



Equality Impact Assessment

A. Policy or Practice (name or brief description): Special Circumstances Policy
B. Reason for screening (delete as applicable): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposed change to an existing policy/practice
C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice: Name: Adam Bunni Job title: Head of Governance and Regulatory Team School/service/unit: Academic Services
D. Screening Analysis <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Does the policy or practice affect primary or high level functions of the University? Yes2. 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)? Yes3. Is the policy or practice one on which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqIA? Yes
E. Screening outcome Equality Impact Assessment required: Yes Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) carried out by Adam Bunni (Academic Services) on behalf of the Curriculum and Student Progression Committee (CSPC) and Academic Services. EqIA carried out prior to 19th September 2016, the implementation date for the policy and procedures.
F. Sign-off Screening undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): Adam Bunni, Head of Governance and Regulatory Team, Academic Services Accepted by (name): Date:
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 and procedures are updated versions of a previous policy and procedures.

The policy and procedures aim to deal consistently with all groups of students, regardless of their degree programme, School or College.

The policy and procedures have been Equality Impact Assessed because they apply to all taught students and all research postgraduate students taking taught courses in the University.

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):

- **Disability: In section 5 of the policy, the University's commitment to making reasonable adjustments through a Learning Profile for students with disclosed disabilities is stated. The policy states that, where adjustments have been made to address the impact of a disability, this specific impact may not also be addressed under Special Circumstances. The policy does, however, allow for submission of Special Circumstances in relation to a disability where the impact of the disability has worsened or changed temporarily.**

Special circumstances can have an impact on any student, whether they are in a protected characteristic group or not.

The policy is in place to prevent possible negative impacts on particular groups and to promote opportunities to eliminate discrimination.

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.

Special circumstances are dealt with anonymously, so no demographic data is available on special circumstances requests.

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.

Following the introduction of the policy, we will be seeking to develop electronic business processes to support special circumstances requests. Should this be implemented, we will be in a position to collect management information on the number and outcomes of requests, and certain characteristics of students making those requests; this may include some information on protected characteristics.

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- the policy is designed to ensure that no student suffers disadvantage in relation to others.

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

Special Circumstances Committees are authorised to consider students' individual circumstances and make adjustments for these. The policy specifically encourages them to consider the impact of disabilities, where this has not been addressed by a Learning Profile.

6. Does the policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity¹? 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?

The policy is consistent in its approach in order to ensure that no student suffers disadvantage. Special Circumstances Committees are designed to meet the needs of different groups, and to encourage all students to participate by mitigating the impact of adverse circumstances. The policy gives specific consideration to disabled people's impairments, and seeks to address exceptional situations where these are not covered by existing Learning Profiles.

7. Is there an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations between people in any protected group and those who are not²? 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?

There is no evidence of this.

¹ This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership

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

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)?

Special circumstances requests are handled anonymously, so there is no demographic data available.

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 policy and procedures will be made available in different formats if required.

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

The task group which developed the policy, and the body which approved the policy (CSPC), have broad representation, including from Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA), to gain input into the development of policies and regulation and their review and monitoring. The group made particular efforts to understand the needs of students with disabilities and mental health conditions by including representatives from the Student Disability Service and Counselling Service, as well as gaining input from a consultant liaison psychiatrist with experience in supporting student mental health.

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 further points.

H. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

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 above for analysis.

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).

Academic Services will seek feedback from EUSA regarding the application of the policy during its first year of use.

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

2018/19

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)):

Adam Bunni, Head of Governance and Regulatory Team, Academic Services

Accepted by (name):

Tom Ward, Director of Academic Services

Date: 2/6/16

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