THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Equality Impact Assessment Template

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. Policy/Practice (name or brief description):   The rollout of a "toolkit" which strongly encourages the use of practical measures to assess candidates' commitment and ability for teaching during the selection process**.** The principal purpose is to support the meaningful assessment of teaching ability and commitment for posts that include, or are likely to include, a significant element of teaching. The tools presented will be designed (a) to be as challenging as those used for assessing research ability and commitment and (b) to provide evidence to inform the value judgement made by a recruitment panel. We take "teaching" to mean all aspects of the process – from lecture-room teaching, through dissertation/project supervision to personal tutoring.
B. Reason for Equality Impact Asessment (delete as applicable):   • Proposed new policy/practice   This University's National Student Survey results remain disappointing. Some small-but-welcome improvements in 2016 appeared in our internal Edinburgh Student Experience Survey (ESES) for 2015-16. As part of the "Unambiguous Priority" around learning, teaching and student experience, the need to improve recruitment and selection processes for identifying new acadmemic staff was identified by Learning and Teaching Policy Group. It is deemed essential to ensure that staff who are recruited into posts that include teaching understand the need for excellent teaching and research and have the skills to address that need to make a sustainable improvement to the learning experience of our students.
C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice   **Name(s):** Craig Hennessy & Professor Alan Murray   **Job title(s):**   Senior HR Partner (Resourcing)   Assistant Principal, Academic Support and Head of the Institute for Bioengineering, School of Engineering   **School/service/unit**:   University HR Services   School of Engineering
D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any if the following apply to the policy/practice, if it:

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

E. Equality Groups

These guidelines are relevant to all equality groups, as it affects all eligible candidates that will be covered by one of the following protected characteristics.

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

The principles and practical measures outlined in the academic selection toolkit apply to all academic posts that include, or are likely to include, a significant element of teaching. The practice will therefore apply to a significant proportion of our academic colleagues covering all protected characteristics.

Add notes against the following statements where applicable/relevant:

- On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups:

Bias for all protected characteristics, both conscious and unconscious are an important consideration for existing selection methods used in different parts of the University and this practice is no different. As with other forms of existing assessment, there needs to be an awareness of the possibility of discrimination occurring during all stages of the selection process, and every attempt will be made to mitigate this risk. The University already has well established Equality and Diversity training for recruiters, which includes unconscious bias training.

The toolkit recommends that students are invited to provide feedback during the selection process (not as formal members of the selection panel). Student feedback during the selection process is not new to the university and this practice already exists in pockets throughout the institution, for example with certain Chair appointments. The toolkit recommends the use of structured student feedback, in the form of a short questionnaire to reduce the likelihood of unintentional bias creeping into the process. Literature exploring bias in these types of questionnaires exists, with gender being the most studied aspect. The research suggests that responses can be affected by bias and that respondents may give higher scores to some groups because of unconscious bias or direct discrimination.

---

[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.

All of the recommended selection methods within the toolkit are inclusive and relevant to the role. A variety of different health conditions, disabilities and impairments may require reasonable adjustments to be made to ensure individuals are not disadvantaged. This will be accommodated through existing invitation to interview documentation which asks whether adjustments need to be made to support individual's personal circumstances.

- Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this be will be addressed:

Students are already versed in providing constructive feedback on their courses using Course Enhancement Questionnaires, so this practice exists in other formats. Whilst students may provide critical feedback for selection purposes; they should ensure that it does not breach the University's Dignity and Respect Policy. The Resourcing Team in UHRS will remain in close contact with colleagues in Schools to log any examples of inappropriate comments and responses from students, which breach the University's Dignity and Respect Policy.

A commitment has been made to review the toolkit after 12 months for evidence of bias (gender initially) and for this to help inform any future amendments to techniques and principals outlined. Equal opportunities monitoring data will be used to track candidates' progress through the recruitment and selection process to monitor whether or not candidates with a particular protected characteristic/s are being disadvantaged during the recruitment and selection process and, if they are, take action to address any bias.

- If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups:

The toolkit will recommend that student feedback must be guarded against bias by rationalising all collated responses before it is fed back to the selection committee. For this purpose, a briefing sheet will be provided and assessors will be asked to outline student responsibilities prior to their involvement.

There is the potential for an indirectly discriminatory effect in some areas:

As noted on previous sections there is the potential for indirect discrimination to occur from both a student feedback angle and from those on the selection panel. These risks are general to recruitment and selection and not unique to this new practice.

If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity[2]

If applied effectively and appropriately, this has the potential to mainstream the way academic posts are recruited to, with non-bias evidence based assessment of suitability sitting at the core of the principles.

If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations:

- If the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?

- How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant?

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

---

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

• Any potential or actual impact of applying the policy or practice, with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and promote good relations:
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. (Delete the options that do not apply): **Option 3:** Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated
G. Action and Monitoring 1. Specify the actions required for implementing findings of this EqIA and how the policy or practice will be monitored in relation to its equality impact (or note where this is specified above). A commitment has been made to review the toolkit after 12 months for evidence of bias (gender initially) and for this to help inform any future amendments to techniques and principals outlined. Equal opportunities monitoring data will be used to track candidates' progress through the recruitment and selection process to monitor whether or not candidates with a particular protected characteristic/s are being disadvantaged during the recruitment and selection process and, if they are, take action to address any bias. 2. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed? March 2017
H. Publication of EqIA Can this EqIA be published in full, now? **Yes** If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply:
I. Sign-off EqIA undertaken by Craig Hennessy – Senior HR Partner (Resourcing) Accepted by (name): Martyn Peggie – Deputy Director Reward, Systems, Business Information and Resourcing Date: 26/05/17

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