



UK Research
and Innovation

UK Research and Innovation
Equality Impact Assessment Form

BBSRC 2025 Bioinformatics and Biological
Resources (25BBR)



Overview of activity

	Response
Name of activity being assessed	2025 Bioinformatics and Biological Resources (25BBR)
Council/department/project team	Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
Aims and objectives of the activity	<p>The Bioinformatics and Biological Resources (BBR) Fund aims to facilitate the establishment, maintenance and enhancement of high-quality bioinformatics and biological resources to support the UK bioscience research community.</p> <p>A funding opportunity requires consideration of equality as part of the application process and assessment related processes, such as panel building, expert panel review and hosting panel meetings. There are three aspects to this equality impact assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the submission, peer review and awarding processes are free from unintentional bias • Ensuring the process enables rigorous assessment of this investment • Identifying and addressing any potential barriers to attendance and participation by a diverse range of people <p>UKRI-BBSRC is committed to ensuring that the processes for funding are open and inclusive. Those engaged in the processes endeavour to conduct each stage in a fair manner and without prejudice or bias.</p> <p>This EIA covers the application and assessment process for the 25BBR funding opportunity.</p>
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	Applicants to the scheme, research offices, submitting organisations, panel members and chairs, the UKRI-BBSRC secretariat and employees supporting delivery of the funding opportunity.
What data and consultation have you used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous EIAs developed within BBSRC for comparable peer review activities • Learning from good practice in objective decision across BBSRC peer review activities, including previous BBR opportunities • Consultation with BBSRC’s EDI and peer review policy experts on barriers to inclusion, participation and potential bias in the decision-making process.



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"/>	If an applicant's age became known to the panel or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or panel members.	
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>General issues regarding UKRI's grant application systems and provisions for flexibility are addressed through policies designed to apply across our organisation.</p> <p>Panel members with physical disabilities may find it difficult to access a physical meeting venue and / or participate in the meeting if the assessment venue cannot cater for their needs.</p> <p>If an applicant's disability became known to the panel, there is the potential for unconscious bias but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to panel members, with the exception of prior consented disclosure in the application by the applicant.</p>	<p>Applicants with a disability (inclusive of physical or neurological) can cost for additional support required that is directly related to the grant.</p> <p>Panel members are advised applications may include these costs for reasonable adjustments and are advised they should be accepted without comment. UKRI will ensure their eligibility.</p> <p>Disability and accessibility support for applicants and grant holders is offered during the application and assessment periods and, the ability to provide information in their applications about disability or long-term health conditions that they may wish to be considered by panel members.</p>



				<p>Accommodations will be made for panel members with a disability (inclusive of physical or neurological) who require care support to participate in the process. UKRI-BBSRC will pay the cost of additional caring requirements incurred while on UKRI-BBSRC business.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC will:</p> <p>Strive to enable an accessible face-to-face panel meeting. In person is preferred for 25BBR due to business needs (quality of discussion) and in response to panel feedback.</p> <p>Choose a meeting venue that can accommodate any potential accessibility requirements. A quiet room for people needing quiet space will be made available.</p> <p>Gather information from meeting participants about any additional requirement they may need to fully participate.</p> <p>Ensure that electronic information is accessible.</p> <p>Ensure that plenty of breaks are built into the panel meeting agenda.</p> <p>Allow for potential use of screen readers for participants of panel meetings who are visually impaired.</p>
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				Ensure that colours chosen, and other visual stimuli do not trigger migraines or affect those with colour blindness; different colours may assist with this if participants do not bring their own laptops to panel meetings.
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>As per UKRI's policies we take care to adopt gender neutral language and protect applications personal details.</p> <p>If an applicant's gender reassignment became known to the committee or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or committee members.</p>	We will ensure to use gender neutral language in all call materials and engagement with the community
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Applicants are not required to declare their marital or civil partnership status.</p> <p>Panel members are provided the opportunity to declare conflicts of interest, but never directly asked to provide their marital or civil partnership status.</p> <p>If an applicant or panel member's marital or civil partnership status became known to UKRI-BBSRC, there is no point during the assessment process where this is disclosed.</p> <p>UKRI's policies protect applicant and panel members' personal data, and UKRI's Conflict of Interest policy safeguards against undue influence</p>	
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Panel members who are pregnant or on maternity leave may be discouraged from participating in panel meetings.	If individuals receive a funding decision during their maternity leave period and are on leave for the start date of the grant, they

			<p>If an applicant's pregnancy or maternity leave status became known to the panel, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to panel members.</p> <p>Career breaks in applicant track records due to parental leave may result in the potential for unconscious bias.</p>	<p>can, as per UKRI's Grant Terms and Conditions RGC 6.1 extend the grant period by up to 12 months without additional funding subject to our prior written approval.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC consults with all participants to understand and cater for their requirements for participation.</p> <p>Panel members are provided an outline of the key dates during the assessment period which will require their participation upon invitation to participate so they can make an informed decision on their involvement.</p> <p>Resume for Research and Innovation (R4RI) has an optional additions section, where applicants may provide context, such as details for career breaks.</p> <p>Guidance to be provided to the panel to ensure appropriate assessment of applicant track record without bias against career breaks due to parental leave/caring responsibilities and others.</p>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>If an applicant's race or ethnicity became known to the panel members, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to panel members.</p>	<p>UKRI-BBSRC will monitor the diversity of committee members and applicants to ensure representation of the community and a diversity of opinion.</p>

			<p>Individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds are underrepresented as academic staff (HESA, 2022/23).</p> <p>It is important that selection of panel members is from a diverse community which represents the community and UK as a whole.</p>	
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Assessment timelines may fall over religious holidays resulting in applicants and/or panel members being unable to or requiring flexibility to participate.</p>	<p>UKRI-BBSRC ensures that religious observances are considered as much as possible when timetabling major activities.</p> <p>Applicants are provided an outline of the key dates during the assessment period which will require their participation as soon as possible after the close date of the opportunity.</p> <p>Panel members are provided an outline of the key dates during the assessment period which will require their participation upon invitation to participate so they can make an informed decision on their involvement.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC ensures that the venue caters for all dietary requirements. A quiet room for people needing quiet space or space for prayer will be made available.</p>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If an applicant's sexual orientation became known to the panel members, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to the panel members.</p>	
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The awards are open to all eligible researchers. However, given the greater proportion of males at the mid and advanced</p>	<p>UKRI-BBSRC will monitor the diversity of panel members to ensure representation of the community and a diversity of opinion.</p>

			<p>career stages (HESA, 2022/23) this could result in an increased proportion of applications from male project leads to the scheme.</p> <p>During panel building in preparation for a meeting, gender is considered to ensure equal representation as far as practicable.</p> <p>If an applicant's sex became known to the panel members, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to panel members</p>	<p>To avoid potential unconscious bias, first names and titles of applicants will not be used during virtual meeting discussions; but instead, application and extranet numbers are used for discussing applications.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC will ensure that the call text highlights the importance of a diverse team</p>
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Additional characteristics

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)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Panel members may be prevented from participating due to the travel requirement associated for in person meetings</p> <p>During panel building in preparation for a meeting, geographical spread across the UK is considered as far as practicable to ensure representation.</p>	<p>UKRI-BBSRC will:</p> <p>Consider a hybrid meeting format where required</p> <p>Use discussion boards to allow robust participation in the assessment outside the panel meeting as required.</p>

Socio-economic status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If an applicant's socio-economic status became known to the panel members, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to panel members	
Education background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Project lead applicants must have a contract of employment at lecturer level or equivalent.</p> <p>Panel members are drawn from a wide range of backgrounds (academia, industry, early career researchers, and those with a non-traditional background). However, some of these areas may be underrepresented.</p>	<p>The Resume for Research and Innovation (R4RI) enables applicants to describe their track record, and additionally to describe any factors that provide context, such as career breaks.</p> <p>Steps have been taken to minimise the potential impact of unconscious bias in the assessment process see below for more information in general or overarching impacts section.</p>
Parent/guardian responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Panel members may find it difficult to participate if they have caring responsibilities.	<p>UKRI-BBSRC ensures that school holidays are considered where possible when timetabling discussion boards and virtual meetings.</p> <p>Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing for preparation for participants to cover any caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Where possible, UKRI-BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours.</p>



				UKRI-BBSRC will pay the cost of additional caring responsibilities incurred while on UKRI-BBSRC business.
Carer/parent carer responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Panel members may find it difficult to participate if they have caring responsibilities.	<p>UKRI-BBSRC ensures that school holidays are considered where possible when timetabling discussion boards and virtual meetings.</p> <p>Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing for preparation for participants to cover any caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Where possible, UKRI-BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC will pay the cost of additional caring responsibilities incurred while on UKRI-BBSRC business.</p>
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If an applicant's political opinion became known to the panel members, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but at no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to panel members	
Other characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	n/a	

Are there **general or overarching impacts on multiple groups**? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?

UKRI is committed to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in all we do, so that we can maximise the impact of our research and innovation to involve and benefit all parts of society. Everything we fund must embrace a diversity of thought, people and ideas. Applicants are signposted to our EDI policies and provisions, to include guidance for those who have taken career breaks or need 'reasonable adjustments' to support them in the application process. The Resume for Research and Innovation (R4RI) has an optional additions section, where applicants may provide context, such as details for career breaks, alternative career paths, information about a disability or long-term health condition.

The UKRI-BBSRC BBR scheme adopts the standard UKRI Terms and Conditions of Research Grants, and these are designed to support equality, diversity and inclusion in all that we do. UKRI collates EDI data on grant applicants and publishes this annually. UKRI's Conflict of Interest policy sets out our expectations, alongside our commitment to the Nolan Principles and our Code of Conduct. Operationally we have particularly focussed on considering applicant and panel members time commitments ensuring that, where possible, the preparation of applications, closing dates, assessment periods and all committee meetings take into consideration school holidays.

Materials for applicants and assessors are provided online, and in accessible formats where required.

In line with UKRI's reasonable adjustments guidance, where an application includes costs for reasonable adjustment, UKRI will ensure they are eligible, and these should be accepted without comment.

Panel members must avoid any bias in their final reports due to gender, disability, age, racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation and religious belief. Panel members' comments must not break this policy or be defamatory or otherwise actionable.

The new UKRI Funding Service contains an expanded set of questions asked of applicants, which includes some or all, of the protected characteristics above. Data processing will be in line with data protection practice and use will be subject to the new UKRI Funding Service Data Protection Impact Assessment.

UKRI-BBSRC is dedicated to ensuring that the processes for the BBR scheme are open and inclusive. Those engaged in the processes endeavour to conduct each stage in a fair manner and without prejudice or bias. In line with this we adopt the following principles:

For applicants

- The call is advertised widely to reach the largest possible audience
- The call text and guidance clearly state the eligibility and assessment criteria and ask questions in a clear and descriptive way
- The UKRI-BBSRC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites, including the ability to adjust the text size or use a text reader on the page.
- UKRI-BBSRC supports applicants as much as possible, both before and after submission, to assist them in the application and assessment process.
- Applicants can contact the funding opportunity lead to discuss individual needs and support in the application process
- Applicants can contact peer review support to provide sensitive information, for example unavailability due to parental leave.

For panel members

- Everyone involved in the decision-making process has had training in Unconscious Bias to raise awareness of conditions that may impact on their decision-making
- UKRI-BBSRC is committed to enabling participation for people with alternative work patterns, including reduced working hours
- Panel members are asked to inform UKRI-BBSRC if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation
- UKRI-BBSRC consults with panel members on a regular basis regarding business improvements including a questionnaire sent after each meeting for feedback
- UKRI-BBSRC consults with the panel chairs informally throughout the panel meeting period



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UKRI-BBSRC provides regular training and guidance on new or revised ways of working.
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Continued below...

Evaluation

Final Decision:	Select the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will proceed .	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Adapt or change the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>A number of areas of potential negative impact have been identified, and care will be taken to a) implement the proposed mitigation strategies and b) consider alternative or additional means of mitigation where required.</p> <p>Should additional impacts be identified throughout the 25BBR assessment process, ad hoc mitigations strategies will be discussed with EDI and peer review policy colleagues as required. These additional impacts will then be integrated into the EIA at its next revision point.</p>
3. Stop 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 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.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Continued below...

Review and sign off

<p><i>What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?</i></p>	<p>UKRI-BBSRC will review this equality impact assessment annually to identify any further actions or interventions that are required to improve the diversity and inclusion of the scheme.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC monitors, analyses and publishes data to better understand the diversity of our applicant and assessor community.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC is proactive in increasing the diversity of our panel members. Panel membership for each meeting is published on the website after the funding decisions have been made and all outcomes communicated to applicants.</p> <p>Further information: https://bbsrc.ukri.org/about/equality-diversity/</p>
<p>Next review date:</p>	<p><i>August 2026</i></p>

<p>Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Point of contact</p>	<p>Daniela Hensen</p>
<p>Signed off by (name and date):</p>	<p>Strategy lead: Daniela Hensen, Joint Head of Transformative Technologies (interim), September 2025</p>

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Daniela Hensen	August 2025	1	EIA created for BBSRC Bioinformatics and Biological Resources scheme



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?