



UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

About your activity

Title of your activity

UKRI Metascience impact funding

Council or business area

ESRC (Metascience Unit)

Aims and objectives

This funding opportunity aims to allow previously awarded applicants to earlier metascience funding opportunities to maximise the commercial, economic, and societal benefits of their research, and enables researchers to execute an additional, defined programme of work that has clear objectives and a short timeframe.

This EIA will need to cover equality as part of

- Advertising the funding opportunity
- The application process
- The review process (done internally)

Who is affected?

Applicants, research office staff, internal moderators



What data and consultation have you used?

Within UKRI, the Metascience Unit have worked with the ESRC Grants Delivery Team to ensure that relevant policies have been followed in the design of the opportunity.

In order to ensure that the call meets their needs and that we have identified and mitigated any potential issues, we have:

- held one-to-one meetings with interested parties (academic and non-academic) to ensure that the call meets their needs and we have identified and mitigated any potential issues.
- attended Metascience conferences and events to promote the work of the Unit and ensure that the community's needs have been considered within the design of the call.
- commissioned two reports from leading academics to identify the current size and shape of the academic community and the key research questions and issues of importance.

The DSIT-chaired Metascience Unit Programme Board has also been consulted in the design of the opportunity.

Impact on specific groups

Are there general impacts on multiple groups?

ESRC's research commissioning processes are designed with fairness in mind.

Eligibility and criteria

- The opportunity is open to all eligible research organisations (ROs). Applicants are eligible for funding whether or not they are established members of a recognised RO, but applicants who are not an established member of a recognised RO must be accommodated by the RO and provided with appropriate facilities to carry out the research. All applicants to this opportunity will be eligible as they have current or recent funding from us.

Standard Grant Terms and Conditions

- UKRI standard Grant Terms and Conditions comply with UK equality legislation and include provisions designed to mitigate against potential negative impacts (e.g. sick pay, parental and adoption leave, the possibility of part-time and flexible working, and grant extensions).
- Research Organisations are subject to equality legislation and have a duty to comply with it. RGC 8 states that 'The Research Organisation must assume full responsibility for staff funded from the grant and, in consequence, accept all duties owed to and responsibilities for these staff, including, without limitation, their terms and conditions of employment and their training and supervision, arising from the employer/employee relationship.' Universities are therefore required to make reasonable adjustments as required to support their staff.

Process



- All reviewers will receive the code of practice and guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias.
- It is the role of moderators to corroborate final scores for each proposal. Moderators will be briefed on unconscious bias and encouraged to feel empowered to constructively challenge potential bias where they identify it. An implementation intention statement will be read out at the beginning of the commissioning panel meeting which sets the tone for discussions and requires that moderators pay close attention to the scoring criteria and definitions.

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	None/Unknown	Applicants are not asked to disclose their age, and we no longer ask for information such as a CV containing information on the year of graduation etc. This information can be included in application sections covering applicant suitability for award though.	Be aware of language used to encourage early career researchers, and that it doesn't also discourage later career researchers. Reviews displaying age bias will be marked as 'Unusable'.
Disability	None/Unknown	The Funding Service is compliant with relevant accessibility standards for RO staff and applicants.	Depending on the needs identified, considerations might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of documents in sans serif, dyslexia friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats • Avoiding colours, lighting etc that may trigger migraines or epilepsy
Gender reassignment	None/Unknown	Trans people may be absent from work as a consequence of transition and UKRI records may	We will work to ensure the use of gender-neutral language in our documents.



		show the wrong gender. Risk of bias against an applicant by reviewers.	UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature and allow for absence as a result of medical treatment. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the Research Organisation's absence policy and strongly encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other medical absence. Reviewers will receive guidance on fair and objective assessment. ESRC staff will safeguard the integrity of the assessment process by watching for bias and raising any concerns. Clear guidelines on reporting bullying and harassment will be provided. Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted.
Marriage or civil partnership	None/Unknown	Applicants are not asked to disclose their marital status.	
Pregnancy and maternity	None/Unknown	Staff may be absent from work for health reasons or parental leave. Risk of bias against applicant. However, applicants are not asked to disclose their pregnancy status or reasons for leave. Staff may miss out on the opportunity being absent from work for health reasons or parental leave.	Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions. We should ensure the use of gender-neutral language – parental leave, irrespective of sexual orientation. The costs of additional childcare for grant holders, beyond that required to meet the normal contracted requirements of the job, and that are directly related to the project, may be requested as a directly incurred cost if the institutional policy is to reimburse them. However, childcare costs



			<p>associated with normal working patterns may not be sought.</p> <p>Suggest any other opportunities they may be able to apply. Communication through investment management would help keeping those applicants potentially affected to informed of other opportunities.</p>
Race	None/Unknown	Applicants are not asked to disclose their race. Risk of bias by reviewers against an applicant based on name and perceived race	Comments referencing the race of the applicant or displaying bias will be marked as 'Unusable'.
Religion or belief	None/Unknown	Risk of discrimination because it is known that somebody (either a research applicant or research participants) has a particular faith or belief. Risk of bias by scheduling key dates on or around religious holidays.	Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning funding opportunity timelines, including scheduling key dates to avoid major religious festivals (if impossible to avoid, otherwise consider mitigations)
Sex	None/Unknown	Use of gendered language can present a barrier to participation	Ensure use of gender-neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc.
Sexual orientation	None/Unknown	Applicants are not asked to disclose their sexual orientation. However, there may be potential for bias, bullying or harassment if the sexual orientation of an applicant is known or assumed.	Comments referencing the sexual orientation of the applicant or displaying bias will be explicitly forbidden.



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	None/Unknown	Potential moderator bias based on university ranking or location.	Comments displaying bias based on university ranking or location will be forbidden. This funding opportunity will not require any travel for the assessment process as everything can be done online, so there is no disadvantage there.
Socio-economic status	None/Unknown	Potential reviewer bias based on university ranking or location.	Comments displaying bias based on university ranking or location will be disallowed.
Education background	None/Unknown	Potential for reviewer bias based on whatever is disclosed in the application about applicants' educational backgrounds.	Comments displaying bias based on educational background will be disallowed.
Parent or guardian responsibilities	None/Unknown	It may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged	Ensure that caring responsibilities are acknowledged as a consideration of time allocated to an awarded grant.
Carer responsibilities	None/Unknown	It may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged	Ensure that caring responsibilities are acknowledged as a consideration of time allocated to an awarded grant.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	None/Unknown	N/A	



Other characteristics	None/Unknown		
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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.

2. Adapt or change the activity in a way which will eliminate negative impact or promote equality

We have done our best to make this funding opportunity inclusive and are very happy to receive feedback on any changes that can be made to improve.

Review and sign off

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

- Plan regular reviews of the EIA and action plan
- Review the EIA as part of any closure or lessons learned activity.
- Be transparent: continue to consult with the groups affected by your activity and use new insights to review you EIA.

What is the EIA review date?

01/08/2026

Contact

metascience@ukri.org (general email inbox)

lauren.curtis@esrc.ukri.org



Will the EIA be published?

Yes

Who has this been signed off by?

Include the name, date and job title

Submitting the form

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

EIAs for the International Science Partnership Funds should be emailed to: 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
		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?