



## 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](http://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):** Student Alumni Platform

The University of Edinburgh is procuring a pan-institution digital platform that uses social networking technology to connect alumni to support the personal and professional development of students and peers.

This will allow members of the University of Edinburgh community to connect and learn from each other's experiences and insights to their mutual benefit, wherever they are in the world.

The community would include other groups as well as students and alumni (including staff, applicants and other supporters of the University) and the interactions could be broader in scope than careers inspiration and mentoring.

It will replace the existing Connect.Ed service and examples of similar successful communities can be found at most other top 50 world-leading institutions, particularly in the UK and US.

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

- Proposed change to an existing policy/practice **YES**

**C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:**

Name: **Simon Raeside**

Job title: **Employer and Alumni Engagement Adviser**

School/service/unit: **Careers Service**

**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 **NO**
- 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)

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

As a web based service accessible to staff, students and alumni, the platform has the potential to affect all protected characteristics, but the equality groups for which the platform is particularly relevant are disability and race. There may be a potential impact on disability and therefore the system will need to be as accessible as possible in line with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2 AA standard and be compatible with assistive technology. There is a potential impact on race as the system will be in English, but as English is the main teaching language of the University we do not anticipate any disadvantage.-

In addition, users will have the ability to post comments and questions to other users individually and via public forums and there is potential for this feature to be abused. To mitigate this risk, we will be developing an 'acceptable use policy' within the terms and conditions, which users will agree to before they can gain access. There is also an explicit requirement that the solution has the ability to monitor and act on these posts in the event of abuse. Any user will be able to easily report inappropriate use via a feedback mechanism available throughout the platform.

We will ensure as far as possible that the new platform contributes to meeting the University's General eEquality dDuty.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

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

All content added to the website must not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics. Any content that was found to discriminate against any of the protected characteristics would result in appropriate disciplinary action. The University vision is a continuing commitment to equality and diversity for both students and staff. The University has a single equality strategy to ensure that equality and diversity are guiding principles in our pursuit of academic excellence. The introduction of this strategy coincides with the implementation of the Equality Act 2010 and builds on its principle of integrating equality and diversity in policy and practice.

In order to ensure the system meets the needs of disabled users the Information Services Staff Disability Officer included a set of questions based on the Web Content Accessibility Policy Version 2 AA standard as part of the procurement and tested the systems. We also have a new University web accessibility policy which web pages must meet.

As English is the main teaching language of the University we do not feel that the system only being in English will cause any disadvantage and there is the option being a web based service for users to use browser settings to change the language of the site.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

There is the option to add profile pictures. We realise there are some religions/faiths where the use of photography is not permitted and therefore there will be no obligation for users to add a profile picture if they do not wish to. It will be at users' discretion what information they add to their profiles such as marital status etc – none of this information will be mandatory and therefore should lead to no disadvantage.

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

We feel we have sufficient evidence at this stage to proceed.

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

We do not believe that this application will result in any form of prohibited conduct for the reasons stated above. In addition, reasonable adjustments will be put in place wherever required. This may include the provision of information in alternative formats or assistance if for a reason related to a disability a user is unable to access the application and we are unable to make changes to resolve this.

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity<sup>2</sup>

It is hoped that that the platform will advance equality of opportunity as it replaces the older Connect.Ed service so the new system should be more accessible to disabled users than the old system.

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

There is the potential for the policy to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity as it should permit members of the University of Edinburgh community to connect with each other to their mutual benefit. This should help users from across the protected characteristics to form links and connections.

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

We do not believe that the platform will create any barriers for any groups other than the issues discussed and the steps put in place to mitigate them as discussed above. For low income groups who may not have access to their own IT facilities the University provides free 24 hour IT access for staff and students and free IT facilities are available in public libraries for those who are no longer staff or students.

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

Communication about the platform will be made available through a variety of medium such as email and online. The University has a web accessibility policy to ensure such communications online are as accessible as possible. In addition, All information about the platform will be available in alternative formats on request without cost.

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

The IS Disability Information Officer was involved in evaluation of the platforms on offer during the procurement phase, and continues to be involved in the project through implementation to business as usual, reviewing the accessibility of the platform for disabled users.

All feedback from stakeholder groups relating to the platform will be monitored and acted upon to ensure there is no negative impact to any protected characteristics, and to note any positive impact.

A diverse group of users has been and will be involved in testing.

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<sup>2</sup> 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:  
None under than that stated above

#### 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 stated above.

#### 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).

All feedback positive and negative will be monitored for any potential positive or negative feedback related to any 9 of the protected characteristics and action taken accordingly Staff will be reminded about the need to make reasonable adjustments and the need to provide information in alternative formats upon request.

Action will be taken based on recommendations from the IS Disability Information Officer's assessment of the nominated platform.

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

The next review will be when we identify a material issue following significant changes to the platform or when we identify a material issue on receipt of positive or negative feedback related to any of the 9 protected characteristics.

#### H. Publication of EqIA

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

#### I. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)):

**Simon Raeside**  
**Employer and Alumni Engagement Adviser**

Accepted by (name): **Grant Spence**  
Director of Alumni Relations

Date: **05.09.17**

Retain a copy of this form for your own records and send a copy to [equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk](mailto:equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk)

