



Equality Impact Assessment Guidance and Template

This form is intended to help you decide whether an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is needed and, if it is, to carry out the assessment of impact.

Before carrying out EqIA, you should familiarise yourself with the University's EqIA Policy Statement 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 is part of the University's general equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012. The Equality Act 2010 specifies the following 'protected characteristics': age, disability, race (including ethnicity and nationality), religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage or civil partnership. This form uses 'equality group' to mean persons who share a relevant protected characteristic.

The University has a general equality duty to have due regard to the **needs** to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Under the Scottish Regulations, the University has a specific duty – subject to relevance and proportionality - to assess the impact of applying proposed new or revised policies and practices against the needs above. 'Policy and practice' should be interpreted widely to include the full range of the University's policies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services – essentially everything we do.

This form is a tool to help with screening and EqIA and is designed to lead you through the process through asking pertinent questions and giving examples. However, the law does not dictate a particular form for EqIA. The requirement is to actively consider how a policy or practice will meet the general equality duty, and take any necessary action. Wherever practicable, EqIA should be built into standard processes and tailored to the nature of the policies or practices involved.

It is, however, necessary to publish EqIA where the policy or practice is applied, so all EqIAs – in whatever format - should be sent to equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk for publication.

The form includes: some details about the policy/practice; a screening analysis to indicate whether full EqIA is required; and then a number of questions to enable full EqIA.

Answers should be recorded after the questions and the form can be expanded and supplemented as required. Answers may be as long or short as is necessary and relevant, bearing in mind that the effort involved in EqIA should be proportionate to the relevance of the policy or practice to equality.

Once completed, this form will be the record of the screening and, where applicable, the EqlA of the policy or practice. All full EqlAs are published.

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

Practice. Upgrade of Questionmark Perception online assessment system (QMP) from version 5.2 to version 5.7. This system is used to deliver online formative, and high stakes summative assessments to on and off campus students.

B. Reason for screening (delete as applicable):

- **Proposed change to an existing practice**

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: **Mark Wetton**

Job title: **Head of Educational Design & Engagement**

School/service/unit: **Learning Teaching & Web Services Division**

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 EqlA? **Yes**

If the answer to any of these questions is 'Yes', an EqlA 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.

An EqlA will be carried out to identify any possible positive or negative impacts on any of the 9 protected characteristics. The QMP upgrade affects ~6000 students. A QMP upgrade project is planned on a two-year basis, and a review of the EqlA should be included with each upgrade project.

F. Sign-off

Screening undertaken by: **Mark Findlay, Service Manager, Digital Learning Applications & Media**

Accepted by (name): **Mark Wetton**

Date: **20th July 2015.**

If EqIA is not being carried out, delete the remainder of this form and send the completed form to equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk.

G. Equality Impact Assessment

Before assessing the policy/practice, ensure that you have a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy or practice, the context, the intended beneficiaries and the results aimed for.

In answering the questions below:

- Bear in mind that the extent of EqIA should be proportionate to the relevance of the policy/practice to equality. It may not be practicable or necessary to answer every question or address every potential scenario.
- Focus mainly on aspects of the policy/practice that are most relevant to the question, to ensure most attention is given to the most important areas.
- Relate answers to consideration of the available evidence and address any gaps or disparities revealed, where feasible without disproportionate effort. For new policies, assess potential impact.
- Describe any action identified to address any issues highlighted.
- Where there is potential for adverse impact, but the policy/practice will still be applied, indicate the rationale for that decision.

Initial/partial EqIA: in some circumstances - particularly for new policies/practices – there may be limited information on which to base EqIA. In these cases, the EqIA should be carried out to the extent possible and should identify arrangements for monitoring/investigation of equality impact and for fuller EqIA in future.

Wholly positive impact: Some policies/practices may be viewed as having only positive equality impact. For these, consideration should still be given to ensure that no adverse impact is overlooked and to ensure that full advantage is taken of the positive impact, e.g. through effective communication. However, the effort involved in carrying out EqIA should not be excessive.

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?

QMP is available to all Schools in the University to deliver formative quizzes and high stakes summative exams. The system is widely used throughout the University, and around 150,000 student assessments are taken on the system each year.

The planned upgrade will be released to users on 20th July 2015. The main concern of this equality impact assessment is any potential impact on disabled users and the need of the system to be accessible to disabled users and compatible with assistive technology.

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): In answering the questions below consider each of these equality groups. As part of this, consider diversity within, as well as between groups (e.g. different disabilities, different racial groups). Consider the implications of combinations of protected characteristics e.g. issues of relevance to women may vary once race, religion and age are taken into consideration. Also consider the impact on those with caring/family responsibilities (which tends to impact more on women).

- Age
- Disability
- race (including ethnicity and nationality)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage or civil partnership¹

QMP is used by a large number Programmes throughout the University; it is available to ~6000 students, it therefore has the potential to impact on all 9 protected characteristics however the characteristic that potentially this change will have the greatest impact on is Disability. QMP is relevant to disabled users, who may rely on assistive technology to access assessments and/or who require the system to meet current accessibility guidelines such as WCAG Version 2. The characteristic of race is also relevant as the system will only be available in English as per the requirements of the teaching assessments of the University of Edinburgh where English is the main teaching language so we would not envisage any disadvantage,

We do not envisage any positive or negative impact on any of the other protected characteristics but will monitor feedback from users in case any issues come to light.

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.

The information Services Disability Information Officer (IS DIO) has completed a detailed accessibility audit of the upgraded QMP service and recommendations from this audit have been completed to a satisfactory level. The IS DIO will continue to review any further developments with the Moodle service, which affect accessibility. In addition, any feedback from students regarding accessibility or any other equality issues will be considered and fed into future EqIAs and acted on accordingly.

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

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.

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 have taken the view that because this is an upgrade to an existing service, and the IS DIO has carried out comprehensive accessibility testing, it would not have been proportional to involve users from protected groups directly at this stage. However, we will monitor feedback from users and review this approach to evidence gathering where appropriate. Therefore, at this stage we feel we have sufficient evidence to proceed.

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?

We do not envisage that this upgrade will lead to any form of prohibited conduct. All steps have been put in place to ensure the system upgrade is as accessible and compatible with assistive technology as possible to disabled users. Reasonable adjustments will be put in place where appropriate to ensure no student experiences any disadvantage.

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

Digital Learning Applications and Media / EDE will provide information on the accessibility of the system when requested. The system has inbuilt functionality to allow extra time for students who require extra time. IS staff can also provide exams in custom colour schemes, or larger text where required. It is also possible to provide a paper copy of an exam where needed if we were unable to make the system fully accessible to a student for whatever reason. The student would not be penalised in any way for taking a paper copy of the exam rather than the online assessment and there will be no cost to the student.

6. Does the policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity²? 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 system has been tested and changes made to maximise accessibility to ensure the system takes accounts of disabled people's impairments along with guidance to schools on the need for reasonable adjustments where appropriate. It is hoped that as the system is designed to be as accessible as possible there will be few requests for reasonable adjustments. However, disabled students will not experience any disadvantage if they require to take the exam using a paper copy etc rather than the online system.

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?

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.

This process has the potential of highlighting to schools the need to ensure that systems are accessible and that reasonable adjustments may need to be put in place for disabled users when there is a requirement to use a specific system or method. This may help to improve other services and facilities schools offer by increasing awareness of these issues.

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?

Disabled users may have different needs in terms that the system needs to be compatible with assistive software and hardware and to be as accessible as possible, meeting the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2 AA standard which the University Web Accessibility Policy states that our University websites should apply to. There should be no expectation that the system will be available in languages other than English as English is the main teaching language of the University and an academic requirement the papers be taken in English so this should lead to no disadvantage.

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, all students on the course will be required to take the assessment.

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?

The University provides 24 hour access to computing facilities for all students so there should not be any disadvantage to users, on the basis of income, caused by IT systems.

IS has a disability computing support team of staff who support disabled students with IT adjustments for exams where appropriate and where identified and referred to them by the Student Disability Service.

Distance users may not have access due to distance to University facilities but users will need computer access to complete the online courses. All communication regarding the upgrade and online help will be available in alternative formats on request.

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

The IS DIO will reviewing the accessibility of the system for disabled users at any time there is an upgrade. In addition, all feedback will be monitored and acted upon where possible.

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.

The information we provide to users and schools on reasonable adjustments will be available in a variety of formats upon request.

I Action and Monitoring

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

Ensure all communications about the upgrade are available in alternative formats upon request.

Ensure schools and IS staff are aware of potential reasonable adjustments. Information Services will publish guidance on reasonable adjustments on the Information Services website and liaise with schools where specific requirements arise for a student.

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

The project team and Information services Helpline will monitor all feedback on the upgrade from users on an on-going basis to monitor any positive or negative impacts on any of the 9 protected characteristics and appropriate action will be taken

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

An upgrade to QMP is planned on a two year basis. An EqIA will be carried out within this two year upgrade project or when we receive any positive or negative feedback related to any of the 9 protected characteristics.

J. Publication of EqIA

EqIAs are published on the Equality and Diversity website.

There is a statutory requirement to publish EqIAs within a reasonable period. However, in some circumstances there may be valid reasons to limit what is published or to delay publication.

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

If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply.

J. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): **Mark Findlay, Service Manager, Digital Learning Applications & Media**

Accepted by (name): **Mark Wetton**

Date: **20th July 2015.**

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

