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):

Project Reference: UWP014 – New University Search Engine Procurement

Project Description:

The website search function used across much of the University has not been actively managed for a significant period of time. In recent years, it has relied on the free Google service.

In early 2012 it was identified that this free search service was planting privacy-invasive cookies on website visitors' devices in contravention of European Union legislation and as part of a wider programme of activity this was replaced with a paid Google service as an interim step.

The process of changing the search engine uncovered a number of issues around the management of phone and email search, and the lack of active management of search in general. Informal support was agreed between the University Website Programme, Information Services

Web Integration Team and Communications & Marketing Web Team to mitigate current risks as an interim step on the understanding that a research project would propose a robust, long-term solution.

The search engine procurement (UWP014) was undertaken to gather requirements and procure a new University-wide search engine. The project resulted in the conclusion of a signed SaaS agreement with the approved supplier ready for implementation.

The implement of the new search engine (UWP016) went live at the end of February 2017.

Implementation of the procured applications, documentation and services (as outlined in SaaS agreement) in accordance with the Business Requirements Specification will provide opportunities to provide a better user experience, with the search engine being able to take advantage and implement a better and more usable service.

B. Reason for Equality Impact Asessment:

- Proposed new policy/practice
- Proposed change to an existing policy/practice
- **Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice - YES**
- Other (please state):

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: **Stratos Filalithis**
Job title: **Head of Website & Communication Technologies**
School/service/unit: **Information Services Learning Teaching Web Division, Website and Communications**

D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any if 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**
- 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?

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

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

The project is relevant to all policy groups because all groups will have access to the New University Search Engine as users and therefore all protected characteristics may be impacted upon. However due to the nature of the search engine, the protected characteristic most likely to be impacted is disability and race. We have included users in our requirements gathering and keep involving them when evolving the services through workshops etc.

Disabled users will require the system to be accessible in relation to the latest version of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines AA Standard including compatibility with assistive technology. The University has a Web Accessibility policy and any new search engine facility meets the standards laid down in that document.

The search function is in English but as English is the main teaching language of the University we do not believe this should result in any form of discrimination. User can search with non-Latin characters getting results e.g. for Greek characters.

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[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.

This EqIA should be read alongside the EqIA for the University Website
http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EqualityDiversity/EIA/University_Centrally_Managed_Public_Facing_Website_at_www(IS).pdf and the
University Website Central Management system
http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EqualityDiversity/EIA/Development_of_a_new_Content_Management_System_(CMS)_for_the_Website(IS).pdf

Race – the search engine will only allow searches in English but as English is the main teaching language of the University and because browsers now offer in built translation options we do not envisage this will cause any disadvantage.

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

At this stage, we feel we have sufficient information 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 the new search engine will result in any form of prohibited conduct. The system has been tested by the Information Services Disability Information Officer to check its accessibility and compatibility with assistive technology and if for any reason a user was unable to access the system and we were unable to immediately rectify this, reasonable adjustments would be put in place to ensure that that individual experienced no detriment.

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity
An improved search engine should benefit all users assist users seeking specific information leading to an improved performance for all users and by ensuring the search engine is as accessible as possible it should assist disabled users accessing and using the website.

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

A key deliverable for the project is to provide a better user experience, with the search engine being able to take advantage and implement a better and more usable service. The use of a responsive design to work in various devices is an important benefit as well. The ability to undertake a more active management of data analytics will provide the capacity to identify and continually develop practices to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. By improving the search functionality it should make it easier for individuals to access information specifically relevant to the protected characteristics such as the Equality and Diversity pages, the Student Disability Service, International Office, Chaplaincy etc. It is hoped that the fact we have taken into consideration accessibility into the procurement and demanded a mandatory level of performance as regards this from the companies tendering we will demonstrate the commitment the University has to Equality and Diversity and secure as an accessible product as possible.

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

We do not envisage that the system will create any barriers for any other groups. The University offers free 24 hour access to computing facilities for all staff and students so any staff or students on low incomes should experiment no determinant and the University Website is free to search and free computing facilities are provided at Libraries and other community sites in the UK for those who are not staff or students

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

Communication about the outcome of the project will be transmitted in a variety of formats – for example via intranet and emails. Accessibility guidelines are followed for these communication channels. In line with our legal requirements all documents about the new system and policy will be made available in alternative formats upon request free of charge.

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

The IS Disability Information Officer has been involved throughout the project. We have included users in our requirements gathering and keep involving them when evolving the services through workshops etc. All feedback will be monitored for any positive or negative impacts on any of the nine protected characteristics.

- 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:

Service users will also be consulted at the point of roll out of the search engine to explain its intended use and to allay any fears or concerns particularly related to any of the 9 protected characteristics.

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 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust. **As per the details provided 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).

Monitoring was undertaken by the project team progressing the roll out and implementation of the new search engine. This will be continued by the Web Development Team post roll out. The team will monitor feedback for any impact positive or negative on any of the 9 protected characteristics, inform stakeholders of reasonable adjustments and ensure communications are available in alternative formats on request.

2. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?
When any feedback (positive or negative) is received relating to any of the 9 protected characteristics or when there is any significant change.

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 **Emma McNab (Programme / Project Manager, Information Services)** Accepted by (name): **Stratos Filalithis (Head of Website & Communication Technologies, Information Services)** Date: **12th January 2018**

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