

Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Caucus
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>The Caucus – made up of experts from a broad range of disciplines – will be responsible for providing high-quality research evidence on equality, diversity, and inclusion that informs policy and practice in the research and innovation system.</p> <p>The objectives of the EDI Caucus are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide insights from research evidence on EDI that informs and shapes the work of UKRI, the British Academy, and the broader research and innovation sector • address priority evidence gaps by commissioning and undertaking new research and by supporting UKRI and the British Academy in testing and evaluating new EDI-related initiatives • promote, coordinate and facilitate interdisciplinary approaches to research on EDI <p>£3,650,000 (at 80%fEC) funding is available for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Principal Investigator (or two Co-Principal Investigators working as a job-share), who would act as the academic lead for the Caucus • a small number of Co-Investigators who together with the Principal Investigator (or Co-Principal Investigators) would form the leadership team • a full-time Project Manager to support the Caucus’ day-to-day operations and post-doctoral research assistance • a flexible research commissioning fund of at least £750,000 which the EDI Caucus would hold and use to support new research activity that addresses priority evidence gaps • estates and indirect costs relating to staff employed to support the Caucus • funding for travel, subsistence and venue hire for events held by the Caucus as well as for meetings with key stakeholders • the cost of any external communication, including website development

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3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	This activity has been led by ESRC's SLT and co-developed with AHRC, BBSRC, EPSRC, Innovate UK and the British Academy.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funders (AHRC, BBSRC, ESRC, EPSRC, Innovate UK and the British Academy) who will be both funders and users • UK higher education institutions • Research council institutes • UKRI-approved independent research organisations • public sector research establishments • Businesses, government, third sector and public sector organisations with research capacity • The broader R&I system • Assessment panel
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a Caucus leadership team who will engage with the funding partners via an oversight group, which will include representatives from UKRI and the British Academy. The caucus leadership team will also be supported by an advisory group made up of academics, practitioners, and representatives from the R&I sector. • Researchfish for capturing information on achievements • Evaluation and key performance indicators agreed as part of the commissioning process • Proposals will be assessed by a Panel of experts from both academic and user communities. There will be a further interview stage built into this process to gain further clarification and elaboration from the applicant(s) in order to make final recommendations for funding.

GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

Eligibility and criteria

- The EDI Caucus funding opportunity is open to those interested in EDI questions, whether they are from academia, business, government, public sector, third sector and non-profit organisations. Applicants are eligible for funding whether or not they are established members of a recognised RO, but applicants who are not an established member of a recognised RO must be accommodated by the RO and provided with appropriate facilities to carry out the research.

Applications are welcome from those who:

- job share
- have a part-time contract
- need flexible working arrangements

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.

Webinar

Funders will hold a webinar for potential applicants. This will be in an online format allowing for virtual attending and recording. Live transcription will be enabled.

Those who are unable to attend can request to be sent the webinar materials and/or recording by email after the event.

Panel recruitment:

- Whilst panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on expertise, we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership. This means trying to balance the panels by gender, ethnicity 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.
- We will aim that the chair and vice chair of the commissioning panel are not the same gender.

- We will ensure that panel members have opportunities to raise any EDI-related requirements in advance, in the knowledge that these will be treated in confidence, and we will do everything at our reach to accommodate such requirements.
- We will maintain a strict policy on discrimination and harassment. We will make this clear before the call is published so even if someone isn't involved directly in an incident, they are encouraged to report it.
- A tool has been developed which allows ESRC staff to gather information on the EDI characteristics of commissioning panels, and this will be used when appointing panels.

Assessment Process

- ESRC will manage the commissioning process on behalf of all funders.
- ESRC staff will endeavour to secure a diverse representation of experts assessing proposals. Every effort will be made to achieve an appropriately balanced membership in terms of gender, age, ethnicity etc.
- ESRC will provide guidance to all assessors where the importance of timely, objective, fair and informed assessments is emphasised, this will apply to both peer reviewers and panel members.
- ESRC will ensure panel members are aware of our strict policy against bullying and harassment.
- Panel members (assessors) are required to justify their views and scores in accordance with the funding opportunity's assessment criteria. ESRC staff conduct usability checks on all assessors' comments and where there is evidence of bias, or an assessor has failed to provide evidence for their scores, ESRC will ask the assessor to provide further justification.
- All panel members will receive guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias.
- The Chair of the Panel will moderate and assess the quality of assessments. The Panel will collectively agree final scores for each proposal. These scores must be in accordance with the assessment criteria detailed in the funding opportunity.
- Panel members will be briefed on bias and encouraged to feel empowered to constructively challenge potential bias where they identify it. The Panel Chair and Panel Secretaries play a particularly important role in this respect. An implementation intention statement will be read out at the beginning of the commissioning panel meeting which sets the tone for discussions and requires that panel members pay close attention to the scoring criteria and definitions.

EDI Caucus operations

- We will aim to ensure that all activities relating to the EDI Caucus Hub are inclusive, accessible and take account of diversity.
- We will work closely with the Caucus to ensure that the processes to award any further funds are consistent with [UKRI's EDI principles](#).
- We will make sure that EDI Caucus meetings and events, both in-person and virtual, take into account individual needs such as sensorial (sight, hearing, etc), mobility (reduced access) and carry out EIA assessments to ensure that protected characteristics are observed. We will take account of such needs and review this continuously.

- We will continue to maintain a strict policy on discrimination and harassment. We will continue to inform all funders, the leadership team, researchers, staff and research participants involved of this policy so even if someone isn't involved directly in an incident, they are encouraged to report it.
- We will require that the team leading the EDI Caucus and any staff involved in its operation, including funders, are aware of EDI issues and are regularly trained on EDI/ bias/diversity so that they can proactively respond effectively to any issues that arise and create an inclusive working environment.
- We will encourage additional forms of engagement (like feedback within the caucus and/or the creation of purposefully designed EIAs for new activities), to proactively advance equality, diversity and inclusion wherever possible.
- We will ensure that the EDI Caucus' processes are transparent, that everyone has equal access to the caucus research and related opportunities and promote information clearly wherever possible.
- We will ensure that Caucus staff know where to go to request reasonable adjustments and feel comfortable accessing support.

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 (mental or physical)	Potential negative	<p>Potential negative JeS formats are not always accessible and compatible with the range of specialist hardware and software that people with disabilities use to access electronic information.</p> <p>Potential negative Je-S does not currently comply with disability accessibility schemes. This</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Je-S helpdesk is available to potential applicants if they need any assistance.</p> <p>The call specification is in san-serif which is a dyslexia-friendly font. The call specification has minimal use of colours and lighting that may trigger migraines and epilepsy.</p> <p>Call documents are in dyslexia-friendly fonts.</p>

		<p>will be picked up by The Funding Service.</p> <p>Applicants should seek support from their own institution's research support office.</p> <p>The webinar and the Panel meeting will be virtual. The webinar will be recorded and uploaded to the webpage for future reference. Prolonged screen time can cause problems for persons with particular conditions or working preferences.</p> <p>Panel meeting attendees with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration and focus during panel assessments.</p> <p>The registration to the webinar and request to be sent webinar materials after the event will need to be made via email. Potential participants to the webinar with neurodisabilities may experience difficulties to use email.</p>	<p>Solicit information from webinar and panel meeting participants (in confidence) about any additional requirements they may have in order to fully participate.</p> <p>Ensure that the webinar and panel meeting offer an accessible and inclusive environment for participants. Depending on the needs identified, considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suitable measures in place for the hearing impaired and we will make sure the transcript option is available; • Alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers for the visually impaired. We will send power point slides ahead of time and make sure that images are described for use with text to talk, as well as making use of colours that are easier to read; • Provision of documents in dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats; • Avoiding colours, lighting, etc. that may trigger migraines, epilepsy; • Ensuring that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda; • Ensuring that any in person meetings are held in sufficiently bright and spacious rooms; • Ensure that venues for any in person meetings are easily accessible to main transport links.
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Gender reassignment	Potential negative	<p>Trans people may be absent from work due to the process of transition.</p> <p>There may be opportunities for bullying and harassment.</p> <p>UKRI records may show the wrong gender.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted.</p> <p>We would expect the Research Organisation to fulfil its legal duties, whereby the Equality Act states that it is unlawful for an employer to treat a transitioning employee worse than they would if you were absent because of sickness/injury.</p> <p>Clear guidelines on reporting bullying and harassment will be provided.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified	Applicant eligibility is not based on marital status.	N/A

<p>Pregnancy and parental leave</p>	<p>Potential negative</p>	<p>Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>We should ensure the use of gender neutral language – parental leave.</p> <p>The costs of additional childcare for grant-holders, 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 working patterns may not be sought.</p> <p>The webinar and panel meeting are expected to be held virtually but in the case that venues are required, a hybrid format will be considered and facilities for breastfeeding/expressing mothers should be made available if necessary.</p> <p>Reimbursement of additional childcare costs 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>Potential negative</p>	<p>There could be potential bias or discrimination because somebody (either a panel member, a research applicant or research participants) is from a particular ethnic background.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against bias and harassment).</p>

		<p>There may be opportunities for bullying and harassment during the project.</p>	<p>We would expect the Caucus to ensure the use of inclusive practices in all of its operations.</p>
<p>Religion or belief</p>	<p>Potential negative</p>	<p>There could be potential bias or discrimination because somebody (either a panel member, a research applicant or research participants) has a particular faith or belief.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations .</p> <p>Venues – prayer rooms</p> <p>Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning the panel meeting, interview, funders’ meetings and any other regular commitment involving the EDI Caucus leadership team and funders. Considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 Muslims meals during periods of fasting) • Accommodating dietary restrictions ensuring that there is sufficient choice to allow all participants to eat – recognising that some groups, due to religious reasons, cannot eat certain animal products, or caffeine. Ensuring that vegetarian food is available if Kosher or Halal food is not provided, etc.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	Potential negative	<p>It is not a requirement and there will not be many opportunities for applicants to disclose their sexual orientation.</p> <p>At the interview stage, where applicants will be required to attend a meeting, there may be potential bias towards particular sexual orientations.</p>	See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against bias and harassment).
Sex (gender)	Potential positive	Use of language (such as leadership, collaboration, partners, team) which is used in the call specification is more likely to appeal to female applicants. Research has shown that the wording of an application form has repercussions on who applies.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.
	Potential negative	Potential applicants and/ or assessors may be disadvantaged and/or unable to attend the webinar and/or panel meeting if they have caring responsibilities.	<p>Ensure use of gender neutral language in call specification, guidance, and any other documents related to the EDI-funders' interactions, etc.</p> <p>Encourage the successful RO to adopt gender neutral language in all relevant documentation.</p>

			Ensure that the panel has balanced gender representation
Age	Potential negative	<p>Early career researchers* may be disadvantaged as they don't have the same track record to draw on as an experienced more established researcher.</p> <p>(*It is assumed that early career researchers are generally younger than their more experienced peers, although this by no means is always the case. This is why this point has been included under 'age').</p>	<p>Track record is not an explicit criterion, given likely relationship to career stage and hence (indirectly) age. 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.</p> <p>Use of a variety of different communication strategies including social media to ensure that our messages reach the widest possible target audience.</p>

Note: Excessive use of repeated line breaks can make a document inaccessible for users of assistive technologies. To ensure inclusion, please ensure a new table row is inserted for each point if there is more than one consideration or impact for each group (please ensure you populate the "protected characteristic group" column e.g. "disability continued"); rather than using the same row for multiple points with repeated line breaks to separate points.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Yes, some potential barriers have been identified (see above) however the necessary steps have been taken to mitigate the likelihood of this in the areas covered.	
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	We have identified the risks of discrimination and outlined the steps which can be taken to adapt the policy and mitigate these risks.
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* *EIAs should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events.	Yes
Date completed:	22.06.2022
End date of activity: (if applicable)	not required
Review date (if applicable):	not required