**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.

UK Research and Innovation is 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 ‘activity’, 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.

**When might I need to complete an EIA?**

Whether an EIA is needed or not will depend on the likely impact that the policy may have and relevance of the activity to equality. The EIA should be done when the need for a new policy or practice is identified, or when an existing one is reviewed. Depending on the type of policy or activity advice can be sought from either your HR team, your Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team, your Peer Review Policy team or their equivalents.

**Ideally, an EIA should form part of any new policy, practice, event or business and funding activity and be factored in as early as one would for other considerations such as risk, budget or health and safety.**

**Who is responsible for completing and signing off the EIA?**

Depending on the nature of the policy, event or funding activity, the responsibility of who should complete the assessment, who should be consulted, and who should sign off the EIA will vary. Ultimate responsibility on whether an EIA is required and the evaluation decision(s) made after completing the EIA lies with the Senior Responsible Officer, budget holder, project board or the most relevant senior manager. Further advice is available from your Equality, Diversity & Inclusion contact.

**What is discrimination?**

Discrimination is where someone is treated less favourably or put at a disadvantage because of their protected characteristic. The different groups covered by the Equality Act are referred to as protected characteristics: disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, sex (gender), and age.

Discrimination can be unintended and can often remain undetected until there is a complaint. Improving or promoting equality is when you identify ways to remove barriers and improve participation for people or groups with a protected characteristic.

**Building the evidence, making a judgement**

In cases of new policies or management decisions there may be little evidence of the potential effect on protected characteristic groups. In such cases you should make a judgement that is as reliable as possible. Using data and consultation will strengthen these value judgements by building a consensus that can avoid obvious prejudices or assumptions.

**Data**

Multiple sources of data can be used to help you understand the potential impact on a particular group. Examples of data you might wish to explore if appropriate are:

* the number of people with a protected characteristic or within a group that are affected by the new policy/practice/event/business or funding activity.
* secondary data from research papers or sector reports
* publicly available dataset on a discipline e.g. HESA data
* previous EIAs conducted on similar policies and practices

**Consultation**

Consultation can add evidence to the assessment. Consultationis very important in considering the potential and actual impact of the activity on a particular group, and is key to demonstrating that organisations are meeting the equality duties. It also needs to be proportionate and relevant. Considering the degree and range of consultation will safe-guard against ‘groupthink’ by involving a diverse range of consultees. These are the key considerations, to avoid over-consultation on a small policy or practice and under-consultation on a significant policy or an activity that has the potential to create barriers to participation.

**Provisional Assessment**

At the initial stages, you may not have all the evidence you need so you can conduct a provisional assessment. Where a provisional assessment has been carried out, there must be plans to gather the required data so that a full assessment can be completed after a reasonable time. The scale of these plans should be proportionate to the activity at hand. When there is enough evidence a full impact assessment should be prepared. Only one EIA should be created for each policy, as more evidence becomes available the provisional assessment should be built upon.

**Valuing Differences**

EIAs are about making comparisons between groups of employees, service users or stakeholders to identify differences in their needs and/or requirements. If the difference is disproportionate, then the policy may have a detrimental impact on some and not others.

**‘You are looking for bias that can occur when there are significant differences (disproportionate difference) between groups of people in the way a policy or practice has impacted on them, asking the question “Why?” and investigating further’. [[1]](#footnote-1)**

**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.

**Any actions that need to be taken following an EIA can be detailed within an action plan to ensure they are defined, monitored, and that there is clear ownership and oversight of them.**

**Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed** | Accelerating the Medicines Revolution |
| 1. **Council/department/project team** | EPSRC |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event** | Providing funding to revolutionise the development of future medicines. We will fund a diverse portfolio of projects, bringing a wealth of exciting, transformative ideas to solve bottlenecks across the whole pipeline, from discovery to deployment. Proposals must address the grand challenge of delivering an accelerated, more sustainable pathway to future medicines. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders) Provide a brief summary of the consultation, methods and outcomes. Detailed Outcomes for each group can be detailed in under the protected characteristic table.* | This has been discussed with the Healthcare, Physical Sciences and Manufacturing/Circular Economy Strategic Advisory Teams. Workshops with the wider academic community have also taken place. |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?** | Applicants, reviewers, panel members and EPSRC staff |
| 1. **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 changes are considered based on feedback received. Research outcomes are collected through ResearchFish  Once projects are more established, we will seek feedback from funding recipients on successes and barriers to the activity. We will analyse the call applicant diversity to inform future activities. |

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| **Protected Characteristic Group** | **Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?** | **Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used** | **Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)** |
| **Disability** | Potential Negative | All information is provided in a written format. | Any reasonable adjustments for specific requirements will be made.  Documents will be produced in line with EPSRC formatting guidelines. |
| **Gender reassignment (Trans identity)** | None Identified |  | Gender neutral language will be used throughout and will be encouraged at panel meetings. |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | None Identified |  | Standard EPSRC Policies will be followed. |
| **Pregnancy and maternity** | Potentially Negative | Depends on individual circumstances.  Applicants may be on parental leave during the grant. Panel members may have additional requirements associated with caring responsibilities or pregnancy. | EPSRC policies for offering support to  those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members will be made aware of these. Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions. |
| **Race** | None Identified |  | Standard EPSRC Policies will be followed. |
| **Religion or belief** | Potential Negative | Depends on individual circumstance.  Participation could be affected by coincidence with religious holidays. | EPSRC endeavours to select dates that a cognisant of major holidays (e.g., panel dates will try to avoid being held during religious holidays.) |
| **Sexual orientation** | None Identified |  | Standard EPSRC Policies will be followed. |
| **Sex (gender)** | None Identified |  | Gender neutral language will be used throughout and will be encouraged at panel meetings. |
| **Age** | None Identified |  | Standard EPSRC policies will also be followed. All staff are trained in unconscious bias, and the principles of this training upheld in panel discussions. |

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| **Additional diversity characteristics** | **Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?** | **Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used** | **Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)** |
| **Geographical location (consider UK and international offices)** | No known negative impact |  | Panels will be held virtually. Any reasonable adjustments for specific requirements will be made. |
| **Socio-economic status** | None Identified |  | Standard EPSRC Policies will be followed. |
| **Education background** | None Identified |  | Standard EPSRC Policies will be followed. |
| **Parent/guardian responsibilities** | Potentially Negative | Depends on individual circumstances.  Applicants or Panellists may have additional requirements associated with parental/guardian responsibilities. | EPSRC policies for offering support to  those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members will be made aware of these. Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions. |
| **Carer/parent carer responsibilities** | Potentially Negative | Depends on individual circumstances.  Applicants or Panellists may have additional requirements associated with carer responsibilities. | EPSRC policies for offering support to  those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members will be made aware of these. Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions. |
| **Political opinion (Northern Ireland)** | None Identified |  | N/A |

**Evaluation:**

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| **Question** | **Explanation / justification** | |
| Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people? | There is a potential, as outlined above, that some individuals may be disadvantaged. | |
| **Final Decision:** | **Tick the relevant box** | **Include any explanation / justification required.**  **(See Annex 1 for template action plan)** |
| 1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will **proceed**. |  |  |
| 1. You can decide to **stop** the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups |  |  |
| 1. You can **adapt or change** the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias | ✓ | See mitigations as outlined above. |
| 1. 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. Consider whether data might need to be redacted before publication) | Yes |
| **Person completing EIA** | John Baddeley |
| **Responsible owner (e.g. project board, committee):** |  |
| **Date signed off by owner:** |  |
| **Review date** (if applicable):  (An EIA is a live document and should regularly be reviewed throughout the life cycle of an activity) |  |

**Change log**

| **Name** | **Date** | **Version** | **Change** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| John Baddeley | When published | 1 | N/A |

**Annex 1:**

Action Plan If you have identified a need to adapt your activity, use the table below to define the actions you intend to take (or have you taken) to address the indications of negative impact you have identified. NB: Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound), highlighting reasonable adjustments you will take within the scope of your activity.

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| **Action** | **To be completed by when?** | **Owner** | **How will it be monitored?** | **What is/will be the impact/outcome?** |
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1. <http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/s/n/Acas_managers_guide_to_equality_assessments.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)