

EPSRC - Equality Impact Assessment

Question	Response
<p>1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed</p>	<p>EPSRC Doctoral Training Partnership</p>
<p>2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event</p>	<p>EPSRC Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) funding supports doctoral training in UK universities. DTPs are flexible awards to support doctoral training across any area of engineering or physical sciences with relevance to EPSRC's remit. The 2020-21 DTP is a 2-year allocation which covers students starting in academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22. Funding is allocated using an algorithm based on a comprehensive profile of EPSRC research grants and fellowships.</p> <p>DTP funding is an important and significant part of EPSRC's investment in doctoral training. The investment offers flexible support and complements our other training routes: Centres for Doctoral Training (CDTs) and Industrial CASE (ICASE). Since 2016, the DTP has been a 2-year allocation with the requirement for universities to submit a statement of intent.</p> <p>The DTP continues to provide flexible funding to universities so they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the career development of academic staff, especially new appointments or early career researchers; • Decide the distribution of the funding and studentships across all areas that EPSRC supports in engineering and physical sciences research; • Respond to the needs of individual students; • React quickly to the evolving research landscape; • Take advantage of opportunities to leverage funding; • Use the DTP to meet their own strategy where this contributes to meeting needs at the national level. • Adjust the number and start of awards within year and between years.
<p>3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? <i>(e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Leadership Team leading the call. • Feedback from the 2018-19 DTP expert panel was used in shaping the 2020-21 call. • Policy paper on changes to the allocation process discussed and agreed by EPSRC Executive Leadership Team (February 2019). • Policy paper on DTP algorithm discussed and agreed by EPSRC Executive Leadership Team (March 2019). • EPSRC Peer Review Team and UKRI Grants team consulted throughout call planning process.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EPSRC Data Team consulted on data extract for algorithm. • Finance consulted on budget and profiling. • Research Careers Network Operations group consulted on monitoring (cross-UKRI group).
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	Universities (includes those funded and not funded) Students Project partners EPSRC staff
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	Individual student monitoring will be done through Je-S Student Details Portal reporting. Monitoring at scheme level will be done by an Annual Report in August/September each year (will include EDI reporting).

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)
Disability	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to panel meeting could be a barrier to participation of prospective panel members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All venues selected will be accessible and reasonable adjustments made to logistics and facilitation plans to support participation.
	Potential positive impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DTP grants include Disabled Students Allowance provision to help universities make reasonable adjustments and provide students with the support they need. • Pastoral support for students, including support for mental health issues is included in the statement of intent questionnaire and assessment. 	
Gender reassignment	No known negative impact		
Marriage or civil partnership	No known negative impact		
Pregnancy and maternity	Potential positive impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UKRI harmonised training grant T&Cs include provision for student maternity and shared parental leave. • 	
	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy/maternity could be a barrier for panel members to attend the meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All venues selected will be accessible and reasonable adjustments made to logistics and facilitation plans to support participation. Support is available for those with caring responsibilities. https://epsrc.ukri.org/funding/applicationprocess/basics/caringresponsibilities/

Race	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student eligibility rules could indirectly lead to discrimination on the basis of nationality. 	Student eligibility rules will be clearly communicated in T&Cs and the 10% open eligibility flexibility allows the very best students to be recruited, regardless of their eligibility status.
Religion or belief	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If call activities coincide with religious holidays. 	Deadlines have been planned to avoid major religious holidays.
Sexual orientation	No known negative impact		
Sex (gender)	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Panel member selection needs to avoid underrepresentation of either gender. 	Panel members will be selected to ensure diversity. Assessment criteria language has been reviewed to ensure it is gender neutral.
Age	No known negative impact		

Additional aspects (not covered by a protected characteristic)	Potential positive impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grants are awarded on an institutional basis so possible discrimination against individual applicants, on the basis of any protected characteristic, is not applicable. • Grants are awarded on an institutional basis so student recruitment decisions are made by institutions. • The format of the statement of intent has been made more structured, to make it easier for universities to understand the requirements. Standardising the format should reduce the cognitive load on the panel members. • Assessment criteria will be clearly communicated to universities receiving an allocation to make the process fairer. • Statements of intent will be scored, helping the panel to make a more objective assessment. • Scoring has been simplified to a 3-point scale, reducing the cognitive load of panel members. 	<p>Universities are explicitly required to comment on their plans to address ED&I issues and on their recruitment processes in the statement of intent, including how they ensure transparency and fair access to all groups.</p>
	Potential negative impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The panel meeting will take place during the school/university summer holidays. • EPSRC staff members will be asked to take an increased role in reviewing statements of intent, which will result in increased workload. • As the DTP is only awarded to ~40 universities each allocation, there is a possibility that some prospective students could 	<p>A full timeline will be provided of all key milestones, allowing early engagement with EPSRC on specific mitigations. EPSRC will do its best to accommodate adjustments, including support for those with caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Timelines and deadlines will be provided in advance to enable staff to plan workloads or request adjustments.</p> <p>To date, there has been a reasonably good spread of universities across the country. However, this could change, depending on the algorithm</p>

		<p>be disadvantaged because they do not live close to DTP-receiving university.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> As recruitment is devolved to individual universities, external student applicants could find it harder to understand and access the applications process than internal applicants. 	<p>used to determine the allocation. This does not currently present a significant barrier but will be monitored.</p> <p>Universities have been asked to explain how they ensure that their recruitment processes are fair and open. It will also be a requirement of the DTP statement of intent process that universities provide weblinks to webpages explaining how students can access DTP studentships. These links will be published by EPSRC on our platforms: Gateway to Research, Grants on the Web and Visualising Our Portfolio.</p>
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Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification	
<p>Is it possible the proposed change in policy, funding activity or event could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?</p>	<p>The allocation process is similar to previous years. This year, questions on ED&I, research culture and recruitment processes are explicitly included within the questionnaire for the statement of intent. Research culture (including ED&I) is an assessment criterion against which universities' statements of intent will be judged. These changes have been made to raise the profile of ED&I issues in the DTP to encourage universities to improve their practices around fair treatment and open recruitment.</p> <p>Throughout the assessment process, EPSRC policies on ED&I, minimising unconscious and safeguarding peer review will be followed. In addition, the process has been modified since the last allocation to improve the fairness of the statement intent process, including issuing clearer assessment criteria at the outset and asking the panel to score against a 3-point scale.</p> <p>Care has been taken to ensure that deadlines and timescales avoid major holidays and allow enough time for all involved. Participants will be informed of timelines in advance.</p> <p>DSA is available for all training grants to support disabled students.</p>	
Final Decision:	Tick the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
<p>1. No barriers identified, therefore activity will proceed.</p>	<p>X</p>	
<p>2. You can decide to stop the policy or practice at some point because the data shows bias towards one or more groups</p>		
<p>3. You can adapt or change the policy in a way which you think will eliminate the bias</p>		
<p>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</p>		

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. The call document will not be available on EPSRC's website, as it is only open to invited universities. The published EIA will therefore be accessible through the DTP webpage: https://epsrc.ukri.org/skills/students/dta/
Date completed:	24 April 2019
Review date (if applicable):	Spring 2021 (before the 2022-2023 DTP allocation)

Change log

Name	Date	Version	Change
L Totterdell	24 April 2019	1	Document created.