



**UK Research  
and Innovation**

# **UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form**



## Overview of activity

	Response
Name of activity being assessed	AHRC Early Career Fellowships in cultural and heritage institutions Round 2 Phase 1: Advertising the fellowship opportunity, expression of interest and fellowship selection.
Council/department/project team	AHRC Skills Team
Aims and objectives of the activity	<p>Overall purpose: To support research, skills development and knowledge exchange between academia, cultural and heritage Independent Research Organisations (IROs), and the wider galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAM) sector. This will be achieved through funding individual fellowships focused on collaborative research and innovation, complemented by a training and development programme and mentoring for the fellowship cohort.</p> <p>Phase 1 is the Expression of Interest phase. It will be managed by the Cohort Coordination and Development team at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&amp;A). This phase will determine which applicants may submit a full application (i.e. Phase 2), which will be managed by AHRC.</p> <p>Objectives of Phase 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote the ECR Fellowship opportunity to a broad and diverse range of potential applicants across academia and the cultural and heritage sectors.</li><li>• Facilitate online engagement opportunities for prospective applicants to meet with representatives from the Cohort Coordination and Development team, participating IROs and AHRC to discuss their fellowship ideas and receive guidance.</li><li>• Deliver a robust expression of interest (Eoi) process, enabling selected applicants to co-develop full fellowship proposals in collaboration with host IROs.</li><li>• Support the submission of full fellowship proposals for review by an AHRC assessment panel.</li></ul> <p>This equality impact assessment focuses on ensuring EDI principles are embedded throughout the following aspects of the funding opportunity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advertising and promotion</li><li>• Expression of Interest application process</li><li>• Expression of Interest assessment and review</li></ul>

	<p>The scheme Cohort Coordination and Development team, working with AHRC and the IRO community, is committed to ensuring that all processes are open, inclusive, and free from unintended bias. The scheme adopts the following principles to support equitable access and participation.</p> <p>For applicants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The funding opportunity and associated activities are advertised widely to reach the largest possible audience within relevant communities.</li> <li>• Participation in online events is encouraged but not mandatory, with recordings made available to ensure accessibility.</li> <li>• Named contacts at each participating IRO are publicly listed to support applicant queries.</li> <li>• Guidance materials clearly outline eligibility, assessment criteria, and key dates.</li> <li>• Online materials meet accessibility requirements.</li> <li>• Virtual meetings are hosted on platforms accessible at no cost to participants.</li> <li>• Support and advice are available throughout the application process, with clearly defined contact points and responsibilities.</li> </ul> <p>For Expression of Interest assessors (IRO panel members):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processes are consistent across all participating IROs.</li> <li>• Selection panels are diverse and representative of relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>• Panels will include members who have received unconscious bias training, including the chair. Panels will be briefed on objective decision-making.</li> <li>• Assessment meetings are scheduled and formatted to support participation by individuals with flexible working patterns and access needs.</li> <li>• Virtual meetings are hosted on accessible platforms (e.g. Teams, Zoom).</li> </ul>
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	<p>This funding activity affects several key stakeholder groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early career researchers applying for fellowships</li> <li>• Early career research fellows with an AHRC early career research fellowship in cultural and heritage organisations</li> <li>• Independent Research Organisations (IROs) seeking to host fellows</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Panel members involved in assessing expression of interest (Eols)</li> <li>• Scheme Cohort Coordination and Development team supporting the programme</li> <li>• IROC, the wider GLAM sector and other organisations which might partner on the fellowships</li> <li>• Academic supervisors and potential mentors of researchers</li> <li>• AHRC and UKRI staff developing and managing the approach and working with award holders throughout the lifetime of the awards</li> </ul> <p>The scheme is designed to be inclusive and accessible to all eligible applicants, regardless of background, personal circumstances, or working patterns. The activity may impact individuals differently depending on their access needs, availability, and familiarity with funding processes.</p> <p>To mitigate potential barriers and ensure equitable participation, the scheme includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible engagement formats (e.g. online information sessions, recorded sessions).</li> <li>• Accessible materials and platforms for both applicants and assessors.</li> <li>• Clear guidance and contact points to support applicants throughout the process.</li> <li>• Training and support for assessors to promote fair and unbiased decision-making.</li> </ul> <p>Further details on how these measures are embedded in the scheme's design and delivery is provided under the aims and objectives of the activity section.</p>
What data and consultation have you used?	<p>The following consultations have taken place in relation to designing this call:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External: this is following on from the pilot round which has been subject to external evaluation.</li> <li>• External: the Independent Research Organisations Consortium (IROC) has developed a funding proposal based on their experience of the pilot</li> <li>• Internal: AHRC Executive Chair and Directors' Group (ECDG)</li> </ul>



Protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit	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.
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The aim has been to make the scheme flexible, and this flexibility might benefit persons across a wide range of age groups who qualify as Early Career Researchers (ECR). Whilst the ECR definition is not age-related, the criteria may mean it is more open to younger age groups.	The scheme is open to early career researchers from a wide range of age groups. We do not define early career by age. Applicants are encouraged to consult the definition of ECR in the Funding Finder call description.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The scheme Cohort Coordination and Development team recognize the broad spectrum of disability and as such appreciate that not every barrier can be anticipated.</p> <p>In case of online interactions, participants with specific accessibility constraints may be disinclined to participate unless reasonable adjustments are made.</p> <p>Applicants are not required to declare a disability as part of the application process. They may wish to do so to allow for reasonable adjustments to be made.</p>	<p>Online platforms of engagement and participation (e.g. Zoom/Teams) can remove physical constraints and enable greater accessibility for people with mobility issues. Online captioning is also available for those with hearing impairments. Due consideration will be given to the needs of people who find videoconferencing challenging and to any access requirement for proprietary/subsorption-based software platforms.</p> <p>The Cohort Coordination and Development team, AHRC and participating IROs will aim to provide documentation produced during</p>

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				phase 1 (Townhall agendas; EoI forms; Assessment Criteria) in accessible formats, on request e.g. large font, captioning, audio description.
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Applicants who have had/are in the process of gender reassignment may feel disinclined to apply if the language isn't sensitive. Gender neutral language is important to support inclusivity, equality and representation.	Gender-neutral language, e.g. pronouns such as 'they' or 'you' instead of 'he/she', will be used in the documentation.  By publishing this EIA, participating IROs are encouraged to use gender neutral language throughout their interactions.
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The funding opportunity is open to all eligible applicants and there are no barriers to those who are married or in a civil partnership apart from, potentially, the need to relocate for the duration of their fellowship and temporarily live away from their home and partner.	Applicants and their potential host organisations should discuss if there would be a need to relocate in a way that's sensitive to their family situation and civil partnership/marriage.
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Individuals who are pregnant or on parental leave may miss the online events and application deadlines.  Applicants may be concerned about how career breaks will be viewed by assessment panels.	Clear details will be provided for participants and an option to provide details of additional requirements for participation.  Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible to enable participation. Online events only are planned to enable flexibility.

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			On the other hand, the flexible nature of the scheme makes it inclusive and might appeal.	Guidance is provided to panels to ensure appropriate assessment of applicant track record without bias against career breaks due to parental leave/caring responsibilities. Part-time fellowships will be offered.
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This funding opportunity is open to candidates of all ethnic backgrounds. We are aware of under-representation of some minority ethnic groups in the fields and a risk that the awards might reflect this under-representation.	<p>There is a risk of low representation of minority ethnic groups among the applicants and successful candidates. To avoid underrepresentation, we will advertise through UKRI channels which are designed with accessibility in mind. We will also share the opportunity with relevant organisations and stakeholders.</p> <p>The Cohort Coordination and Development team will support host organisations to provide reasonable adjustments and a welcoming work culture.</p>
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Potential candidates or participating IRO staff members who may be on leave due to a religious celebration may miss the events or application deadline.</p> <p>Apart from the above, we do not anticipate a person's religion or belief would impact on their application.</p>	<p>Religious observances will be considered as far as possible when timetabling major activities.</p> <p>Online meetings will be recorded, and a recording published online for the benefit of candidates unable to watch the webinars</p>

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	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
				live, including candidates who might be on leave due to religious events.
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We do not anticipate a person’s sexual orientation would impact on their application.	
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We do not anticipate that a person’s sex would impact on their ability to apply for or participate in the fellowship. This opportunity is open to all applicants, regardless of sex.	Gender-neutral language, such as ‘you or they’ instead of ‘he/she’ will be used in all funding opportunity materials.  We will also encourage fellows and the host organisations to adopt inclusive language in all communications.





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)	☒	☒	<p>Applicants based in remote, rural, or economically disadvantaged areas may have less access to research infrastructure, networks, or support services compared to those in major urban centres.</p> <p>Individuals from certain regions may face financial, visa-related, or logistical challenges in relocating.</p> <p>There may be underrepresentation of certain UK nations or regions in applications or awards.</p> <p>The flexibility of the scheme (e.g. hybrid working, remote participation) may enable greater involvement from individuals.</p> <p>The scheme may support levelling-up goals by encouraging participants from a wider range of geographical areas, including those with less historical access to funding.</p>	<p>Applicants and host organisations are encouraged to design fellowships that accommodate geographical constraints. This includes support for hybrid, remote, and part-time arrangements to enable engagement.</p> <p>The outline phase will be open for 12 weeks and the full call for three and a half months, allowing applicants from different regions, including those with limited institutional support to prepare and submit applications.</p> <p>Applicants may request additional travel and subsistence costs if geographical location presents a barrier to participation. These costs can be covered by the fellowship award where justified.</p> <p>Wherever possible, materials and cohort events will be designed to be accessible online ensuring equitable participation regardless of location or digital infrastructure.</p>

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Socio-economic status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>While the scheme is open to all eligible applicants, individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds may face indirect barriers, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Limited access to networks or institutional support, particularly if they are based at smaller or less well-resourced organisations.</li><li>• Financial constraints that make it harder to relocate or attend in-person events.</li><li>• Perceived inaccessibility of research funding or fellowships, which may discourage applications from individuals who have not previously engaged with UKRI or AHRC schemes.</li><li>• Perceived inaccessibility of cultural and heritage organisations, which may deter applicants who have had limited prior exposure to IROs or the GLAM sector.</li></ul>	<p>Host organisations are encouraged to be flexible to accommodate financial and personal circumstances, including part-time, hybrid, or remote working arrangements.</p> <p>Wherever possible, materials and cohort events will be designed to be accessible online ensuring equitable participation regardless of location or digital infrastructure.</p> <p>Clear and concise information about the scheme and participating IROs, along with named contact details, is provided to encourage and support applicants who may have no prior experience of engaging with IROs or the GLAM sector.</p>
Education background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Applicants from non-traditional academic pathways or less research-intensive institutions may perceive the scheme as not being open to them and be discouraged from applying. Individuals from institutions with fewer resources or less experience in securing UKRI/AHRC funding may have less access to mentoring, grant-writing support, or institutional backing.</p>	<p>The eligibility criteria allow for a range of postdoctoral experiences, including professional training and roles with significant research components, which can support applicants from varied educational and career backgrounds.</p> <p>The Expression of Interest form is designed to enable applicants to articulate their</p>

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			Applicants with less conventional academic trajectories may find it harder to demonstrate their potential.	<p>potential, aspirations, and motivations, alongside their experience. This approach supports individuals from diverse educational and career backgrounds, including those with less conventional academic trajectories.</p> <p>The scheme welcomes early career researchers not currently employed, provided a host IRO agrees to employ them, this can help level the playing field for those outside traditional academic pathways.</p>
Parent/guardian responsibilities	☒	☒	<p>Parent or guardian responsibilities may limit the time available to prepare an application, attend meetings, or if successful participate fully in cohort activities.</p> <p>Applicants with children or dependants may be less able or willing to relocate especially if it involves significant disruption to family life.</p> <p>Some potential applicants may self-exclude if they perceive the scheme as demanding or inflexible, particularly if they've had prior negative experiences balancing research and parent or guardian responsibilities.</p>	<p>Applicants and host organisations are encouraged to design fellowships that accommodate parent or guardian responsibilities. This includes support for part-time, hybrid, and remote working arrangements as well as flexibility in working hours.</p> <p>The outline phase will be open for 12 weeks and the full call for approximately three and a half months, allowing applicants with parenting or guardian responsibilities time to prepare and submit applications.</p>

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	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
			<p>The scheme’s encouragement of part-time, hybrid, and remote working can make it more accessible to those with caregiving responsibilities.</p> <p>A longer application window may give parents/guardians more time to plan and prepare.</p>	<p>Applicants and potential hosts are encouraged to discuss any personal needs related to parent or guardian responsibilities in confidence. Hosts are expected to provide reasonable adjustments and foster a welcoming, inclusive working environment, in line with institutional EDI policies and UKRI’s approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion.</p>
Carer/parent carer responsibilities	☒	☒	<p>Caring responsibilities may limit an individual’s time and capacity for application preparation, travel, or participation in events.</p> <p>Carers may face sudden changes in availability due to emergencies or fluctuating care needs, making rigid deadlines or fixed schedules difficult to manage.</p> <p>Carers may be unable to relocate or travel for cohort events due to their responsibilities.</p> <p>The scheme’s encouragement of part-time, hybrid, and remote working may make it more accessible to carers.</p>	<p>Applicants and host organisations are encouraged to design fellowships that accommodate carer or parent carer responsibilities. This includes support for part-time, hybrid, and remote working arrangements as well as flexibility in working hours.</p> <p>The outline phase will be open for 12 weeks and the full call for approximately three and a half months, allowing applicants with caring responsibilities time to prepare and submit applications. Applicants and potential hosts are encouraged to discuss any personal needs related to caring responsibilities in confidence.</p>

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			<p>A longer application window may give parents/guardians more time to plan and prepare.</p> <p>The postdoctoral criteria allow for career breaks, which can help carers who have had interrupted research careers.</p>	<p>Hosts are expected to provide reasonable adjustments and foster a welcoming, inclusive working environment, in line with institutional EDI polices and <a href="#">UKRI's policies and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion</a>.</p>
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	None identified	Not applicable
Other characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	None identified	Not applicable

<p>Are there <b>general or overarching impacts on multiple groups</b>? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?</p>	<p>The following actions are relevant across multiple protected characteristics and have been grouped here to avoid repetition. These mitigations aim to ensure fairness, accessibility, and inclusivity throughout the Expression of Interest activity, and reflect AHRC and UKRI's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AHRC will work with the Cohort Coordination and Development team during the Expression of Interest phase to ensure equitable access to the support for applicants and a fair and consistent assessment.</li> <li>Applicants and host organisations are encouraged to discuss any personal needs related to their protected characteristic in confidence. Hosts are expected to provide reasonable adjustments and foster a welcoming, inclusive work environment, in line with institutional EDI policies and considering <a href="#">UKRI's policies and approach to equality, diversity and inclusion</a>.</li> <li>Online meetings will be live-streamed and/or recorded and webinars will be available for those unable to attend. We have sought to give as long as possible to apply, to enable</li> </ul>
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	<p>those with limited availability e.g. due to parental leave or religious observance, time to apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Townhall events will be scheduled at various times to accommodate different working patterns, including part-time staff, shift workers, and those with caring responsibilities, ensuring broader accessibility and participation. The IRO hosts will be attending different events which may mean participants aren't able to attend the session most relevant to them. Other options to contact potential hosts will be provided.</li> <li>Fellowships will be available as full-time, part-time or hybrid options to enable the opportunity to be accessible for disabled people or those with caring responsibilities.</li> </ul>
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## Evaluation

Final Decision:	Select the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will <b>proceed</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. <b>Adapt or change</b> the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The opportunity advertised through this funding opportunity has been designed to be flexible to accommodate diverse needs.</p> <p>Possible barriers have been identified and activities have been adapted as far as possible. We welcome engagement from any affected community to understand further barriers and will make reasonable adjustments where possible.</p> <p>The Cohort Coordination and Development team will produce an EIA for the networking events and address any actions.</p> <p>AHRC will continue to work with the Cohort Coordination and Development team to determine if any further adjustments are required.</p>

3. <b>Stop</b> the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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 <b>extreme cases</b> or where <b>positive action</b> is taken). Therefore, you are going to <b>proceed with caution</b> with this activity knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Review and sign off

<p><b>What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?</b></p>	<p>The Cohort Coordination and Development team will work with AHRC to monitor, analyse, and report on data to better understand the diversity of the applicant community and assess the inclusivity of the scheme. During Phase 1 of the Fellowships, the following actions will be undertaken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Optional Equality, Diversity and Inclusion monitoring forms will be completed at two key milestones: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attendance at online events</li> <li>submission of Expressions of Interest, available to Cohort Coordination and Development team</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><b>Note:</b> These milestones may be subject to revision during the project and will be recorded in Version Control section.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post-event evaluation forms will be circulated to all attendees of online events to gather feedback.</li> <li>An end-of-Phase 1 survey will be distributed to fellowship applicants and participating IROs to capture insights from into the Expression of Interest process, including whether it met</li> </ol>
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	<p>applicants' needs, and how AHRC and the Cohort Coordination and Development team could improve delivery of the scheme.</p> <p>All data collected will be managed under data-sharing agreements between the Cohort Coordination and Development team, AHRC and participating IROs. Findings will be analysed and reported following the completion of the Phase 1 and will contribute to the overall evaluation of the fellowship scheme.</p>
Next review date:	December 2025

Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required	Yes
Point of contact	Andrea Bond, Skills, Senior Investment Manager
Signed off by (name and date):	Allan Sudlow, Associate Director of Partnerships and Engagement