UK Research and Innovation

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Form

for

Research England Transparency Programme

Overview of activity

	Response
Name of activity being assessed	Transparency Programme
Council/department/project team	Research England, Research Directorate, Research Funding team
Aims and objectives of the activity	The aim of the Transparency programme is to improve RE's understanding of how Strategic Institutional Research Funding (SIRF) is used by Higher Education Providers' (HEPs). The Transparency Programme is being conducted in parallel with, and in alignment to, the SIRF Review. This EIA reflects our approach to designing and delivering sector engagement during the Transparency Programme's testing phase - specifically, testing a transparency-enhancing process with sector experts and mission group-affiliated and non-affiliated HEPs. It considers the potential impact and barriers this engagement may pose for individuals and groups with protected characteristics, as well as the measures and mitigations we will implement to ensure an inclusive and equitable process. Rationale for the Transparency Programme. The Transparency programme provides an opportunity to align with the government's response to the '*Independent Review of the UK's Research Development and Innovation Organisation Landscape'*, which recommended a review of quality-related (QR) funding for HEPs. Outcomes Intended outcomes of the Transparency programme include, but are not limited to: • Better understand the approaches and strategic decisions undertaken by HEPs. • Increase the availability, openness and clarity of information on institutional uses of SIRF. • Evidence the strategic decision undertaken by HEPs representing the diversity of scale of provider. • Present evidence and case studies across the English HE and research sector, reflecting the use of SIRF by HEPs in leveraging and complementing competitive research funding. • Evidence how SIRF can leverage capabilities institutionally to deliver in line with Government's mission/priorities.
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	The internal stakeholders are RE's Executives, who lead the organisation, and the Research Directorate, responsible for delivering this programme.

	External stakeholders primarily include the individuals consulted during our sector engagement, along with their respective HEPs and affiliated mission groups. Wider external stakeholders include government departments, primarily DSIT, as well as learned societies and sector organisations such as the Association for Research Managers and Administrators (ARMA).
What data and consultation have you used?	Sector engagement during the current testing phase – discussions with sector experts and consultation with mission group-affiliated and non-affiliated HEPs through three roundtable events. Feedback and challenge from RE Council on 26th September 2024, RE Senior Management Team on 14th October 2024 and RE Senior Leadership Team on 2nd December 2024 and 17th February 2025. Higher education sector intelligence from RE Engagement Leads. Higher Education Staff Data provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Analysing your impact

Protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown	Negative impact	Please explain the impact or why there is no 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.

Age	☐	☒	Engagement with individuals in senior positions within the HE sector could unintentionally limit input from younger age groups, given the overrepresentation of certain age groups in these roles (As per HESA data - approx. 40% of non-academic managers, directors and senior officials are 51 and over). This may result in a lack of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes and may also place a disproportionate burden on the younger age group individuals in these roles.	**Actions** to increase positive impact or decrease negative impact • Community Testing – We will conduct focused engagement such as via Mission Groups to ensure we hear and consider diverse perspectives. • RE internal intelligence – Seeking input from RE's Engagement Leads to help reach a wider and more representative audience. • Communication – Our communication plans will clearly outline and emphasise that we are inviting HE staff in a range of roles and age groups to provide feedback. • Guidance – We will ensure that all guidance clearly emphasises the need for information to reflect the diverse and representative perspectives of the HEP. We will also highlight the importance of considering the diversity of each HEPs staff community. **Measuring** outcomes and outputs • Stakeholder feedback – Surveys and direct input from RE Engagement Leads will help evaluate whether outreach effectively reached all relevant individuals across career stages and age groups. • Lessons Learned – Insights gained will inform future engagement.
Disability	☐	☒	If sector engagement events are not designed with accessibility in mind, individuals with	**Actions** to increase positive impact or decrease negative impact

			disabilities may face barriers to participation, leading to underrepresentation. This exclusion could result in a failure to identify key challenges affecting their engagement with the Transparency Programme, potentially leading to policies or changes that unintentionally disadvantage them.	- Hybrid participation – We will do our upmost to ensure that our engagement will be primarily virtual or has a hybrid option by default to reduce negative impact of inaccessible venues and travel. - Scheduling – We will schedule sufficient breaks during in person, hybrid, and virtual events. - Virtual platforms – All virtual events will follow best practise for digital accessibility, including compatibility with assistive technologies and enabling live captions. - Inclusive communication and content – Materials will be provided in accessible formats, i.e. using HTML documents on the web, where possible. Materials will be provided ahead of engagement events to allow for prior assessment. - In-person events – We will do our upmost to ensure adequate space and have available rooms for designated quiet areas to provide a safe and comfortable environment. - Guidance – We will ensure that all guidance clearly emphasises the need for information to reflect the diverse and representative perspectives of the HEP. We will also highlight the importance of considering the diversity of each HEPs staff community. **Measuring** outcomes and outputs

	Positive	Negative	Impact	Actions / Measuring
				• Lessons learned - Any feedback and concerns raised regarding accessibility will be documented and reviewed to improve future engagement and communications.
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	☐	☒	Misgendering or deadnaming individuals during sector engagement events or in written communication can have a significant negative impact, particularly on transgender and non-binary participants. Such incidents can cause distress, discourage participation, and create an unwelcoming environment. This may lead to reduced engagement from affected individuals and limit the diversity of perspectives represented in discussions.	**Actions** to increase positive impact or decrease negative impact • Pronoun sharing - Participants will be encouraged to voluntarily include their pronouns in videoconferencing usernames and on physical name badges, where possible. RE colleagues will be encouraged to use pronouns in their introductions. • Facilitator training - Event facilitators will receive guidance on using inclusive language and addressing participants correctly. • Guidance – We will ensure that all guidance clearly emphasises the need for information to reflect the diverse and representative perspectives of the HEP. We will also highlight the importance of considering the diversity of each HEPs staff community. **Measuring** outcomes and outputs • Lessons learned - Any feedback and concerns raised regarding accessibility will be documented and reviewed to improve future engagement and communications.
Marriage or civil partnership	☐	☐	No direct impact.	

Pregnancy and maternity	☐	☒	Individuals who are pregnant or on maternity or paternity leave during Transparency testing and piloting may face challenges in staying informed about developments or participating in engagement activities. Their temporary absence could result in limited awareness of changes. Additionally, individuals with this protected characteristic may have restricted availability for engagement, reducing their opportunity to contribute insights that reflect the experiences of this group.	**Actions** to increase positive impact or decrease negative impact

Actions to increase positive impact or decrease negative impact

- Inclusive communication – We will utilise a variety of communication methods, such as publicly accessible web content and targeted emails, to provide updates. This ensures individuals on pregnancy or maternity leave can easily access relevant information upon their return.
- Flexible engagement – Engagement activities will be designed to accommodate individuals with this protected characteristic, such as scheduling sufficient breaks, and publishing recordings of appropriate engagement events i.e. webinars.
- Event facilities – In-person events will be held in venues where there are rooms for privacy, offering individuals who are pregnant and/or breastfeeding parents' privacy when required. Additional arrangements could be made if necessary.
- Guidance – We will ensure that all guidance clearly emphasises the need for information to reflect the diverse and representative perspectives of the HEP. We will also highlight the importance of considering the diversity of each HEPs staff community.

Measuring outcomes and outputs
- Lessons learned - Any feedback and concerns raised regarding

				accessibility will be documented and reviewed to improve future engagement and communications
Race	☐	☒	Engagement with individuals in senior positions in the HE sector could inadvertently limit input from individuals from minority ethnic background due to their current underrepresentation in certain roles (As per HESA data –77% of non-academic staff are white and 88% of Professors are white). This may result in a lack of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes and place a disproportionate burden on the few minorities ethnic individuals at certain levels. A failure to be aware of these disparities in engagement could reinforce existing inequalities by unintentionally amplifying voices that are already overrepresented in certain roles.	**Actions** to increase positive impact or decrease negative impact • Guidance – We will ensure that all guidance clearly emphasises the need for information to reflect the diverse and representative perspectives of the HEP. We will also highlight the importance of considering the diversity of each HEPs staff community. • RE EDI Expert Advisory Group – We will consult with the advisory group when designing the testing phase.
Religion or belief	☐	☒	There is a potential risk that communication or engagement activities could be scheduled during times when individuals with this protected characteristic may be unavailable due to religious holidays and/or religious practices. This could limit their ability to participate, leading to missed opportunities for feedback and reduced representation of their perspectives.	**Actions** to increase positive impact or decrease negative impact • Scheduling – We will ensure that communication and engagement activities are not scheduled during major religious holidays of the most popular religions. Meeting times will try to avoid overlapping key prayer times. • Flexible engagement – Engagement activities will be designed to accommodate individuals with this protected characteristic, such as scheduling sufficient breaks, and

				publishing recordings of appropriate engagement events i.e. webinars.
				• Event facilities – In-person events will be held at venues where there is a dedicated prayer room or multifunctional quiet room suitable for prayer/meditation.
				• Guidance – We will ensure that all guidance clearly emphasises the need for information to reflect the diverse and representative perspectives of the HEP. We will also highlight the importance of considering the diversity of each HEPs staff community.
				Measuring outcomes and outputs
				• Lessons learned - Any feedback and concerns raised regarding accessibility will be documented and reviewed to improve future engagement and communications.
Sexual orientation	☐	☐	No direct impact.	
Sex	☐	☐	The delivery of the Transparency Programme itself is not expected to directly negative or positively impact this protected characteristic. However, failure to be aware of these disparities in engagement could reinforce existing inequalities by unintentionally amplifying voices that are already overrepresented in certain roles. Engagement with individuals in non-academic positions in the HE sector could inadvertently limit input from certain individuals due to	**Actions** to increase positive impact or decrease negative impact • Guidance – We will ensure that all guidance clearly emphasises the need for information to reflect the diverse and representative perspectives of the HEP. We will also highlight the importance of considering the diversity of each HEPs staff community.

			current underrepresentation in non-academic roles (As per HESA data – 63% of non-academic staff in the UK are female). This may result in a lack of diverse perspectives in our engagement and decision-making processes and place a disproportionate burden on certain individuals in these positions.	

Additional characteristics

Additional characteristics	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit **Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown**	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).
Geographical location and place (consider UK and international offices)	☐	☒	Individuals may face barriers to attending in-person engagement events if they are held far from their place of residence or work. Travel constraints, including time, cost, and accessibility challenges, could limit participation and representation.	**Actions** to increase positive impact or decrease negative impact • Hybrid participation – We will do our upmost to ensure that our engagement will be primarily virtual or has a hybrid option by default to reduce negative impact of inaccessible venues and travel. **Measuring** outcomes and outputs • Lessons learned - Any feedback and concerns raised regarding accessibility will be documented and reviewed to improve future engagement and communications.
Socio-economic status	☐	☒	Individuals may face barriers to attending in-person engagement events if they are held far	**Actions** to increase positive impact or decrease negative impact

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			from their place of residence or work. Travel constraints, such as cost, could limit participation and representation.	- Hybrid participation – Our engagement will be virtual or hybrid by default to reduce negative impact of inaccessible venues and travel. **Measuring** outcomes and outputs - Lessons learned - Any feedback and concerns raised regarding accessibility will be documented and reviewed to improve future engagement and communications.
Education background	☐	☐	No direct impact.	
Parent/guardian responsibilities	☐	☒	There is a risk that communication or engagement activities could be scheduled during times when parents/guardians, particularly those with school-age children, may be unavailable. For example, late afternoons may coincide with school pick-up times, making it difficult for these individuals to participate.	**Actions** to increase positive impact or decrease negative impact - Event scheduling – Engagement events will be scheduled around school holidays and typical school hours (starting after 10am and ending before 2:30pm). We will ensure that all events are announced well in advance, giving participants adequate time to prepare and schedule their involvement. - Flexible engagement – we will publish recordings of engagement activities such as public webinars, so participants with this additional characteristic can engage flexibly. **Measuring** outcomes and outputs - Lessons learned - Any feedback and concerns raised regarding accessibility will be documented and reviewed to improve future engagement and communications.

Carer/parent carer responsibilities	☐	☒	There is a risk that communication or engagement activities could be scheduled during times when carers/parent carers may face time constraints, making it difficult for these individuals to participate.	**Actions** to increase positive impact or decrease negative impact • Event scheduling – Engagement events will be evenly distributed throughout the year tallowing a wider range of participants to engage. We will ensure that all events are announced well in advance, giving participants adequate time to prepare and schedule their involvement. • Flexible engagement – we will publish recordings of engagement activities such as public webinars, so participants with this additional characteristic can engage flexibly. **Measuring** outcomes and outputs • Lessons learned - Any feedback and concerns raised regarding accessibility will be documented and reviewed to improve future engagement and communications.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	☐	☐	RE only funds English HEPs. However, funders and sector members from devolved nations, including Northen Ireland, may be consulted at testing and piloting stages, and may access publicly available online content.	The participation of Northern Irish stakeholders in Transparency Programme activities will be approached with neutrality and inclusivity, regardless of political opinions. All engagement activities will be conducted in a way that fosters open dialogue and encourages diverse perspectives.
Other characteristics	☐	☐	None identified.	

Are there **general or overarching impacts on multiple groups**? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?	In context for the tables above: This EIA outlines our approach to sector engagement during the testing phase of the Transparency Programme. Any changes to this approach or subsequent work packages will be captured through updated iterations of the assessment, as required. RE acknowledges the current inequalities in the higher education sector. In designing and delivering the sector engagement for the testing phase of the Transparency Programme, we will pay due regard to the protected characteristics and additional characteristics outlined in this document. Where possible and relevant to this phase, we will also consider the range of equality issues and challenges affecting the HE sector, such as the low representation of women and ethnic minorities in senior leadership positions and the precarity of career pathways for early career researchers. The Transparency Programme is delivered in parallel to our SIRF review, and evidence gathered through the Transparency pilot and any implementation will contribute to the SIRF review. We have acknowledged the overarching impacts of the SIRF review in a separate EIA (Strategic institutional research funding: equality impact assessment – UKRI).

Evaluation

Final Decision:	Select the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will **proceed**.	☐	
2. **Adapt or change** the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality.	☒	This EIA is reflective of our current approach to sector engagement. We will adapt our engagement events to eliminate negative impact and promote equality as outlined above. We currently have no evidence to suggest that the Transparency Programme testing phase cannot proceed.
3. **Stop** the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.	☐	

4. 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.	☐	

Review and sign off

What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?	This EIA is a live document that will be reviewed periodically, and updated in line with the planned delivery.
Next review date:	*30 October 2025*

Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required	Yes
Point of contact	Tyler Jackling, Policy Advisor, Research England E-mail: researchpolicy@re.ukri.org
Signed off by (name and date):	Anna Lang and Alex Herbert-Guest, Associate Directors, Research England. Date: June 2025

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Transparency Programme EIA, version 1	June 2025.	1	

Continued below…

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).

Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored?	What is/will be the impact/outcome?
Periodically review this EIA and update as necessary.	30 September 2025.	Tyler Jackling, Policy Advisor	Internally by the Senior Responsible Officer for Transparency Programme.	Undertaking the Transparency Programme in an inclusive way that enables participation of diverse individuals and groups and avoids disadvantaging them.
Ensure accessibility of virtual engagement as per all actions listed against protected and additional characteristics above.	Continuous.	Tyler Jackling, Policy Advisor	Internally by the Senior Responsible Officer for Transparency Programme.	As above.
Ensure engagement events are not scheduled overlapping with major religious occasions and/or school holidays.	Continuous.	Tyler Jackling, Policy Advisor	Internally by the Senior Responsible Officer for Transparency Programme.	As above.
Embed an overarching guiding principle for collective effort, emphasising the importance of reflecting the diverse perspectives within HEPs and considering the diversity of each institutes' staff community.	30 September 2025.	Tyler Jackling, Policy Advisor	Internally by the Senior Responsible Officer for Transparency Programme.	As above.