

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.

The Research Councils are 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.

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.

Please send completed EIAs to EDI@esrc.ukri.org

Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	The Call for ESRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Behavioural Research (CDT+) - Assessment Process.
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>To commission a Centre for Behavioural Research Plus in Behavioural Research.</p> <p>A precise specification for the investment is being developed, informed by stakeholder consultations. The aim of the CDT+ is to build a critical mass of researchers with the knowledge and skills to conduct research about human behaviour within different contexts, and to develop and apply a range of behavioural research methods and approaches, to address major societal challenges. Academic capacity building would include strong foundations in methodological innovation and data relevant to the field, excellent underpinning foundations in specific research areas, as well as the skills to work with stakeholders. A suite of training activities will be co-developed with stakeholders so that they meet the needs of a wide audience including non-academic researchers and analysts, and an evolving programme of fellowships and placements between academia and stakeholders. These will be designed to ensure graduates have the flexibility and skills to work confidently and fluently across disciplinary and sector (e.g., academic, private, government) boundaries.</p> <p>To help gauge interest and effectively plan the peer review process, the CDT+ funding call will include an expressions of interest stage. A call pre-announcement will be published on the UKRI website in early July. An open call invitation will then be issued in early September (closing date early March 2023). Proposals will be independently peer reviewed followed by panel assessment (including CDT+ Director interviews) and will take place in July 2023. The expected start date for the CDT+ is September 2023 and the first cohort of students will commence October 2024.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>Stakeholder activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial scoping in conjunction with Public Health England • Understanding Behaviour - Delivery Plan engagement sessions

Question	Response
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic Workshops and consultations with individual stakeholder groups (e.g. government, UKRI and non-UKRI funders and industry) • External Advisory Group made up of members from ESRC Council and Strategic Advisory Network with expertise in behavioural research, capacity building, data and other interdisciplinary researchers • Internal Working Group meeting monthly.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external stakeholders involved in the consultation process • Applicants to the CDT+ funding activity • Peer Reviewers and commissioning panel members for CDT+ funding activity • ESRC staff attending the Panel meeting and interviews for CDT+ funding activity. • Potential co-funders.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A UKRI Risk Management Strategy and Risk Register has been developed and a UKRI Risk Management Strategy will be followed to ensure Risk Management is embedded in Behavioural Research Programme activities • A Theory of Change Model will be developed to describe how our activities will lead to the outcomes and impacts we want to achieve. The Theory of Change will provide a platform to identifying and quantifying programme benefits. • A Benefits Management Plan will be developed to monitor and realise benefits from the change activities • An investment management approach will be taken with the CDT+ and this will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ annual reports ▪ annual meetings ▪ Student surveys

GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

ESRC's research commissioning processes are designed with fairness in mind.

Eligibility and criteria

- The National Capability for Behavioural Research: Centre for Doctoral Training Plus (CDT+) funding activity is open to all UK-based Research Organisations (ROs) that are [eligible](#) to receive research council funding for research and have the infrastructure in place to deliver postgraduate training.

- Panels are instructed to access the application in front of them and not to 'read between the lines' or give the benefit of the doubt based on the reputation of the individual applicant or team, as this would be a form of confirmation bias.

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. TGC 3.4 states that the Research Organisation in receipt of the training grant must ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is considered and supported at all stages throughout the performance of the Training Grant.

Panel recruitment:

- We will aim to ensure that the composition of the commissioning panel is diverse, with at least a 60:40 gender balance (at least 40% for the underrepresented gender).
- We will ensure (if possible) that the chair and vice chair of the commissioning panel are not the same gender.
- Whilst panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on expertise, we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership. Final decisions take into account 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.
- A tool has been developed which allows ESRC staff to assess the EDI characteristics of commissioning panels, and this will be used when appointing panels.

Process

- The ESRC Peer Review College should be the first source of peer reviewers consulted by ESRC staff. Where it is not possible to secure the necessary peer review from within the college membership ESRC case officers will look beyond the college membership. All members of the ESRC community are encouraged to complete the ESRC peer review training tool which is mandatory for Peer Review College members. The training tool outlines the ESRC's standard peer review process and emphasises the importance of timely, objective, fair and informed peer review.
- The membership of the Peer Review College aims to reflect the community it represents, and efforts are made to achieve an appropriately balanced membership in terms of gender, age, ethnic origin etc.
- Peer reviewers are required to evidence their views and scores. ESRC staff conduct usability checks on all peer review comments and where there is evidence of bias or a reviewer has failed to provide evidence for their scores the review will be marked as 'unusable'.
- All panel members will receive guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias.
- It is the role of panel members to moderate and assess the quality of peer review and to agree final scores for each proposal. Panel members will be briefed on unconscious bias and encouraged to feel empowered to constructively challenge potential bias where they identify it. The Panel Chairs 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.

- For each proposal, we appoint two introducers who formally assess and score the proposal, with all panel members then asked to participate in discussions in order to ensure that an open and transparent assessment process is undertaken and a diverse range of views are represented.
- Interviews will be held with members of the panel, the applicant/team and the moderators. Advance notice of interview dates will be provided taking into account (where possible) events such as religious holidays, school holidays etc. Please see further detail in table below.

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	Potential negative	<p>There could be potential discrimination against a panel member, a research applicant, or a research participant due to their perceived or actual disability.</p> <p>Je-S does not currently comply with disability accessibility schemes. This will be picked up by the new Simpler and Better Funding Service.</p> <p>Applicants should seek support from their own institution's research office. Panel meeting attendees with physical disabilities may have difficulties if meeting venues</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that staff have had sufficient EDI/ unconscious bias/diversity awareness training so they can respond effectively to the requirements of all participants • Solicit information from panel meeting participants (in confidence) about any additional requirements they may have in order to fully participate • Meetings are likely to be held remotely via an online communications platform such as Zoom, eliminating the need for travel to meeting venues which may not offer an accessible and inclusive environment for all participants • Set reading order of slide contents for screen reader users and use of automatic captions or subtitles when presenting,

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		<p>cannot cater for their needs.</p> <p>Panel meeting attendees with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration and focus during panel assessments.</p>	<p>live transcript in Zoom and setting up of captions and subtitles within Powerpoint where possible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure any images used are transcribed so that text-to-talk/other software can be used • Ensure that participants have the correct software and that it is compatible with Zoom/Powerpoint etc • Any webinars detailing the aims and objectives of the call will be made accessible via captioning and recording and will be made available online • Zoom meeting length taken into account and shortened if needed • Panel documents will be in sans-serif, dyslexia friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All web pages relating to the call should comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines • We will endeavour to support any additional needs, including but not limited to hearing and sight on request by applicants and panel members. <p>If we hold in person meeting in future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure they are held in • venues that can offer an accessible and inclusive

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			<p>environment for participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is accessibility for wheelchair users and people with impaired mobility; • Ensure participants are asked about their dietary restrictions in advance and that these are accommodated • Consider using induction loops for the hearing impaired • Provision of documents in sans-serif, dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats • ensuring that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda • Ensuring sufficiently bright and spacious rooms with adequate lighting, alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers for the visually impaired. Also, avoiding colours, lighting etc that may trigger migraines or epilepsy • Ensure that venues are easily accessible to main transport links • Consider paying T&S (on a case-by-case basis) for carers or support workers to attend alongside the participant, where this is required and not covered by the Individual's own employment contract.
Gender reassignment	Potential negative	There could be potential	See above, under General Equality and Diversity

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)
		discrimination against a panel member, a research applicant or a research participant due to their perceived or actual experience of gender reassignment.	<p>Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias).</p> <p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure the use of gender-neutral language where possible in our documents
Marriage or civil partnership	Probably not		
Pregnancy and maternity/paternity	Potential negative	<p>Childcare responsibilities may be a barrier to attending events, meetings and interviews,</p> <p>Completion of grant may be affected by maternity and parental leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dates will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow potential attendees to plan to attend Applicants should have some discretion on who can attend the interview. An alternative person could be allocated to attend on behalf of the team member in their absence Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions We should ensure the use of gender-neutral language - parental leave, irrespective of sexual orientation Panel meetings are likely to be held virtually with no travel required.

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)
			<p>We will ensure there are sufficient breaks in any online meeting to provide breaks for breastfeeding/expressing mothers if necessary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If a panel meeting is in-person, consider whether the venue is able to provide facilities for breastfeeding/expressing mothers if necessary • Reimbursement of additional childcare costs (on a case-by-case basis) if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend could be considered, but we would seek to schedule meetings/interviews at a time that would avoid incurring an additional cost (this could include childcare at the venue for in-person panel meetings, additional hours of childcare in the child's usual setting or paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children).
Race including ethnicity	Potential negative	There could be potential discrimination against a panel member, a research applicant or a research participant due to their perceived or actual race/ethnicity.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias).
Religion or belief	Potential negative	There could be potential discrimination because it is known that somebody	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition

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)
		(either a panel member, a research applicant or research participants) has a particular faith or belief.	<p>and mitigations against unconscious bias).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning virtual, hybrid or in-person panel meetings. Considerations might include: • Scheduling meetings to avoid major religious festivals; (if impossible to avoid then consider mitigations – i.e. 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 Muslim’s meals during periods of fasting); • Accommodating dietary restrictions where possible • Not scheduling in-person 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	There could be potential discrimination against a panel member, research applicant or research participant based on their perceived or actual sexual orientation.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Consideration.

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)
Sex (gender)	Potential negative	<p>It may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged.</p> <p>Panel members may be disadvantaged and unable to attend meetings if they have caring responsibilities</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Consideration.</p>
Age	Potential negative	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>This scheme requires an experienced team to lead the DTP and the career stage and therefore age (indirectly) of applicants may lead to difficulties demonstrating the level of experience needed.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants track record is not an explicit criterion, given likely relationship to career stage and hence (indirectly) age • Panel members and reviewers are briefed to assess proposals against the selection criteria and provide justification for their assessments • Applications should be judged on their own merits without inferences being drawn regarding the applicants' abilities due to their apparent or actual age • Ensure use of a variety of different communication strategies, including social media, to ensure that our messages reach the widest possible target audience • ESRC staff and any facilitators should seek to ensure that all participants have the opportunity to speak.

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)
Other characteristics not protected under the Equality Act	Potential negative.	Panel members and applicants may be disadvantages and unable to attend meetings if they have caring responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential reimbursement of additional childcare costs (over and above normal working hours) if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend.

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, but mitigation in place.	
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	✓	See the mitigations outlined above.
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:	11/07/2022
Review date (if applicable):	11/07/2022