



# THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

## Equality Impact Assessment

A. Policy or Practice (name or brief description):

**Code of Practice for External Examiners of Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes**

B. Reason for screening (delete as applicable):

- **Changes made to an existing policy**

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: **Anne Marie O'Mullane**

Job title: **Academic Policy Officer**

School/service/unit: **Academic Registry**

D. Screening Analysis

1. Does the policy or practice affect primary or high level functions of the University?

**Yes**

2. Is the policy or practice relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' set out in the introduction above)?

**Yes**

3. Is the policy or practice one on which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqIA?

**Yes**

If the answer to any of these questions is 'Yes', an EqIA should be carried out on the proposed/revised policy or practice at an early stage and in any event before it is finalised.

E. Screening outcome

Equality Impact Assessment required: **Yes**.

**Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) carried out by Anne Marie O'Mullane (Academic Registry) on behalf of the Senatus Quality Assurance Committee.**

#### F. Sign-off

Screening undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): **Anne Marie O'Mullane, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Registry**

Accepted by (name): **Dr Linda Bruce, Head of Quality Assurance Team, Academic Services**

Date: **20 June 2013**

If EqIA is not being carried out, delete the remainder of this form and send the completed form to [equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk](mailto:equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk).

#### G. Equality Impact Assessment

Before assessing the policy/practice, ensure that you have a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy or practice, the context, the intended beneficiaries and the results aimed for.

In answering the questions below:

- Bear in mind that the extent of EqIA should be proportionate to the relevance of the policy/practice to equality. It may not be practicable or necessary to answer every question or address every potential scenario.
- Focus mainly on aspects of the policy/practice that are most relevant to the question, to ensure most attention is given to the most important areas.
- Relate answers to consideration of the available evidence and address any gaps or disparities revealed, where feasible without disproportionate effort. For new policies, assess potential impact.
- Describe any action identified to address any issues highlighted.
- Where there is potential for adverse impact, but the policy/practice will still be applied, indicate the rationale for that decision.

Initial/partial EqIA: in some circumstances - particularly for new policies/practices – there may be limited information on which to base EqIA. In these cases, the EqIA should be carried out to the extent possible and should identify arrangements for monitoring/investigation of equality impact and for fuller EqIA in future.

Wholly positive impact: Some policies/practices may be viewed as having only positive equality impact. For these, consideration should still be given to ensure that no adverse impact is overlooked and to ensure that full advantage is taken of the positive impact, e.g. through effective communication. However, the effort involved in carrying out EqIA should not be excessive.

Overview. Indicate the current status of the policy/practice or the stage of development/review. Also note any general comments here regarding the relevance and significance of the policy/practice to equality. Which aspects of the policy/practice are particularly relevant (which should be the main focus for EqIA)? On what aspects of equality does the policy/practice particularly impact?

**The Senatus Quality Assurance Committee approved revisions to the Code of Practice for External Examiners of Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes. The Code of Practice was substantially revised in 2012 in order to comply with the requirements set out in the Quality Assurance Agency's Chapter B7 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education on External Examining. As this is the first EqIA of the Code of Practice this EqIA covers the complete Code of Practice.**

1. To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant? Policies/practices applying to substantial groups of students or staff will be relevant to all equality groups, which should be noted. However, also indicate any equality groups for which the policy/practice is particularly relevant, and why.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are (delete any that are not relevant):

- age

**The Code of Practice sets out that External Examiners who retire from their institution during their four year term of office as an external examiner are eligible for an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity. Retirement from a position can relate to an individual's age; therefore this provision may impact on the equality group with the protected characteristic age. The provision sets out that external examiners who retire should not be treated differently based on the fact that they have retired from their institution. This provision therefore promotes the fostering of good relations between people in any protected group and those who are not.**

- race (including ethnicity and nationality)

**The Code of Practice sets out that in order for an individual to be appointed as an external examiner the individual must have fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered or assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s). This provision was introduced to comply with the person specification requirements set out in Chapter B7 of the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education on External Examining. This provision may impact on the equality group with the protected characteristic race; specifically nationality. This provision is required to meet the business needs of the university as external examiners form a key part of the University's quality assurance mechanisms ensuring that degrees awarded are comparable to those in the sector. The nomination of individuals for appointment as an external examiner is conducted with sensitivity.**

In answering the questions below consider each of these equality groups. As part of this, consider diversity within, as well as between groups (e.g. different disabilities, different racial groups). Consider the implications of combinations of protected characteristics e.g. issues of relevance to women may vary once race, religion and age are taken into consideration. Also consider the impact on those with caring/family responsibilities (which tends to impact more on women).

2. What evidence is available about the needs of relevant equality groups? E.g. information/feedback from equality groups or other stakeholders, involvement or

research with equality groups or individuals, equality monitoring data, service monitoring data, information for other similar policies/practices, staff surveys, research reports, demographic information, audit, inspection or management reports and recommendations.

Where are the gaps in evidence? If there is insufficient information to properly assess the policy, how will this be addressed? If information cannot be gathered now, consider building monitoring into the plans for implementation/review of the policy/practice. Note: the resources put into collecting evidence should be proportionate to the relevance of the policy/practice to equality.

**With reference to the equality group with the protected characteristic age:**

**Information on the retirement status of external examiners is not readily available.**

**With reference to the equality group with the protected characteristic race – specifically nationality; Information on the nationality of external examiners is not readily available. It is not deemed necessary to gather this information as the relevant provisions are required for the business needs of the university and complies with an external reference point in Chapter B7 of the QAA's UK Quality Code for Higher Education.**

3. Might the application of this policy/practice lead to discrimination, harassment or victimisation? Might it result in less favourable treatment for particular equality groups or give rise to indirect discrimination?

**With reference to the equality group with the protected characteristic age: no.**

**With reference to the equality group with the protected characteristic race – specifically nationality; individuals who lack fluency in English or in the relevant language being assessed will not be eligible to be appointed as an External Examiner due to the business needs of the University. Processes for appointment of external examiner are handled sensitively.**

4. Are reasonable adjustments built in where they may be needed? **Yes.**
5. Does the policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity<sup>1</sup>? Will it help to:
  - remove or minimise disadvantage - **With reference to the equality group with the protected characteristic age yes the provision does advance equality of opportunity**
  - meet the needs of different equality groups - **N/A**
  - encourage increased participation of particular groups. **With reference to the equality group with the protected characteristic age yes the provision does encourage increased participation of this particular group.**
  - take account of disabled people's impairments? **N/A**
6. Is there an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations between people in any protected group and those who are not<sup>2</sup>? Will it help to tackle prejudice

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<sup>1</sup> This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership

and/or promote understanding?

**With reference to the equality group with the protected characteristic age yes, the policy is intended to foster good relations.**

7. Is there evidence (or an expectation) that people from different equality groups have different needs or experiences in relation to the policy/practice? If so, what are they? **No.**
8. Is there evidence (or an expectation) of higher or lower uptake by any equality group(s)? If so, give details of the differences and the reasons for these (if known)? **No.**
9. Is any equality group excluded from participating in or accessing the service or functions? If so, why? **No.**
10. Does the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups? For example, because of the time when the service is delivered or because of restricted income? Is the communication of the policy/practice accessible to all groups? **No.**
11. How are relevant equality groups or communities involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice?

**Each of the three Colleges are represented on the Senatus Quality Assurance Committee which approved the Code of Practice. The Code of Practice is reviewed regularly. Revision of the Code of Practice will take place following consultations with the three Colleges, School contacts and feedback received from external examiners, College and School contacts.**

12. Are there any other points to note regarding the potential or actual impact of applying the policy or practice, with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and promote good relations? If so, note these here.

#### **H. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome**

There is a legal obligation to take account of the results of the EqIA in the development of a new or revised policy or practice. This requires considering taking action to address any issues identified, such as removing or mitigating any negative impacts, where possible, and exploiting any potential for positive impact. Clearly any unlawful discrimination must be eliminated.

Having considered the answers in section G, select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed. Delete the options that do not apply.

**Option 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust. There is no evidence of potentially unlawful discrimination and all reasonable opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations have been taken, subject to continuing monitoring and review.**

**See Section G.**

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<sup>2</sup> This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership.

## I Action and Monitoring

1. Specify the actions required to implement the findings of this EqIA. **Not Applicable**
2. State how the policy or practice will be monitored in relation to its equality impact (or note where this is specified above). **The Code of Practice will be reviewed by Quality Assurance Committee in academic year 2013/14. Should any revisions be considered necessary an EqIA will be carried out by Quality Assurance Committee.**
3. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed? **2013/14.**

## J. Publication of EqIA

EqIAs are published on the Equality and Diversity website.

There is a statutory requirement to publish EqIAs within a reasonable period. However, in some circumstances there may be valid reasons to limit what is published or to delay publication.

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? **Yes**

If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply.

## J. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): **Anne Marie O'Mullane, Academic Policy Officer, Academic Services**

Accepted by (name): **Linda Bruce, Head of Quality Assurance Team, Academic Services**

Date: **20 June 2013**

Retain a copy of this form for your own records and send a copy to  
[equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk](mailto:equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk)