

Equality Impact Assessment – BBSRC 2023 Appointments to the BBSRC Pool of Experts and Follow-on Fund Committee

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	<p>The 2023 Appointments Call, recruiting members to the BBSRC Pool of Experts and Follow-on-Fund Committee. This EIA is focussed on the application process for the call and the induction of successful applicants.</p>
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>The BBSRC Appointments Board is responsible for the appointment of members to BBSRC's Pool of Experts, Committees and Panels. These decisions are based on recommendations from the BBSRC Office. The Appointments Board meets twice annually and reports to the BBSRC Executive Chair.</p> <p>The process is designed to ensure that appointments are made from a diverse range of applicants that are representative of the research communities with which we work to ensure we access appropriate input and perspectives. Appointments to BBSRC's Pool of Experts and the Follow-on Fund Committee are made through an open and transparent selection and appointment process.</p> <p>There are three aspects to this equality impact assessment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Ensuring the advertising of the vacancies attracts a diverse range of applicants from different sectors and does not disadvantage or prevent participation from any particular groups. 2 Ensuring the assessment criteria and decision-making processes are objective, transparent, and robust. 3 Identifying and mitigating any barriers to participation of the Induction meetings for successful applicants.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with BBSRC's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion lead on barriers to inclusion and potential bias from their perspective. • Consultation with UKRI's Research Culture and EDI strategy teams and BBSRC's Appointments Board members to ensure the application form is inclusive, maps against the Royal Society 'Resumé for Researcher' headline topics (as part of UKRI's ambition towards narrative approaches to evaluating track records) and is relatable to those from both academia and industry. • Consultation with previous applicants to understand potential barriers and take action, where possible, to enable attendance and participation.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with BBSRC Committee secretariats to understand the number of vacancies, skills and expertise required. • Consultation with BBSRC events management team to ensure the Induction meeting allows attendance and participation from a diverse range of people. • Maintenance of two-way channels of communication between BBSRC and stakeholders. <p>BBSRC is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion and to enable participation for everyone who applies to our Committees and Panels and those who are involved in the selection and appointments. To facilitate this, we adopt the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The call is advertised widely to reach the widest possible audience • The advert clearly states the expectations and criteria for the roles. Selection and appointments are made against these pre-published criteria. • The UKRI website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites, including the ability to adjust the text size or use a text reader on the page. • The Appointments Board members involved in the decision-making process have had training in unconscious bias to raise awareness of conditions that may impact on their decision-making. • BBSRC is committed to enabling participation for people with alternative work patterns, including reduced working hours, flexible working patterns • Individuals are asked to inform BBSRC if they have any additional needs to enable applications to be submitted and to aid attendance/participation at meetings
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>Short Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anyone who applies to a position on the Pool of Experts or the Follow-on Fund Committee panels. <p>Long Term:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants who have a proposal assessed by the Pool of Experts or the Follow-on-Fund Committee • The public (through investments through assessment by these panels)
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual	<p>BBSRC will review this equality impact assessment regularly to identify any further actions or interventions that are required to improve the diversity and inclusion of the Appointments Process and Induction meetings.</p>

<p>impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>The language of all documentation is reviewed annually and changes are made where it would improve the understanding or the inclusivity of the document.</p> <p>Anonymised diversity data are monitored throughout the process of application.</p> <p>The data analysis covers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant diversity • The diversity of those who are recommended for a position • The diversity of those who successfully obtain a position <p>These data are used to monitor trends throughout each Appointments call to provide evidence that our processes are inclusive, or to indicate where improvements could be made.</p> <p>Diversity trends are also monitored over time to see if we have achieved an improvement in the diversity of our Committees and Panels.</p>
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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*	Possible negative impact	Applicants and members of the Appointments Board with neurodiversity disabilities may find it difficult to access and view the electronic documentation/experience difficulties with concentration	<p>BBSRC can provide a printed version of the call text and application form from anyone who is unable to complete it online.</p> <p>Plenty of breaks are built into the agenda at the assessment meeting.</p> <p>Allow for the potential use of screen readers for personnel who are visually impaired.</p> <p>Ensure that colours chosen don't trigger migraines; different colours may assist in this if personnel don't bring their own laptops.</p> <p>Ensure that conditions that create bias are</p>

	Possible negative impact	Panel members, newly appointed Pool of Experts and Follow-on Fund Committee members may find it difficult to access physical meeting venue and/or participate in the meeting if the venue cannot cater for their needs.	eliminated during the assessment process. Respond to individual support needs on a case-by case basis Gather information from meeting participants about any additional requirements they may need to fully participate.
	Possible negative impact	Successful applicants with difficulty hearing may find it difficult to engage with induction material delivered verbally through presentations.	Closed captions will be used for virtual induction presentations.
Gender reassignment	None Identified		
Marriage or civil partnership	None Identified		
Pregnancy and maternity	Possible negative impact	Applicants may feel uncomfortable applying knowing they are currently on or going on maternity leave soon	Individuals are encouraged to contact the office as it is possible to delay start dates of appointments or extend appointments to allow for maternity, parental or adoption leave. Guidance is provided to the assessment panel to ensure appropriate assessment of applicants track record without bias against career breaks due to parental leave/caring responsibilities and others.
	Possible negative impact	Potential Inductees who are pregnant or on maternity may find it difficult to access the	BBSRC consult with all appointed applicants to understand and cater for

		venue and/or participate at the Induction Meeting	their requirements for participation. BBSRC allows members to claim expenses for reasonable childcare costs during meetings.
Race*	None Identified		
Religion or belief*	Possible negative impact	Key dates for the appointments call could coincide with some religious holidays	We have endeavoured to ensure this process does not coincide with religious holidays. However, if individuals are affected, then they are encouraged to contact the office to discuss extensions.
	Possible negative impact	Potential inductees may be unable to participate in the Induction meeting due to religious observances.	Potential Inductees can defer their attendance and where possible attend the next available meeting or alternative arrangements can be made.
Sexual orientation*	None Identified		
Sex (gender)*	Possible negative impact	In 2021 we observed a marked decrease in the proportion of applications from people identifying as female, indicating there is a potential barrier to applying for female researchers.	We particularly encourage applications from female applicants and are working within the office and through consultation with the Appointments Board to understand what barriers there are to applying.
Age*	None Identified		
Other (Career Stage and Background)	Possible negative impact	Potential applicants from non-academic backgrounds (eg. public sector), industrialists and those on an alternative career path may not think that this opportunity is appropriate for them.	Care has been taken to ensure that the call text is inclusive of these applicants, and the application form has been crafted in consultation with UKRI Research Culture EDI strategy teams and the Appointments Board to ensure it is inclusive.

Other (Parenting /Caring/ Guardianship responsibilities)	Possible negative impact	Applicants may be cautious about committing to attend meetings that may conflict with these responsibilities or incur additional costs for additional care.	UKRI Policy states that the cost of additional caring responsibilities while on BBSRC business can be reclaimed.
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*In addition to the above, steps will be taken throughout the appointment process to minimise discriminatory practices. This includes:

- BBSRC strive for diversity within the BBSRC Appointments Board responsible for the final appointments (across protected characteristics, as well as expertise, geographical location, career stage and background).
- Care has been taken to ensure the language in the call text is inclusive. Care has been taken to ensure the language and format of the application form is inclusive

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Some groups may be disadvantaged but mitigations have been put in place. Support will be provided to individuals where they are identified.	
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	✓	Some groups may be disadvantaged but mitigations have been put in place. Support will be provided to individuals where these are identified.
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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Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	Yes
Date completed:	February 2023
Review date (if applicable):	On-going during the application assessment and Induction process

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Appointments Team	28 March 2023	1	