

Equality Impact Assessment of University of Edinburgh Admissions Policy and Practices

2. Application processes and activities

Application processes

The application process is the means by which a prospective student submits an application to the University. It includes online application forms and any alternative formats available; methods for submitting documents or other additional information required by the University; and communications to and from applicants with regard to applications.

Applications for undergraduate programmes and for PGDE teaching programmes are submitted via UCAS. Other applications are submitted directly to the University.

Actions taken need to be anticipatory, because any individual applicant may belong to one or more protected characteristic group, and/or to another under-represented group, and our application processes need to be accessible to all. However, we should also have in place systems whereby an applicant can contact us if he/she require us to make specific adjustments to the application process to allow him/her to make an application (e.g. where an applicant requires a printed application form because, for good reason, he/she cannot make an application online).

Equality profile of applicants

- UCAS currently collects data on the following equality characteristics of applicants using its HE application services: gender / age / disability / race. The University is not given information on the ethnic background of individual applicants until the applicant is UF. Information about the ethnic profile of the University's applicant pool is provided at the end of the cycle.
- The University currently collects data on the following equality characteristics of applicants applying directly via EUCLID: gender / age / disability / race.
- The University does not currently collect the following data for applicants / students: Religion; Sexuality; Gender Reassignment; Marital Status; Pregnancy/Maternity.
- Widening Participation has been included within the scope of the EIA because of its focus on under-represented groups. Members of protected characteristic groups may also belong to targeted widening participation groups.
- As new information on the equality profile of potential applicants becomes available, the findings of this equality impact assessment will need to be revisited.

Category	Activity / Process / Policy with potential equality impact	Actions to be taken to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce risk of discrimination and/or unfair impact • opportunities to promote understanding 	Who by
DIGITAL MINI-PORTFOLIOS			
Digital mini-portfolio are required for some ECA programmes	Technical requirements could potentially disadvantage some applicants who don't have access to the facilities / support to upload their digital mini-portfolio <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WP applicants ○ applicants who are not in education and so don't have school / college support (who may be older than average) ○ applicants with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Outreach programmes e.g. ACES can support applicants with preparing and submitting their mini-portfolios ○ Instructions are available on University website ○ Frequently asked questions are available on University website ○ Technical support is available through University website 	WP team IS IS IS
UCAS APPLICATION PROCESS Undergraduate / PG teacher training (PGDE) / Masters of Social Work			
Information for applicants from protected characteristic groups / under-represented groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ UCAS provide information on their website for disabled students considering applying to University. ○ UCAS provide BSL videos for applicants who use sign language covering the application process, information for disabled students and information for parents, amongst other things. ○ UCAS provide information for international students on their website ○ UCAS provide information for care leavers on their website ○ UCAS provide information for mature applicants (i.e. those aged 21 or over at the point of entry) on their website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Links to these specialist pages should be available from the relevant pages of the University of Edinburgh website to ensure the information is available to those who require it. 	SRA
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requirement for an academic reference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Advice provided in what is required in a reference ○ Link to UCAS advice on providing references 	

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UoE ONLINE APPLICATION FORM for PGT / PGR / Distance learning students / Most UG visiting students			
Application form	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accessibility of online application form 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Online forms should meet best practice accessibility standards. ○ Research with disabled students will be carried out to assess the accessibility of the online application form ○ Alternative format application form (e.g. hard copy) is available on request ○ Equality impact assessment to be carried out on revised application forms and/or processes 	<p>IS</p> <p>Student Recruitment and Admissions College/School admissions offices</p> <p>Direct admissions implementation group</p>
References (PGT and PGR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requirements vary between programmes (e.g. number of references) ○ Some types of applicant, particularly those without much recent study who are likely to be older students, may struggle to meet requirements for academic references 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To be revised as part of direct admissions review ○ The reference requirements should be clearly published on programme pages of website ○ Flexibility should be possible, where appropriate 	<p>Direct admissions implementation group</p>
Identification of supervisor prior to application (PGR only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requirements and practice vary, making it difficult for prospective applicants, particularly those from overseas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved information about what is required, and contact details where appropriate, to allow applicants to prepare a complete application 	
Research proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Requirements and practice vary, making it difficult for prospective applicants to know what is required, particularly those from overseas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Improved information about what is required to allow applicants to prepare a complete application 	
OTHER TYPES OF APPLICATIONS			
Paper application forms:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some visiting students complete paper forms ○ Data is manually transferred to EUCLID, with risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A review of application processes using paper forms is underway as part of the direct admissions 	

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Some visiting students (PGT / PGR / Medical electives / 1 semester UG visiting students)	of errors being introduced. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Risk that applicants with disabilities may not be identified before they arrive at the University, so support may not be in place 	review. The intention is to increase the number of applications which can be made using an online form in future.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Slightly different forms are used by different Colleges / Schools could lead to inconsistency and / or an increased chance of errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ College of Humanities and Social Science have reviewed UG and PG paper forms to bring those in line. ○ A review of all paper application forms should be carried out to ensure they meet best practice accessibility standards, with advice from SPA / ECU and involvement of disabled students 	SRA / College and School admissions staff / Student Disability Service
External application processes	External application processes may not meet best practice in terms of equality and diversity. External application processes used are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Law Society of Scotland form for the Diploma in Professional Legal Practice. ○ Applications for the Doctorate in Clinical Psychology are processed by the Clearing House for Postgraduate Courses in Clinical Psychology ○ Veterinary Medical College Application Service (VMCAS) – US application system, accepted by UoE as a route for US graduate students to apply for Vet Medicine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If application forms or procedures owned by external organisations are not considered to meet best practice, we should raise this with the organisation concerned and provide advice as to how this can be improved. ○ External application processes should be reviewed as part of the review of the accessibility of paper and online application forms. 	Admissions officers / Student Disability Service / SRA
Access courses	Students are registered with Edinburgh College, who are responsible for student support including disability arrangements. Teaching is shared between	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Access courses remove barriers facing adult returners to higher education, so provide equality of opportunity for older students, as well as 	Office of Lifelong Learning

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	<p>Edinburgh College and UoE and takes place on UoE campus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To be eligible, an applicant must be a mature student / adult returner. ○ Applicants <i>may</i> have WP indicators but this is not currently a requirement 	<p>increasing the diversity of the student population and provide equality of opportunity (promoting understanding).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analysis of protected characteristic data of applicants admitted to the University from Access courses will identify whether members of any other protected characteristic group benefit from Access programmes. ○ Assistance is available for students attending courses at the University of Edinburgh who have additional support needs. 	SRA
Credit for Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applications can be made online, or on a paper form in person or by post ○ Credit for Entry is designed for people “who have been out of formal full-time education for three years or more and need to acquire the minimum entry academic qualifications for admissions to undergraduate study at the University of Edinburgh”. These are likely to be older applicants. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There is potential for Credit for Entry to be used to increase opportunities for under-represented groups within the adult returner / mature applicant profile. ○ Help is available for those who need assistance in completing the application form, or in undertaking study when they begin their courses. Credit for Entry students are matriculated University of Edinburgh students so receive support from the Student Disability Service. ○ Matriculated students receive information via University of Edinburgh online systems including EUCLID. 	Office of Lifelong Learning / SRA
Short courses / Open study / Languages for all / Art and Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applications can be made online, or on a paper form in person or by post ○ Applicants for non-credit bearing courses, or who have chosen not to study for credit, can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contact details for organisers of each type of course are available for those who need additional help. ○ Information on how to request any required 	Office of Lifelong Learning

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(evening classes, summer school)	receive support for any additional needs through the Office of Lifelong Learning.	adjustments are detailed in the course information	
REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION DURING THE APPLICATION PROCESS			
Requests for further information	<p>Categories of applicant with protected characteristics, or from under-represented groups, where we may need to ask for additional information through the application process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applicants with declared disabilities ○ Care leavers ○ Adult returners / mature applicants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Process set out in <i>Policy and Procedure for Applicants with Declared Disabilities</i> (new policy, currently in committee process for approval). Information to be used only to benefit the applicant, by ensuring adjustments required for the applicant to access the programme can be made ○ Process set out in <i>Policy and Procedure for Undergraduate Applications from Care Leavers</i> (Oct 2013). Information to be used only to benefit the applicant, through offer at minimum entry requirements where possible ○ New <i>Policy and Procedure for Undergraduate Applications from Adult Returners to Higher Education</i> will go to RASG for approval in May 2014. Intention is to provide transparency for adult returners about how their application will be considered, including acceptability of non-traditional qualifications or experiential learning. 	<p>All staff involved with admissions are required to apply the principles and procedures set out in these policies, to ensure that applicants from these protected and/or under-represented groups are treated fairly.</p> <p>On-going policy development and review is the responsibility of SRA.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applicants with declared criminal convictions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development of RPL policy / criteria is scheduled for completion August 2014. ○ Process set out in <i>Code of Practice for Student Criminal Convictions and Disclosure Assessment</i> (April 2011). Intention is to provide transparency for applicants with criminal convictions about how this will be taken into account in the admissions process. It is designed to protect both the applicant him/herself and the University community. Code of practice is due for review in April 2014. 	
Process for providing additional information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Uploading documents to EUCLID <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some applicants have technical difficulties uploading documents to EUCLID, particularly those from overseas with protected characteristics of race/nationality ○ Providing documents or information by email <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some applicants, especially those from overseas with protected characteristics of race/ethnicity, may not have facilities to scan documents ○ Providing hard copies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Postal services can be unreliable, particularly from some overseas countries which will impact most on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Technical advice available online ○ Where difficulties are directly due to the quality of infrastructure available to the applicant in his/her home country, admissions have the discretion to be flexible to ensure that an applicant is not disadvantaged by his/her nationality. Advice can be taken from the International Office and Student Recruitment and Admissions in exercising this judgement. 	<p>IS</p> <p>All admissions staff</p>

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	applicants with protected characteristics of race/ethnicity		
COMMUNICATING WITH APPLICANTS			
EUCLID portal	<p>All applicants are provided with a EUCLID portal when their application is received. This is used to communicate with them in relation to their application.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Some applicants do not check their EUCLID portal, and so may miss automatically generated messages e.g. regarding additional information which they need to provide ○ Some visiting students do not have EUCLID access during the application programme (those using paper forms). These students share the protected characteristic of race/nationality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Email messages are often sent to tell an applicant that a message exists in EUCLID which they need to read ○ Statistical data should be reviewed to identify if any particular protected characteristic group is more likely to be affected in this way. ○ Email is used where an applicant does not have EUCLID access 	<p>Admissions staff</p> <p>SRA</p> <p>Admissions staff</p>
Email	<p>Many communications with applicants are by email, and in some cases mailings are sent mass emailing providers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Messages may not meet best practice accessibility standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IS guidance on University website on writing accessible emails (http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/help-consultancy/accessibility/creating-materials/emails) 	<p>Admissions staff</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Email systems may not be reliable, particularly in some overseas countries which will impact on race/nationality ○ Information can be sent by post, although there are problems associated with postal services too. ○ Some applicants do not have their own email address 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mass email providers have guidance for users on writing accessible messages ○ Where difficulties are directly due to the quality of infrastructure available to the applicant in his/her home country, admissions have the discretion to be flexible to ensure that an applicant is not disadvantaged by his/her nationality. Advice can be taken from the International Office and Student Recruitment and Admissions in exercising this judgement. 	Admissions staff