



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

| Question | Response |
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| 1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed | EPSRC Place-based Impact Acceleration Account (PBIAA) |
| 2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event | The EPSRC PBIAA aims to provide consortia funding to support a programme of impact activities within a research and innovation cluster. |
| 3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g., with relevant groups and stakeholders) | Consultation led by EPSRC Heads of Regional Engagement. Consultation and discussions with EPSRC Strategic Advisory Network, EPSRC Council, UK Universities, devolved bodies and Civic Body stakeholders. Engagement has involved representatives from all four UK nations. |
| 4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event? | Applicants, reviewers, panel members, Civic collaborators (ie representatives from civic bodies who are required to attend interview) |
| 5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event? | Feedback is sought from those involved in the process and policies are considered in light of feedback received. |

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. The Research Councils have together developed the ambitious [RCUK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) to outline our collective aspirations for working with the research community, and partners throughout the sector. For policy changes, funding activities and events EPSRC will aim to:

- Select venues that are accessible and where possible accommodate any specific requirement in our planning and organisation of an initiative to support wider participation. This includes for applicants, reviewers, panel members and staff. Included in the interview invitation letter is a request for any access issues to be notified.
- All participants in the process are asked to inform staff if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation.
- Offer support for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#).
- Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities, advertise these widely to reach the largest possible audience.
- Support and encourage panel members to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions. Staff will work closely with the Panel Chair(s) to agree approaches that are designed to minimize opportunities for bias and improve transparency of the decision-making process. This includes managing environmental conditions, such as providing appropriate breaks.
- Support flexible working of stakeholders.
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels. Staff will adhere to a mixed panel policy and endeavour to achieve the minimum 30% for the underrepresented gender on the panel.
- Abide by the principles of peer review

- Provide EPSRC staff with tailored unconscious bias training for Peer Review processes and clear guidance for assessors.
- Handle personal sensitive information in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

| 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) |
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| Disability | Potentially negative | <p>Those that have or are perceived to have a disability face stigma and discrimination in society in general and are under-represented in EPSRCs portfolio, an assessment process may increase the risk of bias for this group.</p> <p>Universities will be restricted to leading one PBIAA bid so may need to undertake inhouse selection processes which may lead to increases in bias.</p> <p>Once an application is submitted the EPSRC assessment process will be based solely on interview which may lead to challenges in accessibility and increases the risk of unconscious bias.</p> | <p>Universities will be asked to include details of how they minimised bias in their internal selection process via their letter of support.</p> <p>Adjustments will be made to enable attendance to interviews, if held externally to Polaris house an accessible venue will be used.</p> <p>Virtual interviews will be offered.</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given to panel members at interview stage. Convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process.</p> |
| Gender reassignment | Potentially negative | <p>Those that have had or are undergoing gender reassignment face stigma and discrimination in society in general, an assessment process may increase the risk of bias for this group.</p> <p>Universities will be restricted to leading one PBIAA bid so may need to undertake inhouse selection processes which may lead to increases in bias.</p> | <p>Universities will be asked to include details of how they minimised bias in their internal selection process via their letter of support.</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given to panel members at EPSRC interview.</p> <p>Convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process.</p> |
| Marriage or civil partnership | No known negative impact | | |
| Pregnancy and maternity | Potentially negative | Those that are pregnant or have recently given birth can face stigma and discrimination in society in general, an | Universities will be asked to include details of how they |

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| | | <p>assessment process may increase the risk of bias for this group.</p> <p>Universities will be restricted to leading one PBIAA bid so may need to undertake inhouse selection processes which may lead to increases in bias.</p> <p>The EPSRC assessment process will be based solely on interview which may increase the risk of unconscious bias.</p> | <p>minimised bias in their internal selection process.</p> <p>Virtual interviews will be offered.</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given to panel members at interview stage.</p> <p>Convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process.</p> |
| Race | Potentially negative | <p>Those that are racialised other than white, face stigma and discrimination in society in general and are under-represented in EPSRCs portfolio, an assessment process may increase the risk of bias for this group.</p> <p>Universities will be restricted to leading one PBIAA bid so may need to undertake inhouse selection processes which may lead to increases in bias.</p> <p>The EPSRC assessment process will be based solely on interview which may increase the risk of unconscious bias.</p> | <p>Universities will be asked to include details of how they minimised bias in their internal selection process in their letter of support.</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given to panel members at interview stage.</p> <p>Convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process.</p> |
| Religion or belief | Potentially negative | <p>Those that observe religion/belief systems face stigma and discrimination in society in general, an assessment process may increase the risk of bias for this group.</p> <p>Panel and interviews will be held on identified fixed dates, which are unlikely to be flexible.</p> <p>Universities will be restricted to leading one PBIAA bid so may need to undertake inhouse selection processes which may lead to increases in bias.</p> <p>The EPSRC assessment process will be based solely on interview which may increase the risk of unconscious bias.</p> | <p>Ensure religious observances are taken into account when interview dates are chosen.</p> <p>Publicise approximate interview dates in the call document.</p> <p>Ensure that there is a prayer room available at interview venue.</p> <p>Universities will be asked to include details of how they minimised bias in their internal selection process via their letter of support.</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given to panel members at interview stage.</p> <p>Convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias</p> |

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| | | | during the assessment process. |
| Sexual orientation | Potentially negative | <p>Those that are not heterosexual face stigma and discrimination in society in general and are under-represented in EPSRCs portfolio, an assessment process may increase the risk of bias for this group.</p> <p>Universities will be restricted to leading one PBIAA bid so may need to undertake inhouse selection processes which may lead to increases in bias.</p> <p>The EPSRC assessment process will be based solely on interview which may increase the risk of unconscious bias.</p> | <p>Universities will be asked to include details of how they minimised bias in their internal selection process.</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given to panel members at interview stage.</p> <p>Convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process.</p> |
| Sex (gender) | Potentially negative | <p>Women and gender non-conforming individuals face stigma and discrimination in society in general and are under-represented in EPSRCs portfolio, an assessment process may increase the risk of bias for this group.</p> <p>Universities will be restricted to leading one PBIAA bid so may need to undertake inhouse selection processes which may lead to increases in bias.</p> <p>The EPSRC assessment process will be based solely on interview which may increase the risk of unconscious bias.</p> | <p>Universities will be asked to include details of how they minimised bias in their internal selection process.</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given to panel members at interview stage.</p> <p>Convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process.</p> |
| Age | Potentially negative | <p>For a variety of reasons individuals can face stigma and discrimination in society and assessment processes for their relative youth, or their relative age and the perceived experience or energy associated with these assumptions.</p> | <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given to panel members at interview stage.</p> <p>Convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process.</p> |
| Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic) | | | |

Evaluation:

| Question | Explanation / justification | |
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| Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people? | <p>Yes, due to the likelihood of pre-submission internal selection by Universities there is a potential that unconscious bias may be higher than other funding opportunities. Universities will be asked to provide details of their internal selection process and actions taken to minimise unconscious bias via their letter of support.</p> <p>Due to the interview process, there is potential that issues around unconscious bias may be higher when compared with other funding opportunities. All panel members will be briefed on unconscious bias and the situations in which bias can become more prevalent, and convenors will be vigilant to, and address, any bias observed at interview.</p> | |
| Final Decision: | Tick the relevant box | Include any explanation / justification required |
| 1. No barriers identified; therefore, activity will proceed . | Y | <p>Ensure religious observances are taken into account when meeting dates are chosen.</p> <p>Ensure there is a prayer room available.</p> |
| 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 | | |
| 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. | | |

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| <p>Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIAs should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g., calls and events:</p> | Yes |
| <p>Date completed:</p> | 15/08/22 |
| <p>Review date (if applicable):</p> | |

Change log:

| Name | Date | Version | Change |
|------------|----------------|---------|--------|
| Alex Peden | When published | 1 | |