UK Research and Innovation

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Equality Impact Assessment Form

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Overview of activity

	Response
Name of activity being assessed	International Placement Scheme (IPS)
Council/department/project team	AHRC, International Partnerships and Engagement,
Aims and objectives of the activity	The AHRC International Placement Scheme (IPS) aims to give early career researchers and AHRC-funded doctoral students dedicated access to internationally renowned collections, programmes, and specialist expertise at leading global institutions. Its objectives include enhancing the depth, range, and quality of participants' research, supporting work on underrepresented cultures and histories, and creating valuable opportunities for international networking and career development. Through immersive, two-to-five-months placements, the scheme helps scholars build meaningful global connections and pursue resources unavailable in UK institutions, strengthening both individual research projects and long-term international collaboration. The aspects of IPS that need to be covered by the EIA are: • Eligibility criteria and access • Application process and guidance • Availability and accessibility of host institutions • Financial support and any hidden costs • Support for international mobility • Communication and outreach • Monitoring, outcomes, and data collection
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	Prospective applicants, current and prospective IPS host institutions, awardees
What data and consultation have you used?	The EIA, call guidance, assessment guidance and other key aspects of the funding opportunity will be reviewed on an annual basis following feedback from hosts and applicants. With new hosts on board, AHRC plans to conduct a lessons learnt exercise following the delivery of each round, where host feedback is integrated to refine the process for the following call. The data that was used related to the equality impact of IPS include: • AHRC IPS data from The Funding Service (TFS)

	• IPS survey results and feedback from networks or people who share a protected characteristic • Previous consultations, outcomes or lessons learned from similar projects

Analysing your impact

In addition to data gathering and consultation, the guidance materials should be used to assist in identifying impacts on different groups.

Protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown	Negative impact	Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.
Age	☐	☐	Years post-PhD may be a perceived barrier and negative impact for Early career researchers (ECR).	ECR eligibility criteria have been reviewed to ensure it promotes EDI principles, in line with UKRI ECR eligibility.
Disability	☐	☒	Disability might be a negative impact due to not all facilities and resources being accessible in host institutions.	IPS hosts should clearly indicate accessible facilitation, resources, support and any dedicated accessibility contact. We have embedded this question into our new partner assessment process.
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	☐	☐	Gender might be a negative characteristic in countries with policy preventing transindividual or gender diverse individuals to visit, leading to visa bans.	Call document reflects position on support for these individuals. Engagement with UKRI Overseas offices, British Embassies and host partners to ensure visa process is supported for these individuals.

Marriage or civil partnership	☐	☐	Marriage or civil partnership is not captured in application.	
Pregnancy and maternity	☐	☒	Pregnancy and maternity might be a negative impact due to the placement takes place overseas for two to five months.	Support for those with caring responsibilities can be applied by applicants, placement duration, start and end dates are flexible, provided with sound reasons. The call document clearly highlights the resources available at UKRI.
Race	☐	☐	Race might be a negative characteristic in countries with policy preventing individuals with specific heritage to visit, leading to visa bans.	Call document reflects position on support for these individuals. Engagement with UKRI Overseas offices, British Embassies, and host partners to ensure visa process is supported for these individuals.
Religion or belief	☐	☐	Religion or belief is not captured in application.	
Sexual orientation	☐	☐	Sexual orientation is not captured in application.	
Sex	☐	☐	Sex is not captured in application.	

Additional characteristics

Additional characteristics	**Positive impact or opportunity to benefit** **Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown**	**Negative impact**	**Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used**	**Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible).**
Geographical location and place (consider UK	☒	☐	There is under-representation of researchers based outside of London universities in the applications submitted to this programme. IPS	IPS will be promoted through various channel to maximise and diversify reach e.g. CDP and DTP newsletters. Various IPS

and international offices)			encourages application throughout the UK. IPS hosts are currently located in the UK, Japan and China, with expansion plans to Global South and Europe.	webinars will take place to provide a platform for US, Asia, Europe and Africa hosts to present.
Socio-economic status	☐	☐	High cost cities such as Washington D.C. might prevent applicants of lower socio-economic status to apply due to stipend not adequately covering living costs.	Since IPS 2026, stipend was increased from £1925 to £2,500 to reflect a more accurate cost of living. From IPS 2027 onwards, stipends will be based on a location principle to real location-specific cost of living to minimise applicants' financial barriers. Hosts in these countries have been engaged in the process of defining new stipend levels.
Education background	☐	☐	IPS open application to PhD candidates to early career researchers (ECRs).	
Parent/guardian responsibilities	☐	☒	Parents/ guardian responsibilities might be a negative impact due to the placement takes place overseas for two to six months.	UKRI caring support can be applied by applicants, placement duration, start and end dates are flexible, provided with sound reasons.
Carer/parent carer responsibilities	☐	☒	Carer responsibilities might be a negative impact due to the placement takes place overseas for two to six months.	A caring fund can be applied by applicants, placement duration, start and end dates are flexible, provided with sound reasons.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	☐	☐	Political opinion is not captured in application.	
Other characteristics	☐	☒	Nationality might have a negative impact on securing a Visa.	Engage closely with in-country UKRI offices, British Embassies and host institutions on Visa advice (especially for reciprocal pilot and note awareness of APPG-Report-on-Visa-problems-for-African-visitors-to-the-UK_v1.58web.pdf)

Are there **general or overarching impacts on multiple groups**? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?	There is a general risk of unintentional disadvantage or unconscious bias affecting applicants and award holders across multiple groups. While this risk cannot be fully removed from any funding process, IPS has been designed to minimise inequitable impacts through a set of proactive measures embedded across the application, assessment and delivery stages. Another general risk is around war/visa regime/inflation, and in-country safety risks where protected characteristics might be at higher risks. We will ensure to continue monitoring the global situation and liaise effectively with UKRI overseas offices, British Embassies and host partners to ensure the smooth delivery of visa and safety of our grantees. **Application stage** IPS timelines have been designed to be as inclusive as possible, with a pre-announcement and a long call-open period (from November to March including winter break) to support applicants with caring responsibilities, health conditions or other constraints. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Funding Service for reasonable adjustments, and we signpost clearly to UKRI grant terms and conditions, which allow for leave, extensions and flexible working. Eligibility remains inclusive, valuing both academic qualifications and equivalent research experience to ensure diverse career paths can be included. We also conduct webinars to enable direct interactions with host partners. Webinars can present as negative barriers for disabled people, as well as those with parental or caring responsibilities. This is mitigated by turning on captions and share webinar recordings on the funding finder page. FAQ sheet, host institution guidelines, checklists will also be shared on the funding finder page. **Assessment stage** No personal or protected characteristic data is shared with assessors unless an applicant chooses to disclose it in their case for support. All host reviewers receive guidance on EDI and unconscious bias. Assessment processes adhere to UKRI principles of assessment and decision making – UKRI to ensure transparency, fairness and consistency. **Delivery stage**

	IPS award holders are expected to conduct research within inclusive environments aligned with the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and UKRI policy on the governance of good research practice (GRP) . Where relevant, applicants are asked to demonstrate how they will embed inclusive research culture and EDI considerations in project delivery. All award holders have access to UKRI's Good Research Resource Hub and are supported through standard UKRI policies on leave, extensions and research environment expectations.

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Evaluation

Final Decision:	Select the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will **proceed**.	☐	
2. **Adapt or change** the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality.	☒	Please see table above for actions being taken to ensure that funding opportunity is delivered equitably.
3. **Stop** the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.	☐	
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the activity (e.g. in **extreme cases** or where **positive action** is taken). Therefore, you are going to **proceed with caution** with this activity knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	☐	

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Review and sign off

What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?	Monitoring and review of this activity will take place throughout the full IPS life cycle. In addition to standard UKRI grant-monitoring systems (e.g., ResearchFish), the AHRC IPS delivery team will aim to meet on a fortnightly basis to review progress, discuss risks, and plan next steps. Considerations around equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are embedded as a standing agenda item within these meetings to ensure ongoing reflection on the impacts identified in the EIA. To maintain the EIA as a live document, we will: - Schedule regular internal reviews of the EIA and associated action plan at key points, including programme set-up, mid-point review, and at closure. - Capture and monitor applicant and award-holder demographics (where permissible and in line with UKRI data governance) to identify trends, monitor participation, and understand whether barriers persist for under-represented groups. - Maintain transparent engagement with delivery partners and participating institutions, using feedback channels such as emails, check-ins, and cohort meetings to gather insights on how any EDI impacts are being experienced in practice. - Use new insights to update the EIA, ensuring that actions remain relevant, proportionate and reflective of the lived experience of stakeholders. - Embed EDI considerations in IPS governance structures, including escalation of emerging issues to relevant AHRC governance groups where necessary. - Review the EIA as part of formal lessons-learned activity at programme close, ensuring recommendations are captured for future IPS rounds and wider AHRC practice. This approach ensures that the EIA is continually monitored, responsive to feedback, and integrated into decision-making throughout the lifespan of IPS.
Next review date:	*18/03/2027*

Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required	Yes
Point of contact	Eva Islimye, Senior International Partnership and Engagement Manager, International Partnership and Engagement Team, AHRC
Signed off by (name and date):	J Davies 10/04/206 International Partnerships and Engagement (Team Head)
Before publishing or archiving your EIA, please remove any sensitive or confidential information such as personal identifiable data. **Once your EIA is completed or updated:** **1. Upload it to the UKRI central repository via the EIA submission form** **EIAs for ODA and non-ODA ISPF programmes should be emailed to: ISPF@ukri.org**	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
ZuZu Walker	11/09/2026		References to ESRC removed as no longer part of the IPS.

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Action plan

Action	Deadline	Owner	Status	How will it be monitored?	What is/will be the impact/outcome?
Increase stipend	November 2025	Programme manager	Stipend levels increased from £1,925 (IPS 2025) to £2,500. We continue to review these levels and will suggest a place-based approach for the next round of IPS.	Track application and award uptake rates across protected characteristic groups (using available UKRI applicant data)	Reduces disproportionate financial impacts on applicants from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Makes overseas placements more accessible for disabled applicants or those with additional financial needs (e.g., medical costs, accessibility equipment). Expected to widen participation and increase diversity in the applicant pool and awardees.
Expand geographical scope to include Global South and Europe	September 2026	Programme manager	ECDG paper with expansion plans to go to board for approval in April	Successful onboarding of new hosts in Kenya, South Africa, Germany, HK and Egypt	Likely increase attractiveness of the scheme, diversifying offering.
Implement additional caring support	November 2025	Programme manager	IPS 2026 funding funder page text was rephrased to clearly highlight the support.	Collect data on the number and profile of applicants requesting caring support. Track usage patterns and whether the fund meets actual costs (via participant feedback). Monitor whether applicants with caring responsibilities are applying and accepting placements at higher rates.	Removes a key barrier to participation for applicants with childcare or other types of caring responsibilities. Encourages a more inclusive applicant pool by supporting those who otherwise could not undertake extended international mobility.

Organise webinars to accommodate current US and Asia hosts and new hosts in Africa and Europe	January 2026	Programme manager	IPS 2026 delivered 2 webinars to increase participation of hosts located in different time zones.	Track participation numbers, attendance by region/time zone, and protected characteristics where available. Monitor whether applicants indicate that the webinars improved their understanding or confidence in applying. Collect accessibility feedback (e.g., captioning quality, pace, clarity, Q&A usefulness).	Increases accessibility for applicants in different time zones and with different working/personal schedules. Reduces disadvantage for applicants with caring responsibilities, disabilities, or chronic health conditions that affect availability. More diverse applicant engagement with IPS hosts and clearer understanding of accessibility support overseas.
Engage with UKRI in-country offices (US, China)	November 2025, on-going	Programme manager	The impact of US government shutdown was efficiently mitigated by liaising with the UKRI NA office, ensuring all scholars had support and organised informal coffee catchups for those in country.	Log engagement activities and outcomes. Monitor improvements in pre-departure guidance quality and applicant confidence. Track whether escalation cases decrease or are resolved more efficiently through local support.	Enhanced safeguarding, cultural awareness, and accessibility information for applicants. Strengthened institutional relationships improves long-term equality considerations in host partnerships.
Host institutions assessment review on accessibility and support	January 2026	Programme manager	A comprehensive host assessment questionnaire now understands how hosts enable greater EDI processes at their own institutions.	Host review documenting each host's accessibility provisions, building access, digital access, reasonable adjustments, and support services. Track issues raised by IPS participants (if any) and	Clearer understanding of accessibility differences across institutions, enabling informed applicant decision-making. Identifies risks and mitigations early, improving

				confirm whether hosts have addressed them.	disabled applicants' experience and safety.
Prospective host institution assessment on accessibility and support	January 2026, on-going	Programme manager		Implement a standard pre-assessment template for potential hosts, capturing accessibility, safeguarding, and support capabilities. Maintain a record of approved/rejected hosts with rationale. Monitor feedback from first cohorts placed at newly approved hosts.	Ensures new host partners meet minimum equality and accessibility expectations before onboarding. Reduces risk of discriminatory environments or unmet access needs. Expands the global network while maintaining consistent inclusion standards.
Develop accessible guideline and checklists with host institutions	January 2026	Programme manager	Pre-departure guidelines will be shared ahead of IPS 2026.	Evaluate clarity and accessibility through applicant's feedback. Update guidelines annually or bi-annually based on feedback and institutional changes.	Ensures applicants have clear, consistent information on accessibility, support, and expectations across all hosts. Reduces uncertainty and anxiety, particularly for disabled applicants, first-time international travellers, and those with protected characteristics. Supports equitable preparation for all awardees, leading to improved placement experiences and decreased barriers.
Review ECR eligibility criteria to ensure greater EDI	January 2026	Programme manager		Track application and award uptake rates across ECR to compare with previous years (using available UKRI applicant data)	Expected to widen participation and increase diversity in the applicant pool and awardees.