



UK Research  
and Innovation

# 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	UKRI Metascience AI early career fellowships
Council/department/project team	Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (lead), Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), Medical Research Council (MRC), Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC), Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT)
Aims and objectives of the activity	The UK Metascience Unit aims to fund a cohort of early career fellows to build our understanding of how the growing adoption of AI is changing the research landscape, including what metascientific, ethical, epistemic, and socioeconomic questions this raises, and how governments, industry, and funding organisations should respond.
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applicants to the opportunity</li> <li>• Independent moderators</li> <li>• ESRC staff managing the opportunity</li> <li>• Opportunity partner organisation</li> <li>• User communities and stakeholders</li> <li>• The wider research community and public as beneficiaries of the outputs and outcomes</li> </ul>
What data and consultation have you used?	Previous EIAs both within UKRI and consultation with UKRI policy groups

### 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	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The requirement that applicants are required to be early career researchers could be conflated with age.	To avoid conflation with an applicant's age, 'early career' is simply restricted to individuals who have not previously been a project lead, lead on an externally funded project, or led a significant programme of work in a commercial or non-academic setting.
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Funding Service is compliant with relevant accessibility standards.  oho	The Funding Service is compliant with accessibility standards set by the Government Digital Service, (GDS). TFS is built to an AA accessibility standard and the team cannot release code unless it passes tests to ensure compliance with that standard. TFS's interaction designers are trained in accessible design and to ensure it is accessible they undertake regular audits with the Disability Accessibility Centre (DAC) who run the service through human-based testing with people who have a wide range of disabilities. The accessibility statement for the TFS can be found at <a href="#">Accessibility statement for the UKRI Funding Service – UKRI</a>

				<p>RO are expected to comply with their relevant policies and laws around disability for the duration of fellowships.</p> <p>Applicants are asked to contact UKRI if any reasonable adjustments are required.</p>
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	UKRI records may show the wrong gender.	<p>Considerations need to be given at UKRI as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted.</p> <p>We will work to ensure the use of gender-neutral language in our documents.</p> <p>UKRI terms and conditions permit absence because of medical treatment. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the Research Organisation's relevant policies.</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	None identified as UKRI will not have information on this protected characteristic.	
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Due to the time commitment required from the applicants, including preparing an application and a strict deadline for the distributed peer review, those with childcare responsibilities may be at a disadvantage.	<p>Key dates will be communicated in advance to allow applicants maximum flexibility in organising their time.</p> <p>A pre-announcement has been published to make aware of open and closing date of the opportunity.</p> <p>Provisions for parental leave (including maternity leave, paternity leave and leave related to surrogacy and adoption) are covered in the UKRI terms and conditions.</p>

				<p>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).</p> <p>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.</p>
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There could be potential discrimination or bias.	<p>All peer reviewers and independent moderators will receive the code of practice and guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias.</p> <p>The Office and independent moderators will monitor any potential bias and challenge where we identify it.</p>
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There could be potential discrimination because it is known that somebody has a particular faith or belief.	<p>All peer reviewers and the independent moderators will receive the code of practice and guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias.</p> <p>Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning the opportunity timeline.</p>

Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	There could be potential discrimination because it is known by somebody.	All peer reviewers and the independent moderators will receive the code of practice and guidance which covers issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias.
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Use of language can present a barrier to participation and it may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged.	Ensure use of gender-neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc.  The school holidays are considered when developing the opportunity timeline not to disadvantage those with caring responsibilities.

### 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The Metascience Unit is partnering with the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation who will fund a cohort of fellows outside of the UK. Fellows being based in different time zones may impact their ability to participate in cohort development activities.	The assessment process does not involve convening an assessment panel, which can disadvantage assessors across a range of time zones.  Cohort development activities will be scheduled to optimise the ability of fellows to participate.

				<p>The programme will offer an in-person summer school to bring fellows together in the same location.</p> <p>These cohort development opportunities are not mandatory, and Fellows are invited to contact the Metascience Unit to discuss adjustments that might facilitate their participation.</p> <p>UKRI expects regardless of location and legal jurisdiction, Fellows will be treated with fairness and respect and with EDI in mind. ROs are expected to comply with EDI legalisation in the respective countries.</p>
Socio-economic status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	None identified as UKRI will not have information on this additional characteristic.	
Education background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	People without PhD may feel disadvantaged or excluded from the funding opportunity.	The call specification invites applications from researchers who have equivalent experience as PhD.
Parent/guardian responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Due to the time commitment required from the applicants, including preparing an application and a strict deadline for the distributed peer review, those with childcare responsibilities may be at a disadvantage.</p> <p>Caring responsibilities could make it more challenging to participate in cohort development opportunities such as the in-person summer school.</p>	<p>Dates will be agreed and communicated in advance to allow applicants maximum flexibility to plan their time and make arrangements to facilitate their participation in cohort development opportunities. A pre-announcement has been published to make aware of open and closing date of the opportunity.</p> <p>The school holidays are considered when developing the opportunity timeline not to disadvantage those with caring responsibilities.</p>

				<p>Cohort development opportunities are not mandatory, and Fellows are invited to contact the Metascience Unit to discuss adjustments that might facilitate their participation.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>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.</p>
Carer responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Due to the time commitment required from the applicants, including preparing an application and a strict deadline for the distributed peer review, those with caring responsibilities may be at a disadvantage.</p> <p>Caring responsibilities could make it more challenging to participate in cohort development opportunities such as the in-person summer school.</p>	<p>Dates will be agreed and communicated in advance to allow applicants maximum flexibility in organising their time.</p> <p>Cohort development opportunities are not mandatory, and Fellows are invited to contact the Metascience Unit to discuss adjustments that might facilitate their participation.</p>



				<p>A pre-announcement has been published to make aware of open and closing date of the opportunity.</p> <p>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).</p>
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	None identified as UKRI will not have information on this additional characteristic.	
Other characteristics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

<p>Are there <b>general or overarching impacts on multiple groups</b>? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?</p>	<p><b>General Equality and Diversity Considerations</b></p> <p>UKRI’s research commissioning processes are designed with fairness in mind.</p> <p>ESRC is administering this opportunity in partnership with the Metascience Unit. Staff receive Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training so they can respond effectively to the requirements of all participants.</p> <p>ESRC uses a variety of different communication strategies to ensure that our messages are inclusive and accessible.</p> <p>ESRC is working internationally and considering the implication for EDI and the protected characteristics. Those relevant consideration are specified above.</p> <p>Reviewers will receive guidance that includes expectations around equality, diversity and inclusion.</p>
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	<p>Any applicant or Fellow who wishes to discuss reasonable adjustments due to existing or new personal circumstances can contact the UK Metascience Unit at: <a href="mailto:metascience@ukri.org">metascience@ukri.org</a></p>
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## Evaluation

Final Decision:	Select the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will <b>proceed</b> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. <b>Adapt or change</b> the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The activity has been adapted following the actions described in the previous section.
3. <b>Stop</b> 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 <b>extreme cases</b> or where <b>positive action</b> is taken). Therefore, you are going to <b>proceed with caution</b> with this activity knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Review and sign off

<p><b>What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?</b></p>	<p>The UK Metascience Unit will conduct an evaluation of the assessment process, which is trailing distributed peer review. This will include inviting applicants to provide feedback to understand and learn from their experiences.</p>
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	<p>EDI will be considered as part of the lessons learned following this activity and will inform future funding opportunities.</p> <p>Monitoring and evaluation activity throughout the course of the fellowship will capture information on impact.</p>
<b>Next review date:</b>	June 2025

<b>Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required</b>	Yes
<b>Point of contact</b>	metascience@ukri.org
<b>Signed off by (name and date):</b>	UK Metascience Unit, 20/01/2025

**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**