

# UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

## About your activity

### Title of your activity

Doctoral focal award plus: innovating in data-driven research funding opportunity

### Council or business area

ESRC, Research Talent Development

## Aims and objectives

We are funding one Doctoral Focal Award Plus to develop a cadre of social scientists across career stages with the creative vision and skills needed to use data-driven research approaches in imaginative and insightful ways, applying their skills to understand the world and address complex societal and economic challenges. This will be achieved through a combination of doctoral training and targeted training and capacity building (TCB) activities for mid-career and senior researchers.

## Who is affected?

- Applicants to the funding opportunity
- Commissioning and interview panel members

- ESRC staff attending the panel and interview meetings

## What data and consultation have you used?

Scoping work that has informed this funding opportunity:

- Two [reviews](#) to scope capacity-building needs in the social sciences to support data-driven research skills were commissioned.
- Engagement meeting to obtain input from members of relevant ESRC advisory groups (Research Talent Advisory Group; Data-Driven Futures Task and Finish Group; and the Data and Infrastructure Expert Advisory Group)

## 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.

Applicants are advised to contact us as early as possible with any [reasonable adjustments](#) that are required.

If in-person meetings present a barrier for participation, we will consider hybrid or virtual meetings where required. If in-person we will facilitate travel and logistics, ensuring that the location of the meeting and the venue meets accessibility requirements for participants. If hybrid or virtual, we will facilitate logistics including travel (if applicable) and the use of personal equipment to join virtual meetings. We will solicit information from participants about their requirements ahead of any meetings and/or communication and adjust accordingly.

The funding opportunity will follow UKRI guidance and style guidance to ensure that it is inclusive.

There has been a preannouncement, followed by the funding opportunity opening to allow adequate time for applicants to apply.

### 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	Negative	Funding opportunity is targeted at doctoral studentships and mid and senior career level researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Experience and track record are not explicitly included in the criteria.</li><li>• Guidance provided to panel members will make it clear that all applications should be assessed on the merit of the individual application. The individual's delivery capability should be assessed and not their previous experience/track record.</li><li>• Early Career Researchers are supported through other ESRC funding mechanisms specifically designed to address their career development needs. As such, this opportunity complements existing provision for earlier career stages.</li><li>• No direct negative impact on the basis of age is anticipated, as career stage does not map directly to age, and applicants of any age who meet the career-stage criteria are eligible.</li><li>• ESRC will make use of a range of different communication strategies to ensure that our messages reach a broad audience.</li></ul>
Disability	Negative	(Panel) 1. potential limited access to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support.</li><li>• Meeting could be held online via Teams if mobility issues are raised (limiting venue-</li></ul>



		<p>panel/interview meeting for those with mobility issues.</p> <p>2. (Panel/comms) potential difficulties understanding discussion for those with hearing/visual impairment</p> <p>3. (Panel/comms) potential difficulties with concentration for attendees with neuro-disabilities</p>	<p>based accessibility issues.) but we will endeavour to seek out and use an accessible venue for the meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Closed captioning (cc) can be arranged for hearing impaired panel members. Additional support can be provided to visually impaired panel members – including appropriate use of colour/text size in all guidance documents/presentations.</li><li>• ESRC will ensure that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda if required</li><li>• Supporting communications will be recorded and/or shared online, with capacity to share modified versions for specific needs at request (cc/changed colour/text size)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Business Disability Forum <a href="#">Inclusive Communication Toolkit</a></li><li>○ Understanding WCAG 2.2 - Service Manual - GOV.UK (<a href="http://www.gov.uk">www.gov.uk</a>)</li></ul></li></ul> <p>Other considerations could include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adequate lighting, alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers (ensure any images are well described so that text-to-speech applications can recognise them) for the visually impaired.</li><li>• Provision of documents in sans-serif dyslexia friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats.</li><li>• Avoiding colours, lighting etc. that may trigger migraines, epilepsy etc.</li></ul>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that ESRC staff have had sufficient EDI training so they can respond effectively to the requirements of all participants.</li></ul>
Gender reassignment	Negative		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will ask meeting attendees to share pronouns if they feel comfortable and ensure that we have the correct names for participants. All documentation will use gender neutral language.</li><li>• If required, we will provide updates to reflect changes to identity and ensure that we maintain confidentiality throughout the process.</li><li>• We will ensure that venues provide gender neutral toilets and changing facilities should they be required.</li></ul>
Marriage or civil partnership	None		
Pregnancy and maternity	Negative	<b>Panel and interviewees</b>  Potential difficulties attending funding meeting.  Potential difficulties in managing early childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ESRC can ensure that panel member participation is scheduled according to childcare responsibilities if required.</li><li>• Timelines will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow meeting attendees to make arrangements to attend. This will also ensure applicants have advanced notice of deadlines and key dates related to the funding opportunity.</li><li>• All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support.</li></ul>



		responsibilities during meeting	
Race	Negative	Diversity Considerations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias).</li><li>• ESRC will ensure that, where possible, a diverse panel is recruited.</li><li>• During panel meetings, ask people to introduce themselves to check correct pronunciation of name.</li><li>• Selection criteria used will be objective, transparent and robust. We will provide guidance and remind all assessors about not bringing in personal biases and provide a panel briefing in objective decision making.</li></ul>
Religion or belief	Negative	<b>Panel and interviewees</b> Potential difficulties attending during cultural and religious holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings.</li></ul> Considerations might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scheduling meetings to avoid major religious festivals; (if impossible to avoid then consider mitigations – i.e.. during Ramadan ensuring that meetings finish early so that participants are able to get home to break their fast);</li><li>• Not scheduling meetings when they would conflict with religious attendance or observance.</li><li>• Care will be taken to ensure that key call dates do not fall on cultural and religious holidays where possible.</li></ul>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participants will be asked about any religious requirements before meetings so that appropriate venues can be selected i.e. multifaith rooms and any dietary requirements.</li></ul>
Sex	Negative	Use of language can present a barrier to participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure use of gender-neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc.</li><li>• Ensure that the panel has balanced gender representation. ESRC will, at a minimum, ensure that the panel maintains a 60:40 split in regard to gender.</li><li>• Caring responsibilities may have direct and indirect impact on sex as a protected characteristic. People with caring responsibilities (which falls disproportionately on women) may have less time to attend a panel meeting, therefore we will give panel members the opportunity to attend virtually if required.</li></ul>
Sexual orientation	None	No Impact as participants will not be asked to disclose their sexual orientation as part of this process.	

## 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	Negative	Potential difficulties attending panel or interviews due to distance or expense of travel required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESRC can ensure that panel member participation is scheduled according to travel requirements.</li> <li>• All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support.</li> </ul>
Socio-economic status	Negative	Potential financial difficulties attending panel or interviews due to distance or expense of travel required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will ensure that the meeting schedule is sent out with adequate time for participants to rearrange existing work commitments.</li> <li>• ESRC will pay travel, accommodation and subsistence costs incurred by Panel members</li> <li>• We would expect applicants to apply via their Research Organisation should extra expenses be incurred.</li> <li>• Applicants can contact ESRC directly to highlight any additional support required.</li> </ul>
Education background	Negative	Potential difficulties understanding research jargon/language if attendee is from outside of academia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that unnecessary jargon and academic language are not used as these could provide a barrier.</li> </ul>



Parent or guardian responsibilities	Negative	Potential difficulties attending panel or interviews due to parent/guardian responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ESRC can ensure that panel member participation is scheduled according to parent/guardian responsibilities.</li><li>• All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support.</li></ul>
Carer responsibilities		Potential difficulties attending panel or interviews due to caring responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ESRC can ensure that panel member participation is scheduled according to caring responsibilities.</li><li>• All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support.</li></ul>
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	None		
Other characteristics Digital Inclusion	Negative	We should avoid the assumption that everyone has equal access to technological devices or the internet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any needs that will need additional support.</li><li>• If relevant, we will provide alternative formats for information and/or make provisions for people to access information. We will ask participants about how they would prefer to access information and what tools they have access to.</li><li>• Applicants and panel members should ask for assistance from their research organisations when experiencing digital difficulties.</li></ul>

## 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) **Adapt or change the activity in a way which will eliminate negative impact or promote equality**

**The mitigations outlined enable to opportunity to be adapted to eliminate potential bias.**

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

## Review and sign off

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

- EDI will be considered as part of the review following the funding process, with lessons learned considered for future funding opportunities.
- Progress will be monitored through regular reporting and meetings with funder
- Evaluation and objectives will be agreed as part of the commissioning process

## Contact

Joanna Lake – [joanna.lake@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:joanna.lake@esrc.ukri.org)



Elaine Davis – [elaine.davis@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:elaine.davis@esrc.ukri.org)

Vicky Dunstan – [vicky.dunstan@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:vicky.dunstan@esrc.ukri.org)

## Will the EIA be published?

Yes

## Who has this been signed off by?

Lucy Thorne – Deputy Director for Research Talent, Research Talent Development

## 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](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
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		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?