



EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	UK multidisciplinary centre for neuromorphic computing
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	Aiming to fund one centre to address fundamental research challenges in neuromorphic computing across the UK.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	A workshop was run on 22/05/2024 to bring together the neuromorphic computing research community in the UK, identify the challenges in bringing the various disciplines in this area together.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	The research community in neuromorphic computing across the UK. Related research users and broader stakeholders (e.g. industry, public and third sector organisations) who may be involved as Project Partners.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	The assessment process has been designed to ensure unconscious bias is minimised and managed. All panel members will receive information about unconscious bias in their pre-panel briefings The activity will be monitored by the ICT Theme in EPSRC. Research outcomes will be collected via ResearchFish.

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	None identified		<p>Applicants are not asked to disclose whether they have a disability. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.</p> <p>Every attempt will be made to accommodate panel members' accessibility requirements ahead of and during the panel. The ability to request accommodations will be flagged clearly during pre-panel briefings.</p>
Gender reassignment	None identified		Applicants are not asked to disclose whether they have undergone gender reassignment.
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified		Applicants are not asked to disclose their marital status. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.
Pregnancy and maternity	Potentially negative		<p>Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants and panellists in advance as early possible.</p> <p>EPSRC policies for offering support to those with caring responsibilities will be followed and panel members and applicants</p>

			<p>will be made aware of these. Applicants are not asked to disclose pregnancy</p> <p>The assessment panel will be held online to increase accessibility to panel members with mobility impairments or caring responsibilities; support is available at EPSRC for those with caring responsibilities.</p>
Race	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage individuals of specific race, if this is known to the panel.	<p>Applicants are not asked to disclose their ethnicities. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased assessment.</p>
Religion or belief	Potentially negative	Key dates (open call closing, interview) coinciding with specific religious festivals/ events could disadvantage specific religious groups.	<p>Ensure religious observances are taken into account when meeting dates and opportunity closing dates are chosen.</p> <p>Applicants are not asked to disclose their religious beliefs.</p>
Sexual orientation	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage individuals of specific sexual orientations, if this is known to the panel.	<p>Applicants are not asked to disclose their sexual orientation. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.</p>
Sex (gender)	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants on the basis of gender.	<p>Applicants are not asked to disclose their gender. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.</p> <p>Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC</p>

			presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased assessment. In line with EPSRC policies, the assessment panel will be mixed gender, with a target of 30% for the underrepresented gender.
Age	Potentially negative	Unconscious bias on the part of panel members may disadvantage applicants from specific age groups.	Applicants are not asked to disclose their age. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed. Unconscious bias briefing will be given as part of the panel guidance and panel presentation. EPSRC presence at assessment meetings and during interviews acts as an additional assurance to help ensure unbiased assessment.
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	None identified		

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?		
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		Possible risks and bias associated with this activity have been identified and activities adapted accordingly. ED&I aspects will be considered throughout the activity and EPSRC will review this EIA accordingly.
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:	15-08-2024
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Maryam Crabbe-Mann	19/08/2024	1	