

Equality Impact Assessment

| Question | Response |
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| 1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed | ISCF Manufacturing Made Smarter Research Centres call |
| 2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event | <p>Call for 4-5 Research Centres in the area of digital manufacturing. The aims of the centres are to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge the gap between basic research and its application in manufacturing to provide a pipeline of digital technologies for the future. • Co-create projects with industry, focusing on addressing user needs. • Integrate technological and societal aspects of manufacturing research, ensuring technologies are developed with people in mind to improve adoption and acceptance of new ways of working. • Network with the portfolio of Manufacturing Made Smarter (MMS) investments and other relevant projects, to ensure connectivity across the landscape and leverage the maximum benefits. |
| 3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders) | <p>ISCF MMS Project Team – call development, including alignment to overall MMS Challenge</p> <p>ISCF MMS Programme Board – oversight and sign-off of high-level call plans</p> <p>ISCF MMS External Advisory Group – oversight and advice provided on high-level call plans</p> <p>EPSRC Business Improvement Team – oversight and advice on detail of call plans and peer review arrangements</p> |
| 4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event? | <p>Potential call applicants</p> <p>Potential project partners</p> <p>University research office staff</p> <p>Peer reviewers (postal peer reviewers and panel members)</p> <p>UKRI staff</p> |
| 5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event? | |

As a funder of research, EPSRC remain 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 available 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 for flexible working of stakeholders
- Ensure diversity of peer review assessment and interview panels
- Abide by the Principles of peer review
- Unconscious Bias training for EPSRC staff and clear guidance for assessors
- 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) |
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| Disability | Potential negative impact | The interview panel meeting is likely to be conducted as a remote panel via teleconferencing. This could disproportionately disadvantage applicants/panel members with some disabilities. | <p>Ask panel participants if they have any special requirements in advance of the panel.</p> <p>Consider using the closed caption feature of zoom.</p> <p>Give good notice of panel arrangements and processes to all participants.</p> <p>Arrange webinars for panel members in advance of the meeting to ensure they understand the panel processes and to test any technical issues.</p> <p>Ensure a staff member is available to deal with technical issues on the day.</p> |
| Gender reassignment | Potential negative impact | As the assessment includes an interview panel, there is a possibility of discrimination on the basis of individuals' gender presentation. This may disproportionately disadvantage people who have undergone gender reassignment. | <p>All panel members will receive guidance on avoiding unconscious bias and will be explicitly reminded that assessment must be evidence-based and linked to the assessment criteria.</p> <p>UKRI staff will be trained in unconscious bias.</p> <p>All those present at the panel will be encouraged to challenge any</p> |

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| | | | comments/discussion that is not evidence-based, is unrelated to the assessment criteria, or is otherwise inappropriate. |
| Marriage or civil partnership | No expected impact | | |
| Pregnancy and maternity | Potential negative impact | Pregnant applicants/assessors may not be able to take part if timings/dates conflict with leave/medical appointments. | As much advance notice as possible will be given of key dates. Due consideration will be given to requests for flexibility in dates due to pregnancy. Where these can be accommodated without adversely affecting the assessment process, they will be agreed. |
| Race | Potential negative impact | As the assessment includes an interview panel, there is a possibility of discrimination on the basis of race. | Actions as for Gender reassignment. |
| Religion or belief | Potential negative impact | Some applicants/assessors may not be able to take part if timings conflict with religious holidays. The timing of the panel is likely to coincide with Ramadan 2021. We do not anticipate this would prevent observant Muslims from taking part in the panel but it is possible they may have additional requirements. | Dates will be chosen to avoid major religious holidays as far as possible. Applicants and panel members attending the interview panel will be given the opportunity to highlight any special requirements they have. |
| Sexual orientation | Potential negative impact | As the assessment includes an interview panel, there is a possibility of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. | Actions as for Gender reassignment. |
| Sex (gender) | Potential negative impact | As the assessment includes an interview panel, there is a possibility of discrimination on the basis of sex or gender. | Actions as for Gender reassignment. |
| Age | Potential negative impact | As the assessment includes an interview panel, there is a possibility of discrimination on the basis of age. | Actions as for Gender reassignment. |
| Additional aspects (not covered by a | People with caring responsibilities – | Applicants with caring responsibilities may be deterred from applying if | The call document specifies that applicants may request non-standard |

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| | | may be more difficult if COVID-19 restrictions are still in place when successful projects start. | EPSRC will consider requests for delayed starts on a case by case basis. |
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Evaluation:

| Question | Explanation / justification | |
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| Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people? | <p>Yes, it is possible. The principle risks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to access panels (either virtual or in person) – we will consider special requirements and facilitate virtual attendance if needed. • Potential discrimination at interview based on an applicant’s appearance (their perceived gender reassignment, sexual orientation, gender, race, or age) – we will ensure staff are trained and participants receive guidance in unconscious bias. Any inappropriate comments will be challenged. • Inability to participate due to call timings – we will publish timings in advance and will consider reasonable requests for flexibility. • Difficulty in forming partnerships due to COVID-19 – we have extended the length of time that the call is open and relaxed the co-funding requirements. | |
| 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 | Measures have been put in place as described above, therefore the call will proceed. |
| 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. | | |

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| 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: | 29 July 2020 |
| Review date (if applicable): | |

Change log

| Name | Date | Version | Change |
|------------------|--------------|----------------|------------------|
| Laura Totterdell | 29 July 2020 | 1 | Created document |