UK Research and Innovation

Equality Impact Assessment Form

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*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	2025 BBSRC Fellowship Scheme
Council/department/project team	BBSRC Research and Innovation Funding Delivery Team and Skills and Careers Unit
Aims and objectives of the activity	BBSRC Fellowships scheme provides support for researchers wishing to undertake independent research and gain leadership skills. This Fellowship will support the transition of early-stage researchers to fully independent research leaders. This Fellowship represents part of UKRI-BBSRC's commitment to the supply of highly skilled professional scientists to the UK. Applications are assessed by UKRI-BBSRC's Committee E. The scheme is aimed at researchers who are in the early stages of their careers who have the desire to conduct their own independent research within a host laboratory. The opportunity is open to any individual who has appropriate and relevant research or innovation experience. This could be through recent completion of a PhD or other higher qualification or relevant employment within a research or innovation environment. Applicants do not need to hold, or be studying for, a PhD to apply, although those currently studying for a PhD are expected to have completed their PhD viva exam by the date published in the opportunity documentation.
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	Applicants to the BBSRC Fellowship scheme funding opportunity, external peer reviewers, Committee E members and Chairs the UKRI-BBSRC secretariat and employees working on the opportunity.
What data and consultation have you used?	- Consultation with the UKRI-BBSRC events management team to ensure that the committee meetings allow attendance and participation from as diverse a range of individuals as possible. - Consultation with meeting attendees (including staff and those assessing applications) to understand potential barriers and act, where possible, to enable attendance and full participation.

	• Consultation with UKRI-BBSRC's Equality and Inclusion Policy Group to review the EIA • Maintenance of two-way channels of communication between UKRI-BBSRC and stakeholders • Learning from good practice in objective decision making and interview processes from across UKRI, supported by external independent advice		

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 Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown	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.
Age	☐	☒	Potential for unintentional bias, especially given the scheme is aimed at early career individuals who are typically in younger age brackets. Around 70% of prior applicants were in the 30-39 age bracket.	• Career breaks, changes of career and other factors are considered throughout the process to ensure applicants are not penalised for following alternative career paths. Similarly, the scheme is open to those without PhDs or due to complete PhDs by the award start date.

				• At interview stage, committee members are required to follow procedures in line with BBSRC annual unintentional bias training • Committee E has a diverse range of ages, including prior BBSRC fellows
Disability	☐	☒	Impact varies depending on types of disability which may include neurological, visual, auditory, or other physical disability. • Applicants, reviewers, and committee members with neuro-disabilities may find it difficult to access and view electronic documentation or experience difficulties with concentration • When considering the neurodiversity of participants, it is recognised that some people may feel more comfortable engaging in different ways or with an adjusted environment. • Individuals with visual disabilities may find it difficult to access and view electronic documentation. • Committee members and interviewees with physical disabilities may find it difficult to access a physical meeting venue or participate in the meeting if the assessment venue cannot cater for their needs. • Individuals with disabilities may find it difficult to engage with online platforms and virtual assessments both as applicants and the committee members.	UKRI-BBSRC will: • Encourage all individuals engaged in the process to raise concerns with the BBSRC office so that reasonable adjustments can be considered. The office can be contacted via: postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ukri.org We will respond to individual support needs on a case-by-case basis. • use a virtual sift meeting format and Discussion boards following UKRIs Virtual-first policy • ensure that electronic information is accessible to all participants • gather information from participants about any additional requirement they may need to fully participate • ensure that plenty of breaks are built into agendas • allow for potential use of screen readers for participants who are visually impaired • ensure that colours chosen, and other visual stimuli do not trigger migraines or affect those with colour blindness; different colours may assist with this if participants do not bring their own laptops • ensure adjustments are made throughout the assessment process where appropriate, for example regarding interview attendance to assist

individual applicants. This may include the use of video conferencing.

- make adjustments throughout the assessment process where appropriate, for example ensuring that applicants and committee members who do not wish to use Teams can use an alternative online platform.

- ensure that locations and venues for interviews are accessible and adapted for those with limited mobility and are supportive of individuals with cognitive impairment.

- ensure as a general principle, that venues are easily accessible from the main public transport and rail/air links.

- ensure meeting rooms are comfortable, light, and well-ventilated and meetings timetabled to allow for adequate breaks.

- at interview stage, ensure committee members follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions and are annually refreshed regarding the conditions that can result in unintentional bias.

- provide training and documentation to help with using online platforms to ensure that all individuals are comfortable if online assessments and interviews are required.

| Gender reassignment (Trans identity) | ☐ | ☒ | Potential for unintentional bias | • At interview stage, committee members are required to follow procedures in line with UKRI-BBSRC annual unintentional bias training |

	☐	☒		• At sift, applications will only be referred to by reference number • At interview, candidates will be referred to by surname only • If they wish to do so, we encourage our assessors to display their preferred pronouns alongside their name in Microsoft Teams
Marriage or civil partnership	☐	☒	Potential for unintentional bias	• At interview stage, committee members are required to follow procedures in line with UKRI-BBSRC annual unintentional bias training
Pregnancy and maternity	☐	☒	Applicants and committee members who are pregnant, on maternity or paternity leave may find it difficult to access venues or participate in the process. Applicants may be on parental leave whilst the opportunity is open, potentially affecting their awareness of this opportunity and ability to participate. Career breaks in an applicant's track record due to parental leave or caring responsibilities may be seen as negative by the committee.	• The timeline is published ahead of time to increase opportunities for participation. • The opportunity is recurring on an annual basis enabling individuals to apply to subsequent rounds. • UKRI-BBSRC will use a virtual meeting format and Discussion boards for the application sift meeting, following UKRI's Virtual first policy • Adjustments are made throughout the assessment process where appropriate for example, regarding interview attendance to assist individual applicants. This may include flexibility in the timing of interview or the use of video conferencing. • UKRI-BBSRC consults with all participants to understand and cater for their requirements for participation • Guidance is provided to the committee to ensure appropriate assessment of applicant track record without bias against career breaks due to parental leave or caring responsibilities

	Screened out	Screened in	Potential impact	Mitigation
	☐	☒		• At interview, UKRI-BBSRC allows applicants and committee members to claim expenses for reasonable childcare costs during the meeting • UKRI-BBSRC committee membership period is extended if Maternity leave is taken during their appointment
Race	☐	☒	It is important that committee members and peer reviewers are from a diverse community which represents the community and UK as a whole. Potential for unintentional bias	• UKRI-BBSRC will monitor the diversity of committee members to ensure representation of the community and a diversity of opinion • At interview stage, committee members are required to follow procedures in line with BBSRC annual unintentional bias training
Religion or belief	☐	☒	The funding opportunity may coincide with a religious holiday. Participants may be unable to take part in committee meetings or interviews due to religious observances. Participants may have specific dietary requirements due to religious beliefs.	• UKRI-BBSRC ensures that religious observances are considered as much as possible when timetabling major activities. • If catering is provided it should allow for religious observances. All participants will be asked to provide any details of dietary requirements ahead of time.
Sexual orientation	☐	☒	Potential for unintentional bias	• At interview stage, committee members are required to follow procedures in line with UKRI-BBSRC annual unintentional bias training
Sex	☐	☒	Potential for unintentional bias	• UKRI-BBSRC will monitor the diversity of committee members to ensure representation of the community and a diversity of opinion • To avoid potential unconscious bias, first names and titles of applicants will not be used during virtual meeting discussions

Additional characteristics

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Additional characteristics	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown	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).
Geographical location and place (consider UK and international offices)	☐	☒	Due to the location of the BBSRC office and inconsistent travel accessibility across the country, in-person meetings are usually held in London, Birmingham, and other locations with strong rail/flight connections. Individuals located throughout the rest of the UK may need to travel considerable distances to participate. Applicants and committee members may be living in areas of the UK with less efficient internet infrastructure (digital/bandwidth inequality), such as rural areas. This could affect their ability to engage virtually during meetings.	Ensure, where appropriate, that meetings are virtual or hybrid. In the case of interviews, in exceptional circumstances these may be delivered hybrid. Expectations and dates for in-person interviews are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing for preparation for participants. BBSRC staff will avoid starting in-person meetings at 9am and if necessary, offer accommodation for the previous evening. We will also offer accommodation for the evening following the meeting if necessary. Ensure the application process does not require any programmes or software that depend on fast broadband. Ensure travel and accommodation can be expensed for in-person meetings to encourage participation
Socio-economic status	☐	☒	Applicants and panel members may be unable to rely on post-meeting reimbursement of expenses to fund their travel and accommodation due to their personal financial resources. This may also interact with geographic location, caring responsibilities and other protected characteristics. This may also affect their remote working abilities due to reliance on effective internet infrastructure.	Ensure where possible, meetings are virtual or hybrid. Instances where individuals are unable to pay for their own travel and accommodation (before expenses can be made) will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
Education background	☒	☒	We welcome applications from all educational backgrounds, acknowledging that excellent research can be led by a diverse range of individuals.	BBSRC welcomes applications from various educational background and makes this clear in the application text, welcoming applications from different career paths. For example, we welcome international applicants and those who do not hold a PhD.

| Parent/guardian responsibilities | ☐ | ☒ | Applicants and committee members with child or other caring responsibilities may be cautious about committing to attend meetings that may conflict with these responsibilities (for example, school holidays) or incur additional costs for additional care | • UKRI-BBSRC will use a virtual meeting format and Discussion boards for the application sift meeting following UKRI's Virtual first policy

• UKRI-BBSRC consults with all participants to understand and cater for their requirements for participation

• UKRI-BBSRC ensures that school holidays are considered where possible when timetabling discussion boards and virtual meetings.

• Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing for preparation for participants to cover any caring responsibilities.

• Where possible, UKRI-BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours.

• UKRI-BBSRC will pay the cost of additional caring responsibilities incurred while on UKRI-BBSRC business.

   • UKRI-BBSRC will make adjustments where participants are unable to personally attend interview due to ongoing industrial action on public transport or in other sectors. |
| Carer/parent carer responsibilities | ☐ | ☒ | Applicants and committee members with child or other caring responsibilities may be cautious about committing to attend meetings that may conflict with these responsibilities (for example, school holidays) or incur additional costs for additional care | • UKRI-BBSRC will use a virtual meeting format and Discussion boards for the application sift meeting following UKRI's Virtual first policy

• UKRI-BBSRC consults with all participants to understand and cater for their requirements for participation

• UKRI-BBSRC ensures that school holidays are considered where possible when timetabling |

				discussion boards and virtual meetings. • Expectations and dates for all aspects of the process are set out as far in advance as possible, allowing for preparation for participants to cover any caring responsibilities. • Where possible, UKRI-BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours. • UKRI-BBSRC will pay the cost of additional caring responsibilities incurred while on UKRI-BBSRC business. • UKRI-BBSRC will make adjustments where participants are unable to personally attend interview due to ongoing industrial action on public transport or in other sectors.
Other characteristics	☐	☐	Applicants and panel members who do not have English as their first language may experience challenges participating.	Meetings held virtually will have closed captioning enabled. All acronyms used will be fully explained in the relevant meeting or documentation. For hybrid meetings, suitable AV equipment will be used to ensure poor audio quality does not exacerbate language barriers.

Are there **general or overarching impacts on multiple groups**? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?	UKRI-BBSRC is proactive in increasing the diversity of our reviewers and committee members. The committee membership is published on the UKRI-BBSRC website. Further information: **https://bbsrc.ukri.org/about/equality-diversity/** UKRI-BBSRC is dedicated to ensuring that the processes for this Fellowships funding opportunity are open and inclusive. Those engaged in the processes endeavour to conduct each stage in a fair manner and without prejudice or bias. In line with this we adopt the following principles: **For applicants** • The opportunity is advertised widely to reach the largest possible audience • The opportunity call text and guidance clearly state the eligibility and assessment criteria • The UKRI-BBSRC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites, including the ability to adjust the text size or use a text reader on the page • UKRI-BBSRC supports applicants as much as possible, both before and after submission, to assist them in the application and assessment process. • The awards can be held on a part-time or flexible basis, down to 0.5 FTE. **For assessors: reviewers** • Reviewers are drawn from as wide a pool as possible • The guidance clearly states the expectations of reviewers • UKRI-BBSRC provides support to reviewers as much as possible, to assist them in the assessment process. **For assessors: Committee** • Everyone involved in the decision-making process has had training in Unconscious Bias to raise awareness of conditions that may impact on their decision-making • UKRI-BBSRC is committed to enabling participation for people with alternative work patterns, including reduced working hours

	• UKRI-BBSRC provides a geographic spread of meeting locations as much as possible when face-to-face meetings are held, rather than virtual meetings • Committee members are asked to inform UKRI-BBSRC if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation • UKRI-BBSRC consults with committee members on a regular basis regarding business improvements including an opportunity at each meeting for feedback • UKRI-BBSRC provides regular training and guidance on new or revised ways of working.

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**.	☐	
2. **Adapt or change** the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality.	☒	There is potential that some groups may be disadvantaged but with the mitigations stated above in place this has been minimised. Reasonable support will be provided to individuals where unforeseen barriers are identified. Our monitoring process will enable us to identify unforeseen barriers and address them through adaptation if necessary.
3. **Stop** the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.	☐	
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.	☐	

Continued below…

Review and sign off

What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?	• UKRI-BBSRC will review the equality impact assessment before commencing each new Fellowship funding opportunity. • The protected characteristics voluntarily submitted by applicants during the submission process are monitored for each round. Success rates are monitored for each round. • Multiple feedback sessions take place during each round for UKRI-BBSRC staff and Committee E members.
Next review date:	January 2026

Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required	Yes
Point of contact	**postdoc.fellowships@bbsrc.ukri.org**
Signed off by (name and date):	Geoffrey Maycock, BBSRC Senior Portfolio Manager, 24/01/2025

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
Amelia Townley-Taylor	24/01/2024	1.0	
Geoffrey Maycock	15/01/2025	1.1	Annual review; adapted previous EIA template into newer UKRI template including addition of considerations for geographical location, socio-economic background, and educational background.