



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):

Research Data Management Policy

The purpose of the policy, updated from 2011, is to make clear the responsibilities of the University and its researchers for managing research data well, in order to adhere to accepted good practice, advance the University's Open Research strategy, and to provide linkages to other relevant university policies, such as the Data Protection Policy. Research data are both University assets and the underpinning of publications representing the scholarly record, which is public. As research culture changes, this policy will be regularly reviewed (every five years at a minimum).

Content in this version of the policy is both continuous with the original and updated to include concepts of FAIR sharing (to make data findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) and also practice commensurate with the UK Data Protection Act, 1998, which didn't exist in 2011. Language has been changed so that it is no longer described as an "aspirational policy." This means that data management plans will be expected to be written for virtually all research projects by academic staff and postgraduate research students, going forward. As an "aspirational" requirement it may have been overlooked in the past by some.

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: Dominic Tate

Job title: Head, Library Research Support

School/service/unit: Library and University Collections, Information Services Group

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 YES

- 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
- 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? (add notes against the following applicable equality group/s)

The policy affects all staff and student researchers, and so could impact on all nine protected characteristics. The University vision involves a continuing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for both students and staff. The University has a single [Equality Strategy](#) to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are guiding principles in our pursuit of academic excellence.

- Age – This policy does not require any individual to disclose their age.
- Disability – the policy may affect disabled users as they may need to use research data management online tools. These tools will need to be as compatible as possible with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1 AA standard](#), including compatibility with assistive technology such as voice recognition software, screen readers or screen magnification software. Accessibility statements have been added for the Research Data Service tools as per The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Reasonable adjustments will be in place should a disabled user prove unable to use the system, and that we were unable to rectify. This policy does not require any individual to disclose whether they meet the legal definition of disability or not. This policy should increase the amount of research available online, 24/7, which potentially may have a positive impact by increasing flexibility.
- race (including ethnicity and nationality) —overall the thrust of the policy is in line with international Open Research efforts to level the playing field between nations by making data publicly available as open access. In this way the policy benefits those of other nationalities, and eliminates the requirement to be in a researcher's network to receive their data, enhancing equality. Another significant consideration is that the research will mainly be in English, and the policy is written in English, which is mitigated by the fact that the main teaching language of the University is also English. There is a potential positive effect in that by providing the policy online, users can access the information and subsequently use browser translation tools to convert to their preferred language. We are aware that some online tools may be blocked by certain countries, e.g. China, Russia. Where we became aware of this we would work with the researcher to find a solution, as far as possible. This policy does not require any individual to disclose their race.
- religion or belief – This policy does not require any individual to disclose their religious belief or lack thereof. This policy should increase the amount of research available online, 24/7, which potentially may have a positive impact by increasing flexibility for those who observe times of religious observance.
- Sex – This policy does not require any individual to disclose their sex. A possible advantage is that the use of ORCID, (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) encouraged in the policy, means that changes to names or titles will not disadvantage a researcher from having their work discovered.
- sexual orientation - This policy does not require any individual to disclose their sexual orientation.
- gender reassignment - This policy does not require any individual to disclose whether they have undergone gender reassignment or are in the process of undergoing gender reassignment. A possible advantage is that the use of ORCID, encouraged in

the policy, means that changes to names or titles will not disadvantage a researcher from having their work discovered.

- pregnancy and maternity – This policy should increase the amount of research available online, 24/7, which potentially may have a positive impact by increasing flexibility for those with childcare or caring responsibilities.
- marriage or civil partnership¹- This policy does not require any individual to disclose their marriage or civil partnership status. A possible advantage is that the use of ORCID, encouraged in the policy, means that changes to names or titles will not disadvantage a researcher from having their work discovered.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

- On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups: Consultation has been undertaken throughout the development of this policy, including Research Strategy Group, various committees (Library Committee; College Research) and groups (MVM Research Computing Group; Research Data Service Steering Group and Digital Research Services Steering Group), as well as the Information Services Group's Disability Information team. Library Research Support has and will monitor all feedback for any comments, positive or negative, related to any of the nine protected characteristics.
- Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this be will be addressed: Library Research Support will monitor all feedback for any comments, positive or negative, related to any of the nine protected characteristics. At this stage, it is felt we have sufficient evidence to proceed.
- If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups: We believe that this process will not lead to any prohibited conduct for the reasons detailed above and below. Should a disabled user prove unable to access the policy, and we were also unable to rectify this issue, reasonable adjustments would be put in place. This could include utilisation through assistive technology, or in provision of an alternative format. A review of these measures and the policy itself, alongside any feedback received, positive or negative, on all nine protected characteristics will be continually undertaken.
- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity²: due to its emphasis on sharing and transparency, the RDM Policy is likely to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity amongst researchers in the same and different disciplines. Library Research Support will disseminate any successes in this area amongst international peers, some of whom have indicated interest in the policy. By examining the potential positive and negative impacts of all the protected characteristics, it is hoped that this demonstrates the University's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, specifically through enhancing equality of opportunity.
- If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations: Library Research Support intends to embark on a training and outreach programme as part of the service that supports this policy, and this is covered in the EqIA for the Research Data Service, by showing the need to consider the impact on the 9 protected characteristics when creating such a policy it is hoped that is will help to foster good relations.

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.

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

It is hoped that by considering impacts, positive and negative, on all the protected characteristics via the policy, and subsequently this EqIA, we are showing that the University is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We have considered ways to mitigate and provide support and information to users in these groups.

- If the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups? The Research Data Service, which is designed to support the policy, makes itself available for in-depth support of any individual who needs help with research data management or writing a data management plan. The service is accessible through an enquiry to the University helpdesk system, so anyone requesting assistance will be given rapid attention. The RDM service is covered by a separate EqIA. We have had some feedback about the burden of writing data management plans and the carrying out of research data management activities for researchers funded by charities, who may not allow RDM costs. Our examination of those charities' funding policies are that, like other larger funders, RDM activities are generally expected, and that some computing facility costs may be included. However the Research Data Service endeavours to provide some level of free at point of use provision for all its tools and support. Only extensive use, such as storing very large datasets, require additional charges.

Users will require a means of accessing the information about the policy, or undertaking elements of research data management in an electronic format, including internet access. Staff and students have free, 24 / 7 IT facilities at the University, principally at the George Square Main Library. In the UK, libraries offer free internet access, whereas similar arrangements exist in other countries.

- How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant? Library Research Support will communicate the policy and related guidance through a number of channels developed in its Communication Plan, which will include asking Heads of School to cascade the information, working with doctoral training programmes, and arranging workshops and training sessions advertised in the MyEd events booking system. These training sessions will take place on a variety of days and times, materials will be made as accessible as possible and attendees will be asked if they require any reasonable adjustments in advance which will then be put in place. The policy itself will be hosted on University-hosted webpages (EdWeb), governed by a Web Accessibility Policy (based on the WCAG 2.1 AA standards). Any and all information will also be available in alternative formats for disabled users, free of charge, on request. The Policy will be published in HTML format.
- How equality groups or communities are involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice? Comments and feedback will be monitored for any positive or negative impact related to any of the protected characteristics and appropriate action taken accordingly. If issues arise where further consultation with specific protected characteristics is required this will be done through the University Sfaf Networks and student bodies as appropriate.
- 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.

Nothing other than that stated above and below.

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.

For the reasons detailed above and below.

~~**Option 2:** Adjust the policy or practice—this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.~~

~~**Option 3:** Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated/or justified~~

~~**Option 4:** Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.~~

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).

Library Research Support will monitor all feedback for any comments, positive or negative, related to any of the nine protected characteristics and act accordingly. We will also advise staff of the need to make reasonable adjustments where appropriate, including need to provide information in alternative formats, free of charge, upon request throughout the lifespan of the policy.

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

Although the policy has a formal review date of January 2027, a review shall take place if there are any significant changes to the policy. Moreover, a review will take place should feedback be received, positive or negative, related to any of the nine protected characteristics. On each of these occasions, the EqIA will be updated.

H. Publication of EqIA

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? ~~Yes~~/No

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

Publication immediately after the policy is signed-off by University Executive.

I. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): Robin Rice, Data Librarian and Head, Research Data Support, Library and University Collections, Information Services Group

Accepted by Dominic Tate, Head of Library Research Support, Library and University Collections, Information Services Group

[This will normally be the person responsible for the policy/practice named above. If not, specify job-title/role.]

Date: 01.11.2021

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

