

# ESRC/Turing Joint Fellowships Scheme 2019

## Equality Impact Assessment Form

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is committed to promoting equality and participation in all their activities, whether this is related to the work we do with our external stakeholders or whether this is related to our responsibilities as an employer. As a public body, we are also required to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations when making decisions and developing policies. To do this, it is necessary to understand the potential impacts of the range of internal and external activities on different groups of people.

### What is an Equality Impact Assessment and why does UKRI use it?

When developing a new scheme, or considering changes to an existing one, UKRI will carry out an equality impact assessment to review how it may affect particular groups or individuals and will take the findings into account. We expect that very rarely our actions will create barriers to participation. The assessment may however flag issues that are not of UKRI's making but we will, where it is in our remit to do so, recommend actions and adjustments. Some impacts are not exclusive to the scheme or change that is being evaluated and need to be addressed throughout our organisation. In some cases we may not have enough expertise and we will consult with others.

### Our leadership and building on good practice.

It is our ambition to be recognised as a leader in Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and to build on our record of achievements to date, following on from the RCUK, Innovate UK and HEFCE action plans. These plans are updated from time to time and Equality Impact Assessments will help us to prioritise actions.

### Current good practice that is relevant to this Scheme includes:

- Grant terms and conditions, including recognition for sick leave and all forms of parental leave
- Unconscious Bias Training for all panel members (and commitment to train peer reviewers once the UKRI training materials are released)

There are multiple dimensions/aspects to this Equality Impact Assessment

- Ensuring that the eligibility criteria are clear and objectively justified;
- Ensuring that the submission, peer review and awarding processes are free from unintentional bias;
- The identification of any potential barriers to attendance and participation in the call and the assessment and awarding process as below
  - Meeting duration – Appropriate duration to facilitate good environmental conditions for assessment and inclusion
  - Venue location and arrangements to accommodate needs
  - Broad ranging panel membership
  - Meeting management/Chair/robust assessment criteria

Question	Response
<b>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</b>	ESRC/Turing Joint Fellowships 2019
<b>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</b>	This opportunity is aimed at driving forward the development and application of cutting-edge data science to study major societal challenges. The ambitions of Turing align very closely with those of ESRC which has a long-held strategic objective to strengthen quantitative and data science skills across the UK social science research base. The growing

Question	Response
	<p>advent of big data and the need to look at new ways to analyse such data has added further impetus to build new research capacity in this area. A partnership with Turing is seen as an integral and innovative part of this broader strategy.</p> <p>Each award recipient will be entitled to the benefits of a Turing Fellow for the duration of the award period, which include the following: access to work space at the Institute, Intel cloud credits, support from the research facilitation and partnerships team in developing the project, eligibility to apply for seed core funding, and opportunities for collaboration with Turing Fellows from across a network of 13 universities.</p> <p>We are anticipating supporting up to two Fellows, dependent on the quality of the proposals. The maximum amount available for each Fellowship is £500,000 at 100% full economic cost (fEC) of which ESRC will pay 80%. Funding will be available for a maximum of 36 months.</p>
<p><b>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy?</b> (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</p>	<p>ESRC Deputy Director Frances Burstow; Senior members of The Alan Turing Institute; Consultation with the ESRC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion group.</p>
<p><b>4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?</b></p>	<p>Applicants to the scheme; Panel members; ESRC staff; The Alan Turing Institute staff.</p>
<p><b>5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?</b></p>	<p>The scheme is monitored and reviewed on an annual basis by the ESRC and Turing.</p> <p>Grant recipients of the ESRC are also under conditions to publish their research on ResearchFish in line with standard UKRI Terms and Conditions.</p>

## GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

ESRC's standard Panel process is designed with fairness in mind.

### Eligibility and criteria:

- The scheme is open to all eligible research organisations (RO). Applicants are eligible for funding whether or not they are established members of a recognised RO, but applicants who are not an established member of a recognised RO must be accommodated by the RO and provided with appropriate facilities to carry out the research.
- Track record is not a funding criterion for the scheme, and panels are briefed that they should not pay particular attention to track record of applicants. Whilst track record should play into panel decisions it should not be emphasised to the extent that innovative / potentially high impact work

by less established researchers is disadvantaged. Panels are instructed to assess the application in front of them and not to 'read between the lines' or give the benefit of the doubt based on the reputation of the individual applicant or team, as this would be a form of confirmation bias.

### **Standard Grant Terms and Conditions:**

- 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).
- Research Organisations are subject to equality legislation and have a duty to comply with it. RGC 8 states that 'The Research Organisation must assume full responsibility for staff funded from the grant and, in consequence, accept all duties owed to and responsibilities for these staff, including, without limitation, their terms and conditions of employment and their training and supervision, arising from the employer/employee relationship.' Universities are therefore required to make reasonable adjustments as required to support their staff.

### **Panel recruitment:**

- We aim to ensure that the composition of panels are diverse, with each panel having at least a 60:40 gender balance;
- Where possible we ensure that the chair and vice chair of each panel are not the same gender;
- We encourage applicants across the full range of protected characteristics, we look at panel composition by race/ethnicity and disability status. We do not impose quotas;
- Panel members are appointed, first and foremost, based on expertise. Final decisions take into account trying to balance the panels by gender and geography and seek to ensure a diversity of career stage and institutions. We will only make recruitment decisions which compromise diversity when it is objectively justified by the necessity to ensure the required breadth of subject expertise with high quality candidates.

### **Process:**

- The ESRC Peer Review College should be the first source of peer reviewers consulted by ESRC staff. Where it is not possible to secure the necessary peer review from within the college membership ESRC case officers will look beyond the college membership. All members of the ESRC community are encouraged to complete the ESRC peer review training tool which is mandatory for Peer Review College members. The training tool outlines the ESRC's standard peer review process and emphasises the importance of timely, objective, fair and informed peer review;
- The membership of the Peer Review College aims to reflect the community it represents and effort are made to achieve an appropriately balanced membership in terms of gender, age, ethnic origin etc.
- Peer reviewers are required to evidence their views and scores. ESRC staff conduct usability checks on all peer review comments and where there is evidence of bias or a reviewer has failed to provide evidence for their scores the review will be marked as 'unusable';
- It is the role of panel members to moderate and assess the quality of peer review and to agree final scores for each proposal. Panel members are briefed on unconscious bias and encouraged to feel empowered to constructively challenge potential bias where they identify it. The Panel Chair plays a particularly important role in this respect;
- For each proposal we appoint two academic panel introducers who formally assess and score the proposal.

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 negative	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Je-S does not currently comply with disability accessibility schemes. This will be picked up by the Research and Innovation Funding Service (RIFS) project.</p> <p>Since we are promoting the call spec on ESRC's website, we need to check it is accessible and compatible with the range of specialist hardware and software that people with disabilities use to access electronic information.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Solicit information from panel meeting participants (in confidence) about any additional requirements they may have in order to fully participate.</p> <p>Ensure that venues offer an accessible and inclusive environment for participants. Depending on the needs identified, considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility for wheelchair users and people with impaired mobility;</li> <li>• Induction loops for the hearing impaired;</li> <li>• Adequate lighting, alternative document formatting and potential use of screen readers for the visually impaired;</li> <li>• Dietary restrictions for those</li> </ul>

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)
			<p>with coeliac, diabetes etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of documents in sans-serif, dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats;</li> <li>• Avoiding colours, lighting etc. that may trigger migraines, epilepsy;</li> <li>• Ensuring that plenty of breaks are built into the agenda;</li> <li>• Ensuring sufficiently bright and spacious rooms;</li> <li>• Ensure that venues are easily accessible to main transport links.</li> <li>• Consider paying T&amp;S for carers or support workers to attend alongside the participant.</li> <li>• Where there are particular constraints consider opportunities for participants</li> </ul>

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)
			to engage in a different way (via video-link, tele-conference for instance).
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	Potential negative	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Trans people may be absent from work as a consequence of transition and UKRI records may show the wrong gender.</p> <p>Applicant eligibility is not based on gender</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>UKRI terms and conditions are flexible in nature and absence as a result of medical treatment. We would expect that absence related to transition would be covered by the Research Organisation's sick policy and strongly encourage ROs to treat absence relating to transition like any other sick absence.</p> <p>Consideration needs to be given at UKRI level as to how records (including Gateway to Research and other communications materials) might be adjusted.</p>
<b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>	Not necessarily	As applicant eligibility is not based on marital status.	n/a
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b>	Potential negative	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.

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)
		<p>The inclusion of a time commitment for this call may enable those who are pregnant/with childcare responsibilities to effectively plan their time before applying and enable them to participate.</p>	<p>We should ensure the use of gender-neutral language – e.g. parental leave, irrespective of sexual orientation.</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> <p>Consider whether the venue for the meeting is able to provide facilities for breastfeeding/expressing mothers if necessary.</p>
<b>Race</b>	Potential negative	See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias)
<b>Religion or belief</b>	Potential negative	See above, under General Equality and	Also see above, under General

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		<p>Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>There could be potential discrimination because it is known that somebody (either a panel member, a research applicant or research participants) has a particular faith or belief.</p>	<p>Equality and Diversity Considerations (particularly in relation to panel composition and mitigations against unconscious bias)</p> <p>Ensure that religious observances are taken into account when planning panel meetings.</p> <p>Considerations might include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheduling meetings to avoid major religious festivals; (if impossible to avoid then consider mitigations – i.e. during Ramadan ensuring that meetings finish early so that participants are able to get home to break their fast, awareness of the sensitivities around</li> </ul>



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)
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>offering Muslims meals during periods of fasting);</li> <li>• Accommodating dietary restrictions (ensuring that there is sufficient choice to allow all participants to eat – recognising that some groups cannot eat pork or beef or shellfish, that others avoid caffeine, ensuring that vegetarian food is available if Kosher or Halal food is not provided etc.)</li> <li>• Not scheduling meetings</li> </ul>

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)
			<p>so they would require late travel on Friday evenings (Jewish Sabbath) or on Fridays (Friday prayer, Islam)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowing prayer breaks if requested</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Potential negative	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.
<b>Sex (gender)</b>	Potential negative	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Use of language can present a barrier to participation and it may be perceived that those with caring responsibilities are disadvantaged.</p> <p>Panel members may be disadvantaged and unable to attend meetings if they have caring responsibilities</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Ensure use of gender-neutral language in call specification, guidance, etc.</p> <p>Ensure that the panel has balanced gender representation (aim for at worst 60:40 split)</p> <p>Ensure that the meeting location is</p>

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)
			suitable to allow easy return home
<b>Age</b>	Potential negative	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>The scheme is aimed at Mid-Career Researchers which will disadvantage early career researchers</p> <p>Early career researchers may be disadvantaged as they don't have the same track record to draw on as an experienced researcher.</p>	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Post-Doctoral Researchers are permitted on proposals, the aim is to help develop skills and knowledge of early career researchers.</p> <p>Track record is not an explicit criterion, given likely relationship to career stage and hence (indirectly) age. Panel members are briefed to make clear that they should be assessing the application in front of them and not reading between the lines. They should assess an individual's capability to deliver their proposed research.</p> <p>Use of a variety of different communication strategies including social media to ensure that our messages reach the widest possible target audience.</p>

**Evaluation:**

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	See the potential negative impacts outlined above.	
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.	✓	See the mitigations outlined above.

<b>Will this EIA be published*</b> *EIAs should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events.	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Date completed:</b>	<b>February 2019</b>
<b>Review date</b> (if applicable):	Annually, or if any significant changes are made to the scheme.