

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. Consultation is 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

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.

¹ http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/s/n/Acas_managers_guide_to_equality_assessments.pdf

Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Flexible Talent Mobility Accounts 5 (FTMA5 / 23FTMA)
2. Council/department/project team	BBSRC, Skills and Careers Unit (SCU)
3. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>FTMAs are competitively awarded grants to leading bioscience organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. FTMA5 is expected to support placements, secondments and other activities that contribute to the mobility and development of researchers, research technical professionals (RTPs) and other professional services staff (for example, TTO and KEC staff). FTMAs should be used to provide the opportunity for people exchanges, placements, training and secondments with the intention of increasing porosity between sectors and institutions as well as providing a platform for training and skills development.</p> <p>The accounts will support the exchange of personnel, perspectives and knowledge, skills and expertise between sectors. We recognise that there may be some similarity between FTMA and Impact Acceleration Account (IAA) activities, as such utilising existing or future IAA partnerships is welcome, however, the focus of any FTMA funding should be on the exchange, development, and training of individuals.</p> <p>Applications should be from Research Organisation (RO) partnerships. The funding is awarded to a single lead RO. The ROs will then decide how to distribute the funding and select the individuals directly benefiting from the opportunity.</p>
4. 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	<p>The EIA was developed following the UKRI-BBSRC's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion guidelines.</p> <p>The EIA includes Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) diversity data (as available)</p>

<p><i>for each group can be detailed in under the protected characteristic table.</i></p>	<p>We've broken the call down into its constituent stages so that impacts could be considered at each stage of the activity e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call development and launch • Assessment • Post-award <p>We've considered the different groups of stakeholders involved in the activity e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BBSRC staff • Applicants • Assessors • Individuals directly benefitting from the opportunity <p>We asked FTMA4 awardees to provide us with the EDI approaches they had followed. We consulted with the BBSRC EDI team.</p>
<p>5. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals directly benefitting from this opportunity • External committee members and chairs. • UKRI-BBSRC employees working on the opportunity. • Stakeholders across policy, business and third sectors working with applicants on the opportunity, or likely to be impacted by the outcomes from the opportunity.
<p>6. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>Applications must include a section on EDI, which will be evaluated. In this section they will indicate their EDI considerations in selecting individuals to directly benefit from the opportunity.</p> <p>In their annual FTMA reports, ROs are expected to report on the diversity of those directly benefitting from the FTMA opportunity. This will be reviewed by BBSRC and the information used to inform any potential alterations to the scheme.</p>

	<p>Protected characteristics: For all protected characteristics there is the potential for unintentional bias which will be mitigated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel members are required to follow procedures in line with UKRI-BBSRC annual unintentional bias training. • UKRI-BBSRC monitor the diversity of the reviewer pool and panel members to ensure representation of the community and a diversity of opinion • UKRI-BBSRC oversight of, and presence at, the panel assessment meeting will serve as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.
--	--

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	Negative	<p>People with disabilities are under-represented in HESA academic staff (5%) compared to the general labour population (13%) and represent a smaller number of BBSRC grant applications. For BBSRC, UKRI diversity data suggests that applicants with known disabilities are no less likely than those without a disability to be awarded a grant as a PI, but slightly less likely as a Co-I.</p> <p>Impact varies depending on types of disability which may include neurological, visual, auditory, or other physical disability. Some examples of known barriers follow.</p>	<p>We will ask the awarded ROs to comply with EDI guidelines. They should consider mechanisms to support individuals with a disability to participate in FTMA activities. The FTMA is intentionally flexible and can support flexible working opportunities in terms of placement duration and opportunity for part-time working.</p> <p>An individual's disability related costs can be charged to the grant at their FTE % if the person is employed by the organisation specifically to work on the award.</p>

		<p>Individuals with a visual disability may experience difficulty accessing call information</p> <p>Individuals with a physical disability may experience accessibility barriers in attending physical meetings</p> <p>Individuals with auditory disabilities should be supported to fully participate in assessment meetings</p>	<p>If a person benefitting from the award is already employed at the organisation before working on the grant, if the individual has disability related support for their day-to-day activities, but this increases as a direct result of them working on the award, for example, having an assistant travel with them for fieldwork, then these <u>additional</u> costs can be charged to the project.</p> <p>If a person benefitting from the award is already employed at the organisation before working on the grant, if the individual does not normally require disability related support in their day-to-day activities but will require this support as a direct result of their work on the project, for example, having an assistant travel with them for fieldwork, then this would become an eligible cost. UKRI-BBSRC encourage participants to contact the office about any additional requirements they may need to fully participate. We intend to respond to individual support needs on a case-by-case basis and will make reasonable adjustments where appropriate.</p> <p>The BBSRC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites, including the ability to adjust the text size or use a text reader on the page.</p> <p>During assessment, we will</p>
--	--	---	--

			<p>use a virtual meeting format and discussion boards in line with UKRI's Virtual-First Policy.</p> <p>We will ensure that closed captions are available for virtual meetings</p>
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	Negative	<p>Call text and guidance should not be skewed towards a specific gender</p> <p>Action should be taken to avoid misgendering individuals</p>	<p>Gender neutral pronouns are used in text relating to the call and are expected to be used in applications.</p> <p>Panel members will be asked to display their preferred pronouns if they are comfortable to, minimising the risk of misgendering.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	No identified impact		
Pregnancy and maternity	Negative	<p>Pregnant panel members may feel unable to attend an in-person panel meeting.</p> <p>Career breaks in an applicant's track record due to parental leave or caring responsibilities may be seen as negative.</p>	<p>For panel assessment: UKRI-BBSRC will use a virtual meeting format and Discussion Boards, following UKRI's Virtual first policy.</p> <p>Expectations will be set that awarded ROs ensure appropriate assessment of applicant track record without bias against career breaks, including those due to parental leave or caring responsibilities.</p>
Race	Negative	<p>UKRI and BBSRC diversity data show that people identifying as black, Asian, mixed or other ethnicities represent a smaller number of applicants (although there are differences between whether</p>	<p>Applicants (ROs) will be asked to indicate what EDI considerations they will have in place when selecting which individuals will directly benefit from the opportunity.</p>

		ethnicities make up higher or lower than HESA or general labour average) and tend to have less successful award rates compared to those identifying as white.	Where appropriate, awarded ROs could be expected to take action to encourage application from minority groups.
Religion or belief	Negative	Call and assessment dates could coincide with religious holidays	UKRI-BBSRC ensures that religious observances are considered as much as possible when timetabling major activities and major religious holidays were checked in the development of the call's activities and timeline.
Sexual orientation		There are no UKRI data with which to assess this characteristic currently.	Applicants (ROs) will be asked to indicate what EDI considerations they will have in place when selecting which individuals will directly benefit from the opportunity.
Sex (gender)	Negative	Women are under-represented in HESA academic staff compared to the general labour market and also have lower application rates, according to UKRI diversity data, compared to the HESA baseline. This appears to particularly be the case for BBSRC awards where on average, 26% of applicants are women compared to the HESA benchmark of 40%. Despite this under-representation of women at the application stage, there appears to be no difference in the award rate (30%) between men and women.	Applicants (ROs) will be asked to indicate what EDI considerations they will have in place when selecting which individuals will directly benefit from the opportunity. Where appropriate, awarded ROs could be expected to take action to encourage application from minority groups.
Age			Applicants can explain how they will involve staff at different career stages in their application.

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)		Bringing Panellists from a variety of geographical locations together or a physical meeting can represent a barrier to attendance.	<p>Use a virtual meeting format and discussion boards in line with UKRI's Virtual-First Policy.</p> <p>The FTMA scheme requires that ROs create partnerships, in part to diversify the geographical spread of funding awarded.</p>
Socio-economic status			
Education background			
Parent/guardian responsibilities		People with parental responsibilities may have less time to prepare a proposal, participate in reviewing and/or attend a panel meeting. Caring responsibilities fall disproportionately on women and therefore this is likely to interact with gender.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKRI-BBSRC ensures that school holidays are considered where possible when timetabling major activities as part of the funding opportunity and assessment process. • Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing for preparation for participants to cover any caring responsibilities. • Where possible, UKRI-BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours and this will be considered alongside time zone barriers.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For panel assessment: UKRI-BBSRC will pay reasonable caring costs incurred while on UKRI-BBSRC business. • It is the responsibility of the employer (the research organisation) to provide sufficient support for those with caring responsibilities. • In partner countries this should conform to the local regulatory framework.
<p>Carer/parent carer responsibilities</p>		<p>Reviewers, committee members and applicants may find it difficult to participate if they have caring responsibilities. Caring responsibilities fall disproportionately on women and therefore this is likely to interact with gender.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing for preparation for participants to cover any caring responsibilities. • Where possible, UKRI-BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours and this will be considered alongside time zone barriers. • For panel assessment: UKRI-BBSRC will pay the cost of reasonable caring responsibilities incurred while on UKRI-BBSRC business. • It is the responsibility of the employer (the research organisation) to provide sufficient support. • In partner countries this should conform to the local regulatory framework.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Appropriate steps have been taken to mitigate identified barriers to inclusion. Monitoring processes are in place to identify any discrimination within the activity and appropriate further alterations can be made to the programme as necessary.	
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 .		
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	The activity has been adapted following the actions described in the previous section. BBSRC acknowledges that there may be unforeseen barriers and encourage individuals to contact the office to arrange for further mitigations where appropriate.

<p>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.</p>		
---	--	--

<p>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)</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Person completing EIA</p>	<p>Javier Pardo Diaz (Javier.PardoDiaz@ukri.org)</p>
<p>Responsible owner (e.g. project board, committee):</p>	<p>Aidan Grimsley</p>
<p>Date signed off by owner:</p>	<p>08/08/23</p>
<p>Review date (if applicable): (An EIA is a live document and should regularly be reviewed throughout the life cycle of an activity)</p>	<p>At call close (November 2023)</p>

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Javier Pardo Diaz	When published	1	

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.

Action	To be completed by when?	Owner	How will it be monitored?	What is/will be the impact/outcome?

