

EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
<p>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</p>	<p>EPSRC DTP Doctoral Mobility Pilot 2020-2021</p>
<p>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</p>	<p>The DTP Doctoral Mobility Pilot 2020-2021 is aligned to the Doctoral Training Partnership 2020-2021 and is a pilot aiming to widen participation in EPSRC’s doctoral training, specifically to facilitate the movement of people from industry and other non-academic backgrounds into doctoral training. We are particularly seeking proposals that could achieve this in areas where there are known barriers.</p> <p>This pilot is motivated by the government ambition to increase UK investment in research and innovation towards 2.4% of GDP and the accompanying challenges to substantially increase the number of people in the UK working at the forefront of research and innovation. The pilot aims to address this by exploring how to increase mobility across the business and academic sectors and enhance the research skills of individuals from industry and other non-academic backgrounds.</p> <p>The long-term aims for supporting mobility are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support people coming from non-academic backgrounds to undertake doctoral training; • Support reskilling or upskilling of people from a non-academic background; • Address key skills shortages in areas of national importance. <p>The aims of the DTP Doctoral Mobility 2020-2021 pilot are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test new approaches to attracting and supporting doctoral students from non-academic backgrounds; • Support diverse approaches within and across the funded pilot projects. <p>This pilot contributes to meeting the near-term action from our 2019 Delivery Plan to aid rapid expansion in doctoral student numbers and greater industry engagement by investing £180 million in the DTP for students starting in 2020 and 2021. We also hope that the evaluation of this pilot will provide key insights into successful approaches for enabling people with a non-academic background to undertake doctoral training, feeding into our long-term aspirations that those we support are able to move seamlessly across research and</p>

	business sectors and have an excellent appreciation of the context in which research and innovation operate.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? <i>(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Leadership Team leading the call. • Business case for the pilot discussed and agreed by EPSRC Executive Leadership Team (April 2019). • EPSRC Peer Review Team and UKRI Grants team consulted throughout call planning process. • Finance consulted on budget and profiling. • Daphne Jackson Trust – meeting to learn from their fellowship scheme • Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 - teleconference to learn from their Industrial Fellowships scheme. • Discussions with a subset of EPSRC SAN members.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Universities (includes those funded and not funded) Students Project partners EPSRC staff
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	Individual student monitoring will be done through Je-S Student Details Portal reporting. Successful applicants will be expected to develop and execute a strategy for evaluation as well as meeting EPSRC's requirements. These are likely to include 6-monthly informal check-ins with EPSRC staff, annual reports, and workshops for best practice sharing. We would also like the students to input into the evaluation. (The full framework is still under development).

As a funder of research, EPSRC remain 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.
- Offer support available for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#)
- Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities
- Ensure attendees have an opportunity to raise any specific requirements in advance e.g. cover letter and joining instructions
- Support for flexible working of stakeholders
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels
- Abide by the Principles of peer review
- Unconscious Bias training for EPSRC staff 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 impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to panel meeting could be a barrier to participation of prospective panel members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All venues selected will be accessible and reasonable adjustments made to logistics and facilitation plans to support participation.
	Potential positive impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DTP grants include Disabled Students Allowance provision to help universities make reasonable adjustments and provide students with the support they need. Pastoral support for students, including support for mental health issues is included in the statement of intent questionnaire and assessment. 	
Gender reassignment	No known negative impact		
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential positive impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UKRI harmonised training grant T&Cs include provision for student maternity and shared parental leave. 	
	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pregnancy/maternity could be a barrier for panel members to attend the meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All venues selected will be accessible and reasonable adjustments made to logistics and facilitation plans to support participation. Support is available for those with caring responsibilities. https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basic/caringresponsibilities/

Race	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student eligibility rules could indirectly lead to discrimination on the basis of nationality. 	Student eligibility rules will be clearly communicated in T&Cs and the 10% open eligibility flexibility allows the very best students to be recruited, regardless of their eligibility status.
Religion or belief	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If call activities coincide with religious holidays. 	Deadlines have been planned to avoid major religious holidays, as far as possible. However, the process will run over the Christmas period; we expect to provide questions for clarification to ROs approximately coinciding with Christmas, with a deadline for responses in January. In order to reduce the impact, additional time to respond will be provided (at least 8 working days rather than 5) to ensure that applicants do not need to work over the Christmas period.
Sexual orientation	No known negative impact		
Sex (gender)	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel member selection needs to avoid underrepresentation of either gender. 	Panel members will be selected to ensure diversity. Assessment criteria language has been reviewed to ensure it is gender neutral.
Age	Potential negative impact & potential positive impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As the scheme targets students from a non-academic background, very young prospective students could be indirectly excluded if they are not old enough to have entered a non-academic sector after their degree. The scheme aims to widen participation for students from non-academic backgrounds, who are likely to be older on average than those coming straight from a degree. 	The scheme does not have any age-related eligibility criteria; students of any age with the same background will be treated equally. Young students coming straight from a degree are eligible and strongly represented in all other EPSRC training routes whereas students from non-academic backgrounds may face barriers in existing routes. This scheme aims to address those barriers and widen participation so the risk of a negative impact is judged as extremely low and the pilot much more likely to have a positive impact in improving access for mature students.

Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	Potential positive aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pilot aims to improve access and support for doctoral training for students from non-academic backgrounds. This could be beneficial for many different types of people: students returning from a career break, employees in: industry, the third sector, education, policy etc. The grant holder for the pilot may be different to the grant holder for the core DTP. This is to ensure that the appropriate person may be chosen for each role and to avoid placing an unmanageable workload on any single member of staff. 	<p>Applicants will be required to carefully consider the different types of student who could be supported through the pilot and design bespoke support to address their individual needs.</p> <p>Applicants have particularly been asked to consider offering students flexible/alternative working patterns, if appropriate, to fit their needs.</p> <p>This flexibility has been made clear in the pilot documentation.</p>
	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The panel meeting will take place during the school/university summer holidays. As only a small number of projects will be funded, there is a possibility that some prospective students could be disadvantaged because they do not live close to a funded university. 	<p>A full timeline will be provided of all key milestones, allowing early engagement with EPSRC on specific mitigations. EPSRC will do its best to accommodate adjustments, including support for those with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>As this is a pilot, the projects will be monitored and evaluated to see if local successes could be expanded nationally to improve access for all.</p>

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Venues and timelines have been considered carefully to ensure events are accessible and due concern has been given to participants' work/life balance. The pilot aims to bring people into doctoral training who may face barriers through existing routes. The	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .		
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	X	The application process will run over Christmas – deadlines have been extended so that applicants don't have to work over the holiday.
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. The call document will not be available on EPSRC's website, as it is only open to invited universities. The published EIA will therefore be accessible through the DTP webpage: https://epsrc.ukri.org/skills/students/dta/
Date completed:	25 June 2019
Review date (if applicable):	February 2020 (to identify any particular issues arising from the funded projects or plans for evaluation)

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
L Totterdell	25 June 2019	1	Document created.