

BBSRC Pioneer Awards 2025/26: bioscience discovery research

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Overview of activity

	Response
Name of activity being assessed	BBSRC Pioneer Awards 2025/26: bioscience discovery research
Council/department/project team	Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC)
Aims and objectives of the activity	<p>The objective of the BBSRC Pioneer Awards 2025/26 funding opportunity is to support small-scale, early-stage, discovery research projects that will open original and adventurous research avenues with the potential to transform our fundamental understanding of living systems. It will do that by supporting a varied portfolio (~18 grants, up to ~£350,000 full economic cost each) of high-risk, high potential discovery research projects that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are relevant to BBSRC's Frontier Bioscience: understanding the rules of life theme • are original and visionary, challenging current thinking and paradigms • focus on exploring and revealing novel insights and theories relating to our fundamental understanding of biological systems • are early stage and untested, lacking preliminary data and perhaps involving creative or unconventional approaches to the research challenge • involve a high level of uncertainty or require a range of exploratory investigations, such that while there are clear aims to explore, the outcomes are neither predictable nor guaranteed • can involve any combination of experimental, analytical, and theoretical work, potentially crossing disciplinary boundaries, including non-bioscience fields • constitute a significant departure from existing lines of investigation or represent an entirely new line of inquiry • have the potential to substantially shift current and future thinking about an important topic. <p>Key features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the second round of the Pioneer Awards

- Review of the pilot round, which included feedback from both applicants and assessors, highlighted how positively the opportunity was received and that it filled an untapped need in the funding landscape
- Due to the nature of this opportunity (i.e. high appetite for risk, lack of preliminary data) we believe applicants can play a useful role in helping us prioritise the most promising ideas. This is why we wish to trial distributed peer review (DPR), in which applicants are also assessors
- We expect a high number of applications coming in and this is why we will be strongly advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, with a genuine prospect of being funded, and to not to submit large numbers of full proposals, given the overall scale of funding available and expected level of competition nationally
- The Pioneer Awards funding opportunity will include a mandatory registration stage and a full-application stage
- Registrations will be read by BBSRC portfolio managers and advice will be sent back to applicants on whether their idea is suitable for the scheme
- The full-application stage will only be open to project leads who submitted a registration
- If the full application is judged to be out of the scope of the call it will be quickly rejected by the office without further assessment
- Full applications that meet the requirements of the call will be preliminary assessed via DPR focussing only on the summary and vision sections of the application
- Based on this preliminary assessment we will prioritise a subset of applications (90-120) that will be assessed by a multidisciplinary panel that will be looking at all sections of each application
- Panel members will use their own knowledge and experience to evaluate each proposal against the assessment criteria that are detailed in the call text
- The assessment panels will score applications and prioritise them using a tiered approach, or where not practical to do so, they will rank them against each other
- Funding permitting, we intent to fund all exceptional applications (higher tier) and then apply partial randomisation to randomly allocate the remaining budget among the strong applications (second tier)

This funding opportunity requires consideration of equality, diversity, and inclusion as part of advertising, application process, DPR assessment, panel building, panel review, and hosting panel meetings. The introduction of the partial randomisation mechanism involves some additional equality, diversity, and inclusion considerations that are explored below.

Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	Applicants to the scheme, research officers, 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"> • Pioneer awards pilot review, including a geographic and people diversity analysis of successful applications • Lessons learned from similar UKRI funding opportunities (e.g. New Horizons – EPSRC, Exploring the frontiers of environmental science research – NERC) • Lessons learned from UKRI opportunities that have implemented partial randomisation (e.g. Pioneer Awards pilot, Cross Research Council Responsive Mode) • Equality impact assessments from the schemes mentioned above

Analysing your impact

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This funding opportunity is open to eligible individuals based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. We are mindful that the demand management method of advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, carries the risk that certain people might be excluded from the final submissions made to this opportunity.	We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community. We are advising ROs to consider the scope and assessment criteria of the funding opportunity and BBSRC's advice on each submitted registration when they are

			<p><u>UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity</u> for all funding applicants. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers.</p> <p>This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. Panel members will be invited based on their academic expertise. This might exclude some early career researchers that are less established.</p> <p>There is no impact on research officers and BBSRC staff.</p>	<p>prioritising applications, while also ensuring these processes employ good practice relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).</p> <p>Data on applicants' age will not be sourced in the UKRI Funding Service and will not be used to make funding decisions.</p> <p>We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. DPR is a process in which applicants also contribute to the assessment, therefore broadening the opportunity for engagement in the process to a wider group of participants.</p> <p>The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas.</p>
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>This funding opportunity is open to individuals based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. We are mindful that the demand management method of advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, carries the risk that people with disabilities might be excluded from the final submissions made to this opportunity.</p>	<p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community. We are advising ROs to consider the scope and assessment criteria of the funding opportunity and BBSRC's recommendation on each submitted registration when they are prioritising applications, while also ensuring</p>

			<p><u>UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity</u> for all funding applicants. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers. We support people to work in a way that suits their personal circumstances. Data on applicants' disability cannot not be sourced in the UKRI Funding Service and will not be used to make funding decisions. Review of the Pioneer Awards pilot revealed that only 2.4% of award leads reported a disability.</p> <p>Career breaks in applicant track records may result in the potential for unconscious bias during assessment.</p> <p>Neurodivergent attendees (Panel members and BBSRC staff) might find the duration and/or pace of the Panel meetings to be taxing.</p>	<p>these processes employ good practice relating to EDI.</p> <p>UKRI can provide guidance and support to applicants and award holders, if they are disabled, have a long-term health condition, are neurodivergent, or have a learning disability. We will welcome applicants to share information about the reasonable adjustments they may need, including support in the assessment process and requesting eligible costs for reasonable adjustments. We will highlight in the call text that they do not need a formal diagnosis. Panel members will be informed applications may include these costs for reasonable adjustments and will be advised they should be accepted without comment. UKRI will ensure their eligibility. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas. Data on applicants' disabilities will not be used to make funding decisions.</p> <p>The Resume for Research and Innovation has an optional additions section, where applicants may provide context, such as details for career breaks.</p> <p>Panel meetings will take place on-line. Regular comfort breaks will be scheduled to the agenda. Panel members and BBSRC staff will be encouraged to take additional</p>
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			<p>UKRI-BBSRC recognise the broad spectrum of disability and as such appreciate that not every barrier can be anticipated.</p>	<p>sensory breaks if they need to. To allow that without impacting the flow of the meeting, there will be 3 introducing members for each application and at least 2 BBSRC colleagues in each panel meeting. We will gather information from meeting participants about any additional requirement they may need to fully participate. Finally, the partial randomisation process can streamline the funding process by reducing the time and effort spent on detailed evaluations of equally strong applications without compromising on quality. This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. Prioritisation of only a subset of applications for full panel assessment via DPR will also help reduce burden. We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. DPR is a process in which applicants also contribute to the assessment, therefore broadening the opportunity for engagement in the process to a wider group of participants.</p> <p>All documents and materials will be in accessible formats. If requested by participants, we will make publications available in different formats (e.g. large print or printed onto different colour paper). BBSRC contact information will be shared and applicants, research officers, and panel members will be encouraged to get in touch and inform us of any reasonable adjustments they might require so we can try to offer</p>
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				tailored assistance on a case-by-case basis where possible. The same option will be offered to BBSRC staff as well.
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>This funding opportunity is open to individuals based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. We are mindful that the demand management method of advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, carries the risk that people with trans identities might be excluded from the final submissions made to this opportunity.</p> <p><u>UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity</u> for all funding applicants. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers.</p> <p>Individuals who have had/are in the process of gender reassignment may feel disinclined to apply or participate in our panels if our language isn't inclusive. Therefore, gender neutral language is important to support inclusivity, equality, and representation.</p> <p>There are no barriers to participation to individuals of any gender or identity.</p>	<p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community. We are advising ROs to consider the scope and assessment criteria of the funding opportunity and BBSRC's recommendation on each submitted registration when they are prioritising applications, while also ensuring these processes employ good practice relating to EDI.</p> <p>Gender reassignment data cannot not be sourced in the UKRI Funding Service and will not be used to make funding decisions.</p> <p>We will use gender neutral language, e.g. pronouns such as 'they' or 'you' instead of 'he/she', in all documents and materials, and throughout the panel meetings. By publishing this Equality Impact Assessment, we will also encourage panel members to use gender neutral language throughout their interactions and when writing their reviews and feedback to the applicants. We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. During the panel meeting we will encourage participants to</p>

				<p>provide their pronouns and the pronunciation of their names.</p> <p>This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>This funding opportunity is open to individuals based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding.</p> <p><u>UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity</u> for all funding applicants.</p> <p>There is no impact on research officers and BBSRC staff. There are no barriers to participation to individuals of any marital status.</p>	<p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community.</p> <p>Marital data cannot not be sourced in the UKRI Funding Service and will not be used to make funding decisions.</p> <p>We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. We will not enquire about panel members marital status. This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. Panel members will be invited based on their academic expertise. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pregnant persons who are on parental leave and persons on parental leave may miss the	BSRC has a range of other opportunities to participate in peer review, including the annual call for PoE members.

			<p>invitation to participate in this funding opportunity as applicants or assessors.</p> <p>This funding opportunity is open to individuals based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. We are mindful that the demand management method of advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, carries the risk that pregnant people or parents might be excluded from the final submissions made to this opportunity.</p> <p>Pregnant persons might feel disinclined or may require additional adjustments to apply to this opportunity. UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers. We support people to work in a way that suits their personal circumstances.</p> <p>Pregnant persons may require additional adjustments to enable participation in the panel meetings.</p>	<p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community. We are advising ROs to consider the scope and assessment criteria of the funding opportunity and BBSRC's advice on each submitted registration when they are prioritising applications, while also ensuring these processes employ good practice relating to EDI.</p> <p>We will be communicating clearly in our call text the UKRI policies that allow for flexibility to include extension of deadlines and activation of grants. Data on pregnancy and maternity will not be sourced in the UKRI Funding Service and will not be used to make funding decisions.</p> <p>We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. Panel meetings will take place on-line. Regular comfort breaks will be scheduled to the agenda. Panel members and BBSRC staff will be encouraged to take additional breaks if they need to. To allow that without</p>
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			<p>Career breaks in applicant track records may result in the potential for unconscious bias during assessment.</p>	<p>impacting the flow of the meeting, there will be 3 introducing members for each application and at least 2 BBSRC colleagues in each panel meeting. We will gather information from meeting participants about any additional requirement they may need to fully participate so we can try to offer tailored assistance on a case-by-case basis where possible. The partial randomisation process can streamline the funding process by reducing the time and effort spent on detailed evaluations of equally strong applications without compromising on quality. Prioritisation of only a subset of applications for full panel assessment via DPR will also help reduce burden.</p> <p>The Resume for Research and Innovation has an optional additions section, where applicants may provide context, such as details for career breaks. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas.</p>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>This funding opportunity is open to individuals of all races based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. We are mindful that the demand management method of advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, carries the risk that certain groups of people might be excluded from the final submissions made to this opportunity. Individuals from ethnic minority</p>	<p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community. We are advising ROs to consider the scope and assessment criteria of the funding opportunity and BBSRC's recommendation</p>

			<p>backgrounds are underrepresented as academic staff (HESA, 2022/23).</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants and panel members.</p> <p>Panel members will be invited based on their academic expertise.</p>	<p>on each submitted registration when they are prioritising applications, while also ensuring these processes employ good practice relating to EDI.</p> <p>Data on applicants' race will not be sourced in the UKRI Funding Service and will not be used to make funding decisions.</p> <p>We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. DPR is a process in which applicants also contribute to the assessment, therefore broadening the opportunity for engagement in the process to a wider group of participants. To avoid potential unconscious bias, first names and titles of applicants will not be used during the assessment discussions. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers. During the panel meeting we will encourage participants to provide their pronouns and the pronunciation of their names.</p>
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Applicants, panel members, research officers, and BBSRC staff might miss the announcement for this opportunity, a deadline, or a panel meeting due to a religious holiday or observance.	An interfaith calendar has been consulted to ensure that none of announcements, deadlines, or meetings for this opportunity coincide with any major religious holidays or observances.

			<p>This funding opportunity is open to individuals of all religions and beliefs or of no religion or belief that are based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. We are mindful that the demand management method of advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, carries the risk that certain people might be excluded from the final submissions made to this opportunity.</p> <p><u>UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity</u> for all funding applicants and panel members.</p> <p>Panel meetings, due to their prolonged duration, might coincide with prayer times.</p> <p>There are no barriers to participation to persons of any religions or beliefs, nor to persons of no religion or belief.</p>	<p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community. We are advising ROs to consider the scope and assessment criteria of the funding opportunity and BBSRC's advice on each submitted registration when they are prioritising applications, while also ensuring these processes employ good practice relating to EDI.</p> <p>Data on participants' religion or belief will not be sourced in the UKRI Funding Service and will not be used to make funding decisions.</p> <p>Panel meetings will take place on-line. Regular breaks will be scheduled to the agenda. Panel members and BBSRC staff will be encouraged to take additional breaks if they need to. To allow that without impacting the flow of the meeting, there will be 3 introducing members for each application and at least 2 BBSRC colleagues in each panel meeting.</p> <p>We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. DPR is a</p>
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				process in which applicants also contribute to the assessment, therefore broadening the opportunity for engagement in the process to a wider group of participants. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas.
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>This funding opportunity is open to individuals of all sexual orientations that are based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. We are mindful that the demand management method of advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, carries the risk that certain people might be excluded from the final submissions made to this opportunity.</p> <p><u>UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity</u> for all funding applicants and panel members. There are no barriers to participation to persons of any sexual orientation.</p>	<p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community. We are advising ROs to consider the scope and assessment criteria of the funding opportunity and BBSRC's recommendation on each submitted registration when they are prioritising applications, while also ensuring these processes employ good practice relating to EDI.</p> <p>Data on applicants' sexual orientation will not be sourced in the UKRI Funding Service and will not be used to make funding decisions. We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. DPR is a process in which applicants also contribute to the assessment, therefore broadening the opportunity for engagement in the process to a wider group of participants. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any</p>

				conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>This funding opportunity is open to individuals of all sexes and genders that are based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. We are mindful that the demand management method of advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, carries the risk that certain people might be excluded from the final submissions made to this opportunity. Given the greater proportion of cisgender males at the mid and advanced career stages (HESA, 2022/23) this could result in an increased proportion of applications from cisgender male applicants to the scheme.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants and panel members. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers.</p> <p>Persons who do not identify with a specific gender may feel disinclined to apply or participate in our panels if our language isn't inclusive.</p>	<p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community. We are advising ROs to consider the scope and assessment criteria of the funding opportunity and BBSRC's recommendation on each submitted registration when they are prioritising applications, while also ensuring these processes employ good practice relating to EDI.</p> <p>Data on applicants' sex and gender will not be sourced in the UKRI Funding Service and will not be used to make funding decisions.</p> <p>We will use gender neutral language, e.g. pronouns such as 'they' or 'you' instead of 'he/she', in all documents and materials, and throughout the panel meetings. By publishing this Equality Impact Assessment, we will also encourage panel members to use gender neutral language throughout their interactions and when writing their reviews and feedback to the applicants. During the panel meeting we will encourage participants to provide their pronouns and the pronunciation of their names. We will endeavour to convene a</p>

			<p>We support people to work in a way that suits their personal circumstances.</p>	<p>diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess, gender will be considered to ensure equal representation as far as practicable. This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. To avoid potential unconscious bias, first names and titles of applicants will not be used during the assessment discussions. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas.</p> <p>We will be communicating clearly in our call text the UKRI policies that allow for flexibility to include extension of deadlines and activation of grants. There are no barriers to participation to persons of any sex, gender, or identity.</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"/>	This funding opportunity is open to individuals that are based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding across the UK. Every research organisation across the UK will be given the opportunity to submit to this call	We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims

			<p>UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants.</p>	<p>to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community.</p> <p>Data on applicants' research organisation geographic location will not be used to make funding decisions. We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. DPR is a process in which applicants also contribute to the assessment, therefore broadening the opportunity for engagement in the process to a wider group of participants. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas.</p>
Socio-economic status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>The location of an in-person panel meeting might be a barrier to some of the attendees.</p> <p>This funding opportunity is open to individuals based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants.</p> <p>While there is not explicit data on socioeconomic status and lecturers in the HESA 2022/23 report, it's understood that individuals from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are often overrepresented in higher education, including among academic staff. This is reflected in</p>	<p>Panel meetings will take place on-line.</p> <p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community.</p> <p>This negative trend is not unique to this funding call, and we have no way of collecting data on the socioeconomic background of applicants and instilling any changes.</p>

			<p>broader trends of access to education and career progression.</p> <p>There is no impact on research officers and BBSRC staff. There are no barriers to participation to individuals of any socio-economic background.</p>	<p>Panel meetings will take place on-line.</p> <p>We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. We will not enquire about panel members marital status. This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas.</p>
Education background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>This funding opportunity is open to individuals at lecturer level and above based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity for all funding applicants.</p> <p>This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. Panel members will be invited based on their academic expertise. This might exclude some early career researchers that may be less established.</p>	<p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community.</p> <p>We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. There is no further action that can be taken without compromising the integrity of the assessment process. DPR is a process in which applicants also contribute to the assessment, therefore broadening the opportunity for engagement in the process to a wider group of participants. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially</p>

			We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers.	<p>towards certain demographics or research areas.</p> <p>The Resume for Research and Innovation has an optional additions section, where applicants may provide context, such as details for career breaks, or alternative career paths.</p>
Parent/guardian responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Parents or guardians may miss the invitation to participate in this funding opportunity as applicants or assessors. Might feel disinclined or may require additional adjustments to apply to this opportunity.</p> <p><u>UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity</u> for all funding applicants. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers. We support people to work in a way that suits their personal circumstances.</p> <p>This funding opportunity is open to individuals based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. We are mindful that the demand management method of advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, carries the risk that parents or guardians might be excluded from the final submissions made to this opportunity.</p>	<p>A school calendar has been consulted to ensure that none of announcements, deadlines, or meetings for this opportunity coincide with school breaks. 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. All meetings and deadlines will be scheduled during standard working hours.</p> <p>We will be communicating clearly in our call text the UKRI policies that allow for flexibility to include extension of deadlines and activation of grants. Data on parental/guardian responsibilities will not be sourced in the UKRI Funding Service and will not be used to make funding decisions.</p> <p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community. We are advising ROs to consider the scope and assessment criteria of the funding</p>

			<p>Career breaks in applicant track records may result in the potential for unconscious bias during assessment.</p> <p>Parents or guardians may require additional adjustments to enable participation in the panel meetings.</p>	<p>opportunity and BBSRC's recommendation on each submitted registration when they are prioritising applications, while also ensuring these processes employ good practice relating to EDI.</p> <p>The Resume for Research and Innovation has an optional additions section, where applicants may provide context, such as details for career breaks. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas. We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. DPR is a process in which applicants also contribute to the assessment, therefore broadening the opportunity for engagement in the process to a wider group of participants.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC will pay the cost of additional caring responsibilities incurred while on UKRI-BBSRC business. UKRI-BBSRC extends Pool of Experts membership period if parental leave is taken during their appointment. Panel meetings will take place on-line. Regular comfort breaks will be scheduled to the agenda. Panel members and BBSRC staff will be encouraged to take additional breaks if they need to. To allow that without impacting the flow of the</p>
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				meeting, there will be 3 introducing members for each application and at least 2 BBSRC colleagues in each panel meeting. We will gather information from meeting participants about any additional requirement they may need to fully participate so we can try to offer tailored assistance on a case-by-case basis where possible. The partial randomisation process can streamline the funding process by reducing the time and effort spent on detailed evaluations of equally strong applications without compromising on quality. Prioritisation of only a subset of applications for full panel assessment via DPR will also help reduce burden.
Carer/parent carer responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Carers or parent carers may miss the invitation to participate in this funding opportunity as applicants or assessors. Might feel disinclined or may require additional adjustments to apply to this opportunity.</p> <p><u>UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity</u> for all funding applicants. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers. We support people to work in a way that suits their personal circumstances.</p>	<p>A school calendar has been consulted to ensure that none of announcements, deadlines, or meetings for this opportunity coincide with school breaks. 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. All meetings and deadlines will be scheduled during standard working hours. We are hoping to make this a recurring call.</p> <p>We will be communicating clearly in our call text the UKRI policies that allow for flexibility to activation of grants. Data on carer/parent carer responsibilities will not be sourced in the UKRI Funding Service and will not be used to make funding decisions.</p>

			<p>This funding opportunity is open to individuals based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. We are mindful that the demand management method of advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, carries the risk that carer/parent carers might be excluded from the final submissions made to this opportunity.</p> <p>Career breaks in applicant track records may result in the potential for unconscious bias during assessment.</p> <p>Carers may require additional adjustments to enable participation in the panel meetings.</p>	<p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community. We are advising ROs to consider the scope and assessment criteria of the funding opportunity and BBSRC's recommendation on each submitted registration when they are prioritising applications, while also ensuring these processes employ good practice relating to EDI.</p> <p>the Resume for Research and Innovation has an optional additions section, where applicants may provide context, such as details for career breaks. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas. We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. DPR is a process in which applicants also contribute to the assessment, therefore broadening the opportunity for engagement in the process to a wider group of participants.</p> <p>UKRI-BBSRC will pay the cost of additional caring responsibilities incurred while on UKRI-BBSRC business. Panel meetings will</p>
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				<p>take place on-line. Regular comfort breaks will be scheduled to the agenda. Panel members and BBSRC staff will be encouraged to take additional breaks if they need to. To allow that without impacting the flow of the meeting, there will be 3 introducing members for each application and at least 2 BBSRC colleagues in each panel meeting. We will gather information from meeting participants about any additional requirement they may need to fully participate so we can try to offer tailored assistance on a case-by-case basis where possible. The partial randomisation process can streamline the funding process by reducing the time and effort spent on detailed evaluations of equally strong applications without compromising on quality. Prioritisation of only a subset of applications for full panel assessment via DPR will also help reduce burden.</p>
<p>Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>This funding opportunity is open to eligible individuals of any political opinion based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. We are mindful that the demand management method of advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, carries the risk that certain people might be excluded from the final submissions made to this opportunity.</p>	<p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community. We are advising ROs to consider the scope and assessment criteria of the funding opportunity and BBSRC's recommendation on each submitted registration when they are prioritising applications, while also ensuring these processes employ good practice relating to EDI.</p>

			<p><u>UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity</u> for all funding applicants. There is no impact on research officers and BBSRC staff.</p>	<p>Data on applicants' political opinion will not be sourced in the UKRI Funding Service and will not be used to make funding decisions. We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. DPR is a process in which applicants also contribute to the assessment, therefore broadening the opportunity for engagement in the process to a wider group of participants. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas.</p>
Carer stage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>This funding opportunity is open to eligible individuals based at organisations eligible for BBSRC funding. We are mindful that the demand management method of advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, carries the risk that certain people might be excluded from the final submissions made to this opportunity.</p> <p><u>UKRI-BBSRC are committed to achieving equality of opportunity</u> for all funding applicants and panel members. We encourage applications from a diverse range of researchers.</p>	<p>We are committed to encouraging equality, diversity, and inclusion by eliminating unlawful discrimination in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. This opportunity aims to leverage the full strengths of the UK's diverse research and innovation community. We are advising ROs to consider the scope and assessment criteria of the funding opportunity and BBSRC's advice on each submitted registration when they are prioritising applications, while also ensuring these processes employ good practice relating to EDI.</p> <p>Data on applicants' career stage will not be sourced in the UKRI Funding Service and will not be used to make funding decisions.</p>

			<p>Career breaks in applicant track records may result in the potential for unconscious bias during assessment.</p> <p>Panel members will be invited based on their academic expertise. This might exclude some early career people that have not yet managed to establish themselves enough to be considered experts.</p> <p>There is no impact on research officers and BBSRC staff.</p>	<p>We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess. There is no further action that can be taken without compromising the integrity of the assessment process. This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas.</p>
<p>Are there general or overarching impacts on multiple groups? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?</p>	<p>UKRI is committed to embedding equality, diversity and inclusion 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.</p> <p>While designing the Pioneer Awards funding call, we considered equality, diversity, and inclusion during:</p> <p>1. Advertising</p> <p>a. Impact: Some people might miss the invitation to this funding opportunity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action: The call will be advertised widely to reach the largest possible audience. ➤ Action: We have consulted interfaith and school calendars to ensure that none of announcements, or deadlines for this opportunity coincide with any school breaks, major religious holidays or observances. ➤ Action: 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 parental and/or caring responsibilities. All meetings and deadlines will be scheduled during standard working hours. <p>b. Impact: Some people might be discouraged from applying to this funding opportunity if we fail to highlight how we intent to lift negative barriers to participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Action: The call text and all documents and materials will be in accessible formats. 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. If requested by applicants, we will make guidance available in different formats (e.g. large print or printed onto different colour paper). BBSRC contact information will be shared and applicants and research officers will be encouraged to get in touch and inform us of any reasonable adjustments they might require so we can try to offer tailored assistance on a case-by-case basis where possible.

- **Action:** To encourage a diverse range of applicants, we will signpost our equality, diversity, and inclusion policies and provisions, including guidance for those who have taken career breaks, or need reasonable adjustments to support them in the application process. We will highlight in the call text that a formal diagnosis is not needed.
- **Action:** To support people to work in a way that suits their personal circumstances, we will be communicating clearly in our call text the UKRI policies that allow for flexibility to activation of grants.
- **Action:** The Resume for Research and Innovation 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.
- **Action:** UKRI can provide guidance and support to applicants and award holders, if they are disabled, have a long-term health condition, are neurodivergent, or have a learning disability. We will welcome applicants to share information about the reasonable adjustments they may need, including support in the assessment process and requesting eligible costs for reasonable adjustments. We will highlight in the call text that they do not need a formal diagnosis. Panel members will be informed applications may include these costs for reasonable adjustments and will be advised they should be accepted without comment. UKRI will ensure their eligibility.
- **Action:** BBSRC contact information will be shared and applicants will be encouraged to get in touch and inform us of any reasonable adjustments they might require so we can try to offer tailored assistance on a case-by-case basis where possible.

2. Application process

- c. **Impact:** The demand management method of advising ROs to prioritise competitive applications, carries some risk for discrimination for historically underrepresented groups of people prior to proposals being submitted to BBSRC.
- **Action:** We will encourage research organisations to consider opportunities to support and include in their list of submissions project leads from historically underrepresented groups in research funding. To assist with this, we will provide some upfront guidance to research organisations on factors they should consider and general good practice.

d. Impact: The Distributed Peer Review (DPR) process might discourage some applicants from submitting an application if they feel they do not have the time to participate in the DPR

➤ **Action:** We have weighed the benefits and the drawbacks of DPR, and we feel confident that having a diverse review college with the same make up as the applicant pool will ultimately increase participation of underrepresented groups in the process. Additionally, testimonials from previous calls that employed DPR suggest that applicants benefit from participating and manage to improve their own application writing skills for future calls. DPR will also allow for a greater signal during the preliminary assessment of full applications to aid prioritisation of the best applications (with potentially over six reviews per proposal vs two or three if reliant just on panel members). Finally, to minimise the required effort we will only be asking reviewers to assess the summary and vision sections of their assigned applications.

3. Assessment process

e. Impact: There is the potential for conscious or unconscious bias in panel assessment.

➤ **Action:** We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, representative of the BBSRC community they will be attempting to assess, equality, diversity, and inclusion characteristics will be considered to ensure equal representation as far as practicable. Ultimately, panel members and chairs will be invited based on their academic expertise. This might exclude some individuals that have not yet managed to establish themselves enough to be considered experts. There is no further action that can be taken without compromising the integrity of the assessment process.

➤ **Action:** This funding opportunity will be assessed both by DPR and an expert panel. DPR is a process in which applicants also contribute to the assessment, therefore broadening the opportunity for engagement in the process to a wider group of participants.

➤ **Action:** The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas.

➤ **Action:** BBSRC will cover safeguarding decision making in our panel training webinar.

f. Impact: Certain attendees (panel members and BBSRC staff) may miss the invitation or might find the location, duration, and/or pace of the Panel meetings to be limiting, and they may be discouraged from participating.

- **Action:** We have consulted interfaith and school calendars to ensure that none of announcements, deadlines, or meetings for the assessment of this opportunity coincide with any school breaks, major religious holidays or observances.
- **Action:** 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 parental and/or caring responsibilities. All meetings and deadlines will be scheduled during standard working hours.
- **Action:** UKRI-BBSRC will pay the cost of additional caring responsibilities incurred while on UKRI-BBSRC business.
- **Action:** UKRI-BBSRC extends Pool of Experts membership period if parental leave is taken during their appointment.
- **Action:** Panel meetings will take place on-line.
- **Action:** Panel members and BBSRC staff will be encouraged to request any reasonable adjustments they might require to fully participate.
- **Action:** All documents and materials will be provided in accessible formats. If requested by participants, we will make publications available in different formats (e.g. large print or printed onto different colour paper).
- **Action:** We will use gender neutral language, e.g. pronouns such as 'they' or 'you' instead of 'he/she', in all documents and materials, and throughout the panel meetings.
- **Action:** We will encourage panel members to use gender neutral language throughout their interactions and when writing their reviews and feedback to the applicants.
- **Action:** We will encourage participants to provide their pronouns and the pronunciation of their names at the beginning of the panel meeting.
- **Action:** Regular comfort breaks will be scheduled to the agenda. Attendees will be encouraged to take additional breaks if they need to. To allow that without impacting the flow of the meeting, there will be 3 introducing members for each application and at least 2 BBSRC colleagues attending in each panel meeting.
- **Action:** The partial randomisation process can streamline the funding process by reducing the time and effort spent on detailed evaluations of equally strong applications without compromising on quality.
- **Action:** BBSRC contact information will be shared and attendees will be encouraged to get in touch and inform us of any reasonable adjustments they might require so we can try to offer tailored assistance on a case-by-case basis where possible.

- g. Impact:** There is the potential for conscious or unconscious bias during the assessment based on applicants track records (e.g. career breaks, unconventional career paths), or certain characteristics.
- **Action:** Everyone involved in the decision-making process has had or will receive training in Unconscious Bias and guidance on new or revised ways of working to raise awareness of conditions that may impact on their decision-making.
 - **Action:** We will not use equality, diversity, and inclusion data on applicants to make funding decisions.
 - **Action:** To avoid potential unconscious bias, first names and titles of applicants will not be used during the assessment discussions.
 - **Action:** The partial randomisation process will help mitigate any conscious and unconscious biases that might influence assessment, especially towards certain demographics or research areas.
 - **Action:** Pioneer Awards is a unique funding opportunity that focusses more on the potential to deliver distinctive and transformative outcomes rather than on applicants' previous track records. This is achieved by lowering perceived barriers in peer review relating to (1) risk appetite, (2) need for preliminary data, and (3) difficulty pivoting to different research areas, therefore providing an avenue to explore completely novel research ideas.
 - **Action:** The Resume for Research and Innovation has an optional additions section, where applicants may provide context, such as details for career breaks.
 - **Action:** Panel members will be informed applications may include costs for reasonable adjustments and will be advised they should be accepted without comment. UKRI will ensure their eligibility.

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 type="checkbox"/>	
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>After considering equality, diversity, and inclusion during advertising, application and assessment processes, when sharing documents and materials, as well as barriers to participation, we are going to proceed with caution with this funding opportunity knowing that no particular group is unfavourably affected by it.</p> <p>Due to the unique nature of the Pioneer awards, that focus more on the potential to deliver distinctive and transformative outcomes rather than on applicants' previous track records and based on the outcomes from the review of the pilot round as well as the innovative assessment process we have chosen (i.e. DPR, tiered approach, partial randomisation), we believe this opportunity has the potential to reverse some the observed negative trends of underrepresentation.</p>

		<p>We will endeavour to convene a diverse panel, but ultimately, panel members and chairs will be invited based on their academic expertise. This might exclude some individuals that are currently less established. There is no further action that can be taken without compromising the integrity of the assessment process.</p> <p>While there is not explicit data on socioeconomic status and lecturers in the HESA 2022/23 report, it's understood that individuals from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are often overrepresented in higher education, including among academic staff. This is reflected in broader trends of access to education and career progression. This negative trend is not unique to this funding call, and we have no way of collecting data on the socioeconomic background of applicants and instilling any changes.</p>
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Continued below...

Review and sign off

<p>What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?</p>	<p>We are prepared to review and amend this Equality Impact Assessment as soon as new insights are presented to us from anyone negatively affected by this funding opportunity.</p> <p>The DPR process and outcomes will be evaluated by the UK Metascience Unit. Applicants will be approached for feedback following the process.</p> <p>We will carry out a strategic and process evaluation of the call seeking views from panel members, research officers, and applicants on the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demand management process • panel review process • nature of the applications received • suggestions for improvements <p>We will also analyse equality, diversity, and inclusion and institutional patterns within the applicant pool, as well as the science areas represented and the characteristics of both the funded and unfunded proposals for lessons learned.</p>
<p>Next review date:</p>	<p>When needed</p>

<p>Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Point of contact</p>	<p>Chrysanthi Michelaki and Laurie O'Neill</p>
<p>Signed off by (name and date):</p>	<p>Chrysanthi Michelaki, 15 September 2025</p>

Before publishing or archiving your EIA, please remove any sensitive or confidential information such as personal identifiable data.

Once your EIA is completed or updated:

1. Upload it to the UKRI central repository via [the EIA submission form](#)

EIAs for ODA and non-ODA ISPF programmes should be emailed to: ISPF@ukri.org

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Chrysanthi Michelaki	15 September 2025	1	EIA published
		2	
		3	