents/Strategy/Gender%20and%20diversity/EandD%20Considerations%20in%20Peer%20Review/Workstreams/Work%20Stream%204%20How%20we%20run%20panel%20meetings/EQUALITY%20IMPACT%20ASSESSMENT%20Panel%20number%20limit.docx) |
| BBSRC | [BBSRC Future Leader Fellowships (FLF) Scheme](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/documents/future-leader-fellowships-impact-assessment-pdf/) |
| BBSRC | [BBSRC/STFC/Innovate UK Biofilms programme](http://www.bbsrc.ac.uk/documents/biofilms-programme-equality-impact-assessment-pdf/) |

1. <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/s/n/Acas_managers_guide_to_equality_assessments.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)