



# UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

## About your activity

### Title of your activity

Funding opportunity - EPSRC Mathematical Sciences Early Independence Fellowship

### Council or business area

EPSRC

## Aims and objectives

Give an outline of your activity in two or three sentences, including the aspects of it which need to be covered by the EIA.

The aim of the fellowship is to support ambitious and talented researchers in mathematical sciences who have gained a higher research degree and have evidence of career consolidation and productivity across past appointments to:

- lead their own research plans to establish their own research niche
- start to build their own research team
- make the first step-change towards establishing themselves as a leading independent researcher

## Who is affected?

List all affected groups, for example, staff, applicants

- UK's research community concerned with the areas of mathematical sciences
- EPSRC staff managing the peer review
- UK Research office/institutions and staff
- UK and international external reviewers and panel members (peer reviewers, prioritisation panel and interview panel)
- UK and/or international researchers relocating to the UK as fellows.
- International and UK based researchers that work with the fellow



## What data and consultation have you used?

Give details of the evidence you've used, for example, survey results, UKRI reports, external data, legal precedents

Consulted with:

- EPSRC's Business Improvement team
- EPSRC Mathematics theme
- The mathematical sciences community through the Mathematical Sciences Strategic Advisory Team, Early Career Forum and community focus groups
- EPSRC Talent and Skills team

## Impact on specific groups

### Are there general impacts on multiple groups?

Give details of an impact which affects multiple groups, include the actions you will take to increase positive impact, or mitigate negative impact.

## 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	Potentially negative	<p>Questions related to protected characteristics in The Funding Service will be in line with ONS guidance.</p> <p>For a variety of reasons individuals can face stigma and discrimination in society and assessment processes for their relative youth, or their relative age and the perceived experience or energy associated with these assumptions.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>If an applicant's age became known to the panel or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but in no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or panel members.</p>	<p>EPSRC's panel members receive a briefing on unconscious bias in advance of the panel. EPSRC panel convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process, both at postal peer review and panel stage. Reviewers who are part of the peer review college also receive information about unconscious bias as part of their training.</p> <p>We will not be equating age with experience and instead will focus on required competencies.</p> <p>Applicants are encouraged to raise any issues with reviews in advance of the panel so that they can be addressed.</p> <p>More information about EPSRC's commitment to ensuring fairness in peer review can be found <a href="#">here</a>. EPSRC have recently published a 3 year <a href="#">EDI action plan</a> line which includes actions related to peer review to reduce the likelihood of bias impacting on decision making.</p>
Disability	Potentially negative	<p>The assessment process involves an interview stage which may lead to challenges in accessibility and increase the risk of unconscious bias.</p>	<p>Reasonable adjustments for specific requirements will be made. Documents will be produced in line with EPSRC formatting guidelines.</p> <p>We will publish in line with <a href="#">UKRI's accessibility standards</a> so that as</p>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/age-discrimination>



		<p>All information provided is in written format. A panel and chairs' briefing meeting will be provided and briefings will be available in the call guidance.</p>	<p>many people as possible can use and understand guidance for applicants, reviewers and panel members. At least eight weeks notice will be given of the closing date.</p> <p>Panels are likely to be virtual. If any of the panels are in person, then accessibility will be considered when choosing a physical venue.</p> <p>Panel dates will be provided in advance to give sufficient time for applicants to discuss and plan required adjustments as needed.</p> <p>Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. EPSRC's presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased peer review.</p> <p>Under the equality act 2010, employers are expected to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled applicants and employees. This might include having a scribe to help write the application or using specialist software to support the writing of an application. Applicants are encouraged to speak to their research support services about the support available to them. EPSRC can also make reasonable adjustments for applicants, for example giving more time for an applicant response under these circumstances. Applicants, reviewers and panel members are encouraged to speak to EPSRC staff if accommodations can be made to enable them to participate in the application and peer review processes.</p>
Gender reassignment	Potentially negative	Questions related to protected characteristics in The Funding Service will be	EPSRC's panel members receive a briefing on unconscious bias in advance of the panel. EPSRC panel



		<p>in line with ONS guidance.</p> <p>Those that have had or are undergoing gender reassignment face discrimination in society in general. An assessment process may increase the risk of bias for this group. If an applicant's gender reassignment became known to the panel or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but in no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or panel members.</p>	<p>convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process, both at postal peer review and panel stage. Reviewers who are part of the peer review college also receive information about unconscious bias as part of their training.</p> <p>Applicants are also encouraged to raise any issues with reviews in advance of the panel so that they can be addressed.</p> <p>See more information about <a href="#">EPSRC's commitment to ensuring fairness in peer review</a>.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact	n/a	Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative.	<p>We will batch fellowships multiple times a year, meaning that those on parental leave will not be disadvantaged due to this change, because they will be able to continue to apply soon afterwards. However, due to the need to align with responsive mode panels, there is less flexibility around key dates in the assessment process.</p> <p>If an applicant's pregnancy or maternity leave status became known to the panel or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but in no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or panel members.</p>	<p>As a mitigation, under exceptional circumstances, we will be able to move a proposal to be assessed at a later date if the application process is affected by leave related to pregnancy or maternity or other EDI reasons. If exceptional circumstances mean that applicants cannot meet a deadline for an applicant response or attend interview, there will be a workaround in place to allow flexibility with deadlines at the request of the applicant.</p> <p>Applicants are encouraged to raise any issues with reviews in advance of the panel so that they can be addressed.</p> <p>Adjustments are made to enable attendance to interview and virtual interviews will be offered when required. The interview timings are published before the time of application.</p> <p>If individuals receive a funding decision during their maternity leave period and are on leave for the start date of the grant, they can, as per</p>

			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. <sup>2</sup>
Race	Potentially negative.	<p>Questions related to protected characteristics in The Funding Service will be in line with ONS guidance.</p> <p>Those that are racialised other than white, face discrimination in society in general and are under-represented in EPSRC's portfolio. An assessment process may increase the risk of bias for this group (<a href="https://www.ukri.org/about-us/epsrc/our-policies-and-standards/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/ethnicity-and-race-equality-in-our-portfolio/">https://www.ukri.org/about-us/epsrc/our-policies-and-standards/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/ethnicity-and-race-equality-in-our-portfolio/</a>)</p> <p>If an applicant's race or ethnicity became known to the panel or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias. This is not disclosed to reviewers or panel members, but interview panel members may draw their own assumptions.</p>	<p>EPSRC's panel members receive a briefing on unconscious bias in advance of the panel. EPSRC panel convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process, both at postal peer review and panel stage. Reviewers who are part of the peer review college also receive information about unconscious bias as part of their training.</p> <p>Applicants are encouraged to raise any issues with reviews in advance of the panel so that they can be addressed.</p> <p>See more information about <a href="#">EPSRC's commitment to ensuring fairness in peer review</a>.</p>
Religion or belief	Potentially negative	<p>If key dates in the assessment process (e.g. opening and closing dates for rounds, panel dates, PI response interview dates) coincide with major religious festivals, then this could disadvantage applicants.</p> <p>Those that observe religion/belief systems face discrimination in society in general, an</p>	<p>We will ensure that major deadlines like opening and closing dates for rounds and panel dates do not coincide with major religious festivals and bank holidays.</p> <p>Ensure religious observances are considered when interview meeting dates are chosen, and where possible that there is a prayer room available. Virtual interviews will also be offered where required.</p> <p>EPSRC's panel members receive a</p>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/UKRI-021122-fECGrantTermsAndConditionsGuidance.pdf>



		<p>assessment process may increase the risk of bias for this group.</p>	<p>briefing on unconscious bias in advance of the panel. EPSRC panel convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process, both at postal peer review and panel stage. Reviewers who are part of the peer review college also receive information about unconscious bias as part of their training.</p> <p>Applicants are encouraged to raise any issues with reviews in advance of the panel so that they can be addressed.</p> <p>See more information about <a href="#">EPSRC's commitment to ensuring fairness in peer review</a>.</p>
Sex	Potentially negative	<p>Questions related to protected characteristics in The Funding Service will be in line with ONS guidance.</p> <p>Women and individuals across the sex and gender spectrums who do not identify as cis men face stigma and discrimination in society on the basis of their sex or gender and are underrepresented in EPSRC's portfolio. An assessment process may increase the risk of bias for this group.</p> <p>If an applicant's sex became known to the panel or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias. This is not disclosed to reviewers or panel members, but interview panel members may draw their own assumptions.</p>	<p>EPSRC's panel members receive a briefing on unconscious bias in advance of the panel. EPSRC panel convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process, both at postal peer review and panel stage. Reviewers who are part of the peer review college also receive information about unconscious bias as part of their training.</p> <p>Gender neutral language will be used throughout and will be encouraged at panel meetings.</p> <p>We will ensure to select gender diverse panelists and reviewers.</p> <p>Applicants are encouraged to raise any issues with reviews in advance of the panel so that they can be addressed.</p> <p>See more information about <a href="#">EPSRC's commitment to ensuring fairness in peer review</a>.</p>
Sexual orientation	Potentially negative	<p>Questions related to protected characteristics in The Funding Service will be in line with ONS guidance.</p>	<p>EPSRC's panel members receive a briefing on unconscious bias in advance of the panel. EPSRC panel convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the</p>



		<p>Those who are LGBTQ+ face stigma and discrimination in society in general, an assessment process may increase the risk of bias for this group.</p> <p>If an applicant's sexual orientation became known to the panel or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but in no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or panel members.</p>	<p>assessment process, both at postal peer review and panel stage. Reviewers who are part of the peer review college also receive information about unconscious bias as part of their training.</p> <p>Applicants are encouraged to raise any issues with reviews in advance of the panel so that they can be addressed.</p> <p>See more information about <a href="#">EPSRC's commitment to ensuring fairness in peer review</a>.</p>
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## 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,	Details of impact	Actions to reduce negative or increase positive impact
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	none or unknown)		
Geographical location and place	Potentially negative	Interviewees may be in other time zones.	We will try to accommodate interviewee requests for reasonable interview times where they are in other time zones.
Socio-economic status	None known		
Education background	None known		
Parent or guardian responsibilities	Potentially negative	Participation in activity could be restricted by lack of availability due to parental leave/caring responsibilities.	<p>Reasonable adjustments will be made for individuals if required at all stages of the process.</p> <p>Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panelists in advance as early as possible.</p> <p>We will make every effort to ensure that school holiday key dates will be avoided when deciding on panel meeting dates.</p> <p>EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these. Panelists will be informed if a panel meeting is to be held virtually as far in advance as possible.</p> <p>We will ensure that breaks are scheduled in throughout the duration of panel meetings whether held virtually or in-person.</p> <p>Additional care requirements could occur if individuals are required to attend the panel meeting on a non-working day or work extended hours on a normal working day. It is an individual's responsibility to check with EPSRC and confirm what costs can be reimbursed prior to attendance at a panel. Further details on the support EPSRC will offer for those with</p>



			<p>caring responsibilities can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panelists on unconscious bias and empowering all panelists to challenge potential bias.</p>
Carer responsibilities	Potentially negative	Participation in activity could be restricted by lack of availability due to parental leave/caring responsibilities.	<p>Reasonable adjustments will be made for individuals if required at all stages of the process.</p> <p>Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panelists in advance as early as possible.</p> <p>We will make every effort to ensure that school holiday key dates will be avoided when deciding on panel meeting dates.</p> <p>EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these. Panelists will be informed if a panel meeting is to be held virtually as far in advance as possible.</p> <p>We will ensure that breaks are scheduled in throughout the duration of panel meetings whether held virtually or in-person.</p> <p>Additional care requirements could occur if individuals are required to attend the panel meeting on a non-working day or work extended hours on a normal working day. It is an individual's responsibility to check with EPSRC and confirm what costs can be reimbursed prior to attendance at a panel. Further details on the support EPSRC will offer for those with caring responsibilities can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Standard EPSRC policies will be</p>



			followed, including providing training materials for panelists on unconscious bias and empowering all panelists to challenge potential bias.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	None known		
Other characteristics	None known		

## Final decision

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

State which one of the following outcomes applies and give a reason for your decision.

1. No negative or positive impact identified therefore, activity will proceed
2. Adapt or change the activity in a way which will eliminate negative impact or promote equality



3. Stop the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.
4. 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

This activity can proceed via outcome 4. Possible risks and biases associated with the funding opportunity have been identified and mitigations have been put in place, for example, through providing panel and chair briefs on unconscious bias. We will also be providing adequate breaks throughout the day, and ensuring appropriate facilities are in place or through putting in place reasonable adjustments. We will continually review and adapt to reduce bias.

## Review and sign off

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

We will apply all reasonable mitigations as described above and adapt further where any unforeseen issues arise during the process. The assessment process has been reviewed and designed to promote the identification and management of any unconscious bias and challenges to participation. All Panel Chairs and members will be briefed on unconscious bias.

### What is the EIA review date?

The EIA is a live document and will be regularly reviewed throughout the life cycle of the activity. The EIA will also be reviewed as part of any closure or lessons learned activity.

## Contact

Enter the name and contact details for the main contact

Mathematical sciences theme: [maths@epsrc.ukri.org](mailto:maths@epsrc.ukri.org)

### Will the EIA be published?

EIAs should be published alongside relevant funding activities for example funding opportunities and events

Yes, this EIA will be published alongside the funding opportunity.

### Who has this been signed off by?

Include the name, date and job title

Sarah Harman, Head of Mathematical Sciences, 15 May 2025

## Submitting the form



**UK Research  
and Innovation**

You need to [submit the form to the central repository](#)

EIAs for the International Science Partnership Funds should be emailed to: [ISPF@ukri.org](mailto:ISPF@ukri.org)

## **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

Name	Date	Version	Change
Emma Foxell	13/05/26	1	
		2	
		3	

## Action plan

Add the actions you intend to take (or have taken) to address the negative impact you have identified. Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored?	What is the outcome?
Consider diversity when inviting panel members and ensure panels are mixed sex in line with EPSRC policy	Ahead of each panel	Panel convenor	Through the use of this EIA	A diverse panel will be recruited which will reflect the diversity of our research community
Brief panel members on unconscious bias, in line with EPSRC policy	Ahead of each panel	Panel convenor	Through the use of this EIA. Include in panel briefings and panel member guidance.	Panel members will be aware of and on the lookout for unconscious bias and empowered to challenge any potential bias
Plan key dates, including interviews to avoid school holidays and religious holidays wherever possible	Ahead of each panel	Panel convenor	Through the use of this EIA. Include in panel briefings and panel member guidance.	Increased accessibility for those with parental responsibilities and who practice religion