



Equality Impact Assessment

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

LibSmart II

Online asynchronous information skills training course, hosted on Learn. Follows on from LibSmart I course (basic information skills) and increases confidence in information literacy in areas relevant to students' studies, allowing participants to choose topics from 10 distinct subject specific modules.

B. Reason for screening (delete as applicable):

- **Proposed new policy/practice: new course to be launched Sept 2021.**

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: **Christine Love-Rodgers**

Job title: **Library Academic Support Project Lead**

School/service/unit: **Information Services Group**

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**

Record notes about the screening process or outcome here.

- If EqIA is required, note when/at what stage(s) and by whom EqIA will be carried out.

SarahLouise McDonald (Academic Support Librarian) will carry out the screening process during the content creation stage of the project, April 2021.

F. Sign-off

Screening undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): **SarahLouise McDonald, Academic Support Librarian**

Accepted by (name): **Christine Love-Rodgers, Academic Support Librarian Project Lead**

Date: **9/4/21**

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 project is currently past the proposal and planning stages, and we are now in the content creation stage. The project helps ISG work towards better equity among a wide range of students as it is open to all and will encourage increased information literacy, helping close the skill gap between students from different backgrounds, cultures and with varying levels of expertise. The format of the course (online, asynchronous) benefits many students with accessibility issues and allows students to learn at flexible times to suit their work, study and home lives.

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

LibSmart II is open to all students and therefore is relevant to all protected characteristic groups.

However we believe it is particularly relevant to those with disabilities as it is hosted online (requiring no physical attendance on campus, timings are flexible) and content will be provided with accessibility in mind (i.e. alt text for images in order to support screen reader use, documents provided in alternative formats). The asynchronous nature of the course may also impact positively on students who have family and caring responsibilities, as it is non-credit bearing, only contains formative assessments, can be completed at a time to suit the student – all aspects which can affect participation of protected groups, often women. The course content includes guidance for building advanced academic research skills such as searching, systematic reviews, using university collections, and subject specific good practice which may be of particular use to students from different cultural backgrounds and nationalities.

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.

As this is a self-enrol course the students will elect whether or not to participate in the course and may self-assess their needs based on their own knowledge of their circumstances and personal characteristics.

Although we have used some data regarding student participation from the LibSmart I course to feed into the desired outcomes for LibSmart II, this is not based on data relating to personal characteristics or relevant equality groups but rather overall completion rates and participation at academic college/school level. We did not consider it appropriate to interrogate which students completed the earlier course nor project reasons for this based on equality groups. Instead we have focused on making the course accessible to all, inclusive of those with additional support requirements.

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.

We do not consider there to be gaps in evidence but will endeavour to gather feedback indicative of issues equality groups may face when the course is live.

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?

Yes. The course can be completed flexibly with no penalty or time restrictions. Captions and subtitles will be applied to all videos. All content can be made available in alternative formats, either already included or by request. Contact information for requesting adjustments will be provided in each module.

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?

Yes, the course advances equality. It provides a baseline of information skill that ensures students from all equality groups are equipped to deal with their assignments and research regardless of previous experience, location or socio-economic status. By ensuring course content is created mindfully with disabled people's impairments in mind, difficulties experienced when using the course will be reduced which will improve participation and overall accessibility.

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

We also intend to consider the inclusivity of images, videos and resources used. We plan to mirror the diversity of the university community to help people feel included and that the course is aimed at them.

7. Is there an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations between people in any protected group and those who are not³? Will it help to tackle prejudice and/or promote understanding?

Partially. We hope that by making adjustments visible and content inclusive we will highlight some areas where there may be knowledge gaps between participants from different groups, and in the interactive elements we hope that participants will express their own experiences which will lead to greater understanding of others' experiences.

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?

Partially. Some studies suggest that age may affect the accessibility and digital literacy of participants, however this view has received much criticism in recent years ([N. Selwyn, Educating the 'Digital Natives'](#)). More relevant may be the socio-economic status of participants, for example their access to technology and a reliable internet connection.

The Coronavirus pandemic has meant much of teaching for 2020/21 has had to be conducted online and as such students are being supported by the university in their increased need for access to computing devices and internet connections with [medium and long-term laptop loans, and Mi-Fi \(personal wifi\) devices](#).

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. We endeavour to make the communications accessible and encourage different channels of communication, via the library and administrative offices of Schools.

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

The staff developing content for the course (Academic Support Librarians) are all required to engage with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training as part of their annual review process. The Educational Design & Engagement Team and Learning Technologist (CAHSS) working on the project are trained in issues relating to inclusivity and accessibility. We also have a student intern involved with the project who is providing additional feedback on inclusivity issues. There will be widespread input into the monitoring and evaluation of the course, content will be reviewed annually and student feedback taken into account for all modules involved in the programme.

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. **None**

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.

Given the experience of the ASL, Educational Design & Engagement team, and Learning Technologist, we are confident that all procedures used will ensure the course meets a high standard of accessibility. Staff will put into place supporting guidelines to encourage best practice for equality, diversity and inclusion practices for content creation, which the Educational Design & Engagement team will help review before the course goes live. We expect that we will not encounter any negative issues with regards to equality and diversity issues but will monitor and seek advice from relevant groups within the University community such as EUSA and the Student Disability Service.

I Action and Monitoring

1. Specify the actions required to implement the findings of this EqIA.
 - **The EqIA will be reported to the Project Team at the next meeting (April 2021)**
 - **Module leads will be provided with best practice guidelines for EDI issues to circulate to staff creating content**
2. State how the policy or practice will be monitored in relation to its equality impact (or note where this is specified above).
 - **Upon the course being made live (September 2021) a range of feedback will be sought from relevant groups and departments within the University community (EUSA, SDS etc) to ensure a high standard of inclusivity is met.**
3. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?
 - **Participation of students on the course will be evaluated throughout the 21/22 academic year, and content reviewed in Summer 2022.**
 - **This EqIA statement will be used in June 2022 and annually thereafter to assess whether the course continues to meet the equality and inclusion standards set by the University.**

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)): **SarahLouise McDonald, Academic Support Librarian**

Accepted by (name): **Christine Love-Rodgers, Academic Support Librarian Project Lead**
Date: **9/4/21**

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