



BBSRC

Equality Scheme

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1. Introduction

The BBSRC Equality Scheme sets out our commitment to meet the general and specific duties placed upon all public bodies by employment legislation.

The Race Relations, Disability and Sex Discrimination Acts already place duties on BBSRC and our race, disability and gender equality schemes have gone some way to meeting the requirements. Our schemes have also helped towards mainstreaming diversity throughout the organisation and its activities. However, recent legislation has introduced additional provisions (covering sexual orientation, age and religion or belief) and, therefore, it is timely that BBSRC develops a 'single' equality scheme for all equality groups. Such a scheme not only eliminates much duplication but also allows BBSRC to pursue an integrated approach to the six equality strands rather than view them as competing issues.

Under the general duties, BBSRC must take action to:

- Eliminate all unlawful discrimination (including discrimination under the Equal Pay Act).
- Promote equality and good relations between people.
- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life.

BBSRC will also undertake the following specific duties:

- Publish an equality scheme and action plan showing how the general and specific duties will be met.
- Formulate objectives that address the causes of equal pay gaps.
- Gather and use information on how our policies affect equality and the delivery of services.
- Assess the impact of our policies on equality.
- Consult all stakeholders (including employees, service users, trades unions and others) and take account of information in order to determine our equality objectives
- Report against the scheme annually and review the scheme every 3 years.

Our continued aim is to mainstream and embed equality and diversity into all BBSRC core business activities.

The BBSRC Equality Scheme reflects its roles: as an employer; as a funding body; and as a facilitator of public engagement. It builds on our previous Race, Disability and Gender Equality Schemes and the progress made to date within BBSRC Swindon Office and our sponsored institutes.

2. About BBSRC

BBSRC is the leading funding agency for academic research and training in the biosciences at universities and institutes throughout the UK. We support over 5000 researchers and research students. We are a diverse organisation, spread across the United Kingdom, with a variety of different job categories and roles.

BBSRC is committed to meeting the general duties and to reflecting and initiating best practice within the sector. To achieve this we recognise that equality and fair treatment (regardless of race, disability, sexuality, marital status, age, gender, ethnic origin, religion or belief) will be key issues in the development, delivery and review of our policies, procedures and services and the way in which we manage people.

Whilst we will endeavour to achieve all our obligations within the area of equality and diversity, we recognise that it is important to take actions that are meaningful, practical, realistic and achievable, and that are consistent with the overall aims of the organisation.

3. Our approach to the equality duties

For the purposes of the Scheme, 'function' means the 'duties and powers of BBSRC or services provided by it'. A function can cover a strategy, policy, document or initiative.

BBSRC has determined its main functions as:

- Funding of Research and Post-graduate Training
- Undertaking Research
- Grants and Award Management
- Employer
- Training and Development
- Public Engagement
- Supporting knowledge transfer and economic impact.
- Support Services including IT, Joint Shared Services (Pensions, Audit, Building and Office Services), Finance, Human Resources and Estates
- International Relations

Therefore, as an employer we will:

- Take all reasonable steps to prevent unlawful discrimination and reduce any significant disparities in treatment between groups.
- Welcome applications from people irrespective of background (including race, disability, sexuality, marital status, age, gender, ethnic origin, religion or belief). Selection is subject to individuals being able to fulfil the requirements of the job.

- Not tolerate harassment for any reason. We are committed to taking action to stop harassing behaviour as soon as it is identified. Any BBSRC employee who believes they are subject to harassment or victimisation is strongly encouraged to raise their concerns, in confidence with their line manager, member of HR or trade union representative.
- Consider positive action, where appropriate, to address any perceived imbalance.

As a funder of research we will:

- Ensure that the grant and funding terms and conditions are updated to reflect our commitment to equality.

As a communicator we will:

- Ensure that all information, publicity and advertising undertaken by BBSRC promote positive attitudes towards equality and does not discriminate.

As a purchaser of goods and services we will:

- Take equality into account when procuring goods, works or services from external providers (see also Procurement and Contracted-out Services).

As an influencer within the scientific research community we will:

- Challenge others, through our impact assessments, our structures, processes, policies and practices, to promote equality.
- Continue to work with other research councils to share best practice in equalities implementation e.g. training programmes, equality monitoring and impact assessments.

4. The Equality Scheme

The BBSRC Equality Scheme (and Equality Duty Action Plan aligned to it) is based on the following principles:

- (a) Equality, diversity and fair treatment underpin all BBSRC policies and strategies, maximising the potential impact on all groups of people and all core functions and business activities.
- (b) BBSRC fulfils all its different roles to the highest standards.
- (c) The Equality Scheme is a catalyst to take the organisation forward equitably and fairly.
- (d) The Equality Scheme and Action Plan will be underpinned by high quality statistical evidence but where the potential impact on equality is unknown, where possible, additional data will be collected.

The Scheme will be promoted internally and externally.

5. Consultation

In developing the BBSRC Equality Scheme we have consulted the following groups:

- **Our employees** through an attitude survey in liaison with the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology. This primarily covered gender related issues but also sought responses on attitudes towards equality and diversity and related BBSRC policies.

From November 2008 to April 2009, the draft Scheme was also posted on our Internet Consultation Forum which all employees can access and give feedback on the draft.

- **Trade Union Representatives** through the EDJC (Equality and Diversity Joint Committee).

The scheme will be placed on the BBSRC website and we invite feedback on the Scheme from our employees and the general public throughout the period it is applicable. Any comments on the Scheme should be sent to geoff.peebles@bbsrc.ac.uk

6. Gathering information and monitoring

BBSRC will gather information on the effect of policies and practices on recruitment, training and development, promotion and retention of all employees through data collection and monitoring. We will monitor the following by equality group (ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief):

- Staff in post
- Applicants for posts and those appointed
- Starting salary on appointment
- Employment status (indefinite or fixed term)
- Applicants for training and development courses, and those attending training and development courses
- Applicants for promotion, including the personal promotion scheme
- Appraisal performance
- Grievance and discipline cases
- Leavers.

BBSRC incorporates equal pay principles when undertaking, for example job evaluation. We will monitor the impact of pay policies and pay decisions and ensure their consistency with equal pay principles. As part of this we will undertake periodic equal pay reviews.

7. Assessing impact

We will review our new and existing policies, processes and functions, on an ongoing basis. In carrying out these reviews, equality impact assessments will be conducted by the policy owner in order to assess the implications of the policy or process on each of the six equality groups (ethnic origin, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief). Summaries of Equality Impact Assessments conducted throughout BBSRC will be published in the annual report against the Equality Scheme, which will be available on the BBSRC website at www.bbsrc.ac.uk

The equality impact assessment process consists of two forms:

- Initial Impact Assessment Form. This is used to screen all policies, processes or functions to see if they are relevant to, or could have implications for equality or people relations. This initial screening may indicate that a policy or process promotes equality for one or more of the groups. Conversely, it may indicate that there is neutral impact or there is actual or potential negative impact on one or more of the six groups. In the latter case, a full impact assessment will be required.
- Full Impact Assessment Form. This is used to examine in more detail any actual or potential negative impact and put in place actions to resolve the detriment and revise the policy. In determining whether an existing or new policy is likely to have an adverse impact on particular groups, policy owners will need to consider whether:
 - it will result in BBSRC not meeting the general duty under employment legislation;
 - if there are alternatives that could meet the policy objectives without any impact on the general duty;
 - if the negative impact can be reduced or justified;
 - further consultation is required;
 - whether the policy should be rewritten.

For existing policies, BBSRC will ensure that:

- Relevant data is generated and examined;
- BBSRC applies the Full Impact Assessment process, set out above, if it is determined that the policy is likely to have a negative impact on one or more of the six groups;
- The policy will be subject to continuous monitoring and review.

Further details about Equality Impact Assessments in the form of guidance on how to conduct assessments and a process model can be found on the BBSRC website at www.bbsrc.ac.uk

8. Procurement and contracted-out services

As a purchaser of goods or services, we recognise that the general duty remains with BBSRC and liability cannot be transferred to the service provider or contractor. We will, therefore, ensure that service providers or contractors acting on behalf of BBSRC demonstrate their commitment to equality issues and their performance (throughout the life of the contract) is monitored.

9. Publication arrangements

BBSRC will publish the Equality Scheme on its website at www.bbsrc.ac.uk and establishment websites and intranets. It will also be available as a printed document and can be provided in alternative formats as requested.