

**Equality Impact Assessment**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed**
 | Access to High Performance Computing Call, incorporating a pilot of novel peer review |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event**
 | * To provide open access to EPSRC’s HPC services for UKRI remit researchers
* To pilot the use of partial randomisation in peer review
 |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)*
 | * The call is the successor to the ARCHER RAP, Pioneers and Tier-2 Open access calls
* EPSRC’s HPC services have been consulted regarding changes in process
 |
| 1. **Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?**
 | * Computational researchers in UKRI remit
* EPSRC’s HPC services
* Peer review members
 |
| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?**
 | * Diversity monitoring data will be collected regarding applications and awards
* The peer review pilot will be reviewed with applicants and peer reviewers
* Computational researchers have routes for raising concerns with both the services and EPSRC directly
 |

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. 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](https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/caringresponsibilities/).
* 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 | No additional identified impacts |  |  |
| Gender reassignment | No additional identified impacts | Gender neutral language is used in communications |  |
| Marriage or civil partnership | No additional identified impacts | This information is only used for assessing potential conflicts of interest |  |
| Pregnancy and maternity | Potentially negative | Individuals may not have the opportunity to participate in this specific process |  |
| Race | No additional identified impacts |  |  |
| Religion or belief | Potentially negative | The dates of major religious events will be taken into account in the call planning |  |
| Sexual orientation | No additional identified impacts |  |  |
| Sex (gender) | No additional identified impacts | Gender neutral language is used in communications |  |
| Age | No additional identified impacts | The call is open to all career stages | EPSRC will endeavour to have representation from across career stages in the reviewing process |
| Parent/guardian responsibilities | Potentially negative | The dates of major holidays will be taken into account in the call planning |  |

**Evaluation:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Question**  | **Explanation / justification** |
| Is it possible the new/proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate against or unfairly disadvantage people? | Yes, but these are mitigated sufficiently through the actions described above. |
| **Final Decision:** | **Tick the relevant box** | **Include any explanation / justification required** |
| 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/against one or more groups.
 |  |  |
| 1. You can **adapt or change** the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias.
 |  |  |
| 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.
 | **X** | This access route to EPSRC HPC compute provides the most open route, without the requirements set through other EPSRC-led access routes.The pilot of partial randomisation in peer review is aimed at streamlining the application process. Peer review remains the mainstay of the evaluation process and only projects that reach a ‘fundable’ threshold will receive resources. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Will this EIA be published\* Yes/Not required** | Yes |
| **Date completed:** | 07/02/2024 |
| **Review date** (if applicable): |  |

**Change log**

| Name | Date | Version | Change |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Billy McGregor  | 21/06/2022  | 1 |  |
| Richard Bailey | 22/03/2023 | 2 | Updated for new call process |
| Richard Bailey | 27/09/2023 | 3 | Reviewed |
| Richard Bailey | 07/02/2024 | 4 | Updated for new call process |