# 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

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|  | **Response** |
| Name of activity being assessed | P2R: Increasing UK policymaker engagement with research |
| Council/department/project team | ESRC Public Policy and Engagement Team |
| Aims and objectives of the activity | This 42-month ‘policy to research’ (P2R) investment will fund the establishment of an inclusive ‘connective infrastructure’ that facilitates sustained collaboration between research and policy. It will increase the number and range of opportunities for policy makers to engage with research organisations and communities. Through strengthening policy makers’ skills on how to access research evidence, and by strengthening connections between research and policy communities, this investment will support effective public policy based on robust evidence and expertise from leading research organisations.  The investment aims to create sustainable infrastructure that supports the formation of effective and trusted relationships between policy making and academic communities, provide policy makers with the skills and opportunities to access the data, insights and expertise, embed training for policymakers across the civil service, improve coordination, public sector awareness and access to P2R opportunities, and expand the current P2R offering from UK research organisations.  As part of a standard funding opportunity, we will review our processes to ensure they are as fair and equitable as possible throughout the opportunity application process and post-award, specifically as part of advertising, the application process, recruiting a panel, hosting panel meetings and panel assessment, and applicant interviews. |
| Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event? | * Applicants to the opportunity. * Those involved in the commissioning process: panel members and interview panel members. * ESRC staff organising the opportunity, including facilitating the panel and interview meetings * The wider research community and policy community as primary beneficiaries of the outputs and outcomes. |
| What data and consultation have you used? | We have used previous consultations, a sector survey, outcomes and lessons learnt from similar projects and have put measures in place to ensure a fair commissioning process and structures. We have consulted internally within the ESRC, referred to previous EIAs within UKRI and consulted with stakeholders at various stages of the process. |

## 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

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| **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 |  |  | Early career researchers\* may be disadvantaged as they don’t have the same track record to draw on as an experienced researcher.  (\*It is assumed that early career researchers are generally younger than their more experienced peers, although this is by no means always the case. This is why this point has been included under ‘age’). | Also see below, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Track record is not an explicit criterion, given likely relationship to career stage and 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.  Use of a variety of different communication strategies including social media to ensure that our messages reach the widest possible target audience.  Applicants are not required to disclose their age at any point in the application process, although this may be inferred from the information on their CV. |
| Disability |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations below.  Meeting attendees with neuro-disabilities may experience difficulties with concentration and focus during panel assessments and interviews.  Additional care requirements could occur if individuals are required to:   * Participate in events on what would normally be a non-working day. * Work extended hours on a normal working day. * Attend meetings with overnight stays and/or travel overseas. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations below.  The Funding Service has been designed to comply with disability access schemes.  Direct applicants to [UKRI guidance on disability and access support for applicants and grant holders](https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/how-to-apply/disability-and-accessibility-support-for-ukri-applicants-and-grant-holders/).  Provide the opportunity for applicants, panel members and interviewees to share, in confidence, any reasonable adjustments they may require for participating fully throughout the application process and post-award.  Online meeting platforms offer an accessible and inclusive environment for participants. Depending on the needs identified, considerations might include:   * + Enabling the chat function and closed captioning, and adjusting the volume, to support those with hearing requirements.   + Adequate lighting, alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers (ensure any images are well described so that text-to-speech applications can recognise them) for the visually impaired.   + Provision of documents in sans-serif dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia friendly formats.   + Avoiding colours, lighting etc. that may trigger migraines, epilepsy etc.   + Consideration of the length of any online meetings, shortening if necessary and ensuring that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda.   Ensure that ESRC staff have had sufficient EDI training so they can respond effectively to the requirements of all participants.  Ensure ESRC staff are encouraged to be flexible with scheduling and in implementing any reasonable adjustment requests.  Applicants should also seek support from their own institution’s research support office. |
| Gender reassignment (Trans identity) |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Trans people may be absent from work due to a period of medical recovery. UKRI records may show the wrong gender.  A person’s pronouns may be used incorrectly in panel meetings and interviews or suitable options for titles (e.g. Mx) may not be available on funding opportunity documents. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  We will work to ensure the use of gender-neutral language where possible in our documents.  At virtual panel meetings and interviews, members may wish to include pronouns in biography or in their Zoom/Teams name.  UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature and permit absence as a result of medical treatment. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the Research Organisation’s relevant policies and strongly encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other health-related absence.  Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted. |
| Marriage or civil partnership |  |  | None identified | None identified |
| Pregnancy and maternity |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Completion of application or project may be affected by maternity, paternity or parental leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption.  Childcare responsibilities may be a barrier to attending panel meetings or interviews.  Applicants may be perceived to be less productive by Panel members if they have gaps in their career or publication record on their CV due to maternity leave.  Panel members may have unconscious bias towards applicants that are pregnant which may disadvantage the applicant.  Applicants may be unable to apply to the call if they are on parental leave during the funding call or feel unable to apply if they are on leave during the latest start date for successful awards. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Provision for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions.  Timelines will be agreed and publicised in advance to allow meeting attendees to make arrangements to attend. This will also ensure applicants have advanced notice of deadlines and key dates related to the funding opportunity.  Regular breaks will be built into the panel meetings and interviews for parental duties, including breastfeeding/expressing if required.  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. |
| Race |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  [UKRI diversity data](https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/uk.research.and.innovation.ukri./viz/UKRICompetitiveFundingDecisions2022-23/CompetitiveFundingDecisions) for applicants and awardees shows that inequalities exist in awarding rates between applicants who identify as White (higher success rates) compared to applicants who identify as being from a minority ethnic group (lower success rates). This is particularly the case for Black applicants.  Minority ethnic researchers are also under-represented within panel membership.    Research shows that people from minority ethnic groups are under-represented within research funding and across scientific research and innovation careers more broadly, and face additional barriers to achieving success within academic pathways.  Potential discrimination for against an applicant due to their perceived or actual race/ethnicity as the process is not anonymous and names are present. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias).  ESRC will ensure that, where possible, a diverse panel is recruited. During panel meetings and interviews, ask people to introduce themselves to check correct pronunciation of names. |
| Religion or belief |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  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.  Religious holidays or practices may present a barrier to attending panel meetings or interviews. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias).  Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings and interviews. Considerations might include:   * Scheduling meetings to avoid major religious festivals; (if impossible to avoid then consider mitigations – i.e. during Ramadan ensuring that meetings finish early so that participants are able to get home to break their fast). * Not scheduling meetings when they would conflict with religious attendance or observance on specific days or times (e.g. Jewish Sabbath on Friday evenings or Islamic Friday prayer) Allowing prayer breaks if requested. |
| Sexual orientation |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to mitigations against unconscious bias). |
| Sex |  |  | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Potential for discrimination because it is known to somebody (either panel member or a research applicant) has a particular gender.  Use of language can present a barrier to participation. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  Ensure use of gender-neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc.  Ensure that the panel has balanced gender representation. ESRC will, at a minimum, ensure that the panel maintains a 60:40 split in regard to gender. |

## Additional characteristics

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| **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) |  |  | Panel meetings and applicant interviews will be held online, which will allow panel members from a more diverse range of geographical locations to participate. | See General Equality and Diversity Considerations.  ESRC will work to ensure that panels are balanced as far as possible (within the constraints of quality and appropriateness) across the range of protected characteristics, and across broader characteristics including participation from post1992 and Russell Group institutions, ensuring that we have a good geographical spread of panel members across the UK, and across a diversity of career stages and paths. Where international panel members are used, this will be considered in the scheduling of meetings.  All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support. |
| Socio-economic status |  |  | Participation in any activities related to this opportunity will not incur any expenses for individuals. | We will ensure that the meeting and interview schedule is sent out with adequate time for participants to rearrange existing work commitments.  We would expect applicants to apply via their Research Organisation which should remove most barriers to access.  Applicants and panel members can contact ESRC directly to highlight any additional support required. |
| Education background |  |  | Early career researchers may be disadvantaged as they don’t have the same track record to draw on as an experienced researcher.  Potential for difficulties in understanding research jargon/language if panel member or member of the applicant’s team is from outside of academia or from another discipline. This is particularly relevant given the focus of the opportunity and the high likelihood that potential panel members have a policy background. | While expertise in policy to research activities is an explicit criterion, this is not linked to career stage or educational background. Panel members are briefed to make clear that they should be assessing the application in front of them and not read between the lines. They should assess an individual’s capability to deliver their proposed activities.  Ensure that unnecessary jargon and academic language are not used. |
| Parent/guardian responsibilities |  |  | Panel members and applicants may be disadvantaged and unable to attend meetings or interviews if they have caring responsibilities.  Those with caring responsibilities may need longer time periods to carry out their work. | See also discussion of actions to reduce negative impact in relation to pregnancy and maternity.  ESRC can ensure that panel member participation and interviews are scheduled according to caring responsibilities.  Meetings and interviews will be scheduled within the working day.  Reimbursement of additional childcare  costs will be considered by UKRI on a  case-by-case basis, if the meeting participant is otherwise unable to attend.  Panel members will be given sufficient time to carry out their work.  All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support. |
| Carer/parent carer responsibilities |  |  | See above - ‘Parent/guardian responsibilities’ | See above - ‘Parent/guardian responsibilities’  Carer/parent carer costs incurred when attending panel meetings or participating in commissioning or other ESRC research related activities can be met where necessary. |
| Political opinion (Northern Ireland only) |  |  | n/a | n/a |
| Other characteristics |  |  | We should avoid the assumption that everyone has equal access to technological devices or the internet. | All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any needs that will need additional support.  Applicants and panel members should ask for assistance from their research organisations when experiencing digital difficulties. |

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| Are there **general or overarching impacts on multiple groups**? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact? | **For general impacts and actions that affect more than one protected characteristic, please use this space.** For example, in-person meetings can present as negative barriers for disabled people, as well as those with parental or caring responsibilities. You may wish to mitigate this by allowing hybrid or fully virtual meetings to avoid access issues, travel and overnight stay requirements, and facilitate the use of personal equipment (e.g. allowing caption use).  **For specific impacts and actions for individual characteristics, please use the table below**.  Your assessment could encompass:   * How your activity supports UKRI or Council’s [EDI objectives](https://www.ukri.org/what-we-do/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/edi-strategy/) * **positive impacts**. Think about how you promote equality and foster good relations between people who do or do not share a characteristic. * **negative impacts** * **no impact**. Share evidence to support this * **actions** you are going to consider/put in place to remove disadvantages or minimise negative impacts. You should consider whether you need to change the activity, change how it is implemented or whether the aims could be achieved in a different way * **outcomes and outputs**. Share how you will measure these     **GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS**  ESRC is committed to go above and beyond simply complying with Equalities legislation to ensure that our processes are as fair and equitable as they can be.  UKRI’s research commissioning processes are designed with fairness in mind.  ESRC staff receive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training so they can respond effectively to the requirements of all participants.  As part of a standard funding opportunity, we regularly review our processes to ensure they are as fair and equitable as possible throughout the opportunity application process and post-award, specifically as part of advertising, the application process, recruiting a panel, hosting panel meetings and panel assessment, and applicant interviews. This is achieved by using a variety of different communication strategies to ensure that our messages and activities are inclusive and accessible. The Panel meeting and interviews will be virtual and adjustments will be incorporated to ensure that the meeting is inclusive, including briefing the Chair to ensure that the session is facilitated to take equality and diversity considerations into account. Further details on general equality and diversity considerations are set out below:  **Eligibility and criteria**   * Project lead must be based at a UK research organisation eligible for ESRC funding. The project co-leads can be based at UK research organisations eligible for ESRC funding, UK businesses, public sector, third sector or eligible public sector research establishments (PSREs). As this is an investment in UK infrastructure, project co-leads based in non-UK organisations will need to be strongly justified. * The applicants will be required to answer a question on how Equality, Diversity and Inclusion will be embedded into the proposed work. The answer will be assessed by the opportunity panel.   **Support for UKRI applicants**   * Applicants have the opportunity to share, in confidence, any relevant sensitive information – including barriers to participation – by contacting the office for advice via [ESRCP2R@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:ESRCP2R@esrc.ukri.org).   **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.   **Panel recruitment**   * While panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on expertise, we will aim to appoint a diverse panel membership. Final decisions take into account trying to balance the panels by gender and geography and seek to ensure a diversity of career stage and institutions. We will only make recruitment decisions which compromise diversity when it is objectively justified by the necessity to ensure the required breadth of subject expertise with high quality candidates. * A tool has been developed which allows ESRC staff to assess the EDI characteristics of commissioning panels, and this will be used when appointing panels.   **Process**   * All panel members will receive guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias. * It is the role of panel members to moderate and assess the quality of applications and to agree final scores for each proposal. Panel members will be briefed on unconscious bias and encouraged to feel empowered to constructively challenge potential bias where they identify it. The Panel Chairs and Panel Secretaries play a particularly important role in this respect. An implementation intention statement will be read out at the beginning of the commissioning panel meeting which sets the tone for discussions and requires that panel members pay close attention to the scoring criteria and definitions.   **Interviews**   * At the interview stage, focus will be on what is said, not how it said (accents, speed, confidence). Presentation styles will not influence scores. * Applicant teams will be asked to answer specific questions based on the discussions of each proposal at the previous panel meeting. As applicants will be asked to clarify and expand on different aspects of their proposals, panel members will take a holistic overview of how each applicant team proposes to deliver the aims of the opportunity in both its written proposal and interview responses. |

Continued below...

## Evaluation

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| **Final Decision:** | **Select the relevant box** | **Include any explanation / justification required** |
| 1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will **proceed**. |  |  |
| 1. **Adapt or change** the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality. |  | The activity has been adapted following the actions described in the previous section. |
| 1. **Stop** the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups. |  |  |
| 1. 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. |  |  |

Continued below…

## Review and sign off

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| **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?** | Progress will be monitored through regular reporting and meetings with funder. |
| **Next review date:** |  |

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| **Will this EIA be published? \* Yes/Not required** | Yes |
| **Point of contact** | [ESRCP2R@esrc.ukri.org](mailto:ESRCP2R@esrc.ukri.org) |
| **Signed off by (name and date):** | Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) Daniel Robinson, PPE, ESRC  5th December 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](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=juC3i6TajkqSfvyjjbBLfuzmJllr2UxPiagnQdB9dGBUMzFPRDY0RUJIRlpCRkwzN01WMTJWM1BKRCQlQCN0PWcu)**   **EIAs for ODA and non-ODA ISPF programmes should be emailed to: ISPF@ukri.org** | |

## Change log

| **Name** | **Date** | **Version** | **Change** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | 1 | E.g. Based on input received from consultation groups at the **business case** stage, added actions under the gender section |
|  |  | 2 | E.g. Based on input received from x at the **announcement of opportunity** stage, added/removed/edited x |
|  |  | 3 | E.g. Based on input received from x at the **investment authorisation** stage, added/removed/edited x |

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).

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| **Action** | **Deadline** | **Owner** | **How will it be monitored?** | **What is/will be the impact/outcome?** |
| e.g. Update application form to include questions on additional support and reasonable adjustments | December 2023 | Applications manager | Updated form published and submissions reflect individual needs | Individual needs can be addressed.  Inform inclusive design of the activity |
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