



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
<b>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</b>	Artificial Intelligence for Real Data or Science
<b>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</b>	<p><i>AI for Real Data:</i> This investment seeks to support the development of AI capabilities that can not only work with challenging and complex data, but that can be effectively applied to real-world scenarios.</p> <p><i>AI for Science:</i> This investment seeks to accelerate the application of AI to research challenges. It will realise this through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- supporting the development and deployment of new AI capabilities with applicability across disciplines</li> <li>- driving knowledge transfer of applied AI across disciplinary boundaries, resulting in a step change to scientific discovery and research methods across disciplines</li> </ul>
<b>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AI &amp; Robotics Theme</li> <li>• Mathematical Sciences Theme</li> <li>• Physical Sciences and Materials Theme</li> <li>• Manufacturing and the Circular Economy Theme</li> <li>• Turing AI fellows</li> <li>• Contacts at universities and Institutes</li> <li>• EPSRC Advisory Groups</li> <li>• Community engagement workshop attended by academics from different institutions and leading figures within the AI community</li> </ul>
<b>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</b>	<p>UK's research community and industrial sector concerned with the areas of AI for Real Data and AI for Science; government representatives; UKRI staff.</p> <p>Applicants, reviewers, panel members</p>
<b>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual</b>	<p>Feedback is sought from those involved in the process and considered when creating the funding activity.</p>

<b>impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</b>	<p>Standard eligibility rules apply. Applications will be welcome from any eligible UK-based research team.</p> <p>The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed. All panel members will receive an unconscious bias briefing. UKRI will pay special attention to applicants that can demonstrate multi-disciplinary and collaborative teams and approaches. The activity will be monitored by the AI and Robotics Theme in EPSRC.</p>
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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 endeavor 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)
Disability	Potentially negative	The assessment process involves an interview which may lead to challenges in	Adjustments are made to enable attendance to interviews, Polaris

		accessibility and increases the risk of unconscious bias.	House is an accessible venue.  Unconscious bias briefing are given to panel members at multiple stages in interview process.  EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No known negative impact		
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	No known negative impact		
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Potentially negative	The process requires interview attendance	Support will be offered for people with caring responsibilities, and reasonable adjustments will be made wherever possible
<b>Race</b>	Potentially negative	Racial bias may be perceived	Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review
<b>Religion or belief</b>	Potentially negative	Panel and interviews are held during fixed periods throughout the year.	Ensure religious observances are taken into account when meeting dates are chosen, and where possible that there is a prayer room available.  All panel members will be asked to highlight

			any personal circumstances that may affect their ability to participate and how this can be accommodated
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	No known negative impact		
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	Potentially negative	Gender bias may be perceived.	In line with EPSRC policies, the assessment panel will be mixed gender.
<b>Age</b>	Potentially negative	Age-related bias may be perceived.	Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unconscious bias is dealt with.
<b>Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)</b>	None identified		

## Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Yes, due to the interview there is potential that issues around unconscious bias may be higher when compared with other funding opportunities. All panels are briefed on unconscious bias and the situations in which bias can become more prevalent, this is especially focused on at interview.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will <b>proceed</b> .	Y	Ensure religious observances are taken into account when meeting dates are chosen, and where possible that there is a prayer room available.
2. You can decide to <b>stop</b> the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can <b>adapt or change</b> 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 <b>proceed with caution</b> with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.		

<b>Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required</b> (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Date completed:</b>	<b>02.09.22</b>
<b>Review date (if applicable):</b>	

## Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Rhian Jacob-Barclay	When published	1	Final version created

