



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	EPSRC Fellowships
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	The EPSRC Fellowship aims to provide greater support to aspiring and current world-leading individuals who are delivering the highest quality research to meet UK and global priorities. Fellowship researchers with the greatest potential across the postdoctoral, early and established career stages. The Fellowship is a personal award which enables applicant to design a flexible package to facilitate delivery of a novel and outstanding piece of world-leading research. Fellowships also support training for the duration of the award to enable them to develop research leadership skills, raise the profile of STEM and EPSRC and gain the experience required to enable them to advance their career.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	BIT, portfolio managers and others through XBIRT, panel members through panel feedback questionnaires, and regular consultation with Strategic Advisory Teams/Networks.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Applicants, reviewers, panel members, ROs
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	Feedback is sought from those involved in the process and policies are considered in light of feedback received.

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. The Research Councils have together developed the ambitious [RCUK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) to outline our collective aspirations for working with the research community, and partners throughout the sector. For policy changes, funding activities and events EPSRC will aim to:

- Select venues that are accessible and where possible accommodate any specific requirement in our planning and organisation of an initiative to support wider participation. This includes for applicants, reviewers, panel members and staff. Included in the interview invitation letter is a request for any access issues to be notified.
- All participants in the process are asked to inform staff if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation.

- Offer support for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#).
- Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities, advertise these widely to reach the largest possible audience.
- Support and encourage panel members to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions. Staff will work closely with the Panel Chair(s) to agree approaches that are designed to minimize opportunities for bias and improve transparency of the decision making process. This includes managing environmental conditions, such as providing appropriate breaks.
- Support flexible working of stakeholders.
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels. Staff will adhere to a mixed panel policy and endeavor to achieve the minimum 30% for the underrepresented gender on the panel.
- Abide by the principles of peer review
- Provide EPSRC staff with tailored unconscious bias training for Peer Review processes and clear guidance for assessors.
- Handle personal sensitive information in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability	Potential negative	The fellowship assessment process involves an interview which may lead to challenges in accessibility and increases the risk of unconscious bias.	Adjustments are made to enable attendance to interviews, if held externally to Polaris house an accessible venue will be used. Virtual interviews will also be offered where required, when held virtually transcripts can be enabled if required. Unconscious bias briefings are given to panel members at multiple stages in interview process and included in the panel documentation.
Gender reassignment	No known negative impact		
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential negative	The process requires interview attendance	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.
Race	No known negative impact		
Religion or belief	Potential negative	Panel and interviews are held during fixed periods throughout the year.	Ensure religious observances are considered when meeting dates are chosen, and where possible that there is a prayer room available. Virtual interviews will also be offered where required.
Sexual orientation	No known negative impact		
Sex (gender)	No known negative impact		
Age	No known negative impact		
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	Caring responsibilities	May impact attendance to interviews and panels	Panel dates are published in advance and costs for carrying responsibilities beyond normal carrying responsibilities can be covered by EPSRC. Virtual interviews will also be offered where required.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Yes, due to the interview there is potential that issues around unconscious bias may be higher when compared with other funding opportunities. All panels are briefed on unconscious bias and the situations in which bias can become more prevalent, this is especially focused on at interview.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .	Y	Adjustments can be made to take into account of the potential negative impact on protected characteristics with disability, maternity and special religion. Ensure religious observances are taken into account when meeting dates are chosen, and where possible that there is a prayer room available. Virtual interviews will also be offered where required.
2. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.		

Will this EIA be published* Yes/Not required (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	Yes
Date completed:	17/06/2020
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
George Adams	When published	1	