



Equality Impact Assessment

Before carrying out EqIA, you should familiarise yourself with the University's EqIA Policy Statement and Guidance and Checklist Notes, and undertake our online training on Equality and Diversity and EqIA. These, along with further information and resources, are available at www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/impact-assessment

EqIA covers policies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services, but will be referred to as 'policy/practice' hereinafter.

A. College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) Fitness to Practise Procedure

B. Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (Mark **yes** against the applicable reason):

- Proposed new policy/practice
- Proposed change to an existing policy/practice **YES**
- Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice
- Other (please state):

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: Kathryn Nicol

Job title: Academic Administrator

School/service/unit: Academic and Student Administration, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any of the following apply to the policy/practice, if it:

- affects primary or high level functions of the University
- is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance)?
- It is one which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqIA? **Yes**

E. Equality Groups

To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant and why?

- Disability: the procedure applies to students on professional programmes with fitness to practise requirements, and lists relevant circumstances that could put into question a student's fitness to practise. This list includes health issues.
- The CAHSS Fitness to Practise Procedure is intended to:
 - fulfil the College's duty to ensure that students on professional programmes are fit to practise;

- protect the interests and wellbeing of members of the public with whom students have contact during professional training, and in particular minimising the risk of harm to children, vulnerable adults, patients, clients and service users;
 - ensure that students are appropriately prepared for entry to the profession and understand and demonstrate professional behaviour, and to comply with the requirements of professional bodies; and
 - reduce the risk to the University of legal action brought by an individual or representative of an individual claiming to have suffered harm or loss as a result of student proving during training or after qualification to be unfit to practise.
- In the large majority of cases, student health conditions can be addressed through appropriate support and reasonable adjustments, and will not bring into question fitness to practise. In exceptional circumstances, a student may be referred to fitness to practise procedures because of a health condition that is preventing them from meeting required professional competencies, or practising safely, after reasonable adjustments have been made. Because the Procedure requires that reasonable adjustment are made for students with disabilities, it does not create an unlawful barrier for this group. Fitness to Practise procedures will only be initiated if an issue cannot be resolved through support and discussion with the student.
 - Only a very small number of Fitness to Practise cases have been escalated to College in the last 5 years. None of these cases involved student health concerns, therefore there is no current evidence, in CAHSS, that students with disabilities face particular barriers in relation to fitness to practise.
 - The Student Disability Service was consulted as part of the Procedure review. The Students' Association (Sabbatical Officers and The Advice Place) were given an opportunity to comment on the revised Procedure. The Procedure review process made reference to Fitness to Practise policies / procedures at comparable higher education institutions and the approach taken to student health concerns is in line with the sector and with other parts of the University of Edinburgh.
 - All third party organisations (such as placement providers or Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies) that are referred to in the Procedure are subject to UK equalities legislation.
 - Any students whose fitness to practise is reviewed under the Procedure are encouraged to seek independent support from the Students' Association Advice Place.
 - The revised Procedure and guidance reinforces the requirement to make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, and includes reference to consultation with the Student Disability Service to agree reasonable adjustments. By providing more and clearer information about the relevance of health conditions to fitness to practise, the revised Procedure is intended to support Schools in responding appropriately to any disability issues. Therefore the revised Procedure constitutes an improvement in supporting students with disabilities in accessing professional programmes in CAHSS.
 - The Procedure review process has led to the institution of an annual College Fitness to Practise Committee meeting. This will provide an opportunity to monitor the College fitness to practise caseload and an opportunity to identify any increase in cases relating to student health conditions and, should this occur, the reasons for such an increase, and recommendations for any action in response.

F. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

Select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision

Option 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.

The procedure makes specific reference to the University's responsibilities in relation to equalities legislation, and is in line with practise in other Colleges, and other UK Higher Education Institutions. The Student Disability Service will provide expert guidance on appropriate adjustments, external to the student's School or placement provider, and the Procedure encourages students to seek independent support from the Students' Association Advice Place. The Procedure allows for fitness to practise concerns to be addressed through support and discussion in the first instance. The annual review of the Procedure by the CAHSS Fitness to Practise Committee will provide an opportunity to review the implementation of the procedure and caseload, and recommend actions to amend the Procedure if required.

G. Action and Monitoring

1. The application of the Procedure will be monitored annually via the meeting of the College Fitness to Practise Committee.
2. The Procedure will be reviewed 3 years after initial implementation, but there will be scope for minor changes before this date.

H. Publication of EqIA

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? Yes

I. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by Kathryn Nicol, Academic Administrator, CAHSS

Accepted by (name): Lisa Kendall, CAHSS Head of Academic and Student Administration

Date: 21/6/19

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