THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Equality Impact Assessment

A. Policy or Practice (name or brief description): **MSc by Research Structure**
B. Reason for screening (delete as applicable): • Proposed change to an existing policy/practice
C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice: Name: **Sara Welham** Job title: **Head, Governance and Regulatory Framework Team** School/service/unit: **Academic Services**
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**
F. Sign-off Screening undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): **Sara Welham, Head, Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services** Accepted by (name): **Nichola Kett, Head, Enhancement Team, Academic Services** Date: 10.6.14

G. Equality Impact Assessment

1. 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 policy, which comes into effect in academic year 2015/16, provides a clear framework for the structure of the degree of MSc by Research, MSc(R). It explains how it is distinguished from the taught MSc and how it should be assessed. The University-wide structure will provide consistency within and between Colleges.

2. 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
    - Disability
    - race (including ethnicity and nationality)
    - religion or belief
    - sex
    - sexual orientation
    - gender reassignment
    - pregnancy and maternity
    - marriage or civil partnership[1]

    Students from any of the protected characteristic groups may take an MSc by Research and therefore could be affected by the structure of the degree.

3. 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.

    Schools monitor and reflect on student progression and award data in their annual and periodic reviews of courses and programmes as part of the University's quality assurance framework. The Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) and Curriculum and Student Progression Committee receive reports on student progression and award data, some of which relates to the protected characteristics groups. CSPC is reviewing its use of student data and is participating in a cross-Senate committees' working group on this.

    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

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[1] Note: only the duty to eliminate discrimination applies to marriage and civil partnership. There is no need to have regard to advancing equality or opportunity or fostering good relations in this respect.

policy/practice to equality.

This is being considered by the cross-Senate committees' Use of Student Data working group.

4. 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?

   No

5. Are reasonable adjustments built in where they may be needed?

   Schools build in reasonable adjustments in a degree programme's implementation in response to an individual student's learning profile.

6. Does the policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity[2]? Will it help to:
   - remove or minimise disadvantage
   - meet the needs of different equality groups
   - encourage increased participation of particular groups
   - take account of disabled people's impairments?

   No

7. Is there an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations between people in any protected group and those who are not[3]? Will it help to tackle prejudice and/or promote understanding?

   No

8. 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

9. 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

10. Is any equality group excluded from participating in or accessing the service or functions? If so, why?

    No

11. 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 barriers are created. The MSc by Research Structure document will be made available in different formats if necessary.

12. How are relevant equality groups or communities involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice?

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[2] This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership
[3] This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership.

CSPC has wide-spread representation, including from the Edinburgh University Students Association (EUSA), to gain input into the development of policies and regulation and their review and monitoring. Relevant regulations are checked with the Student Disability Service and those with responsibility for the provision of particular services, who have insight into the needs of particular groups, e.g. Student Administration.

13. 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.

No

H. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

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.

State the reasons for this conclusion and the evidence used, if not already included in section G.

See Section G above.

I Action and Monitoring

1. Specify the actions required to implement the findings of this EqIA.

   No further action needed.

2. State how the policy or practice will be monitored in relation to its equality impact (or note where this is specified above).

   The outcome of the Use of Student Data working group and any evidence that student progression has a different impact on different protected characteristic groups will be considered by CSPC for future versions of the MSc by Research Structure document.

3. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?

   2017/18

J. Publication of EqIA

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

J. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): **Sara Welham, Head, Governance and Regulatory Framework Team, Academic Services**

Accepted by (name): **Nichola Kett, Head, Enhancement Team, Academic Services**

Date: 10.6.14

Retain a copy of this form for your own records and send a copy to equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk