

**2022/23 BBSRC Pioneer Awards funding opportunity: Equality Impact
Assessment version 1.0**

Version history

Version	Date	Change
1.0	7 Dec 2022	Initial publication

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	BBSRC Pioneer Awards
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>The aim of the Pioneer Awards scheme is to support early-stage research with the potential to transform our fundamental understanding of biological systems. The call has an indicative budget of £4 million and it is anticipated that approximately 25 grants will be awarded, subject to the quality of the applications received.</p> <p>This EIA covers the application and assessment process for this funding opportunity.</p> <p>The application process consists of two mandatory stages – an expression of interest stage and a full opportunity stage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The expressions of interests are reviewed internally by the BBSRC office to assess fit to scope of the scheme and BBSRC remit • Full applications will be assessed by a multidisciplinary panel comprising members drawn from BBSRC's Pool of Experts and other subject matter experts as required. Panel members use their own knowledge and experience to evaluate the proposal against set assessment criteria. • The Pioneer Awards panel will make the final recommendations for funding.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with a member of BBSRC's Equality and Inclusion Policy Group to review the Pioneer Awards process • Consultation with BBSRC Heads of Sectors and Directors to gain advice, assess and agree the revised scheme and guidance • Engagement with BBSRC Council, Executive and Committee Chairs

**2022/23 BBSRC Pioneer Awards funding opportunity: Equality Impact
Assessment version 1.0**

4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Applicants to the Pioneer Awards call, panel members, BBSRC Council members, and BBSRC employees who are taking part in the assessment process.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>BBSRC monitors, analyses and publishes data to better understand the diversity of our applicant and assessor community.</p> <p>BBSRC is proactive in increasing the diversity of our reviewers and panel members. Panel membership for each meeting is published on the website after the funding decisions have been made.</p> <p>We encourage our community to inform us of perceived or experienced barriers, and endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to mitigate those barriers where epossible.</p> <p>Further information: https://www.ukri.org/our-work/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/</p>

2022/23 BBSRC Pioneer Awards funding opportunity: Equality Impact Assessment version 1.0

BBSRC is committed to ensuring that the processes for Pioneer Awards funding are open and inclusive. Those engaged in the processes endeavor to conduct each stage in a fair manner and without prejudice or bias.

There are three aspects to this equality impact assessment:

- Ensuring that the submission, peer review and awarding processes are free from unintentional bias
- Ensuring the process enables rigorous assessment of this investment
- Identifying and addressing any potential barriers to attendance and participation by a diverse range of people (applicants and assessors)

In line with this we adopt the following principles:

For applicants:

- The call is advertised widely to reach the largest possible audience
- A series of webinars are held prior to the closing date of the expression of interest stage to inform potential applicants of the opportunity
- The call text and guidance clearly state the eligibility and assessment criteria and the key dates for applications and outcomes
- BBSRC provides support and advice to applicants both before and after submission, to assist them in the application and assessment process

For assessors (panel members):

- BBSRC ensures that the membership of the panel is diverse and is representative of relevant stakeholders and regions
- Everyone involved in the decision-making process will receive training in Unconscious Bias to raise awareness of conditions that may impact on their decision-making
- BBSRC provides briefing to panel members throughout the assessment process about good practice in objective and safeguarding decision making
- BBSRC ensures that the format, duration and location of the assessment meeting and the venue itself (if face-to-face) are conducive to participation by a diverse range of people
- Assessment meetings and interviews are structured and managed to ensure that the approach is consistent with appropriately scheduled breaks
- Virtual meetings are arranged using an appropriate platform that can be accessed by all panel members (Zoom)
- Where applicable, BBSRC provides a geographic spread of meeting locations as much as possible
- BBSRC is committed to enabling participation for people with alternative work patterns, including reduced working hours
- Panel members are asked to inform BBSRC if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation
- BBSRC provides regular training and guidance on new or revised ways of working, such as webinars, induction training, one-to-one training, Zoom/Teams functionality
- BBSRC ensures that caring responsibilities are considered when organising panel meetings, for example not scheduling them during school holidays or religious festivals

**2022/23 BBSRC Pioneer Awards funding opportunity: Equality Impact
Assessment version 1.0**

Protected Characteristic Group	Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?	Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used	Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)
Disability	Potential for negative impact	<p>BBSRC recognises that disability has a diverse spectrum. Specific examples of barriers are provided below but are not intended to cover this spectrum in its entirety.</p> <p>Recognising a range of neurdiversity, we understand that some individuals may find it difficult to access and view electronic documentation or experience difficulties with concentration</p> <p>Panel members with physical disabilities may find it difficult to access the meeting venue and / or participate in the meeting if the assessment venue cannot cater for their needs.</p> <p>Individuals with visual disabilities may have</p>	<p>BBSRC will respond to individual support needs on a case by case basis.</p> <p>Ensure that electronic information is accessible</p> <p>Gather information from meeting participants about any additional requirements they may need in order to fully participate ensure that the room is light and airy ensure that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda</p> <p>Consider the use of a virtual meeting and the platforms used to facilitate this</p> <p>Ensure that the venue is easily accessible to main rail/air links</p> <p>Allow for potential use of screen readers for participants who are visually impaired</p>

**2022/23 BBSRC Pioneer Awards funding opportunity: Equality Impact
Assessment version 1.0**

		<p>difficulty reading and accessing information</p> <p>Individuals with hearing impairments may have difficulty at meetings</p>	<p>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</p> <p>The BBSRC website conforms to accessibility requirements for websites, including the ability to adjust the text size or use a text reader on the page</p> <p>Ensure that, at physical meetings, those with hearing impairments are placed where their hearing will not be interfered with</p>
Gender reassignment	Neutral	Neutral	N/A
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral	Neutral	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential for negative impact	Panel members who are pregnant/ on maternity or have child or other caring responsibilities may be discouraged from participating in Panel meetings	<p>Consider the use of a virtual meeting</p> <p>BBSRC consults with all participants to understand and cater for their requirements for participation.</p> <p>As a general principle, venues are easily accessible to main rail/air links and easy to move around.</p> <p>Meeting rooms are comfortable and meetings are timetabled to allow for adequate breaks.</p>

**2022/23 BBSRC Pioneer Awards funding opportunity: Equality Impact
Assessment version 1.0**

		Career breaks in applicant track records due to parental leave or caring responsibilities may be seen as negative by the panel	Guidance to be provided to the panel to ensure appropriate assessment of applicant track record without bias against career breaks due to parental leave/caring responsibilities, etc.
Ethnicity	Potential for negative impact	It is important that selection of panel members is from a diverse community	BBSRC will monitor the diversity of panel members and aims to achieve representation of the community and a diversity of opinion, while maintaining necessary scientific expertise
Religion or belief	Potential for negative impact	Panel members may be discouraged from participating in the panel meeting if it is due to take place during a religious festival	BBSRC ensures that religious observances are taken into account as much as possible when timetabling major activities. When applicable, BBSRC ensures that the venue caters for all dietary requirements.
Sexual orientation	Neutral	Neutral	N/A
Sex (gender)	Potential for negative impact	Panel members and interview candidates may find it difficult to participate if they have caring responsibilities	BBSRC ensures that school holidays are taken into account where possible when timetabling the panel meeting for the Pioneer Awards call. 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, BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours.

**2022/23 BBSRC Pioneer Awards funding opportunity: Equality Impact
Assessment version 1.0**

		There is an uneven gender split in the community of applicants and Panel members	<p>BBSRC will pay the cost of additional caring responsibilities incurred while on BBSRC business.</p> <p>BBSRC will monitor the diversity of panel members and aims to achieve representation of the community and a diversity of opinion</p>
Caring responsibilities	Potential for negative impact	Panel members and interview candidates may find it difficult to participate if they have caring responsibilities	<p>BBSRC ensures that school holidays are taken into account where possible when timetabling the panel meeting for the Pioneer Awards call.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Where possible, BBSRC aims to schedule meetings in standard working hours.</p> <p>BBSRC will pay the cost of additional caring responsibilities incurred while on BBSRC business.</p>
Age	Neutral	Neutral	N/A

2022/23 BBSRC Pioneer Awards funding opportunity: Equality Impact Assessment version 1.0

Unconscious bias

In addition to the above, steps have been taken to minimise the potential impact of unconscious bias on the assessment processes. These include:

- Chair and deputy(s) to attend briefing meeting, where unconscious bias will be covered
- Panel to receive a briefing on Methods of Working and objective decision making (e.g. by webinar)
- Note regarding unconscious bias included in the Chair's brief.

**2022/23 BBSRC Pioneer Awards funding opportunity: Equality Impact
Assessment version 1.0**

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Potential for discrimination or negative impact has been assessed and actions to address negative impacts are being implemented	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed .		
2. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias	X	
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the aim of the policy or practice (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore you are going to proceed with caution with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.		

Will this EIA be published Yes/Not required	Yes
Date completed:	10 Nov 2022
Review date (if applicable):	Annually