# 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 | Research Skills Strategic Leadership Hub funding opportunity- Supporting the development of research skills in the social sciences funding opportunity. |
| Council/department/project team | Research Talent Development team, ESRC |
| Aims and objectives of the activity | For UK social science to remain world-leading, we need to ensure researchers have the skills needed to deliver innovative, impactful research. The development of research talent is essential to the successful delivery of all our strategic objectives meaning that we require a highly skilled social science research community with the ability to deliver on all aspects of research, from design to impact.  We will commission a new strategic leadership hub to lead this new investment. It will:   * create the mechanisms, partnerships and networks needed to develop the desired research environment by facilitating connections with existing training providers and through the creation of new opportunities. * work with the social science community to promote the importance of skills development throughout researchers’ careers * minimise barriers to both accessing training and sharing knowledge in relevant methods; tools; techniques and approaches. * Provide a ‘one stop shop’ for researchers to access research skills training and capacity building provision   This EIA covers the funding opportunity for the research skills training model. This EIA will cover equality considerations as part of associated comms including webinars, press releases and social media, and the applicant process including our expectations for applications. |
| Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event? | * Applicants to the funding opportunity * Commissioning and interview panel members * ESRC staff attending the panel and interview meetings * User communities and stakeholders * The wider research community and public as beneficiaries of the outputs and outcomes |
| What data and consultation have you used? | * ESRC D&I Expert Advisory Group (EAG) to undertake this work, commissioning Professor John Goodwin to gather evidence. * Engagement workshops to obtain input from the research community * Open engagement survey to obtain input from the wider research community/potential users * EIA workshop with ESRC EDI management team * Work scoping the skills needs in the social sciences to undertake data-driven research * Evidence taken from Future Data Services Programme * UKRI Responsible Procurement Guide |
| For strategy, policy and decision-making | EDI is an integral part of UKRI’s vision and mission, therefore we want to foster a more diverse and inclusive research and innovation system; a system where everyone feels included, can participate in, contribute to, and benefit from our investments in research and innovation.  As part of the ESRC EDI action plan we will ensure that EDI is embedded at every stage of the research model process, including any comms and the consultation process. We are working closely with the ESRC EDI lead on this EIA and also the process itself. The model will have several ‘living’ EIAs for the different components, and we will regularly monitor the process through stakeholder feedback and UKRI updates. |

## Analysing your impact

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

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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? | If in-person meetings present a barrier for participation, we will consider hybrid or virtual meetings where required. If in-person we will facilitate travel and logistics, ensuring that the location of the meeting and the venue meets accessibility requirements for participants. If hybrid or virtual, we will facilitate logistics including travel (if applicable) and the use of personal equipment to join virtual meetings. We will solicit information from participants about their requirements ahead of any meetings and/or communication and adjust accordingly.  The funding opportunity will follow UKRI guidance and style guidance to ensure that it is inclusive.  There will be an initial expression of interest, followed by the funding opportunity opening to allow adequate time for applicants to apply. Applicants are advised to contact us as early as possible with any [reasonable adjustments](https://www.ukri.org/apply-for-funding/how-to-apply/disability-and-accessibility-support-for-ukri-applicants-and-grant-holders/#:~:text=Support%20and%20reasonable%20adjustments%20are,a%20clear%20and%20descriptive%20way) that are required. |

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## 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 |  |  | A potential impact as early career researchers may perceive they are at a disadvantage due to not having the same breadth of experience and track record as an experienced researcher. (\*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’) | Experience and track record are not explicitly included in the criteria.  Guidance provided to panel members will make it clear that all applications should be assessed on the merit of the individual application. The individual’s delivery capability should be assessed and not their previous experience/track record.    The funding opportunity is open to all researchers at any career stage.  ESRC will make use of a range of different communication strategies to ensure that our messages reach a broad audience. |
| Disability |  |  | (Panel)  1. potential limited access to panel meetings for those with mobility issues.  2. (Panel/comms) potential difficulties understanding discussion for those with hearing/visual impairment  3. (Panel/comms) potential difficulties with concentration for attendees with neuro-disabilities | All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support.    Meeting could be held online via Zoom if mobility issues are raised (limiting venue-based accessibility issues.) but we will endeavour to seek out and use accessible venues for meetings.  Closed captioning (cc) can be arranged for hearing impaired panel members. Additional support can be provided to visually impaired panel members – including appropriate use of colour/text size in all guidance documents/ presentations.  ESRC will ensure that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda if required  Supporting communications will be recorded and/or shared online, with capacity to share modified versions for specific needs at request (cc/changed colour/text size)   * <https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/knowledge-hub/toolkits/inclusive-communication-toolkit/> * [Understanding WCAG 2.2 - Service Manual - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service/understanding-wcag)   Other considerations could include, but are not limited to:  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.  Ensure that ESRC staff have had sufficient EDI training so they can respond effectively to the requirements of all participants. |
| Gender reassignment (Trans identity) |  |  | Participants of panel meetings and interviews may experience difficulties if the proper considerations are not taken into account. | We will ask meeting attendees to share pronouns if they feel comfortable and ensure that we have the correct names for participants. All documentation will use gender neutral language.  If required, we will provide updates to reflect changes to identity and ensure that we maintain confidentiality throughout the process.  We will ensure that venues provide gender neutral toilets and changing facilities should they be required. |
| Marriage or civil partnership |  |  | No impact as participants will not be asked to disclose their marriage or civil partnership status as part of this process. |  |
| Pregnancy and maternity |  |  | (Panel and interviewees) potential difficulties attending funding meeting.  (Panel and interviewees) potential difficulties in managing early childcare responsibilities during meeting | ESRC can ensure that panel member participation is scheduled according to childcare responsibilities if required.  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.  All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support. |
| Race |  |  | Diversity Considerations. | 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, ask people to introduce themselves to check correct pronunciation of name.  Selection criteria used will be objective, transparent and robust. We will provide guidance and remind all assessors about not bringing in personal biases and provide a panel briefing in objective decision making. |
| Religion or belief |  |  | (Panel and interviewees) potential difficulties attending during cultural and religious holidays | Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings.  Considerations might include:  Scheduling meetings to avoid major religious festivals; (if impossible to avoid then consider mitigations – ie. 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.  Care will be taken to ensure that key call dates do not fall on cultural and religious holidays where possible.  Participants will be asked about any religious requirements before meetings so that appropriate venues can be selected i.e. multifaith rooms and any dietary requirements. |
| Sexual orientation |  |  | No Impact as participants will not be asked to disclose their sexual orientation as part of this process. | Inclusive language will be used for all communications and any information shared by participants will maintain confidentiality. |
| Sex |  |  | Use of language can present a barrier to participation | 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.  Caring responsibilities may have direct and indirect impact on sex as a protected characteristic. People with caring responsibilities (which falls disproportionately on women) may have less time to attend a panel meeting, therefore we will give panel members the opportunity to attend virtually if required. |

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## 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) |  |  | Potential difficulties attending panel or interviews due to distance or expense of travel required. | ESRC can ensure that panel member participation is scheduled according to travel requirements.  All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support. |
| Socio-economic status |  |  | Potential difficulties attending panel or interviews due to distance or expense of travel required | We will ensure that the meeting schedule is sent out with adequate time for participants to rearrange existing work commitments.  We would expect applicants to apply via their Research Organisation and they should cover travel and accommodation expenses incurred.  Applicants can contact ESRC directly to highlight any additional support required. |
| Education background |  |  | Potential difficulties understanding research jargon/language if attendee is from outside of academia | Ensure that unnecessary jargon and academic language are not used as these could provide a barrier. |
| Carer/parent/guardian carer responsibilities |  |  | Potential difficulties attending panel or interviews due to caring responsibilities | ESRC can ensure that panel member participation is scheduled according to caring responsibilities.  All applicants and panel members will be asked to highlight any personal circumstances that will need additional support. |
| Political opinion (Northern Ireland only) |  |  | No impact |  |
| Other characteristics  Digital Inclusion |  |  | 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.  If relevant, we will provide alternative formats for information and/or make provisions for people to access information. We will ask participants about how they would prefer to access information and what tools they have access to.  Applicants and panel members should ask for assistance from their research organisations when experiencing digital difficulties. |

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## 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 mitigations outlined enable to opportunity to be adapted to eliminate potential bias. |
| 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. |  |  |

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## Review and sign off

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| **What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?** | EDI will be considered as part of the review following the funding process, with lessons learned considered for future funding opportunities.  • Progress will be monitored through regular reporting and meetings with funder  • Evaluation and objectives will be agreed as part of the commissioning process |
| **Next review date:** |  |

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| --- | --- |
| **Will this EIA be published? \* Yes/Not required** | Yes |
| **Point of contact** | Joanna Lake |
| **Signed off by (name and date):** | For example, project board, committee, budget holder, Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) |
| **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. **Email it to your** [**council**](https://ukri.sharepoint.com/sites/thesource/SitePages/EDI-across-UKRI.aspx) **EDI team and** 2. **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 |

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## 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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