



UK Research  
and Innovation

# UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment



**Overview of activity**

	<b>Response</b>
Name of activity being assessed	Quantum for Science – scientific exchange visits
Council/department/project team	STFC QTFP team
Aims and objectives of the activity	<p>This is an ISPF funded programme that will support UK researchers to collaborate with international partners through exchange visits focused around short research projects. The programme will be a platform to drive international collaboration to develop quantum technologies for science discovery, while providing a demanding application for quantum technologies, to drive their development and application in a range of other sectors.</p> <p>Outline the aspects of the activity that need to be covered by the EIA. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This funding opportunity is open to anyone who is eligible to receive STFC funding. From previous such calls, we are aware of how small the community is and the lack of diversity within this community. Due consideration will need to be given to EDI aspects of the applicants e.g representation across gender, race, religion and career status.</li> <li>• Proposals will be assessed by an expert panel. Consideration will need to be given to the balance of members of the panel across gender, race ethnicity etc.</li> </ul>
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	Anyone applying to the funding opportunity, panel members, external and internal stakeholders involved in the assessment process.
What data and consultation have you used to assess the equality impact of your activity?	<p>STFC is dedicated to ensuring that the review process is open and inclusive. Those engaged in the process endeavour to conduct each stage in a fair manner, without prejudice or bias, In line with this we follow the Nolan Principles. Additionally, comments and suggestions received as part of the peer review survey are implemented where possible to improve the process.</p> <p>For Applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The call text and guidance provides detailed guidelines to Applicants about the process and links to the Research Grants Handbook, which has clear eligibility and assessment criteria</li> <li>• STFC will make available hard copies of documents when required</li> <li>• The STFC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites</li> <li>• STFC will support Applicants throughout the process, from pre-submission right through to informing them of the outcome.</li> </ul>

**For Panel Members:**

- Pre-meeting discussions take place, STFC staff will work closely with the Panel Chair to agree approaches that are designed to minimise opportunities for bias and improve transparency of the decision making process
- A presentation on Objective Decision making will be presented reminding panel members of the roles and responsibilities required for them and office staff and to highlight best practice.
- STFC will ensure that assessment criteria are clear and easily accessible throughout the process, including at the meeting.
- Everyone involved in the decision-making process is aware of Unconscious Bias and encouraged to undertake training. It is planned that going forward such training will be mandatory
- STFC endeavour to achieve the minimum 30% female participation and will justify if this isn't the case. The gender balance for of the panel is unknown at this stage as there is a need to receive expression of interests to appropriately manage any conflicts before agreeing the panel membership/composition.
- STFC enable participation for people with flexible working patterns, including reduced working hours
- Panel members are asked to inform STFC if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation
- STFC will schedule appropriate breaks for Panel members

**For STFC Staff:**

All STFC staff involved in the process will receive training in unconscious bias to raise awareness of conditions that may impact upon their decision making

**Analysing your impact**

In addition to data gathering and consultation, the guidance on protected characteristics should be used to assist in identifying impacts on different groups. Where impact has not been identified in the checklists, general EDI considerations, or where there is impact pertinent to your opportunity or activity, it should be recorded here.

Are there **general or overarching impact on multiple groups**? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?

The funding opportunity is open mostly during the holiday period.

A pre-announcement has been made to give people sufficient notice for this funding opportunity

The call is open for six weeks to allow groups sufficient time to develop proposals around existing commitments

Existing UKRI/STFC accessibility policies/processes apply to this call.

The expert panel assessment will take place virtually which will help facilitate the involvement of those with caring responsibilities, accessibility requirements or other factors that may be a barrier to in-person attendance.

**For specific impacts and actions for individual characteristics, please use the table below.**

Your assessment could encompass:

- **positive impacts.** Think about how you promote equality and foster good relations between people who do or do not share a characteristic.
- **negative impacts**
- **no impact.** Share evidence to support this
- **actions** you are going to consider/put in place to remove disadvantages or minimise negative impacts. You should consider whether you need to change the activity, change how it is implemented or whether the aims could be achieved in a different way
- **outcomes and outputs.** Share how you will measure these



**Protected characteristics**

Protected characteristic	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit	Negative impact	Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Panel members, reviewers may cite age in terms of lack of experience or in terms of near retirement	<p>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review. For example, appropriate terminology will be encouraged during the peer review process. For example, not using words such as 'young.'</p> <p>The assessment criteria for Quantum for Science – scientific exchange visit funding opportunity are not linked to age</p>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		STFC will take all reasonable steps to make adjustments to the assessment process in order to enable participation. As examples, this may include the use of video conferencing or equivalent tools, tailored timing of the meeting schedule, or provision of specific facilities to enable an applicant or panel member to be comfortable in the meeting environment.

			<p>Applicants and/or reviewers with visual disabilities or impairments may find it difficult to access and review electronic documentation.</p> <p>Applicants or panel members with mobility disabilities may face difficulties in attending the panel meetings.</p> <p>Panel members with hearing difficulties may find it hard to engage in discussions.</p>	<p>Where panel meetings will be held via video conferencing facilities such as Zoom (the UKRI Primary VC choice). STFC will take all reasonable steps to make adjustments to enable participation in virtual meetings. This can include, for example, use of screen readers, closed captioning, automatic transcripts and keyboard accessibility. More frequent breaks will be scheduled in virtual meetings.</p> <p>Electronic information is accessible and STFC will investigate the ability for the potential use of screen readers for personnel who are visually impaired. For virtual meetings, Zoom follows the latest accessibility standards to ensure it is fully accessible for the latest screen readers. Where other VC programmes are to be used, we will ensure this is also the case.</p> <p>STFC will respond to individual support needs on a case by case basis.</p> <p>STFC will ensure the meeting venue is compatible with the use of hearing aid loops and will work with individuals to understand what other help can be provided. For virtual meetings, STFC the use of closed captioning and automatic transcripts is available with Zoom. We will make sure this is also the case where other VC programmes are to be used.</p>
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			Attendees with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration during panel assessments.	<p>STFC will select a room that is light and airy, ensure that plenty of breaks are built in to the agenda and ensure that colours chosen don't trigger migraines, different colours may assist in this if personnel don't bring their own laptops. More frequent breaks will be scheduled into the agenda for virtual meetings to allow adequate time away from the screen.</p> <p>STFC will consult with all panel members to understand any specific requirements for participation and will accommodate where required.</p>
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information regarding gender reassignment is not made available throughout the peer review process. However, this may become apparent during the meeting stage or it may be possible that panel members already know this information or could endeavour to seek it out.	Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence during interview acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Bias may be voiced in relation to new partners starting a family therefore not given as a high a priority	Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.
Pregnancy and maternity/paternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence

			<p>A researcher on parental leave during the open call maybe unable to apply. Those with caring responsibilities may have split commitments between applying and caring responsibilities</p> <p>Panel members who are pregnant or on parental leave may find it difficult to access the venue and /or participate in meetings.</p> <p>Nursing mothers may need additional support in terms of suitable accommodation or childcare</p> <p>An applicant's career path and track record may be criticised due to the existence of a number of career breaks due to maternity/paternity.</p>	<p>during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p> <p>For virtual meetings, STFC will make all reasonable efforts to ensure the timing of the meeting is convenient for any requirements relating to the current homeworking environment, for example, adjusted working hours, caring and childcare responsibilities.</p> <p>Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance as early possible. STFC recognise this issue and the potential impact and will consider as part of the programme review.</p> <p>STFC will consult with all panel members to understand and cater for their requirements for participation. As a general principle, venues are easily accessible to main rail links.</p> <p>Meetings are timetabled to allow for adequate breaks.</p> <p>Ensure suitable accommodation provided for nursing mothers and additional childcare.</p> <p>STFC recognise this issue and the potential impact and will consider as part of the review. The chair will appropriately moderate discussions and ensure the objective application of the assessment criteria.</p>
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				STFC will reimburse additional childcare costs, above any beyond that required during normal working hours.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information regarding race is not made available throughout the peer review process. However, it may be possible that panel members already know this information or could endeavour to seek it out.	Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Key dates (i.e. pen/ closing) coinciding with specific religious festivals/ events could disadvantage specific religious groups.</p> <p>Panel members may be unable to participate in meetings due to religious observances</p> <p>Panel members or attendees may have specific dietary requirements due to religious belief.</p>	<p>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p> <p>Key dates will be checked and chosen to avoid clashes with major religious events wherever possible.</p> <p>Consideration will be given to the timing of panel meetings so that panel members from different religious communities can attend if requested.</p> <p>STFC will consult with all panel members to understand and cater for their requirements for participation. Ensure the venue caters for all dietary requirements.</p>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information regarding sexual orientation is not made available throughout the peer review	Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard

			process. However, it may be possible that panel members already know this information or could endeavour to seek it out.	funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review..
Sex (gender)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Panel members, reviewers may criticise track record, publication history which could be as a result of extended maternity, paternity leave.</p> <p>Negative perceptions of an applicant's gender may be expressed by a peer reviewer or a panel member.</p>	<p>STFC are committed to ensuring that panel chairs are briefed on how to handle such situations.</p> <p>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions, and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during each meeting. STFC staff presence during meetings acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p>

Continued below...



**Additional characteristics**

Additional characteristics	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit	Negative impact	Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible).
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Geographical location and place (consider UK and international offices)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Socio-economic status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Education background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Parent/guardian responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Covered in previous sections	Covered in previous sections
Carer/parent carer responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Covered in previous sections	Covered in previous sections
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		