



## 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](http://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](mailto: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.

<p>A. Policy or Practice (name or brief description):</p> <p><b>Policy and Procedure for Undergraduate Applications from Adult Returners to Higher Education</b></p>
<p>B. Reason for screening (delete as applicable):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Proposed new policy/practice</li></ul>
<p>C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:</p> <p>Name: Rebecca Gaukroger</p> <p>Job title: Director of Admissions</p> <p>School/service/unit: Student Recruitment and Admissions</p>
<p>D. Screening Analysis</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Does the policy or practice affect primary or high level functions of the University? Yes</li><li>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</li><li>Is the policy or practice one on which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqlA? Yes</li></ol> <p>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.</p>
<p>E. Screening outcome</p> <p>Equality Impact Assessment required: Yes</p> <p>Record notes about the screening process or outcome here.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If EqlA is required, note when/at what stage(s) and by whom EqlA will be carried out.  EqlA will be carried out when the policy is at draft stage, and before it is taken to the Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Group for ratification. The EqlA will be carried out by the SRA Senior Policy and Projects Officer</li><li>If EqlA is not required, note plans for review, monitoring or other action (including the communication of any favourable equality impact).</li></ul>
<p>F. Sign-off</p> <p>Screening undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): Gillian Simmons, Senior Policy and Projects Officer</p> <p>Accepted by (name): Rebecca Gaukroger</p> <p>Date: 18 April 2014</p>

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

*The policy has been developed in consultation with the College undergraduate admissions offices. The policy is designed to promote access to the University for undergraduate study for adults who are returning to take up higher education after a break in their formal education, improving equality of opportunity and widening participation. Adults returning to higher education may come from one or more protected characteristic groups.*

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<sup>1</sup>

*The policy is of relevance to all protected characteristic groups, but it is likely that many adults returning to education will be older than the average applicants to the University, and therefore issues relating to Age are particularly relevant with regard to this policy.*

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).

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 University holds information on the sex, age, and self-declared disability status of all undergraduate applicants. In addition, the University holds information on the race of undergraduate applicants, where they have chosen to disclose it. This information is collected by UCAS during the application process.*

*The University reports to HESA annually on the number of mature students (defined as those aged 21 or over at the start of their studies) attending the University.*

*The Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee publishes an annual report which includes degree outcome data for students by Age, Race, Gender and Disability.*

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.

*While there is published data at a national level about the specific needs of adult returners to higher education, there is little qualitative data about the needs of adult returners applying to the University of Edinburgh. Further evidence should be gathered, particularly from those taking Access courses through SWAP, or studying Credit for Entry programmes at the University.*

*The University has no information on the religion or belief of applicants, or on their sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity status, or marital or civil partnership status. This information is not currently collected by UCAS, and the*

<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.

*University has no means to collect it because it does not manage the application process directly.*

*UCAS is currently considering whether to collect further information from applicants for monitoring purposes.*

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?

*The policy and procedure is intended to improve the experience of adult returners to higher education by providing clarity about the University's admissions arrangements. It is not anticipated to lead to discrimination, harassment or victimisation of an applicant from any protected characteristic group. The policy/procedure will not result in less favourable treatment for any particular equality group, or give rise to indirect discrimination.*

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

*It is not anticipated that any adjustments will be required, but should any applicant require adjustments, these will be made as necessary.*

6. Does the policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity<sup>2</sup>? 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 policy is designed to remove or minimise disadvantage to adult returners, who are likely to be older than the average applicant to the University. It is designed to recognise the value of non-standard qualifications and RPL in the admissions process, which will improve opportunities for adult returners and should encourage more adult returners to apply to the University.*

*Adult returners may come from more than one equality groups. This policy is not designed specifically to advance equality of opportunity with regard to other protected characteristics, which are covered by other policies.*

7. Is there an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations between people in any protected group and those who are not<sup>3</sup>? Will it help to tackle prejudice and/or promote understanding?

*Applying this policy and procedure will not directly foster good relations between people in any protected group and those who are not, and it will not directly tackle prejudice and/or promote understanding. However, it will increase the diversity of the student population thereby fostering good relations, tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.*

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?

*There is no evidence, or expectation, that people from different equality groups have different needs or experiences in relation to this policy and procedure.*

9. Is there evidence (or an expectation) of higher or lower uptake by any equality group(s)?

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<sup>2</sup> This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership

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

If so, give details of the differences and the reasons for these (if known)?

*It is likely that this policy will be most relevant to applicants who are older than the average for applicants to the University.*

10. Is any equality group excluded from participating in or accessing the service or functions? If so, why?

*No equality group is excluded from benefitting from this policy.*

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 policy is designed to remove barriers for adult returners wishing to attend the University. The policy will be communicated on the University's website, through widening participation outreach and through direct communication with those studying on Access and Credit for Entry programmes. The policy should not create any barriers for any other group.*

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

*Adult returners will be involved in future review and monitoring of the policy through the student panel which is currently being set up.*

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.

*This policy has the potential to add value to the educational experience of all students by increasing the diversity of experience of the student population.*

#### **H. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome**

There is a legal obligation to take account of the results of the EqIA in the development of a new or revised policy or practice. This requires considering taking action to address any issues identified, such as removing or mitigating any negative impacts, where possible, and exploiting any potential for positive impact. Clearly any unlawful discrimination must be eliminated.

Having considered the answers in section G, select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed. Delete the options that do not apply.

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.

State the reasons for this conclusion and the evidence used, if not already included in section G.

*The policy is designed to clarify entry requirements and remove barriers which may discourage adult returners from applying to the University. As adult returners may come from more than one of the protected characteristic groups, the policy has the potential to be of wider benefit.*

### **I Action and Monitoring**

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

*No actions are required.*

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

*Data on the number of adult returners applying to and entering the University is already monitored, together with progression and outcome achieved. Cross-referencing this data with the equalities information provided by UCAS will allow the University to monitor the equality impact of the policy over time.*

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

*July 2015.*

### **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

### **J. Sign-off**

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): Gillian Simmons, Senior Policy and Projects Officer

Accepted by (name): Rebecca Gaukroger

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> April 2014

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