

## EQUALITY AND INCLUSION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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| 1. Policy / activity being assessed  | The Panel for the Allocation of Telescope Time (PATT) Grant funding Panel, meets once a year with meetings held via videoconferencing  |
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| 2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy / activity                     | <p>The Panel for the Allocation of Telescope Time (PATT) is an advisory body set up to consider the allocation of telescope time and associated travel and subsistence costs in support of those allocations for a range of astronomy facilities for the UK community. These include those where the UK Community has priority access to time via an agreement (such as the ING, LT and e-MERLIN) and those where the UK community is able to compete via open access (such as facilities owned and operated within the US, Chile or Australia).</p> <p>The PATT has one closing date a year in October and the proposals are assessed by the panel. STFC will make an award based on the panel recommendations. Grants are generally awarded for two years and must exceed a total of £10k. Only Travel &amp; subsistence is funded but will be paid at 100%.</p> <p>The role of the Panel is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advise the executive on the award of travel and subsistence expenses consistent with allocated telescope time</li> <li>• take account, as appropriate, of any strategic advice provided by STFC</li> <li>• provide clear concise feedback for the office to send to the Applicants</li> <li>• advise the Executive as required on all issues relating to PATT</li> <li>• liaise with other bodies as necessary</li> </ul> |
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| 3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? | <p>This EIA has been reviewed by a member of STFC’s Equality and Diversity policy group.</p> <p>STFC is dedicated to ensuring that the processes for funding is open and inclusive. Individuals engaged with the process endeavour to conduct each stage in a fair manner, without prejudice or bias. In line with this, we adhere to the seven principles of public life. Additionally, comments and suggestions received as part of the peer review survey are considered and implemented where possible to improve the process.</p>   |

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|   | <p>For Applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The annual call for PATT is advertised on the STFC website</li> <li>• The call text and guidance clearly state the eligibility and assessment criteria and links to the Research Grants Handbook</li> <li>• 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</li> <li>• STFC will provide support to Applicants throughout the process, from pre-submission through to the outcome</li> </ul> <p>For Panel Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STFC staff will work with the Panel Chair to agree approaches that are designed to minimise opportunities for bias and improve the transparency of decision-making</li> <li>• STFC enable participation for people with alternative work patterns, including reduced working hours</li> <li>• STFC will provide appropriate breaks when required</li> <li>• STFC will endeavour to reach an appropriate gender balance. The current Panel comprises 67% Female, 33% Male, whereas last year the balance was 33% Female, 67% Male</li> <li>• Panel members are asked to inform STFC if they have any additional needs to enable participation at the teleconference</li> </ul> <p>For STFC staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All STFC staff involved in the process will receive training in unconscious bias to raise awareness of conditions that may impact upon their decision making.</li> </ul> |
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| <p>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p> | <p>Anyone who applies for a PATT Travel Grant or anyone involved in the assessment process.</p>  |

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| <p>5. Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing actual impact of the policy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STFC will review this equality impact assessment annually to identify any actions or interventions that are required to improve diversity and inclusion.</li> <li>• STFC monitors and analyses data to better understand the diversity of its Community</li> <li>• STFC recognises the need to increase the diversity of its panel membership and takes a pro-active approach to meeting this requirement.</li> <li>• Panel membership for each meeting is published on the website</li> </ul> <p>Over the last three years (Jan 17 – December 20) 12% of Applicants were female and 88% male. The success rate for female Applicants was 100% compared to 65% for males. The total number of applications for the period was 35 spread across multiple calls so volumes are very low.</p> <p>However PATT grants provide travel funds which are used to support all eligible members within a Research Group. Gender and success rates are somewhat misleading as only a single Applicant is requested on PATT proposals despite supporting numerous Academics within a group.</p> |
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| Group      | Potential for positive or negative impact? | Examples of any evidence/data used | Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)  |
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| Disability | Yes – negative impact                      |                                    | <p>STFC takes all necessary steps to ensure that electronic information is accessible. STFC will respond to individual support needs on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>Going forward all panel meetings will be held via videoconferencing facilities such as Zoom (the UKRI Primary VC choice). STFC will take all reasonable steps to make adjustments to enable participation in virtual meetings. This can</p> |

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|                     |                       | <p>Applicants and/or reviewers with visual disabilities or impairments may find it difficult to access and review electronic documentation.</p> <p>Applicants or panel members with mobility disabilities may face difficulties in attending the panel meetings.</p> <p>Panel members with hearing difficulties may find it hard to engage in discussions.</p> <p>Attendees with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration during panel assessments.</p> | <p>include, for example, use of screen readers, closed captioning, automatic transcripts, and keyboard accessibility. More frequent breaks will be scheduled in virtual meetings when required.</p> <p>STFC will work with individuals to understand what help can be provided. This could entail arranging a face-to-face meeting rather than a teleconference</p> <p>For virtual meetings, Zoom follows the latest accessibility standards to ensure it is fully accessible for the latest screen readers. Where other VC programmes are to be used, we will ensure this is also the case.</p> <p>For virtual meetings, the use of closed captioning and automatic transcripts is available with Zoom. We will make sure this is also the case where other VC Programmes are to be used.</p> |
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| Gender reassignment | Yes – negative impact | <p>Information regarding gender reassignment is not made available throughout the peer review process. However, this may become apparent during the meeting stage or it may be possible that panel members already know this information or could endeavour to seek it out.</p>  | <p>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the meeting.</p> <p>STFC staff presence at meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review</p>   |

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| Marriage or civil partnership  | Yes – negative impact | <p>Bias may be voiced in relation to new partners starting a family therefore not given as a high a priority</p>  | <p>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting.</p> <p>STFC staff presence at meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p>  |
| Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity, Nursing mothers, Caring responsibilities? | Yes – negative impact | <p>Panel members who are pregnant or on parental leave may find it difficult to access the venue and /or participate in meetings.</p> <p>Nursing mothers may need additional support in terms of suitable accommodation or childcare</p> <p>An applicant’s career path and track record may be criticised due to the existence of several career breaks due to maternity/paternity.</p> <p>Panel members may face additional childcare costs if having to work outside of their normal hours.</p> | <p>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the meeting.</p> <p>STFC staff presence at meeting acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review</p> <p>STFC will liaise with panel members to identify and address barriers that may prevent their participation in the process.</p> <p>Whenever possible, the meeting will be scheduled to avoid school holidays</p> |
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| Race               | Yes – negative impact | Information regarding race is not made available throughout the peer review process. However, it may be possible that panel members already know this information or could endeavour to seek it out. | Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the meeting.<br><br>STFC staff presence at meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.   |
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| Religion or belief | Yes – negative impact | Panel members may be unable to participate in meetings due to religious observances<br><br>Panel members or attendees may have specific dietary requirements due to religious belief.                | Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the meeting.<br><br>STFC staff presence at meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.<br><br>Consideration will be given to the timing of meetings so that Panel members from different religious communities can attend if requested.<br><br>STFC consult with all Panel members to understand and cater for their requirements for participation. Ensure the venue caters for all dietary requirements. |
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| Sexual orientation | Yes – negative impact | Information regarding sexual orientation is not made available throughout the peer review process. However, it may be possible that panel members already know this                                  | Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the meeting.<br><br>STFC staff presence at meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.   |

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|              |                       | information or could endeavour to seek it out.   |  |
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| Sex (gender) | Yes – negative impact | <p>Panel members, reviewers may criticise track record, publication history which could be as a result of extended maternity, paternity leave.</p> <p>Negative perceptions of an applicant’s gender may be expressed by a peer reviewer or a panel member.</p> | <p>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the teleconference.</p> <p>STFC staff presence at the teleconference acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p>   |
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| Age          | Yes – negative impact | <p>Panel members, reviewers may cite age in terms of lack of experience or in terms of near retirement</p>   | <p>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the teleconference.</p> <p>STFC staff presence at the teleconference acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p> <p>The Assessment criteria for PATT are not linked to age</p> |

