

**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

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| **Question** | **Response** |
| 1. **Name of funding activity being assessed**
 | Next Generation Manufacturing Call |
| 1. **Summary of aims and objectives of the funding activity**
 | The focus of this call is to deliver the next generation of innovative and disruptive manufacturing technologies and methods to enable us to manufacture the products that we will need for a productive and sustainable future UK. These technologies will also allow us to make new products that cannot currently be manufactured at scale but will be needed for the UK to address future challenges, such as the transition to net zero. New and developed manufacturing technologies will prioritize resource efficiency, waste reduction and lower emissions, leading to a more sustainable manufacturing sector. |
| 1. **What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?** *(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)*
 | This call was originally developed with advice from the SAT associated with the Manufacturing and the Circular Economy theme (M&tCE) and a strategic decision was taken by M&tCE theme leads. |
| 1. **Who is affected by the funding activity?**
 | * Research office/institutions and staff
* Research councils and staff
* External reviewers (postal peer reviewers, prioritisation panel)
* PDRAs employed by the funded projects.
* Support staff will also be employed on the grant.
* There will be significant interaction with industry and the wider innovation landscape.
* Students may be aligned to the funded projects, although not directly funded through the grants.
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| 1. **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the funding activity?**
 | The result of this call will be reviewed within the team and the SAT. Researchfish and other outputs could also be used for an impact study if appropriate. |

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](https://www.ukri.org/files/legacy/documents/actionplan2016-pdf/) 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](https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/caringresponsibilities/).
* 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 endeavour 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.

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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** | Potentially Negative | All information provided is in written format.Potential for unconscious bias | Information provided will be in a format that is supported by accessibility software to support other access to the information beyond in writing.The panel meeting will be held virtually, panellists and research council staff will be informed in advance and tools such as ‘Live Transcript’ will be used.Full guidance in call document of EPSRC’s policies. Documents will be produced in line with EPSRC formatting guidelines.  |
| **Gender reassignment** | Potentially Negative | Potential for unconscious bias | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. |
| **Marriage or civil partnership** | None Identified |  | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed |
| **Pregnancy and maternity** | Potentially Negative | Participation in activity could be restricted by lack of availability due to parental leave/caring responsibilities/ pregnancyPotential for unconscious bias | Accommodations will be made for individuals if required at all stages of the process.Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance as early possible.EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants will be made aware of these.Panellists will be informed if a panel meeting is to be held virtually as far in advance as possible. If this happens, we reserve the right to change the timetable of the meeting to take into account individual circumstances and allow additional time for breaks and technical issues.Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. |
| **Race** | Potentially Negative | Potential for unconscious bias | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. |
| **Religion or belief** | Potentially Negative  | Potential for unconscious bias | Ensure religious observances are taken into account when panel dates are chosen, and where possible that there is a prayer room available for panels held in person. |
| **Sexual orientation** | Potentially negative | Potential for unconscious bias | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. |
| **Sex (gender)** | Potentially Negative | Potential for unconscious bias | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. |
| **Age** | Potentially Negative | Potential for unconscious bias | Standard EPSRC policies will be followed, including providing training materials for panellists on unconscious bias and empowering all panellists to challenge potential bias. |
| **Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)** | Caring Responsibilities – Potentially Negative  | Panellists and applicants may have reduced availability, if they are caring for a vulnerable person or due to unexpected school or childcare closures | Dates for panels will be outside of school holidays wherever possible. Panellists will be informed in advance that the panel meeting is to be held virtually.Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists as far in advance as possible. |
| Zoom Panel Meetings  | Potentially Negative  | Potential for screen use fatigue and increase to cognitive load as well as potential technical issues | Guidance will be provided to panellists – best practice and tools that can be used such as the hand raising and mute functions.‘Test runs’ will be offered to those who have not used Zoom before. Contingency plans will be put in place if Zoom cannot be used Learning from virtual panels held prior to this, will be incorporated to improve the process. |
| Project Partner inclusion | Potentially Negative | All applicants will be required to have project partner letter of support which could be detrimental as this might discourage blue-sky research. This could also have a potentially negative impact on groups such as ECRs who may lack established industry connections. | Requiring project partners ensures industry participation, which enhances the commercial viability of the proposals. |

**Evaluation:**

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| **Question**  | **Explanation / justification** |
| Is it possible the proposed change in funding activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people? | There is a potential, as outlined above, that some individuals may be disadvantaged. All efforts will be made to minimise this. |
| **Final Decision:** | **Tick the relevant box** | **Include any explanation / justification required** |
| 1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will **proceed**.
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| 1. You can decide to **stop** the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups
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| 1. You can **adapt or change** the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias
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| 1. 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.
 |  | This activity must go ahead and so everything has been done to be as fair and flexible as possible to all applicants. We will promote and inform as early as possible, and take circumstances into due account when necessary |

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| **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:**  | **05/July/2024** |
| **Review date** (if applicable): |  |

**Change log**

| **Name** | **Date** | **Version** | **Change** |
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| Jay Thakkar | When Published | 1 |  |