

EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Tier 2 High Performance Computer Services
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	This is a call to invest in a new cohort of Tier 2 computing resources in the UK.
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	Advice on the call has been provided by the e-infrastructure advisory groups.
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Academic and professional staff associated with bids for funding in the call.
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	The standard processes for calls within EPSRC. Due to the expected low volume of applications the Infrastructure team should also be able to monitor the impacts on the applicants on a case by case basis.

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.
- Offer support for people with caring responsibilities, further details are available [here](#)
- Clearly communicate the timeline and key milestones for funding activities
- Ensure attendees have an opportunity to raise any specific requirements in advance e.g. cover letter and joining instructions
- Support flexible working of stakeholders
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels
- Abide by the principles of peer review
- Ensure EPSRC staff receive tailored unconscious Bias training for Peer Review processes and clear guidance for assessors to reduce the effects of unconscious bias in panel meetings
- Handle personal sensitive information in compliance with General Data Protection Regulation 2018

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	Potentially negative	Applicants will be interviewed, which could be more challenging for those with hearing impairment, and those with mental disorders. Additionally travel may pose a barrier to those with mobility issues.	To investigate whether a hearing loop could be used at interview if needed. Mental disorders are a particular challenge as they are diverse, we will seek central advice on these issues should they arise. With regards mobility should the applicants raise these issues we could seek additional funding to assist them to travel to Swindon earlier before the interview. We will time interviews, particularly for those with issues, to avoid peak travel times.
Gender reassignment	Potentially negative	Applicants may feel uncomfortable without suitable facilities and if gendered language is used during the interview panel.	Polaris house has non-gendered toilet facilities for use, which we can direct individuals too if required. On the language, this can be difficult to control but could be discussed with the panel beforehand should a candidate raise the issue.
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact		
Pregnancy and maternity	Negative impact but minimised	The call is only run every few years, and so some individuals who may have applied as a Director/PI could be on parental leave over the 6 months period it is running.	The regularity of the call cannot be more frequent for financial reasons, and the call is primarily aimed at groups of institutions rather than particular PIs. The Directorship

			of each service could change during its lifetime.
Race	Potentially negative impact	Unconscious bias of the panel members and convenors could affect decision processes.	We will follow the established process of discussing unconscious bias with all parties in order to minimise it.
Religion or belief	No known negative impact		
Sexual orientation	No known negative impact		
Sex (gender)	Potentially negative impact	Unconscious bias of the panel members and convenors could affect decision processes. Perhaps particularly true in this area given cultural stereotypes.	We will follow the established process of discussing unconscious bias with all parties in order to minimise it.
Age	Potentially negative impact	Call is for large investments and require significant contributions from the universities involved. These often require established academics supporting them, which can be confused with age.	Remind the panel of issues with unconscious bias and that decisions must be made based on the proposals and PI responses in the process.
Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	Those with caring responsibilities could potentially be disadvantaged.	The call is open to proposals largely over the summer break (July to September).	The call is open for 8 weeks to account for it being over the summer, and to help mitigate these issues.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?	There are some aspects to the call which could disadvantage certain people. However, these aspects are being considered and mitigated as far as is possible. Moreover, avoiding stages such as an interview could harm the overall process or extending the length of the call could lead to a rushed procurement process for the supercomputers which could impact value for money. Taking these into account, the above measures should ensure any negative affects are minimised.	
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		
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 (*EIA's should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events:	Yes
Date completed:	06/06/2019
Review date (if applicable):	

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
Kieran Jarrett	06/06/2019	1	
Kieran Jarrett	25/06/2019	2	Minor modifications to phrasing.