

STFC Industrial CASE Equality Impact Assessment 2021

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	STFC Industrial CASE Studentships (iCASE)
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>The STFC Industrial CASE studentship competition provides support for PhD students to work in collaboration with a non-academic partner on projects that fall within the STFC core science programme or that aim to apply technologies or techniques developed within the programme into other areas. Projects involve joint supervision of the student by a member of staff at an academic Research Organisation or related institution and an employee of a non-academic organisation, such as a UK industrial firm, public sector organisation or charity (the non-academic partner). Assessment relates to the training environments of both the academic and non-academic partners and the collaboration between the two organisations rather than assessing individuals. It is the responsibility of the collaborating organisations to recruit a suitable student if an award is made.</p> <p>Proposals are assessed by the Industrial CASE Panel. There is no reviewer process or face to face Panel meeting; however, a teleconference/videoconference is held to discuss and rank proposals. STFC makes funding decisions based upon recommendations from the panel.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this	The Education, Training and Careers Committee (ETCC) advises on the policy related to iCASE and annually reviews the scheme and its processes after each round has completed

policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)

based on feedback from the iCASE panel. In 16/17 the whole assessment process was amended (criteria, scoring etc) to make things easier for the panel members.

In 2016 ETCC also introduced a process to accredit University Departments for their suitability to hold training grants based on a number of criteria. This has taken place twice, 2016 and 2018.

This EIA has been reviewed by a member of STFC's Equality and Diversity policy group.

STFC is dedicated to ensuring that our processes for funding are open and inclusive. Individuals engaged with our funding processes endeavour to conduct each stage in a fair manner, without prejudice or bias. In line with this, STFC adheres to the seven principles of public life. In addition, we adopt the following principles for iCASE awards:

For applicants:

- The annual call for Industrial CASE studentships is advertised on the UKRI website
- The call text and guidance clearly states the eligibility and assessment criteria
- The STFC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites, including the ability to adjust the text size or use a text reader on the page
- STFC will provide support to applicants before and after submission in order to assist them in the application and assessment process

	<p>For Panel Members:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STFC staff will work with the Panel Chair to agree approaches that are designed to minimise opportunities for bias and improve the transparency of decision-making • STFC enable participation for people with alternative work patterns, including reduced working hours • STFC endeavour to achieve the minimum 30% female participation and will justify if this isn't the case. • Panel members are asked to inform STFC if they have any additional needs to enable participation at the teleconference • STFC will provide appropriate breaks if required <p>For STFC staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All STFC staff involved in the process will receive training in unconscious bias to raise awareness of conditions that may impact upon their decision making.
<p>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>Applicants who apply for an STFC Industrial CASE award, or anyone involved in the assessment process.</p>
<p>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</p>	<p>STFC will review this equality impact assessment annually to identify any further actions or interventions that are required to improve the process.</p>

	<p>STFC monitors, analyses and publishes data to better understand the diversity of our applicant and assessor community.</p> <p>STFC recognises the need to increase the diversity of its panel membership and takes a pro- active approach to meeting this requirement.</p>
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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	Negative	<p>Applicants and/or panel members with visual disabilities or impairments may find it difficult to access and review electronic documentation.</p> <p>Panel members with hearing disabilities may face difficulties in engaging in discussions.</p>	<p>STFC takes all necessary steps to ensure that electronic information is accessible. STFC will respond to individual support needs on a case-by-case basis.</p> <p>STFC will take all reasonable steps to make adjustments to enable participation in virtual meetings. This can include, for example, use of screen readers, closed captioning, automatic transcripts and keyboard accessibility. STFC will work with individuals to understand what help can be provided. This could entail turning on the transcript facility on Zoom so the panel member can see and follow the conversation.</p>

			There is flexibility to make adjustments throughout the assessment process where appropriate.
Gender reassignment¹	Neutral	Assessment is not based on an individual/applicant as criteria is based around the training environment and collaboration.	
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral	Assessment is not based on an individual/applicant as criteria is based around the training environment and collaboration.	
Pregnancy and maternity	Negative	Panel members who are pregnant or on maternity leave may find it difficult to participate in the teleconference or require changes to be made to enable their participation	Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the teleconference.

		Nursing mothers may need additional support in terms of childcare.	<p>STFC staff presence at the teleconference acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p> <p>STFC will liaise with panel members to identify and address barriers that may prevent their participation in the process.</p> <p>As this is a teleconference or videoconference and in their own institution or home, nursing mothers should have less of a problem as they have more flexibility and know the facilities available to them. Meetings are only a couple of hours in duration and no travel is required.</p>
Race	Neutral	Assessment is not based on an individual/applicant as criteria is based around the training environment and collaboration.	
Religion or belief	Negative	Panel members may be unable to participate in the teleconference due to religious observances.	Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the teleconference.

			<p>STFC staff presence at the teleconference/videoconference acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p> <p>Consideration would be given to the timing of the teleconference/videoconference so that panel members from different religious communities can participate.</p>
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Assessment is not based on an individual/applicant as criteria is based around the training environment and collaboration.	
Sex (gender)²	Negative	Panel members with caring responsibilities may face difficulties in participating in the teleconference/videoconference.	<p>Panel members are required to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are reminded of the conditions that may lead to unconscious bias during the teleconference/videoconference.</p> <p>STFC staff presence at the teleconference/videoconference acts as an additional assurance to ensure unbiased peer review.</p> <p>Whenever possible, the teleconference/videoconference will be scheduled to avoid school holidays. The</p>

			meeting is scheduled for three hours and a Doodle Poll is carried out to identify the best date/time for members to attend.
Age	Neutral	Assessment is not based on an individual/applicant as criteria is based around the training environment and collaboration.	

[1] A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex. **Gender reassignment also includes a person who identifies as non-binary or gender fluid.**

[2] Although the definitions of the Equality Act 2010 are set out as per above comment, at UK Research and Innovation we recognise all gender identities and sexualities including asexual and intersex people. The definition of gender reassignment was extended in September 2020 to include people who identify as non-binary or gender fluid – recognising that gender is a spectrum.