

Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	DigitalFootprints Strategic Advice Team
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	Call to recruit a strategic advice team for DigitalFootprints. *please see person specification documents for further information if required.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	A consultation has been undertaken with the community to support the development of DigitalFootprints. Meetings with the DF advisory groups.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	The DF team will be positively affected by the recruitment to these posts as it will give an academic viewpoint and help to ensure that the projects and delivering against their timelines and meeting the strategic and research needs of the wider ESRC community.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	Review of progress, the publication of papers and personal research, regular meetings and presentations.

GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

ESRC's research commissioning processes are designed with fairness in mind.

Eligibility and criteria

We are seeking to appoint a team, led by a principal investigator based at an eligible UK research organisation. That organisation will be responsible for submitting the grant application to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI).

- Eligible organisations include:
- UK higher education institutions
- research council institutes
- UKRI-approved independent research organisations.

The team must be social science-led and reflect a broad range of experience and expertise. The principal investigator for the grant must allocate a minimum of 0.2 full-time equivalent.

At minimum, the team must include someone of international standing and experience but, may also include early and mid-career researchers.

Standard Grant Terms and Conditions:

- UKRI standard Grant Terms and Conditions comply with UK equality legislation and include provisions designed to mitigate against potential negative impacts (e.g. sick pay, parental and adoption leave, the possibility of part-time and flexible working, and grant extensions).
- Research Organisations are subject to equality legislation and have a duty to comply with it. RGC 8 states that ‘The Research Organisation must assume full responsibility for staff funded from the grant and, in consequence, accept all duties owed to and responsibilities for these staff, including, without limitation, their terms and conditions of employment and their training and supervision, arising from the employer/employee relationship.’ Universities are therefore required to make reasonable adjustments as required to support their staff.

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 (both mental and physical)	Potential negative	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Je-S does not currently comply with disability accessibility schemes. This will be picked up by The Funding Service.</p> <p>Applicants should seek support from their own institution’s research support office.</p> <p>Panel meeting attendees with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration and focus during panel assessments</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Solicit information from panel members and applicants participants (in confidence) about any additional requirements they may have in order to fully participate.</p> <p>Ensure that this virtual meeting is an inclusive environment for participants. Depending on the needs identified, considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a virtual meeting. • Zoom meeting closed captions used for the hearing impaired; • Adequate lighting, alternative

			<p>document formatting and potential use of screen readers for the visually impaired;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provision of documents in sans-serif, dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats;• Avoiding colours, lighting etc that may trigger migraines, epilepsy;• Ensuring that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda;• Consider paying T&S for carers or support workers to attend alongside the participant, where this is required and not covered by the Individual's own employment contract. This will be considered on a case by case basis• Where there are particular constraints consider opportunities for participants to engage in a
--	--	--	---

			different way (via video-link, tele-conference for instance).
Gender reassignment	Potential negative	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Trans people may be absent from work as a consequence of transition and UKRI records may show the wrong gender.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature and absence as a result of medical treatment. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the Research Organisation's sick policy and strongly encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other sick absence.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	Probably not.		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential negative	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in</p>

			<p>the UKRI terms and conditions.</p> <p>We should ensure the use of gender neutral language – parental leave, irrespective of sexual orientation.</p> <p>The costs of additional childcare for grant-holders, beyond that required to meet the normal contracted requirements of the job, and that are directly related to the project, may be requested as a directly incurred cost if the institutional policy is to reimburse them. However, childcare costs associated with normal working patterns may not be sought.</p> <p>facilities for breastfeeding/expressing mothers if necessary- this should be possible as it is a virtual meeting. Adequate breaks will be provided to support nursing mothers as required.</p> <p>Reimbursement of additional childcare costs if required and flexibility around meeting timings to allow for any caring responsibilities we are made aware of on a case by case basis.</p>
--	--	--	--

Race (including ethnicity)	Potential negative	See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias)
Religion or belief	Potential negative	<p>See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>There could be potential discrimination because it is known that somebody (either a panel member, a research applicant or research participants) has a particular faith or belief.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias)</p> <p>Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings. Considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are not Scheduling meetings during religious festivals • Accommodating dietary restrictions is not a concern as the panels will be virtual. • Not scheduling meetings such that they would require attendance late on Friday evenings (Jewish Sabbath) or on Fridays (Friday prayer, Islam) • Allowing prayer breaks if requested

Sexual orientation	Potential negative	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.
Sex (gender)	Potential negative	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Use of language can present a barrier to participation and it may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged.</p> <p>Panel members may be disadvantaged and unable to attend meetings if they have caring responsibilities</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Ensure use of gender neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc.</p> <p>Ensure that the panel has balanced gender representation (aim for at worst 60:40 split)</p> <p>The meeting will be virtual, so there is no need for travel, overnight stays and we can be flexible around timing and caring/other needs.</p> <p>Reimbursement of additional childcare costs if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend (this could include childcare at the venue, additional hours of childcare in the child's usual setting or paying for a relative to travel to care for school age children)</p>
Age	Potential negative or positive depending on scheme eligibility requirements	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Given likely relationship to career stage and</p>

		<p>Early career researchers* or mid career researchers applying for the Academic advisor role may be disadvantaged as they don't have the same track record to draw on as an experienced researcher.</p> <p>(*It is assumed that early career researchers are generally younger than their more experienced peers, although this by no means always the case. This is why this point has been included under 'age').</p>	<p>hence (indirectly) age. Panel members are briefed to make clear that they should be assessing the application in front of them and not reading between the lines. They should assess an individual's capability to deliver their proposed research.</p> <p>Use of a variety of different communication strategies including social media to ensure that our messages reach the widest possible target audience.</p>
<p>Other characteristics not protected under the Equality Act</p>	<p>Potential negative. ESRC is committed to go above and beyond bare compliance with Equalities legislation to ensure that our processes are as fair and equitable as they can be. For instance, we wish to ensure that potential applicants and stakeholders are not disadvantaged by geography, institutional status etc.</p>		<p>ROs need to be clear of their responsibilities/ duty of care. The Research funding guide states: 'The Research Organisation is responsible for compliance with the terms of the Equality Act 2010 including any subsequent amendments introduced while work is in progress; and for ensuring that the expectations set out in the RCUK statement of expectations for equality and diversity are met'.</p>

			<p>Call specifications should draw attention to ESRC's aspirations around ED&I. Applicants should be alerted to the fact that if they wish to participate in an ESRC-led activity but find that they are barred from doing so as a consequence of ED&I considerations they should contact the office for advice.</p>
--	--	--	--

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	See the potential negative impacts outlined above.	
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	✓	See the mitigations outlined above.
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:	23/06/22
Review date (if applicable):	N/A one off call

Note: Excessive use of repeated line breaks can make a document inaccessible for users of assistive technologies. To ensure inclusion, please ensure a new table row is inserted for each point if there is more than one consideration or impact for each group (please ensure you populate the “protected characteristic group” column e.g. “disability continued”); rather than using the same row for multiple points with repeated line breaks to separate points.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	It is possible, however, we are taking clear steps towards ensuring that the call and panel processes are as inclusive as possible.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
5. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .		
6. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups	X	<p>We have autonomy over this process and will closely monitor for any indications of bias, unconscious bias, introduction of information or re reviewing.</p> <p>We will use zoom to hold the panels and ensure that considerations outlined above are followed.</p> <p>We will fully brief panel members and have clear expectations.</p>

Question	Explanation / justification	
		<p>We will have to use Siebel for our call applications, but we can have a flexible approach (E.g, applications by email manually uploaded etc) if the applicant cannot access Siebel/Je-S due to E,D & I considerations outlined above.</p> <p>We will work in a flexible and agile way to support applicants, panelists and staff across the office supporting on this activity.</p>
7. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		
8. 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* *EIAs should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events.	Yes/not required
Date completed:	23/06/22
End date of activity: (if applicable)	01/10/22
Review date (if applicable):	N/A

Annex 1: Examples of recently completed EIA templates

Council	Activity
EPSRC	Inclusion Matters Call
EPSRC	New Investigator Awards
EPSRC	Policy change: Limit to the number of applications at a standard panel
BBSRC	BBSRC Future Leader Fellowships (FLF) Scheme
BBSRC	BBSRC/STFC/Innovate UK Biofilms programme