



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Quantum Technologies Early Career Forum
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>The Quantum Technologies Early Career Forum (ECF) is an informal advisory structure, with an evolving membership that reflects the early career Quantum Technologies community. The Forum is consulted on strategic issues and, in turn, encouraged to act as advocates for EPSRC, sharing their awareness of EPSRC strategy and operations with the wider research community.</p> <p>To enable the ECF to have a membership that represents early career members of the Quantum Technologies, Early Career Forum (ECF) hold the position for three years. As such every 18 months a refresh of the members takes place to continue to represent the views of Early Career Researchers across the breadth of the Quantum Technologies research landscape.</p> <p>The EPSRC Quantum Technologies team is seeking applications from Early Career academics, industrialists, and from third sector and government organisations to join the ECF in the Quantum Technologies theme.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>Quantum Technologies Early Career Researchers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current Quantum Technologies Fellows & Future Leadership Fellows (FLFs) were invited to contribute to a survey on how they would like to see the set-up of an Early Career Forum (format, frequency and topics for discussions etc.). The outcome of the survey has fed into the development of the opportunity.

	<p>Internal stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with the NQTP Programme Board Strategic Advisory Board and consultation with the wider QT Fellows community as well as consultation within the EPSRC Quantum Technology team. <p>External stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publishing the call for new members across the wider Quantum Technologies community via EPSRC Website and the National Quantum Technologies Programme (NQTP) website as well as via Quantum Technologies Hub and communications team.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic researchers of in Early Career stages. • UK's research community and industrial sector concerned with the areas of Quantum Technology. • Research councils and staff • Industry and the wider innovation landscape.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed.</p> <p>Discussion of recruitment process with ECF members will be held before future Early Career Forum refresh.</p>

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](#).
- 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 Negative Impact	Accessibility requirement for meetings & Early Career Forum information & documentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable adjustments for specific requirements will be made. • Documents will be produced in line with EPSRC formatting guidelines and information will be shared in the most appropriate and accessible way possible • ECR forum meetings will be held in a hybrid setting to allow those to attend either in-person or virtually. • EPSRC will endeavour to choose venues which have accessibility facilities for disabled participants. Forum members who are organising meetings will be asked to take into consideration members' accessibility requirements when choosing venues.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisers will be encouraged to ensure regular breaks to minimise sensory/ cognitive load. • ECF meeting dates will be provided in advance to give sufficient time for applicants to discuss and plan required adjustments. • When joining, members will be given the opportunity to raise with EPSRC anything that will affect their ability to contribute to the forum and we will work with them to mitigate the impact and adapt our ways of working • EPSRC reserve the right to change the timetable of the meeting to take into account individual circumstances and allow additional time for breaks and technical issues. • The assessment panel will be held virtually.
Gender reassignment	Potential negative impact	Accessibility to gender inclusive facilities for meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Venues to be chosen which have access to gender inclusive toilets where possible
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact	n/a	Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.

Pregnancy and maternity	Potential negative impact	Attendance to Early Career Forum meetings could be restricted due to parental leave/caring responsibilities/ pregnancy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasonable adjustments will be made for individuals if required at all stages of the process. • Timetable of key dates will be made available to ECF members in far in advance as possible. • The opportunity will be open for eight-weeks to provide an extended time for applicants to complete their Expression of Interest. • EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these. • Forum membership will run for a two-year term, which means that there will be future opportunities to apply when the forum membership will be refreshed. • Those on maternity/parental leave during their term on the ECF can extend their membership for a period equal to their period of leave. • We will ensure that breaks are scheduled in throughout the duration of the ECF meetings whether

			minority underrepresentation.
Religion or belief	Potentially negative impact	Potential for unconscious bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All ECF members will be encouraged to inform EPSRC of any personal circumstances that may affect their ability to participate and how this can be accommodated for. • Ensure religious observances are taken into account when meeting dates are chosen. • To ensure the venue for the meeting can provide a prayer/quiet room. • Dietary requirements and the opportunity to raise them in advance will be available to all attendees.
Sexual orientation	Potentially negative impact	Potential for unconscious bias	Standard EPSRC policies will be followed
Sex (gender)	Potentially negative impact	Potential for unconscious bias	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender neutral language will be used throughout and will be encouraged during the assessment process of applications. • Existing EPSRC policies regarding diversity of the Early Career Forum membership will be followed. • Panellists will be made aware of actions to take to minimise the effect of unconscious biases, in line with standard EPSRC policies.

	Potentially positive impact		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacancies will be filled from the shortlists with consideration to ensuring a gender balance in line with UKRI ambition of achieving at least 30% participation of the underrepresented gender. Where candidates are of equal merit, take positive action to prioritise candidates based on gender.
Age	Potential Positive impact	Potential for positive impact as all age groups of the community are invited to apply for this opportunity. This opportunity has remained open for applicants to decide if they are an Early Career Researcher (ECR) and eligible to access this opportunity.	
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	Caring responsibilities – potentially negative	Early Career Forum members with caring responsibilities may have reduced availability to attend meetings in person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timetable of key dates will be made available to members as far in advance as possible. Highlight EPSRC guidance on support for carers or caregivers when travelling. Dates for Early Career Forum meetings will be held outside of school holidays wherever possible. Early Career Forum meetings will be held within the working day and the specific timing

			<p>and length of the meetings will be discussed with the Forum membership. We reserve the right to change the timetable of the meeting to take into account individual circumstances and allow additional time for breaks and technical issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members will be informed of EPSRC's policy on Support available for people with caring responsibilities. Details on the support EPSRC will offer for those with caring responsibilities can be found here.
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Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	<p>We have identified potential areas which could lead to bias and have a negative impact, with the risk of unfairly discriminating amongst /unfairly disadvantaging members of the Quantum Technology community with protected characteristics. To eliminate the potential for any unconscious bias we have identified these risks and will put mitigating actions in place to reduce potential bias/discrimination.</p> <p>There has been no evidence found to show that this opportunity would discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people.</p>	
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	✓	Possible risks and biases associated with the opportunity have been identified and mitigation has been put in place. ED&I aspects will be considered throughout the lifetime of the Early Career Forum and this EIA will be reviewed accordingly.
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:	10/04/2025
Review date (if applicable):	At each Early Career Forum refresh.

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Jack Allen	When published	1	