

EQUALITY AND INCLUSION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. Policy / activity being assessed	STFC Call for Nuclear Physics Project Proposals 2022 - Outlines
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy / activity	<p>As part of its role in supporting a world leading nuclear physics programme, STFC will be able to fund a new nuclear physics project/s from January 2024. This call replaces the Sol stage for the large or complex scientific project. This is the first stage of a two-stage process.</p> <p>The document covers the first stage of this process. This first will be a strategic prioritisation to tension the projects against each other, followed by the full PPRP assessment. The strategic prioritisation will be carried out by a panel, reporting to Science Board in December 2022. The panel will be set up with minimal conflicts, made up of international nuclear physics experts and detector experts from other disciplines such as particle physics. A member of Science Board will be invited to serve on the panel, providing continuity across the STFC portfolio and direct engagement.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?	<p>STFC is dedicated to ensuring that the peer review process is open and inclusive. Those engaged in the process endeavour to conduct each stage in a fair manner, without prejudice or bias, in line with this we follow the Nolan Principles. Additionally, comments and suggestions received as part of the peer review survey are implemented where possible to improve the process.</p> <p>This call replaces the initial outline stage of the Project Peer Review Panel submissions. This open call draws on a number of ongoing activities across the Nuclear Physics Programme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2021/22 STFC carried out the Nuclear Physics Feasibility Call and funded four small projects. The aim of the call was to provide a small level of support to a few projects that have the potential to be further developed into longer term projects that would be considered by STFC. It is anticipated that some of the funded projects may develop into larger projects and wish to submit project proposals. • In 2021 Science Board recommended providing some short-term preliminary support for the FAUST project whilst STFC explores project opportunities across the wider nuclear physics landscape.

- In June 2022, Science Board considered the JLAB2 Statement of Interest and recommended that this be considered as part of a strategic review.

Science Board are aware of the plan to run this call and have provided feeding following June 2022 Science Board.

For Applicants:

- The call is advertised widely to reach the largest possible audience
- The call text and guidance provides detailed guidelines to Applicants about the process and links to the Research Grants Handbook, which has clear eligibility and assessment criteria
- STFC will make available hard copies of documents when required
- The STFC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites
- STFC will support Applicants throughout the process, from pre-submission right through to informing them of the outcome.

For Panel Members:

- Pre-meeting discussions take place, STFC staff will work closely with the Panel Chair to agree approaches that are designed to minimise opportunities for bias and improve transparency of the decision making process
- A presentation on Objective Decision making will be presented reminding panel members of the roles and responsibilities required for them and office staff and to highlight best practice.
- STFC will ensure that assessment criteria are clear and easily accessible throughout the process, including at the meeting.
- Everyone involved in the decision-making process is aware of Unconscious Bias and encouraged to undertake training.
- STFC endeavour to achieve the minimum 30% female participation and will justify if this isn't the case. The gender balance for of the panel is unknown at this stage as there is a need to receive expression of interests to appropriately manage any conflicts before agreeing the panel membership/composition.
- The panel will take place virtually via zoom
- STFC enable participation for people with flexible working patterns, including reduced working hours
- Panel members are asked to inform STFC if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation
- STFC will schedule appropriate breaks and provide refreshments for Panel members

For STFC Staff:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All STFC staff involved in the process will be aware of unconscious bias, and will raise awareness of conditions that may impact upon objective decision making.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Anyone who is applying for the Nuclear Physics Project Proposals 2022 panel members, external and internal stakeholders involved in the assessment process.
5. Arrangements for monitoring and reviewing actual impact of the policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STFC will review this equality impact assessment when future opportunities with similar objectives are planned and identify any actions or interventions that are required to improve diversity and inclusion. STFC monitors and analyses data to better understand the diversity of its Community STFC hold an annual application exercise for Panel membership and when published provides guidance on diversity targets Panel membership for each meeting is published on the website Lesson learnt Document will be produced by those involved in the process

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		STFC will take all reasonable steps to make adjustments to the assessment process in order to enable participation. As examples, this may include the use of video conferencing or equivalent tools, tailored timing of the meeting schedule, or provision of specific facilities to enable an applicant or panel member to be comfortable in the meeting environment.

		<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>The 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 include, for example, use of screen readers, closed captioning, automatic transcripts and keyboard accessibility. More frequent breaks will be scheduled in virtual meetings.</p> <p>Electronic information is accessible and STFC will investigate the ability for the potential use of screen readers for personnel who are visually impaired. 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>STFC will respond to individual support needs on a case by case basis.</p> <p>STFC will ensure the meeting venue is compatible with the use of hearing aid loops and will work with individuals to understand what other help can be provided. For virtual meetings, STFC 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> <p>STFC will select a room that is light and airy, ensure that plenty of breaks are built in to the agenda and ensure that colours chosen don't trigger migraines, different colours may assist in this if personnel don't bring their own laptops. More frequent breaks will be scheduled into the agenda for virtual meetings to allow adequate time away from the screen.</p>
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Gender reassignment ¹		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.	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. STFC staff presence during interview acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review
Marriage or civil partnership	Yes – negative impact	Bias may be voiced in relation to new partners starting a family therefore not given as a high a priority	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. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.
Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity, Nursing mothers, Caring responsibilities?	Yes – negative impact		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. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review. For virtual meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic, 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.

		<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 a number of 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>Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance as early possible.</p> <p>STFC consult with all Panel members to understand and cater for their requirements for participation. As a general principle, venues are easily accessible to main rail links.</p> <p>Meetings are timetabled to allow for adequate breaks.</p> <p>Ensure suitable accommodation provided for nursing mothers and additional childcare.</p> <p>STFC recognise this issue and the potential impact and will consider as part of the review. The Chair will appropriately moderate discussions and ensure the objective application of the assessment criteria.</p> <p>STFC will reimburse additional childcare costs, above any beyond that required during normal working hours.</p>
Race	Yes – negative impact	<p>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.</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. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p>

Religion or belief	Yes – negative impact	<p>Panel members may be unable to participate in meetings due to religious observances</p> <p>Panel members or attendees may have specific dietary requirements due to religious belief.</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. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to the timing of panel meetings so that Panel members (applicants) from different religious communities can attend if requested.</p> <p>STFC consult with all Panel members to understand and cater for their requirements for participation. Ensure the venue caters for all dietary requirements.</p>
Sexual orientation	Yes – negative impact	<p>Information regarding sexual orientation 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.</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. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p>
Sex (gender) ²	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</p>	<p>STFC are committed to ensuring that Panel Chairs are briefed on how to handle such situations.</p>

		by a peer reviewer or a panel member.	<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. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p> <p>Gender neutral language will be used throughout (written and spoken) and encouraged during the peer review process – at both review stage and the panel. This is part of the actions taken to minimise the effect of unconscious biases.</p>
Age	Yes – negative impact	Panel members, reviewers may cite age in terms of lack of experience or in terms of near retirement	<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. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p> <p>Appropriate terminology will be encouraged during the peer review process. For example, not using words such as ‘young.’</p> <p>The Assessment criteria for Nuclear Physics Feasibility call are not linked to age</p>

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.**’

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.