



UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form

About your activity

Title of your activity

Focal award: EPSRC and MHCLG Fire Engineering Skills Hub

Council or business area

EPSRC Talent & Skills and Engineering Teams

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.

Funding for a skills hub to deliver high quality, cohort-based doctoral training and design of high-quality postgraduate level taught programmes in Fire Engineering.

Aim

In response to the Grenfell Tower Enquiry findings the UK Government established the Fire Engineers Advisory Panel to produce the [Authoritative Statement](#) of the knowledge and skills expected of a competent fire engineer. The implementation of the panel's Authoritative statement is detailed in the [Next steps on fire engineering profession reform](#).

Through this funding opportunity the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) aims to strengthen the UK Fire engineering profession by increasing the capacity, skill, research capability and higher education provision.

EPSRC/UKRI are one of two delivery partners secured by MHCLG to deliver Fire Engineering skills development and training. The funding will be distributed by each partner as detailed below.

- Royal Academy of Engineering will manage the provision of scholarships for taught Master's level, innovative routes for future recruitment and other campaigns to enhance the recognition of fire engineering as a profession and attract entrants to the profession.

- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) is leading the coordination of the allocation of funding for the development of level 7 including CPD programmes and doctoral studentships through a Skills Hub model.

A skills hub will develop the skills and capabilities of the next generation of fire engineering practitioners, researchers and innovators.

It will address the skills gaps and differing levels of training provision across the UK Fire Engineering community and adjacent professions.

It will provide leadership in research, through the funding of new doctoral studentships, and will coordinate and support the development of new and updated level 7 provision for training master's students, doctoral students and supporting the wider continuing professional development of the UK Fire Engineering community.

Who is affected?

List all affected groups, for example, staff, applicants

- Universities and research organisations eligible to lead or participate in the skills hub.
- Academic staff involved in delivery of CPD programmes and doctoral training.
- Current and prospective doctoral students.
- Fire engineering professionals seeking continuing professional development opportunities.
- Panel members and reviewers
- Professional bodies and wider stakeholders involved in fire engineering skills development.
- Underrepresented groups who may benefit from targeted EDI activities embedded within funded proposals.
- EPSRC staff involved with managing the internal processes of the funding opportunity

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

- UKRI EIA guidance
- EIAs for other UKRI funding opportunities, including those specifically for doctoral training.
- UKRI and EPSRC equality, diversity and inclusion policies and guidance.
- EPSRC's EDI Action Plan considerations, particularly related to widening participation into doctoral education.
- EPSRC diversity data: i.e. evidence highlighting underrepresentation of women and some ethnic minority groups within engineering disciplines.
- Findings from the Grenfell Tower Inquiry and subsequent government work on fire engineering profession reform.

- [Fire Engineers Advisory Panel: Authoritative Statement - GOV.UK](#)
- [Next steps on fire engineering profession reform - GOV.UK](#)
- [Government Building Workforce programme](#)
- The Royal Academy of Engineering

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.

Evidence from across the higher education sector indicates that multiple underrepresented groups face barriers with regards to accessing doctoral training. In particular, individuals who are unable to travel regularly or relocate, which can disproportionately affect disabled people, those with caring responsibilities and individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Positive impacts include the creation of new funded training opportunities, increased postgraduate provision and CPD opportunities, improved career pathways into fire engineering and mandatory requirements for award holders to embed good EDI practices into their recruitment, policies, guidance and training.

UKRI will mitigate potential barriers through our approach to evolving and upholding fairness in peer review, EDI requirements in assessment criteria and ongoing monitoring of award holder EDI plans.

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	Positive	The funding opportunity aims to attract students from more diverse career backgrounds including those that are currently in employment but looking to return to education or upskill. This is likely to improve the diversity of	We will also look to ensure diversity in the full application interview panels. Guidance will be provided to UKRI staff when suggesting panel members.

		ages of UKRI-funded doctoral students.	
Disability	Negative	Access to meeting venues for panel members and applicants could have a negative impact on participation.	Interview panels are planned to be virtual. All venues selected will be accessible and reasonable adjustments offered and made to logistics and facilitation plans to support participation (both by those being interviewed and panels). Briefing events will be held by webinar, to reduce the barriers associated with in-person meetings. For any future in-person events, information will be made available for those physically not able to attend such as a webinar or transcripts. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) requirements have been embedded in the opportunity. It will be a requirement for all funded proposals to develop an EDI plan. This will ensure that university led activities such as recruitment, flexible working and other activities promote equality and inclusive participation.
	Positive	UKRI training grant conditions offer flexibilities and funding for disabled students	
	Potential negative:	Some applicants may still face barriers navigating the Funding Service or gaining research office support.	UKRI will highlight student support available (disabled students allowance payments, disability leave etc). We will also clarify UKRI accessibility support routes; ensure guidance is clear and accessible; offer reasonable adjustments for review or panel processes where required; enable applicants to seek clarification via the Research Careers inbox. UKRI's webpages meet universal accessibility standards. If anyone needs accessibility support with TFS they can get in contact via email at: support@funding-service.ukri.org or call the UKRI Funding Service Helpline: +44 (0)1793 547 490.



Gender reassignment	None	No specific impacts have been identified. However, all funded organisations will be expected to create inclusive environments for individuals with protected characteristics, including those undergoing or who have undergone gender reassignment.	Continue to use inclusive language and ensure confidentiality in applicant data handling. EDI plans will be required from funded organisations and UKRI assessment processes will follow equality and inclusion guidance.
Marriage or civil partnership	None		
Pregnancy and maternity	Negative	Participation in the funding opportunity may be negatively affected, if potential applicants or panel members are unavailable at key assessment stages. Access to events and panels for panel members and applicants could have a negative impact on participation.	Full timeline provided of all key milestones, allowing early engagement with UKRI on specific mitigations. UKRI will do its best to accommodate adjustments, such as virtual presence or deputising. UKRI has taken into consideration the funding opportunity opening and closing dates, webinars, panels and interviews to provide additional time where these unavoidably cross school holidays. The full application opening periods have been extended beyond the standard 8 weeks to mitigate being open over school holidays All venues selected will be accessible and reasonable adjustments made to logistics and facilitation plans to support participation. Briefing events will be held by webinar, to reduce the barriers associated with in-person meetings. For any future in-person events, information will be made available for those physically not able to attend such as a webinar or transcripts. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) requirements have been

			embedded in the opportunity. It will be a requirement for all funded proposals to develop an EDI plan. This will ensure that university led activities such as recruitment, flexible working and other activities promote equality and inclusive participation. UKRI offers support available for people with caring responsibilities. Additional care requirements or facilities could be required if individuals need to: • Participate in events on what would normally be a non-working day. • Work extended hours on a normal working day. • Attend meetings with overnight stays and/or travel overseas. It is an individual's responsibility to check with UKRI and confirm what costs can be reimbursed prior to attendance at a panel or interview.
Race	Negative	Universities and other organisations vary in the diversity of their populations; organisational restrictions could have potentially negative impacts. Underrepresentation of minoritised ethnic groups in EPSRC disciplines is a known issue; applicants with overseas or international funding histories may face additional complexity navigating UKRI funding terminology in demonstrating eligibility, which may intersect with a range of applicant backgrounds.	While limited to 1 application per lead organisation, the need to apply as a consortium of organisations allows for a broad range of organisations to participate across the nations and regions. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) requirements have been embedded in the call. It will be a requirement for all funded proposals to develop an EDI plan. This will ensure that university led activities such as recruitment, flexible working and other activities promote equality and inclusive participation. Maintain clear guidance; ensure supporting information reflects a range of applicant backgrounds. Continue monitoring patterns of application and eligibility queries.



			Enable applicants to seek clarification where needed.
Religion or belief	Negative	Activities could coincide with religious holidays and festivals	The full application opening period have been extended beyond the standard 8 weeks to mitigate being open over religious holidays and festivals. A full timeline will be provided of all key milestones, allowing early engagement with UKRI on specific mitigations. UKRI will work to mitigate any conflicts that arise. EPSRC will also endeavour to accommodate adjustments for religious practices. EPSRC will have a point of contact for people who need to discuss their specific requirements/queries.
Sex	Positive	Women remain underrepresented across many engineering disciplines, including areas related to fire engineering. Increased postgraduate and doctoral training opportunities supported through EDI-focused recruitment practices may improve participation of women within the sector.	We will look to ensure diversity in the sift and interview panels as per EPSRC's mixed gender panel policy. Guidance will be provided to UKRI staff when suggesting panel members. Panel guidance documents have been updated to reduce the potential of unconscious bias.
Sexual orientation	None		

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	Potentially negative or positive	Students can only be based at organisations that are part of a successful consortia, limiting the number of opportunities to specific locations. The organisational eligibility and demand management policies allow a wider range of organisations than standard to submit to the opportunity, allowing a broad range of organisations to participate.	
Socio-economic status	Potentially positive or negative	Positive: The provision of funded studentships, enhanced stipends and opportunities for career transition into the profession may reduce financial barriers that can prevent participation in postgraduate study and training. Negative: Evidence indicates that students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face more barriers with regards to accessing postgraduate education.	Provision of funded studentships, explicit encouragement to attract students from more diverse career paths and ability to provide enhanced stipends, all have the potential to attract students from lower income backgrounds. EDI requirements have been embedded within the funding opportunity and align with EPSRC's EDI Action Plan on widening participation in doctoral training. Award holders will be expected to take proactive steps to address this, including attracting and supporting students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, helping to reduce financial, cultural and informational barriers to participation.
Education background	Positive	The opportunity encourages recruitment from diverse educational and career pathways into fire	Provision of funded studentships, explicit encouragement to attract students from more diverse career paths and ability to provide



		engineering and is not solely focused on traditional academic routes.	enhanced stipends, all have the potential to attract students from more diverse education backgrounds
Parent or guardian responsibilities	Potentially negative	Participation in the funding opportunity may be negatively affected, if potential applicants or panel members are unavailable at key assessment stages. Access to events, interviews and panels for both panel members and applicants could have a negative impact on participation.	Full timeline provided of all key milestones, allowing early engagement with UKRI on specific mitigations. UKRI will do its best to accommodate adjustments, such as virtual presence or deputising. UKRI has taken into consideration the funding opportunity opening and closing dates, webinars, panels and interviews to provide additional time where these unavoidably cross school holidays. The full application opening period has been extended beyond the standard 8 weeks to mitigate being open over school holidays All venues selected will be accessible and reasonable adjustments made to logistics and facilitation plans to support participation. Briefing events will be held by webinar, to reduce the barriers associated with in-person meetings. For any future in-person events, information will be made available for those physically not able to attend such as a webinar or transcripts. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) requirements have been embedded in the opportunity. It will be a requirement for all funded proposals to develop an EDI plan. This will ensure that university led activities such as recruitment, flexible working and other activities promote equality and inclusive participation.

			EPSRC offers support available for people with caring responsibilities. Additional care requirements or facilities could be required if individuals need to: • Participate in events on what would normally be a non-working day. • Work extended hours on a normal working day. • Attend meetings with overnight stays and/or travel overseas. It is an individual's responsibility to check with UKRI and confirm what costs can be reimbursed prior to attendance at a panel or interview.
Carer responsibilities	Potentially negative	Individuals with caring responsibilities may face challenges participating in interviews, meetings, networking activities and training opportunities due to competing care commitments.	As described for parent and guardian responsibilities.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	None		
Other characteristics	None		

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

Number 2 - The EIA has identified a number of potential barriers relating to disability, pregnancy and maternity, caring responsibilities, geographical location and representation within the fire engineering profession. Measures have been incorporated into the funding opportunity design, assessment process and award requirements to mitigate these impacts and promote equality of opportunity. No disproportionate adverse impacts have been identified that would prevent the activity proceeding.

Review and sign off

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

For example, by planning regular reviews of the EIA, consulting with affected groups

Impact will be monitored through:

- Assessment of EDI plans submitted by applicants.
- Monitoring diversity of panel membership.
- Collection and review of applicant and award-holder diversity data where available.
- Monitoring participation across doctoral studentships, taught provision and CPD activities delivered by the award holders.
- Feedback gathered through applicant surveys, stakeholder engagement and award monitoring activities.
- Annual review of the Skills Hub's progress against EDI commitments.

Contact

Alex Seweryn alexander.seweryn@epsrc.ukri.org

Sarah King sarah.king@epsrc.ukri.org

Will the EIA be published?

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

Yes. The EIA will be published alongside the funding opportunity documentation in accordance with UKRI practice.

Who has this been signed off by?

Include the name, date and job title

Rachel Rothwell, Senior Portfolio Manager, EPSRC Talent and Skills team,

13/08/2026

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
Sarah King	3 August 2026	1	Draft document
Rachel Rothwell	13 August 2026	2	Updates made to initial draft ready for sign off
Sarah King	14 August	3	Inclusion matters comments incorporated.

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?



Review web content and supporting guidance.	Before launch	EPSRC Talent and Skills team and UKRI web team.	Checking the final opportunity documentation before publishing.	Ensures assessment criteria and guidance is clear and accessible to all applicants.
Ensure diverse interview and assessment panels.	Assessment stage	EPSRC panel convener(s)	Review of diversity during panel selection.	Fairer assessment processes, including reduced risk of bias
Require successful applicants to produce and maintain an EDI plan.	Before the award start date	Award holder(s)	Part of the assessment process and monitoring.	EDI is embedded into each award.
Review diversity data of applicants, as part of UKRI annual diversity data monitoring.	Annually	UKRI and EPSRC's data team	UKRI diversity data collection through the funding service.	Identification of representation gaps
Review data on training grant delivery as part of UKRI Annual Monitoring	Annually	UKRI and EPSRC's data team	Review by EPSRC Talent and Skills team of data provided.	Identification of gaps in meeting the standard Training Grant Terms and conditions.