

Equality Impact Assessment – Work, Education and Skills Online Survey 2023

Question	Response
1. Name of policy/funding activity/event being assessed	Work, Education and Skills horizon-scanning online survey
2. Summary of aims and objectives of the policy/funding activity/event	<p>The ESRC's Work, Education and Skills (WES) team are undertaking a long-range (research-focused) horizon-scanning exercise.</p> <p>We have identified a series of broad provisional priority areas within our portfolio remit that we think have the potential to be significant, long-term challenges for society and the economy over the coming decades.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work priority areas: a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable labour force and market • Education priority areas: societal impacts on education provision, educational inequalities, and skills for life <p>We are now seeking input from the academic, policy, third sector and business communities to explore in more detail what these challenges could mean for individuals, organisations, and the UK labour market and education systems.</p> <p>We are particularly interested in identifying persistent and future research and evidence gaps where ESRC funding could have a genuine 'real-world' impact.</p>
3. What involvement and consultation has been done in relation to this policy? (e.g. with relevant groups and stakeholders)	<p>An initial meeting with members of the Strategy team was carried out to discuss consultation options and for advice on survey design that is accessible as possible, capturing as many views as possible.</p> <p>Ongoing discussions within the WES team took place for recommendations when making the survey.</p>
4. Who is affected by the policy/funding activity/event?	<p>The research and user community who we will be reaching out to in order to complete the survey.</p> <p>UKRI staff, including ESRC staff who we will contact to share the survey with their networks.</p>
5. What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the actual impact of the policy/funding activity/event?	Once the online consultation has closed, the arrangements are to process the data captured, and provide an overview of the findings. Thematic analysis will be carried out to identify the specific areas where ESRC

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	funding could add significant value, (knowledge creation and real-world impact) to existing and planned research activity.

GENERAL EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS

Accessibility and design considerations:

- The survey is designed and to be completed online, in order to maximise accessibility, reach a wide population and eliminate any physical concerns. Online surveys are generally the most accessible method as they can allow all people regardless of ability or background to complete questions, which provides more diverse and representative results
- The survey audience are not members of the public, but the research community therefore respondents will have internet access through work
- In order to avoid intrusive personal questions, the survey will not ask an individual's personal characteristics. To gain a representative sample and to ensure hard-to-reach populations participate, networks for minorities will be identified and contacted
- Inclusive language is used with limited technical jargon to accommodate for those who do not speak English as a first language
- Questions are as streamlined as possible to reduce any response fatigue
- The survey will be open for a minimum of 8 weeks to reach a wide audience, allow respondents enough time to complete the survey, and to accommodate for any religious holidays or events occurring during this time
- Information at the beginning of the survey is provided to explain to the participants what the survey will involve, give a clear structure and an indication of the time commitment required to complete the survey
- The function to save answers and return to complete the survey later is included to allow for response fatigue

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	Potential accessibility concerns, or fatigue from survey length	<p>The design of the survey ensures that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The survey is online, which eliminates many physical accessibility issues. • Dyslexia-friendly fonts; and dyslexia-friendly formats are used. • We have avoided using any images, negating the need for text descriptions. • Accessibility features and requirements are built into the Delib Citizen Space platform that forms the basis of UKRI's Engagement Hub. This includes requiring accessibility labels to be added to all question-and-answer components, and is easily interpreted by text-to-speech software. • Colours, lighting, etc. that may trigger migraines, epilepsy are avoided. • The survey is not too long and is simple in its design to accommodate for those who struggle with technology. • Questions are streamlined as much as possible to reduce response fatigue. • The function to save answers and return back to complete the survey at a later time is included to allow for response fatigue.
Gender reassignment	Potential negative	The survey may not provide the gender options for which the respondent identifies as.	<p>The survey asks the participant to select their gender, provided with the following options:</p> <p>What best describes your gender?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Female ○ Male ○ Prefer to self-describe: _____ ○ Prefer not to say

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			<p>These options were determined following this guidance from Queen's University Belfast on asking gender questions in a trans-inclusive way:</p> <p>Asking about Sex / Gender Identity People and Culture Queen's University Belfast (qub.ac.uk)</p> <p>We have also sought guidance from:</p> <p>Sex and gender identity question development for Census 2021 - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)</p> <p>Gender identity survey questions Equality and Diversity Unit (ox.ac.uk)</p> <p>Gender or sex – GOV.UK Design System (design-system.service.gov.uk)</p>
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified	Marriage status is not disclosed in the survey.	N/A
Pregnancy and maternity	None identified	Not disclosed in survey questions.	<p>It is possible that stakeholders on parental leave will not be able to participate in the survey, because it coincides with their leave.</p> <p>We do not expect people on any type of leave (parental, sick, compassionate annual) to respond to the survey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy / Industry / Third-sector stakeholders: we anticipate that their positions will likely to be filled by temporary parental leave cover, and their response is likely to be in line with their employer's interests/line to take.

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academia: we would expect responses 'missing' due to leave to fall broadly in line with those submitted by other members of the academy. <p>Moreover, the survey is only one method we are using for stakeholder engagement; there will be other opportunities for stakeholders to engagement with us at a later date.</p>
Race	Potential negative	There may be potential bias in responses if underrepresented groups are not reached.	<p>When distributing the survey, networks will be identified and contacted to ensure minority groups are reached and responses are collected from a representative sample.</p> <p>The survey is intended for an audience familiar with the themes and priority areas identified by the ESRC's Work, Education and Skills teams. The survey wording has been chosen to be as accessible as possible, including for international and domestic respondents whose first language is not English. The UKRI Engagement Hub requires the survey to provide a named contact and email address for any queries. In this case: Annie Gibney, wesscoping@esrc.ukri.org</p> <p>See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p>
Religion or belief	Potential negative	See above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations</p> <p>Scheduling of the survey and length of time provided will be taken into consideration to allow sufficient time for respondents to participate well before/after major religious festivals (for example, Diwali).</p>
Sexual orientation	None identified	Sexual orientation not disclosed in survey questions.	N/A
Sex (gender)	Potential negative	Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.	<p>Also see above, under General Equality and Diversity Considerations.</p> <p>Ensure use of gender-neutral language in survey introduction and questions.</p>

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			Survey will be open for a minimum of 8 weeks to allow enough time to complete, taking into consideration caring responsibilities and school holidays etc.
Age	Potential negative	<p>Researchers in earlier in their careers may be harder to reach as they have less established networks.</p> <p>(*It is assumed that early career researchers are generally younger than their more experienced peers, although this by no means always the case. This is why this point has been included under 'age').</p>	While the respondents will not be asked their age in the survey, 'career stage' will be asked which may potentially be an inaccurate proxy for age. In order to gain a wide range of responses from all experience levels, a variety of different communication strategies will be used, including social media and early career networks. This will ensure that the survey reaches the widest possible audience.

Additional non-protected characteristics for consideration?

- Geographical location (consider UK and international offices)
 - As part of the 'respondent information' section, survey participants are required to provide their principal geographical location. This is to ensure that we have as representative a sample of views as possible from across geographical locations. As part of our communications strategy, we will be advertising the survey via relevant knowledge-exchange networks and social science societies to maximise our reach across the entire UK Work and Education social science community. We will also be contacting relevant policy, industry, and third-sector stakeholders in all the Devolved Administrations – as well as all relevant ESRC investments.

- Socio-economic status & education background
 - The survey is intended for an expert audience familiar with the themes and priority areas identified by the ESRC's Work, Education and Skills teams. Our target audience are academics, policy makers (national, devolved, regional & local);

practitioners (from industry and the education sector) and representatives from the third-sector. We anticipate that all will be highly familiar with survey technology and processes, and all will have access to the internet and hardware to complete the survey.

- The UKRI Engagement Hub requires the survey to provide a named contact and email address for any queries. In this case: Annie Gibney, wesscoping@esrc.ukri.org
- Parent/guardian responsibilities & Carer/parent carer responsibilities
 - Not applicable.
- Political opinion (Northern Ireland)
 - Care will be taken to ensure a diverse range of views across Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and England.

Evaluation:

Question	Explanation / justification
<p>Is it possible the proposed policy or activity or change in policy or activity could discriminate or unfairly disadvantage people?</p>	<p>Yes, some potential barriers have been identified (see above) however the necessary steps have been taken to mitigate the likelihood of this in the areas covered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online survey: removes physical participation barriers to enable to maximum number of people to engage with the survey. • Use of UKRI Engagement Hub as host platform: survey adheres to UKRI accessibility guidelines and uses built in accessibility features (including, accessibility labels, 'save and come back later function') Survey is also easy to find by stakeholders. • 8.5 week opening period (02/10 - 01/12): will allow stakeholders to respond when most convenient for them. The survey will also be open before and after major October/November 2023 religious holidays (including Diwali). • Detailed communication plan developed to ensure that the maximum number of stakeholders are reached (including, UKRI/ESRC social media posts, direct contacts with key policy-industry-government-third sector stakeholders, use of internal COFF group to target ESRC investments, announcements in major academic associations (e.g., British Academy of Management, British Educational Research Association), and direct contact with networks for underrepresented academic communities).

Question	Explanation / justification
	<p>We should also stress that the online horizon-scanning survey is only one tool being used by the WES team to develop new, future work, education, and skills research agendas. There will also be future opportunities for stakeholders to influence the shape and content of potential research investments in these spaces, including via wider UKRI and ESRC-led stakeholder engagement activities.</p>

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.	✓	See the mitigations outlined above.

Will this EIA be published* *EIAs should be published alongside relevant funding activities e.g. calls and events.	Yes
Date completed:	29/09/2023
End date of activity: (if applicable)	01/12/2023
Review date (if applicable):	