

UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form



*See guidance document for detailed support.

* Delete the guidance text in the response column when completing your EIA.

Overview of activity

	Response
Name of activity being assessed	EPSRC UK-NSF Understanding and exploiting Quantum Information in Chemical systems
Council/department/project team	EPSRC International Team and EPSRC Physical Sciences and Advanced Materials Team
Aims and objectives of the activity	<p>This EIA is being produced to cover a funding opportunity that requires us to consider equality as part of advertising, application process, external review, building a panel, hosting panel meetings and all other related activities.</p> <p>This joint funding opportunity, in collaboration with NSF, is to establish new, and build on existing relationships to advance our understanding of quantum information in chemical systems.</p> <p>The UK support through this funding opportunity is funded by the UK Government's International Science Partnerships Fund (ISPF). ISPF is managed by the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT), and delivered by a consortium of the UK's leading research and innovation bodies, including UKRI. The £337m fund supports collaboration between UK researchers and innovators and their peers around the world on the major themes of our time: planet, health, tech, and talent.</p> <p>This opportunity is seeking to advance our fundamental understanding and exploitation of QIS concepts in chemistry. Meeting this challenge will necessitate that the community draw upon its collective expertise in synthesis, measurement, and theory. With chemistry's nearly infinite flexibility in molecular design, there is the potential to design novel molecular systems that manifest desired quantum behavior.</p> <p>This opportunity follows a bilateral workshop hosted in Alexandria, Virginia, in February 2024.</p> <p>To advance our understanding of these areas, and address topics raised in the workshop report, we now invite bilateral research proposals focused in following areas of interest:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Designing of and utilisation of new experiments enabled by QIS or tools that give insight into QIS phenomena in chemical systems.• Creating an improved understanding chemistry that is governed by or optimized by QIS and opportunities presented by chemical systems as platforms for studying QIS;



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New fundamental studies of quantum correlations enabled by chemical systems.• Advancing measurement of quantum correlations and non-classical properties of chemical systems. <p>The proposed partnership should include at least one researcher from an eligible organisation from both the UK and USA.</p>
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	<p>This funding opportunity spans several areas of EPSRCs remit, therefore members of the EPSRC community in these sub-disciplines and those in related disciplines are affected.</p> <p>A USA project lead is a requirement for this funding opportunity.</p> <p>Overseas project partners, in addition, at universities, public sector research organisations or publicly funded research institutes can be based in any country outside the UK.</p> <p>Applicants, panel members, awardees, members of the research community, research council staff.</p>
What data and consultation have you used?	<p>This opportunity follows a bilateral workshop hosted in Alexandria, Virginia, in February 2024, which sought to discuss key topics and identify research challenges in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How concretely does QIS matter in chemistry?• What are most pressing and interesting research questions at the interface between chemistry and QIS and vice versa?• In what ways and new directions should the field innovate, where a chemical perspective is essential?• What recent observations in chemical systems inspire scrutiny from a QIS perspective? <p>A workshop report was subsequently produced to identify areas to focus on in the funding opportunity.</p> <p>In addition to this workshop, the tentative plans to build on this event in partnership with the NSF have been noted during Physical science theme visits to university departments and at the RSC's Heads of Chemistry Departments conference in 2023 and 2024.</p>

Analysing your impact



In addition to data gathering and consultation, the guidance materials should be used to assist in identifying impacts on different groups.

Protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit	Negative impact	Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Age	☒	☒	<p>Positive: The call is open to all (although there must be one USA project lead and one UK based lead). Researchers with expertise in relevant research areas for the funding opportunity.</p> <p>Negative: For a variety of reasons individuals can face stigma and discrimination in society and assessment processes for their relative youth, or their relative age and the perceived experience or energy associated with these assumptions. If an applicant’s age became known to the panel or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but in no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or panel members.</p>	<p>EPSRC’s panel members receive a briefing on unconscious bias in advance of the panel. EPSRC panel convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process, both at postal peer review and panel stage. Reviewers who are part of the peer review college also receive information about unconscious bias as part of their training. Applicants are encouraged to raise any issues with reviews in advance of the panel so that they can be addressed. More information about EPSRC’s commitment to ensuring fairness in peer review can be found here. EPSRC have recently published a 3</p>



				year EDI action plan which includes actions related to peer review to reduce the likelihood of bias impacting on decision making.
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Applicants Negative: Typically, international collaboration requires investigators and staff to travel nationally and internationally. This may discourage individuals with additional requirements relating to physical or mental impairments from applying. There may be differences in accessibility standards and provision in different countries.</p> <p>Panellists Positive: The panel will be held virtually therefore this is a more accessible participation option. Panellists will not have to travel to an in-person venue which may not have accessibility measures.</p> <p>Negative: This may have a negative impact for those with hearing impairments and those who find a lot of sensory input overwhelming.</p>	<p>Applicants We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain international collaboration with their USA collaborators that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested.</p> <p>We will highlight EPSRC guidance on support for carers or caregivers when travelling.</p> <p>Panellists Breaks will be built into the panel schedule at regular intervals to prevent screen fatigue and overwhelm.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that any circumstances which could affect participation can be accommodated wherever possible.</p>
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Depending on USA State, there may be challenges for transgender individuals traveling from the UK to the USA , such as access to medical care.	<p>We will encourage applicant to explore options to build and maintain international collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested. We will also encourage travel to the UK to ensure an inclusive</p>

Commented [DU1]: completely agree that this will cause challenges to individuals in those states but perhaps beyond the remit of our responsibilities? this would be an indirect impact rather than one that is particularly affected?

unless of course it is referring to UK applicants traveling to the States. If so then perhaps add a line? Could encourage travel to the UK rather than US travel too.



				approach to collaboration for transgender individuals.
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If an applicant's marital status became known to the panel or reviewers, there is the potential for unconscious bias, but in no point during the assessment process is this disclosed to reviewers or panel members	EPSRC's panel members receive a briefing on unconscious bias in advance of the panel. EPSRC panel convenors will remain vigilant to, and address, any bias during the assessment process, both at postal peer review and panel stage. Reviewers who are part of the peer review college also receive information about unconscious bias as part of their training. Applicants are encouraged to raise any issues with reviews in advance of the panel so that they can be addressed.
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Typically, international collaboration requires investigators and staff to travel nationally and internationally. This may impact investigators or staff members who are pregnant or on parental leave.</p> <p>Pregnant women are unable to travel by aeroplane during latter stages of pregnancy.</p> <p>A researcher on parental may not be able to apply or take part as a panel member.</p>	<p>We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain international collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested.</p> <p>Highlight EPSRC guidance on support for carers or caregivers when travelling.</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments will be made to ensure that any circumstances which could affect participation to apply can be accommodated wherever possible.</p>



				<p>A timetable of key dates will be made available on the funding opportunity, including the Full Proposal stage. A timeline for the panel assessment will be provided to panel members as far in advance as possible.</p> <p>EPSRC intend to run a reciprocal call in 2025 led by NSF. Potential applicants who cannot apply in the 2024 EPSRC led funding opportunity would be able to consider the NSF led opportunity.</p>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Applicants: EPSRC's Ethnicity report found that 'The award rate for PI, CI and Fellowship applicants who identify as White is higher than that of applicants from ethnic minority groups in most reporting years.</p> <p>Overseas research organisations may be in a (remote) location which may be unsafe for ethnic minority PIs (i.e. they may experience racism in these locations).</p> <p>Panellists: There is a risk of not having panel members who identify as an ethnic minority.</p>	<p>Applicants:</p> <p>We will encourage researchers to accommodate the participation of their ethnic minority collaborators and colleagues in a way which prevents harm via consulting the UKRI Good Research Resource Hub (https://www.ukri.org/manage-your-award/good-research-resource-hub/), and to follow the policies their research organisation advocates around safe travel.</p> <p>Panellists: An unconscious bias briefing will be presented to the panel as part of the panel guidance presentation. EPSRC convenors will also carefully listen for instances of bias and step in where appropriate. Diversity will be taken into consideration when putting together the panel membership.</p>

Commented [DU2]: we intend to run a reciprocal call in 2025 led by NSF, potential applicants who for what ever reason can't apply this time would be able to consider the next round.

Commented [DU3]: how are we doing this? We aren't the employer of individuals and so the primary responsibility/duty of care is the universities. Perhaps could re phrase to encourage successful researchers to follow University policy on safe travel. or words to that effect?



Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Travel dates – which could be tied to collaborator availability - could coincide with a religious holiday. Panel and application timeline dates could be affected by the same issue.</p> <p>This could negatively disadvantage those who practice particular faiths if this is not taken into account by researchers scheduling a visit and if panel dates clash with religious holidays.</p>	<p>We will encourage applicants to be considerate of their team’s beliefs and that reduce the need to travel if the trip would fall over a religious holiday – or to provide a hybrid attendance option.</p> <p>We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain international collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested.</p> <p>EPSRC will ensure to schedule panels on days which are not major religious holidays, and ask panel members to highlight circumstances which may affect their ability to participate in a panel and to specify accommodations which would enable them to participate.</p>
Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Research organisations included may be in a (remote) location which may be unsafe for PIs who identify as LGBTQ+.</p>	<p>We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain international collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested.</p> <p>There are no requirements within the call to collaborate with researchers in particular countries – aside from the USA.</p>
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Our gender report found that ‘Women are consistently under-represented in EPSRC’s</p>	<p>Applicants:</p>

Commented [DU4]: other than US of course :)



			<p>Principal Investigator (PI) applicant pool across our portfolio' and 'Application numbers from women for large grants are particularly low'.</p> <p>Research organisations included may be in a (remote) location which may be unsafe for PIs who identify as women (i.e. they may experience sexism in these locations).</p> <p>Panellists: There is a risk of not having panel members who identify as women.</p>	<p>We will encourage researchers to accommodate the participation of their women collaborators and colleagues in a way which prevents harm.</p> <p>Panellists: An unconscious bias briefing will be presented to the panel as part of the panel guidance presentation. EPSRC convenors will also carefully listen for instances of bias and step in where appropriate. Diversity will be taken into consideration when putting together the panel membership. Gender neutral language will be used throughout the assessment process.</p>
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Additional characteristics

Additional characteristics	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit	Negative impact	Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible).
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			



Geographical location and place (consider UK and international offices)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Positive: This funding opportunity actively promotes the inclusion of international collaborations.	N/A
Socio-economic status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Education background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Parent/guardian responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Typically, international collaboration requires investigators and staff to travel nationally and internationally, this may impact investigators or staff members who have parent/guardian responsibilities.	We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain international collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested. Highlight EPSRC guidance on support for carers or caregivers when travelling.
Carer/parent carer responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Typically, international collaboration requires investigators and staff to travel nationally and internationally, this may impact investigators or staff members who have carer/parent carer responsibilities.	We will encourage applicants to explore options to build and maintain international collaboration that reduce the need to travel and make clear that associated resources can be requested. Highlight EPSRC guidance on support for carers or caregivers when travelling.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Other characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		



Are there **general or overarching impacts on multiple groups**? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?

In-person visits, travel and meetings can present as negative barriers for disabled people, those who identify as transgender, women, ethnic minorities as well as those with parental or caring responsibilities (and those who have intersectional identities of all of the aforementioned demographics). We will encourage hybrid and/or fully virtual meetings to avoid access issues, travel and overnight stay requirements, and facilitate the use of personal equipment (e.g. closed captioning or live transcript provision).

We will encourage researchers from non marginalised backgrounds to accommodate the participation of their marginalised collaborators and colleagues who may experience discrimination in a way which prevents harm, and to learn from their lived experiences such that they will work together in a harmonious and inclusive way with a positive, understanding team research culture.



Continued below...

Evaluation

Final Decision:	Select the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will proceed .	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Adapt or change the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Possible risks associated with this call have been identified and the guidance and peer review protocols have been adapted accordingly.
3. Stop the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the activity (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, you are going to proceed with caution with this activity knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Continued below...



Review and sign off

What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?	Research outcomes will be monitored via ResearchFish. EPSRC International Team and EPSRC Physical Sciences and Advanced Materials Team staff will convene the panels. We will review the EIA as part of a lessons learned activity at the end of the timeline for this funding opportunity. We will use data from groups affected by this funding opportunity to inform future decisions and use new insights to review this EIA.
Next review date:	
Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required	Yes
Point of contact	EPSRC International Team
Signed off by (name and date):	Rehemat Bhatia, August 23 rd 2024



Before publishing or archiving your EIA, please remove any sensitive or confidential information such as personal identifiable data.

Once your EIA is completed or updated:

1. Upload it to the UKRI central repository via [the EIA submission form](#)

EIAs for ODA and non-ODA ISPF programmes should be emailed to: ISPF@ukri.org

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Rehemat Bhatia	23/08/2024	1	Completion of EIA Assessment for Activity

Continued below...



Action plan

Use the table below to define the actions you intend to take (or have taken) to address the indications of negative impact you have identified or to promote equality. Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored?	What is/will be the impact/outcome?
<p>Timetable of key dates made available to applicants and panel members as far in advance as possible.</p> <p>Religious observances will be taken into account when meeting dates are chosen.</p>	September 2024	Staff involved in delivering this funding opportunity.	Key dates will be identified when call is published	Applicants have as much time as possible to prepare applications.
<p>Unconscious bias training to be delivered to panel members. EPSRC members of staff will monitor all meetings and highlight instances of bias in conversations.</p>	Panel date (May 2025)	Staff involved in delivering this funding opportunity.	<p>Unconscious bias training within panel briefing.</p> <p>EPSRC staff presence at meetings.</p>	Preventing unconscious bias as much as possible in panel discussion.