



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	National Material Science Beamline Research Facility Call
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>This is a funding opportunity to run a national material science beamline research facility for the UK on behalf of EPSRC.</p> <p>The aim of this service is to provide access to a range of instruments, expertise and techniques in material science to support research spanning disciplinary boundaries.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>A community-led Statement of Need was submitted in 2023 by the current holders of the XMaS national research facility grant, which was assessed by the high level group that oversees EPSRC national research facilities. A specification panel meeting was then held to set the technical requirements of this funding opportunity.</p>
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>The physical sciences community who will/may make use of this material science beamline national research facility and potential applicants who wish to run such a facility. Support staff may also be employed to help run the facility.</p>
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>Research outcomes are collected through Researchfish. EPSRC portfolio managers or senior portfolio managers will be members of the facility advisory board or steering committee. An annual report by the facility with key performance indicators will be submitted to EPSRC and assessed by the high level group that oversees EPSRC national research facilities. A mid-term review will be conducted by EPSRC, employing an independent peer review panel to determine whether the facility should continue to be funded for the full 5 years.</p>

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	Potential for both negative and positive	As the panel will be held virtually, the issue of selecting an accessible venue may have a positive impact. However, this may also have a negative impact on those with dyslexia or hearing impairments.	Panel will be held virtually. Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that any circumstances which could affect participation can be accommodated wherever possible.
Gender reassignment	None identified		
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative on those with caring responsibilities. A researcher on parental leave during the open call maybe unable to apply.		Support will be offered for people with caring responsibilities, and reasonable adjustments will be made wherever possible. Timetable of key dates will be made available

			to applicants and panellists in advance as early as possible.
Race	Potentially negative	Potential risk –lack of diversity of ethnicity and race of panel members and/or applicants.	Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.
Religion or belief	Potentially negative	Key dates (open call closing, interview) coinciding with specific religious festivals/ events could disadvantage specific religious groups	Major religious holidays will be taken into consideration when setting panel dates. All panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that may affect their ability to participate and how this can be accommodated.
Sexual orientation	None identified		
Sex (gender)	Potentially negative		Diversity will be taken into consideration when drawing up the panel membership. Gender neutral language will be used throughout. We have written the specification around the applicants to focus on team contributions rather than a single Principle Investigator.
Age			Evidence requirements for the Director are only about their ability to manage a National Facility and have

			sufficient standing within the relevant research community. They do not refer to years of experience.
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	None identified		

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	A number of risks and potential negative impacts have been identified and considered as part of the call design. Reasonable adjustments will be made and by adhering to the standard peer review principles and the risks have been mitigated as far as possible.	
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	x	Adaptations outlined above have been made to reduce chance of 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.		

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:	05.05.2023

Review date (if applicable):	
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Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Leila Behrooz	05.05.2023	1	