



# UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

## About your activity

### Title of your activity

UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships scheme: Launch of FLF Round 11.

### Council or business area

UKRI Talent Team

### Aims and objectives

The UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship scheme aims to develop the next wave of world-class research and innovation leaders in academia and business, including international applicants looking to take up roles at UK-based organisations. The scheme launched in 2018 and has funded over 1000 researchers and innovators, who are transitioning to or establishing independence, through 9 rounds of the scheme drawn from disciplines spanning the UKRI remit. Round 10 is in progress with funding decisions expected in June 2026.

The Future Leader Fellowships scheme is highly competitive, with increasing numbers of applications in previous rounds leading to the extension of timelines and an increased peer review burden on our research and innovation community. In order to be able to administrate funding opportunities in a timely manner, the number of applications which can be submitted by each academic host organisation, excluding UKRI Institutes, has been capped from round 7 onwards. Caps were determined using REF data.

To mitigate the risk of demand management negatively impacting the diversity of applicants to FLF Round 7, Host Organisations were asked to provide a statement describing the inclusive process they have used to select their chosen candidates by completing an online survey before the submission of full proposals to UKRI. Full proposals submitted by host organisations that have not reported on this process will be office rejected.

The Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) were commissioned by UKRI and published a report<sup>1</sup> identifying good practice relating to inclusive selection.

As outlined in the UKRI response<sup>2</sup> to the CRAC report, as a pilot, academic host organisations wishing to submit applications to the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship were required to complete diversity monitoring templates to provide anonymised information on the number of prospective applicants by sex, gender, ethnicity, disability, and broad disciplinary groupings. Initial outcomes from this pilot have informed the data collection approach for FLF R11 and a more detailed review is currently ongoing.

In addition, The UKRI Funding Service collects personal data including date of birth, ethnic origin, sex and gender and disability. We use this personal data to:

- Inform analysis to investigate if applicants to the scheme who share a protected characteristic:
  - a. suffer a disadvantage linked to that characteristic
  - b. have different needs to other groups, or
  - c. have a disproportionately low level of participation

If there is an evidenced need, UKRI may make appropriate and proportionate interventions, including in final funding decisions. This is in accordance with our duty to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

## Who is affected?

Researchers and innovators who are transitioning to or establishing independence across UKRI remit who are seeking long-term, flexible fellowship funding to tackle difficult and novel challenges, and support adventurous, ambitious programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> [CRAC - Identifying Good Practice Relating To Inclusive Selection Within The Future Leaders Fellowship Scheme](#)

<sup>2</sup> [UKRI response to CRAC report](#)



## What data and consultation have you used?

Relevant stakeholders within UKRI have been consulted with regards to introducing demand management, namely the FLF Project Board, UKRI Executive Champion for Talent and UKRI CEO.

UKRI EDI Implementation Group and UKRI Legal have been consulted with regard to the mitigation of potentially impacting the diversity of candidates.

UKRI has worked in partnership with ARMA to host workshops to facilitate sharing of good practice in data collection for by the FLF and CRCRM scheme.

Feedback has been sought from all academic research organisations submitting applications to R9 on the impact and practicalities of collecting and monitoring diversity data, alongside guidance from UKRI information Governance which has informed our approach.

## Impact on specific groups

### Are there general impacts on multiple groups?

The UKRI Future Leaders Fellowships scheme and associated processes are designed with support for equality, diversity and inclusion in mind.

### Terms and conditions for research grants

- Organisations receiving UKRI funding are expected to adopt the principles of the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#), one of which is to “Ensure that institutional policies and practices relevant to researchers are inclusive, equitable and transparent, and are well-communicated to researchers and their managers.” This should include reasonable adjustments as required to support their award holders.
- Award holders are entitled to take parental leave in accordance with the terms and conditions of their employment. We will consider requests for a Fellowship Grant to be placed in abeyance during the absence of the Research Fellow for parental leave, and the period of the Fellowship extended by the period of leave. We will also consider requests to continue the Fellowship on a flexible or part-time basis to allow the Research Fellow to meet caring responsibilities.
- We ask that UK employers do not apply a minimum qualifying period for paid sick leave, for paid parental leave (in all its forms, without reference to sexual orientation), or for paid leave associated with gender reassignment. [UKRI terms and conditions](#) are flexible



in nature. All UKRI fellowships allow extensions to the award to take account of absences due to medical/compassionate leave and as a result of gender reassignment.

### **Assessment process and criteria**

- Call timelines will ensure that, where possible, the preparation of applications, closing dates and all panel meetings / panel interviews take into consideration school holidays.
- We will ensure that materials for applicants and assessors have input from the Business Disability Forum and are provided online, and in accessible formats where required.
- Assessment of applicants will be against the objective criteria for the scheme, and with recognition of supporting those who have taken career breaks, sick leave, worked flexibly etc.
- Guidance to peer reviewers and panel members that describes the potential impacts of unconscious bias and safeguards the peer review process will be provided and panels will be observed by Roving Panel Members who feed into decision making processes to help ensure consistency and fairness.
- UKRI staff will carry out usability checks on provided external reviews and be empowered to positively challenge any comments not supported by evidence that they identify within these and where appropriate, rejecting and seeking an alternative review in order to safeguard the decision making process.
- We will seek to invite a diverse range of panel members to assess proposals; we will particularly aim to attract participation from groups currently underrepresented on the UKRI Talent Panel College as compared to HESA data. This currently includes women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities. We will ensure wide promotion of opportunities to target these underrepresented groups. We will review membership of the college annually and after each recruitment round.
- All panel interviews will offer reasonable adjustments to applicants, for pregnancy and maternity this will include an option to postpone the interview or for an application to be 'paused' and assessed during a future round of the call, if future rounds of the call have been confirmed at the point of request.
- We will ensure that locations, venues or virtual settings for panels, interviews and post-award engagements are physically and neurologically accessible, with agendas fully considerate of EDI, and that all engagements incorporate reasonable adjustments as required to support applicants, assessors and award holders.
- We will publish and review application and success rates after each round and consider if additional steps need to be taken to reach all eligible applicants across the breadth of the scheme. It is recognised that data may vary considerably between, for example, those applicants from academic, technical and business backgrounds, and that there is likely to also be variation within disciplines. Care will be taken to also review these potential differences after each round and consider if additional steps need to be taken.



## Impact on protected characteristics

Complete the table for all characteristics. You only need to add details if there is a positive or negative impact.

Protected characteristic	Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown)	Details of impact	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
Age	Possible indirect impact	The scheme is for academics and innovators who are transitioning to or establishing independence who tend to be younger in age. However, the scheme promotes diversity of career paths and people later in their career can still be eligible if they have transferred to a different discipline/sector. Data from the scheme to date indicates that the only age groups for which we have not yet made an award are the 60-69 and 70+ age groups.	The scheme is open to applicants of all career stages, with applicants self-identifying how they meet the eligibility criteria.
Disability	Potentially, negative.	In FLF rounds 1-8, 4% of applicants reported <sup>3</sup> a disability. This is compared to 6% of academic staff with a disability as reported by HESA <sup>4</sup> . Data from the 2021 Census <sup>5</sup> indicates that 18% of people in England are disabled.	Continue the application support provided in FLF round 9, with this support now available during the host organisation selection process in addition to the application to UKRI.  We will ensure that applicants with a disability (inclusive of physical and neurological) can cost for additional support required that is directly

<sup>3</sup> [Future Leaders Fellowships outcomes and EDI data – UKRI](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Table 5 - HE academic staff by disability and academic employment function 2014/15 to 2022/23 | HESA](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Disability by age, sex and deprivation, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)



		<p>Success rates for awards indicate that disabled applicants have slightly higher success rates than the scheme average.</p> <p>As a pilot initiative, in FLF round 9 and 10, UKRI appointed a third-party supplier to provide application support, in the form of reasonable adjustments, for people who have a disability or a long-term condition who face barriers applying to us. This pilot has been paused for round 11 while we review the impact of the pilot to date.</p> <p>Application data for FLF round 9 saw an increase in applications from those reporting disabilities, with the proportion increasing to 8% (for academic applications).</p>	<p>related to the grant within their applications and that this is explicitly stated in the call text on the funding finder and within the applicant guidance.</p> <p>As per qu2, mitigation in place to ensure host organisations support a diversity of applicants within their institutional cap and, if an evidenced need, UKRI may make appropriate and proportionate interventions, including in final funding decisions, in accordance with our duty to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</p> <p>The scheme has been designed to be inclusive of part-time and flexible working. Care needs to be taken to ensure that applications from researchers and / or innovators who identify themselves as having a disability (inclusive of physical and neurological) are assessed commensurate with their needs and opportunities, and with recognition of supporting those who have taken career breaks, sick leave, worked flexibly etc.</p> <p>The assessment process and associated panels will be run in line with the process set out in the General equality and diversity consideration section above.</p>
Gender reassignment	Potentially, negative.	Applicants who have had/are in the process of gender reassignment may feel disinclined to apply if our language isn't sensitive. Therefore,	We will ensure the use of gender neutral language in all call materials and engagement with the community.



		<p>gender neutral language is important to support inclusivity, equality and representation.</p> <p>Using government guidance for employers, we need to consider:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Absence as a result of medical treatment or other absence related to transition.</li></ol> <p>Adjustment of UKRI records (including Gateway to Research) and any communication materials (case studies etc).</p>	<p>The assessment process and associated panels will be run in line with the process set out in the GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS section.</p> <p><a href="#">UKRI terms and conditions</a> are flexible in nature. All UKRI fellowships allow extensions to the award to take account of absences due to medical/compassionate leave as a result of reassignment. As the main UKRI terms and conditions are currently written this would be done under the 'exceptional circumstances' clause at the discretion of the Research Council. The UKRI Talent team will be advised to automatically consider this an exceptional circumstance. In parallel we will work with the UKRI Funding Policy team to move towards changing the wording within the main UKRI terms and conditions so that leave for gender reassignment is not referred to as sickness absence.</p> <p>UKRI has a legal obligation under the UK GDPR and DPA 2018 to process accurate personal data; the obligation is on the account holder to provide any updates to personal data to us for this purpose.</p> <p>This call will be run on TFS which will capture data on gender reassignment to enable monitoring of applications and associated success rates to take place.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	Potentially, negative	A career move (particularly if international) can impact on partners and	Successful applicants who require a visa to work in the UK will be eligible to be considered for a <a href="#">Global Talent</a>



		<p>dependants. In our experience, in the case of physical relocation, the partner often needs to relocate their career as well.</p> <p>Data from the UK HESA database suggests that the majority of researchers holding a UK work visa are male. The UK allows 'dependants' of visa holders to work on that same visa but entering a new labour market is not always straightforward. This uncertainty and change could have an impact on families.</p>	<p><a href="#">visa</a> under the 'exceptional promise' category for future research leaders and this has been highlighted in the funding opportunity documentation. Family members can travel with the GTV holder or join them later in the UK on a dependent visa.</p> <p>Visa costs and costs associated with the International Health Surcharge are eligible grant costs for staff directly employed on the grant for 100% of their contracted time.</p> <p>Information and resources to be available to support relocation of award holders, partners and dependents are highlighted within the call documentation.</p> <p>Fellowships are personal awards and changes to the Host Organisation are permitted where an award holder can clearly demonstrate personal or professional reasons for requiring this change.</p>
Pregnancy and maternity	Possibly, negative (assume all parental leave irrespective of sexual orientation. Where the response refers to pregnancy, we include surrogacy and	<p>Pregnancy and maternity may impact on an applicant's ability to attend a panel interview.</p> <p>Career breaks associated with pregnancy and maternity may impact on an applicant's perceived track record.</p> <p>There are structural and financial impediments to taking parental leave: UK</p>	<p>The assessment process and associated panels will be run in line with the process set out in the GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS section.</p> <p>Awards will be subject to UKRI terms and conditions for research grants as set out in the GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS section.</p>



	adoption as well).	law requires employees to serve a minimum term before they become eligible for paid parental leave (over and above statutory benefits). New starters or their partners who fall pregnant or are pregnant at the time of application would thus receive little pay during their parental leave. Some employers have moved to a nil qualifying period for maternity or parental leave in recognition of this detriment.	
Race	Possibly, negative and positive	<p>Data from FLF R1-8<sup>6</sup> indicates that 20% of applications and 16% of awards were submitted or held respectively by applicants from ethnic minorities.</p> <p>Benchmark data<sup>7</sup> of early career researchers suggests 23% of this population are from ethnic minorities.</p>	<p>As per qu2, mitigation in place to ensure host organisations support a diversity of applicants within their institutional cap and, if an evidenced need, UKRI may make appropriate and proportionate interventions, including in final funding decisions, in accordance with our duty to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</p> <p>In the past, proportionate interventions have been made to promote 'near-miss' ethnic minority candidates to the interview stage as part of the tensioning process after the sift panels.</p> <p>Review of diversity data this round will also consider the intersectionality between race and sex (gender).</p>

<sup>6</sup> [Future Leaders Fellowships outcomes and EDI data – UKRI](#)

<sup>7</sup> [CRAC - Identifying Good Practice Relating To Inclusive Selection Within The Future Leaders Fellowship Scheme](#)



Religion or belief	Not enough information to fully assess but potentially, negative	Call and assessment timelines could fall over religious holidays with applicants and / or panellists requiring reasonable adjustments to fully participate.	Call timelines will ensure that, where possible, the preparation of applications, closing dates and panel meetings / panel interviews take into consideration religious holidays.
Sex	Potentially, negative.	<p>Data from FLF R1-8<sup>8</sup> indicates that 40% of applications and 47% of awards were made/held by female applicants.</p> <p>Benchmark data<sup>9</sup> of early career researchers suggests 47% of this population are female.</p> <p>Although over the scheme to date, females are under-represented in application terms, the proportion of female applicants has increased in more recent rounds with applicants now in line with the researcher population.</p> <p>Awards are flexible, with part-time and job-share opportunities, and with provisions in place to ensure parental leave in accordance with the terms and conditions of their employment. This could attract a greater proportion of females to the scheme.</p>	<p>As per qu2, mitigation in place to ensure host organisations support a diversity of applicants within their institutional cap and, if an evidenced need, UKRI may make appropriate and proportionate interventions, including in final funding decisions, in accordance with our duty to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</p> <p>Panel processes are being considered to try to better understand the difference in success rates at each stage of the application process for male and female applicants.</p> <p>Applicants will be able to undertake their fellowships flexibly, applying for part-time awards to combine with personal responsibilities, applying for job-share awards and with provisions in place to ensure parental leave in accordance with the terms and conditions of their employment.</p> <p>Review of diversity data this round will also consider the intersectionality between race and sex (gender).</p>

<sup>8</sup> [Future Leaders Fellowships outcomes and EDI data – UKRI](#)

<sup>9</sup> [CRAC - Identifying Good Practice Relating To Inclusive Selection Within The Future Leaders Fellowship Scheme](#)



		Call and assessment timelines could fall over school holidays with applicants and / or panellists requiring reasonable adjustments to fully participate.	
Sexual orientation	Not enough information to assess	<p>We recognise that managing demand may reduce the diversity of the applicants to the scheme, including applicants of an under-represented sexual orientation.</p> <p>Of note, data is not held on sexual orientation in the Je-S system to evidence this. From FLF round 9 this data is being collected on TFS.</p>	As per qu2, mitigation in place to ensure host organisations support a diversity of applicants within their institutional cap and, if an evidenced need, UKRI may make appropriate and proportionate interventions, including in final funding decisions, in accordance with our duty to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

## Impact on additional characteristics

Complete the table for all characteristics. You only need to add details if there is a positive or negative impact.

Additional characteristics	Impact (positive, negative, none or unknown)	Details of impact	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
Geographical location and place	Possibly positive	Restriction on the number of proposals submitted by host organisations could result in a higher proportion of applications from organisations based outside of London and across the UK	Webinars are planned with a particular emphasis on encouraging new host organisations to apply for the scheme.



Socio-economic status	Possibly positive		
Education background	Unknown		
Parent or guardian responsibilities	Possibly negative	<p>Career breaks associated with childcare may impact on an applicant's perceived track record.</p> <p>Applicants may work part time or have commitments during school holidays that may affect their availability during the assessment process.</p>	<p>The assessment process and associated panels will be run in line with the process set out in the GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS section.</p> <p>Awards will be subject to UKRI terms and conditions for research grants as set out in the GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS section.</p>
Carer responsibilities	Possibly negative	<p>Career breaks associated with caring responsibilities may impact on an applicant's perceived track record.</p> <p>Applicants may work part time or have time commitments associated with their caring role that may affect their availability during the assessment process.</p>	<p>The assessment process and associated panels will be run in line with the process set out in the GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS section.</p> <p>Awards will be subject to UKRI terms and conditions for research grants as set out in the GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS section.</p>
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	Unknown		
Other characteristics	Unknown		



## Final decision

### Make a decision on whether to proceed with the activity

#### Final decision

Barriers and impact identified, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the activity. Proceed with caution with this activity knowing the impact.

There are no other proportionate ways to achieve the aims of the demand management. Impacts have been identified and mitigating actions put in place. Impacts will be regularly monitored with interventions implemented if required, in accordance with our duty to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

## Review and sign off

### How will you monitor and review the impact of your activity?

The number and diversity of applications to the scheme will be monitored at point of applications, and at all panel decision points.

Should academic host organisations not cap proposals, discussions will take place between UKRI and host organisation VCs before applications are progressed. Should academic host organisations not submit statements describing the inclusive process they have used to select their chosen candidates, proposals submitted by those host organisations will be office-rejected.

If there is an evidenced need, UKRI may make appropriate and proportionate interventions, including in final funding decisions, in accordance with our duty to advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

### What is the EIA review date?

01/02/2027, ahead of round 12 of the FLF scheme

## Contact



Please reach out to the FLF team if you have any queries: [fellows@ukri.org](mailto:fellows@ukri.org)

## **Will the EIA be published?**

EIA will be published on the funding finder for Round 11 of the FLF scheme.

## **Who has this been signed off by?**

Chloe Kersley, Senior Programme Manager, UKRI Talent Team

## **Change log**

Include changes as you've reviewed the EIA. For example, based on input received from x at the announcement of opportunity stage, x was added

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Change</b>
		1	
		2	
		3	