# **UK Research and Innovation**

# **Equality Impact Assessment**

## 

\*See guidance document for detailed support.

\* Delete the guidance text in the response when completing your EIA.

## **Overview of activity**

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|  | **Response** |
| Name of activity being assessed | BRAID: Responsible AI Demonstrators |
| Council/department/project team | AHRC AI & Design Team |
| Aims and objectives of the activity | AHRC’s *Bridging Responsible AI Divides (BRAID)* Demonstrator projects will seek to address real-world challenges facing sectors, businesses, communities and publics in the responsible development and application of AI technologies. Designed to support human-centred and humane AI innovation, Demonstrators will be collaborative, co-produced projects that involve multiple stakeholder groups, including the public where appropriate.  Our ambition is to demonstrate the transformative power of embedding responsible, human-centred approaches and thinking at the earliest stages of the AI R&D pipeline, and across the AI lifecycle. Funded projects will support this ambition by demonstrating and evaluating the application of one or more specific Responsible AI (RAI) practices, tools, techniques or other types of intervention, in a particular context and aligned to one or more of the BRAID programme’s delivery themes.  EDI activities including but not limited to:     * Ensuring that EDI-focused activities are monitored and reviewed for ongoing effectiveness and ensure that the commitments AHRC are making to diversity are being met * Understanding how to best support impact-focused EDI work * Understanding what areas of our portfolio are particularly underrepresented and use as evidence for decisions around appropriate support and interventions * Raising awareness of the EDI-relevant research we are funding * Helping coordinate AHRC’s portfolio of EDI research and advising on future AHRC EDI interventions and activities * Ensuring that EDI is a primary consideration in the recruitment of staff and members of governance groups |
| Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event? | This programme will follow AHRC EDI policy, which has been formed following substantial engagement with employee groups and has been benchmarked against external best practice through schemes such as the Disability Confident Employers programme. Throughout the development of the programme, we will continue to engage with industry and academic stakeholders, including those representing minoritized groups within the field of AI.    UKRI staff, potential stakeholders from both the academic and wider AI communities, communities affected by the long-term impact of the BRAID programme. |
| What data and consultation have you used to assess the equality impact of your activity? | Funded projects will be required to report via the Programme Directors. This will be included in the quarterly reporting the Programme Directors submit to AHRC, which in turn feeds into Measuring AHRC’s Success (MAS). |

## **Analysing your impact**

In addition to data gathering and consultation, the funding opportunity EDI checklist, the inclusive events checklist and 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.

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| Are there **general or overarching impacts on multiple groups**? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact? | **We have taken the following approach to ensure this call is as inclusive as it can be -**    **Applications - Timeframes & reasonable adjustments:**  A range of applicants will face challenges in adhering to timeframes of application and / or delivering projects within specified timeframes as they need to take unexpected periods of leave. We will ask applicants in ‘Funding finder’ text to contact us if they are any reasonable adjustments which need to be considered.    We have tried to ensure the application window is open for the longest time we can accommodate.    A range of applicants will also face challenges in adhering to timeframes of delivery of research projects. We will be open and transparent about the ability for award holders to take periods of leave and can request extensions. We will sign post them to relevant T&Cs. [UKRI-04042023-UKRI\_fEC-Grant-Terms-And-Conditions-April-2023.pdf](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/UKRI-04042023-UKRI_fEC-Grant-Terms-And-Conditions-April-2023.pdf)    **Status of applicants**    When developing this call, we have considered how we can make the opportunity as inclusive as possible e.g. PIs do not need to have PhD but can have equivalent experience.    **Assessment of application**  Accessing applications in a fair, open and transparent process is an integral part of what we do. For more information about how we do this please see – [Guidance for reviewers – AHRC – UKRI](https://www.ukri.org/councils/ahrc/guidance-for-reviewers/), [UKRI-14072023-UKRI-Principles-of-Assessment-and-Decision-Making-March-2021-V5.pdf](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/UKRI-14072023-UKRI-Principles-of-Assessment-and-Decision-Making-March-2021-V5.pdf)    The assessment panel meeting will take place online to reduce barriers to participation for a range of panellists.    We will ensure the panel will be made up of diverse range of assessors in terms of specialisms, backgrounds, HEIs / organisations they are affiliated with, and sex (gender) for example.    We will ensure panel chair is aware of unconscious bias so can communicate importance of this to panel members.    **Delivery of research:**    **Inclusive work cultures**    AHRC advocates the importance of ensuring the researchers and research teams we fund access inclusive research environments as outlined by the Researcher Concordat, where needs of individual are considered and supported e.g. supporting researchers to work flexibly, reduced hours and in a hybrid way. This is outlined in AHRC’s Research Funding Guide.  There are a number of UKRI policies which discuss the importance of inclusive research cultures to ensure that the researchers and teams we fund feel part of an inclusive and welcoming research team.    We will ensure that award holders are aware of these policies and when appropriate ask them to demonstrate how they will adhere to these principles via EDI statements / action plans.    [Good research resource hub – UKRI](https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/good-research-resource-hub/)  [UKRI-310322-GRP-Policy2022.pdf](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/UKRI-310322-GRP-Policy2022.pdf)  [Updated FINAL-the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf (universitiesuk.ac.uk)](https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-08/Updated%20FINAL-the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf)    **UKRI grant T&Cs**  UKRI policy tries to ensure that all those that we fund are supported in their research environments and can access sickness, maternity, paternity, parental leave and have flexibility within grant to request extensions. [UKRI-04042023-UKRI\_fEC-Grant-Terms-And-Conditions-April-2023.pdf](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/UKRI-04042023-UKRI_fEC-Grant-Terms-And-Conditions-April-2023.pdf) |

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## **Protected characteristics**

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| **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 | ☐ | ☐ | Expected to be neutral. | Will remain under review. |
| Disability | ☐ | ☒ | * Accessibility of call documents and any engagement activity (online or in person) can be impacted by any number of accessibility needs. People with disabilities are also disproportionately negatively impacted by requirements for physical colocation and rigid working patterns within project teams. * Applicants may have a range of disabilities, health conditions and additional needs which might impact their ability to apply for call within designated time frame / might need to take unknown periods of leave in delivery phase of projects. * There is an extensive range of disabilities to consider and may include - visual, hearing and mobility impairments / neurodiversity / chronic illness (any long-lasting disease or health condition | * At application stage – applicants will be asked if they have any specific needs so reasonable adjustments can be considered and made whenever possible. * The call is open for 4 months, we hope this will give applicants adequate time to apply. * Ensure application process adheres to UKRI accessibility standards. * Ensure UKRI grant T&Cs are communicated to applicants and they are aware of right to take period of leave / absence / ask for an extension / work reduced hours. * AHRC advocates the importance of ensuring the researchers we fund access inclusive research environments as outlined by the Researcher Concordat, where needs of individual are considered and supported e.g. supporting researchers to work flexibly and in a hybrid way. This is outlined in AHRC’s Research Funding Guide. * Alternative formats for communications will be made available either as a matter of course or on request in line with legal requirements and AHRC’s of guidance on publications. * Engagement activity will be planned with a view to offering information in a variety of communication styles, including formal call guidance, FAQs, virtual events with Q&A. * There will be no requirement for the colocation of project teams, and flexible working arrangements will be specifically permitted/encouraged. |
| Gender reassignment (Trans identity) | ☐ | ☐ | * Expected to be neutral. * Inclusivity of literature poses a risk. * Inclusive options on registration forms. * Period of leave might be needed for reassignment / recovery. This might impact ability to apply within specified timeframe and might require period of leave in delivery phase of project.      * Misuse of pronouns * Physical environments need to be inclusive e.g. gender neutral bathrooms are available. | * Programme literature will be gender neutral. Applicants will be given the opportunity to disclose preferred pronouns which should also be included in outgoing correspondence. Where gender identity information is requested, an “other” option will be available with a write in box to provide details. * Inclusion principles for this programme outlined in above section (over – arching impacts on multiple groups) should provide an overview of how we intend to mitigate known barriers to engagement. * At application stage – applicants will be asked if they have any specific needs so reasonable adjustments can be considered and made whenever possible. * The call is open for 4 months, we hope this will give applicants adequate time to apply. * Ensure UKRI grant T&Cs are communicated to applicants and they are aware of right to take period of leave / absence / ask for an extension / work reduced hours. * Ensure use of gender -neutral language. * Ensure environments are as inclusive as they can be, especially if AH is leading on delivery of in person workshop / meeting. Please see Researcher Concordat with regards to supporting inclusive research cultures. |
| Marriage or civil partnership | ☐ | ☒ | * Expected to be neutral: will continue to review. It might be challenging to commit to delivering / participating with research / programme in a certain geographical location if participant’s relationship status might mean they have commitment to a certain region. | * There will be no requirement for the colocation of project teams, and flexible working arrangements will be specifically permitted/encouraged. * Inclusion principles for this programme outlined in above section (over – arching impacts on multiple groups) should provide an overview of how we intend to mitigate known barriers to engagement. |
| Pregnancy and maternity/paternity | ☐ | ☐ | * Specific windows in which work must take place may dissuade expectant parents from applying. * Institutions may be reluctant to name expectant parents on applications due to concern about the complexity of arranging and or availability of suitable cover for a fixed term grant * Pregnancy is an unpredictable time when it comes to the management of pregnancy symptoms and unexpected periods of leave might be required– this might impact someone’s ability to make application deadline / deliver within project timeframes. * If someone is on maternity leave, they might be on leave within application timeframes, or there might be anxiety about whether they are permitted to take maternity leave during lifecycle of grant. | * Call webinar event should take place within regular working hours. * Call application guidance to highlight 2020 changes to UKRI’s [grant terms and conditions](https://www.ukri.org/news/update-to-the-ukri-fec-grant-and-training-grant-terms-and-conditions/#:~:text=Leave%20entitlement,do%20not%20require%20HMRC%20approval.) which provide for maternity, paternity and parental leave to be funded through our grant system without HMRC approval. Guidance should also highlight the ability to request funding extensions due to maternity, paternity, parental or shard parental leave as well as changes to working patterns. * At application stage – applicants will be asked if they have any specific needs so reasonable adjustments can be made * Call open for 4 months. * UKRI standard grant T&Cs give award holders right to take maternity leave within life-time of grant. UKRI will reimburse costs incurred by hosting HEI to cover any additional net parental leave costs that cannot be met within the announced grant cash limit including Statutory Maternity pay. See RGC 8.3.1 in [UKRI-04042023-UKRI\_fEC-Grant-Terms-And-Conditions-April-2023.pdf](https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/UKRI-04042023-UKRI_fEC-Grant-Terms-And-Conditions-April-2023.pdf) * Ensure programme events are accessible and where possible hybrid options are provided. |
| Race | ☐ | ☐ | * Expected to be neutral but we are mindful that there could be a potential negative: continue to review. * Potential negative impact of under – representation of participants from minoritised groups. | * Promotional material will consider diversity and be reflective of society as a whole. * Documents to be checked for unconsciously exclusionary language both manually and with appropriate UKRI-commissioned software. * We will be proactive in our efforts to address under – representation of minoritised groups for future activity. This might involve development of specific partnerships / networks to address underrepresentation of minority ethnic applicants, drawing on the EDI data that we have from applicants, to develop our understanding of barriers to engagement and how we can mitigate them. |
| Religion or belief | ☐ | ☐ | * Impact expected to be neutral. * Applicants who are observing certain faith festivals, celebrations, practice might face challenges engaging with application / delivering within certain grant timeframes. | * Adjustments around religious observance are already covered in existing EDI policies and legal requirements under the Equalities Act (2010). * Call open for 4 months. * With in funding finder text for this call, we will ask applicants if they have any specific needs so we can make reasonable adjustments whenever possible. * Ensure UKRI grant T&Cs are communicated to applicants and they are aware of right to take period of leave / absence / ask for an extension. |
| Sexual orientation | ☐ | ☐ | Expected to be neutral | * Promotional material will consider diversity and be reflective of society as a whole. * Researcher concordat states the principles of creating an inclusive research culture. |
| Sex (gender) | ☐ | ☐ | * Impact expected to be neutral. * Long distance travel with potential overnight stays may disproportionately impact those with caring responsibilities which in turn fall disproportionately on women. This potentially creates a risk of indirect discrimination. * Unconsciously exclusionary language in the call documents may dissuade female applicants especially in areas where women are underrepresented. * Please see comments related to pregnancy / maternity leave and Gender reassignment (Trans identity). * An applicant might have health issues related to their sex (gender) which could impact their ability to participate in application process / delivery of project, e.g. menstrual health challenges / the menopause. | * Call guidance should explicitly support non-standard working patterns, including part time and compressed hours, as well as flexible working. * Considered use of images on the programme and balance of panellists at any events. * Call open for 4 months. * With in funding finder text for this call, we will ask applicants if they have any specific needs so we can make reasonable adjustments whenever possible. * Ensure UKRI grant T&Cs are communicated to applicants and they are aware of right to take period of leave / absence / ask for an extension. |

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## **Additional characteristics**

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| **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) | ☐ | ☒ | * Possible negative impact. * Could be challenging for a range of people to participate with in person events, delivery of project in specific geographical areas. * Applicants might face barriers to deliver research in specific region if they live far away from said region and need to undertake considerable travel. | * Support importance of hybrid and flexible working. Ensure activity takes place in diverse geographical areas so there is not an expectation that all participants need to access London for example. * Ensure activities across the lifespan of the programme take place in diverse geographical areas so there is not an expectation that all participants need to access London. |
| Socio-economic status | ☐ | ☒ | * Costs associated with participation of application / project. | * AHRC advocates inclusive working environments for the research staff its investments support e.g. the importance of working flexibly and in a hybrid way so members of research teams don’t face financial barriers to working in a research team e.g. commuting costs. * We encourage award holders to consider ‘participation costs’ to ensure equitable participation opportunities, i.e. reimbursing travel expenses for those supporting research and whenever possible participation fees for co – collaborators of research. |
| Education background | ☐ | ☐ | * There might be barriers to engagement for applicants if there are specific requirements for the role of Principal Investigator. | * Need to ensure equity of opportunity for all. This should be reflected in status to apply for applicants – e.g. PI is not expected to have a PhD but can have equivalent experience . |
| Parent/guardian responsibilities | ☐ | ☐ | * Applicants with parent / guardian responsibilities could face challenges to applying within certain timeframes e.g. within school holiday periods. * Applicants with parent / guardian responsibilities could face challenges to delivering project within specified timeframes if there is no flexibility to time scales. | * We will ensure UKRI grant T&Cs are communicated to applicants and they are aware of right to take period of leave / absence / ask for an extension. * AHRC advocates inclusive working environments for the research staff its investments support e.g. it supports the importance of flexible and hybrid working which might help to mitigate barriers to engagement which researchers with parent / guardian responsibilities might face. |
| Carer/parent carer responsibilities | ☐ | ☐ | * Applicants with carer / parent carer responsibilities could face challenges to applying within certain timeframes e.g. within school holiday periods. This call is open over the summer holiday period. * Applicants with carer / parent carer responsibilities could face challenges to delivering project within specified timeframes if there is no flexibility to time scales. | * We will ensure UKRI grant T&Cs are communicated to applicants and they are aware of right to take period of leave / absence / ask for an extension. * AHRC advocates inclusive working environments for the research staff its investments support e.g. it supports the importance of flexible and hybrid working which might help to mitigate barriers to engagement which researchers with carer / parent carer responsibilities might face. |
| Political opinion (Northern Ireland only) | ☐ | ☐ | * The theme of this call is perceived to be politically neutral. * The political opinion of applicants / assessors will not form part of any application / assessment criteria. | * To ensure we understand the needs of all attendees and participants, we will give them the opportunity to communicate whether they have any specific needs we should be aware of so we can make reasonable adjustments. |
| Other characteristics | ☐ | ☐ | * Expected to be neutral | * To ensure we understand the needs of all attendees and participants, we will give them the opportunity to communicate whether they have any specific needs we should be aware of so we can make reasonable. |

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## **Evaluation**

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| **Question:** | **Explanation / justification** | |
| Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people? | Whilst some impact on people with certain protected characteristics is unavoidable, every reasonable effort has been taken to mitigate such disadvantages within the strict timeframe of the programme. | |
| **Final Decision:** | **Select the relevant box** | **Include any explanation / justification required** |
| 1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will **proceed**. | ☐ |  |
| 1. **Adapt or change** the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality. | ☐ | e.g. The activity has been adapted following the actions described in the previous section. |
| 1. **Stop** the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups. | ☐ |  |
| 1. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the activity (e.g. in **extreme cases** or where **positive action** is taken). Therefore, you are going to **proceed with caution** with this activity knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision. | ☒ | We have carefully considered all identified impacts and have made our best efforts to mitigate against these considering the timeframe and resource available. We will consult further on these measures throughout the event and call commissioning processes. |

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## **Review and sign off**

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| **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?** | An EIA is a live document and should regularly be reviewed throughout the life cycle of an activity    Consider how you monitor the impact identified in your EIA. Put a plan in place to ensure that the impact is being monitored throughout the activity and evaluate the outcomes of any actions identified in the EIA. For example, you could:     * Plan regular reviews of the EIA and action plan * Review the EIA as part of any closure or lessons learned activity. * Be transparent: continue to consult with the groups affected by your activity and use new insights to review you EIA. |
| **Next review date:** |  |

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| --- | --- |
| **Will this EIA be published? \* Yes/Not required** | Yes    \*EIA’s should be published alongside relevant funding activities for example funding opportunities and events. |
| **Point of contact:** | Nina Cox  [Nina.Cox@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:Nina.Cox@ahrc.ukri.org) |
| **Responsible owner:** | AHRC AI & Design [ai.design@ahrc.ukri.org](mailto:ai.design@ahrc.ukri.org) |
| **Accountable owner:** | BRAID Project Board |
| **Signed off by (name and date):** |  |

## **Change log**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Date** | **Version** | **Change** |
|  |  | 1 | E.g. Based on input received from consultation groups at the **business case** stage, added actions under the gender section |
|  |  | 2 | E.g. Based on input received from x at the **announcement of opportunity** stage, added/removed/edited x |
|  |  | 3 | E.g. Based on input received from x at the **investment authorisation** stage, added/removed/edited x |

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## **Action plan**

Use the table below to define the actions you intend to take (or have taken) to address the indications of negative impact you have identified or to promote equality. Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

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| **Action** | **Deadline** | **Owner** | **How will it be monitored?** | **What is/will be the impact/outcome?** |
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