



**EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment**

Question	Response
<b>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</b>	EPSRC Core Equipment 2024
<b>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</b>	To award universities, National Research Facilities the Research Complex at Harwell, National Wind Tunnel Facility and Infrastructure Fund investments in 1.2 GHz NMR and MRI with block grants for the purchase of core equipment in support of the EPSRC priority of World Class Labs.
<b>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</b>	This is the fifth year that a similar call has been run. Feedback from applicants and the four previous panels has been incorporated into this call.
<b>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</b>	Invited applicants from 40 universities, NRFs and the RCaH, NWTF and IF investments in NMR and MRI, panel members, university research offices.
<b>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</b>	Case studies with users of the funded equipment

As a funder of research, EPSRC remains committed to attracting the best potential researchers from a diverse population into research careers. The Research Councils have together developed the ambitious [RCUK Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#) to outline our collective aspirations for working with the research community, and partners throughout the sector. For policy changes, funding activities and events EPSRC will aim to:

- Select venues that are accessible and where possible accommodate any specific requirement in our planning and organisation of an initiative to support wider participation. This includes for applicants, reviewers, panel members and staff. Included in the interview invitation letter is a request for any access issues to be notified.
- All participants in the process are asked to inform staff if they have any additional needs to enable attendance or participation.
- Offer support for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#).
- Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities, advertise these widely to reach the largest possible audience.
- Support and encourage panel members to follow best practice in taking positive steps to safeguard funding decisions. Staff will work closely with the Panel Chair(s) to agree approaches that are designed to minimize opportunities for bias and improve transparency

of the decision making process. This includes managing environmental conditions, such as providing appropriate breaks.

- Support flexible working of stakeholders.
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels. Staff will adhere to a mixed panel policy and endeavor to achieve the minimum 30% for the underrepresented gender on the panel.
- Abide by the principles of peer review
- Provide EPSRC staff with tailored unconscious bias training for Peer Review processes and clear guidance for assessors.
- Handle personal sensitive information in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018.

<b>Protected Characteristic Group</b>	<b>Is there a potential for positive or negative impact?</b>	<b>Please explain and give examples of any evidence/data used</b>	<b>Action to address negative impact (e.g. adjustment to the policy)</b>
<b>Disability</b>	Potentially positive or negative	The review panel is taking place virtually which is a long period of screen time which may be a problem for some.  However those with physical disabilities will find it easier to attend virtually.	Regular breaks will be included in the agenda. Panel members will be encouraged to request additional breaks
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	No known negative impact		
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	No known negative impact		
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Potentially negative	Those who are on parental leave may miss out on having their equipment request included in the application	We gave universities advanced warning of the call and will have the call open for 10 weeks.
<b>Race</b>	Potentially negative	The call is by invitation only which could limit the diversity of applicants.	Call is to fund multi-user equipment that will be open to a wide range of users. The Sustainability assessment criterion includes need to “sustain and evolve a diverse and inclusive user base.”

			The review panels will follow EPSRC's rules on ethnic diversity on panels, subject to availability on the panel dates.
<b>Religion or belief</b>	No known negative impact		<p>Universities will be given advance warning of the call and will have the call open for 10 weeks to minimise the impact of religious holidays on ability to submit.</p> <p>Schedule webinars to avoid religious holidays if possible: <a href="#">Interfaith Calendar 2024: Major Religious Holidays, Holy Days (diversityresources.com)</a></p> <p>Webinar will be recorded for those who cannot attend and a Q&amp;A document from the webinar will be circulated.</p> <p>Panel meetings will be held virtually and include regular breaks which will allow for prayer. We reserve the right to modify the panel structure for ED&amp;I reasons.</p>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	No known negative impact		
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	No known negative impact	The call is by invitation only which could limit the diversity of applicants.	<p>The review panels will be mixed gender, based on availability on the panel dates as per Standard EPSRC rules.</p> <p>Call is to fund multi-user equipment that will be open to a wide range of users. The Sustainability assessment criterion</p>

			includes need to “sustain and evolve a diverse and inclusive user base.”
<b>Age</b>	Potentially negative	The PI has to be the senior member of staff responsible for capital within the university or director of an NRF/RCaH, therefore ECRs cannot be PI on the application	<p>We have actively encouraged the inclusion of Co-Is on the call. Therefore ECRs can be named on the proposal and get recognition for their role in managing the equipment.</p> <p>The call document states that an RTP can be the PI on applications for this call.</p> <p>One of the call objectives is core equipment for the benefit of ECRs and doctoral training cohorts, therefore a range of researchers will benefit from these awards</p> <p>The review panel will be made up of equipment experts, spanning different career stages and roles.</p>
<b>Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)</b>	Potentially negative	Caring responsibilities – the call is open over the summer, meaning those with caring responsibilities will be juggling multiple priorities.	ROs were given advance notice of the call 4 weeks ahead of the call opening. The call will be open for 10 weeks to allow as much time as possible for preparation. A webinar will be held to ensure any questions could be answered. A Q&A document will be circulated to applicants and we will record the webinar as well for those who cannot attend. We have taken on advice from the

			<p>business improvement team on timing for the webinar to minimise the impact of it being held in the summer holidays.</p> <p>The review panel will be held virtually, therefore no overnight stays are required.</p>
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**Evaluation:**

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	Potentially, these awards are Organisational Awards and the project lead must be a senior member of staff with responsibility for the RO's capital strategy. We have however designed the call to be inclusive of ECRs and students. Research Technical Professionals are also encouraged to be listed as investigators.	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will <b>proceed</b> .		
2. You can decide to <b>stop</b> the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups		
3. You can <b>adapt or change</b> the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias		
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 <b>proceed with caution</b> with this policy or practice knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	Y	<p>We will give as much advanced warning as we possibly can before launching the call and the call will be open for 10 weeks. Webinars will be held and notes circulated to all applicants.</p> <p>Based on advice from our SAT we are allowing project co-leads on the applications so that a wide gender balance and age range of investigators can be achieved.</p> <p>Call is to fund multi-user equipment that will be open to a wide range of users. The sustainability assessment criterion</p>

		<p>includes need to “sustain and evolve a diverse and inclusive user base.”</p> <p>One of the objectives of the call is specifically aimed at ECRs and students, therefore a broad range of researchers will benefit from the funded equipment.</p>
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<b>Will this EIA be published*</b> (*EIA’s should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	Yes
<b>Date completed:</b>	<b>21/6/2024</b>
<b>Review date (if applicable):</b>	

#### Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Stephen Gilligan	11/5/2022	1	
Stephen Gilligan	17/6/2022	2	Update following feedback from EDI and People Team
Stephen Gilligan	21/6/2024	3	Update for 2024 call