



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): **Guidance for contacting Student Emergency Contacts**

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

- Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice **YES**

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: **Andy Shanks**

Job title: **Director of Student Wellbeing**

School/service/unit: **Wellbeing Services, University Secretary's 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**
- is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance)?
- **It is one which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqIA?**

E. Equality Groups

To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant and why? (add notes against the following applicable equality group/s)

The guidance process is relevant to all protected characteristics (PC). PC information held in the Student Record is accessible by the staff enacting the Emergency Contact procedure, They may inadvertently share sensitive information about the students' PC that the emergency contact is not aware of. In particular, if the student has disclosed the following:

Disability – the emergency contact may not be aware that the student has a disability, e.g. mental health issues.(If staff have access to this part of the student record).

Sexual Orientation – the emergency contact may not be aware of the students' sexual orientation.

Gender Reassignment – the emergency contact may not be aware the student is Transgender or undergoing gender reassignment.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

The University is introducing a new step in the annual student registration process that makes entering emergency contacts a compulsory step of matriculation. This project has a separate EqIA.

The guidance for staff on contacting emergency contacts has been approved at University Executive.

As noted above there is a potential impact on students with protected characteristics on sharing information with their emergency contact.

A privacy statement is in place for students informing them that only a very limited number of emergency contact staff have access to their student information.

Emergency contact staff are senior members of staff, fully trained and have available guidance on the information to relay to emergency contacts and what should be kept confidential

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

- Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this be will be addressed:
 - Staff and student reviews will be conducted each year following data collection at College level. These will be conducted by staff in Student Experience Services. They will be light touch reviews, with a focus on lessons to learn for the future.

Emergency contact staff will record each time they use the emergency contact process. This will be recorded at local level via Colleges, then collated centrally.

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

The process is used for emergency purposes only. Training and guidance is in place to ensure that no information is revealed that would create any potential for discrimination, bullying, harassment, less favourable treatment,

Previous data shows that there have been few instances of emergency contact situations.

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity¹ **n/a**
- If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations: **n/a**
- If the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups? **n/a**

¹ This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership

- How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant?
 - The guidance is made available on staff websites, and is being re-written from the student perspective. The information is available in alternative formats if required/on request
- How equality groups or communities are involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice?
 - Review of the guidance will be undertaken with the Student's Association and sabbatical reps, Academic Services, Colleges, Student Counselling, and the Chaplaincy.
- 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:
 - Application of the policy has a slight potential to impact negatively on a number of groups if their sensitive PC are mistakenly revealed to the students' emergency contact. To mitigate this risk, emergency contact staff will be fully trained on undertaking the contact steps.
 - However, if the emergency situation is related to a PC, e.g. Disability Mental Health and the student is considered to be a risk to either their own life or the life of others, this may be revealed to the emergency contact to help resolve the matter.
 - Previous data shows there have been very few emergency contact situations to date.

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.

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).

The policy will be monitored at University level through the three Colleges, with case studies and best practice identified throughout the academic year. Previous data shows emergency contact situations have been minimal to date but we will continue to monitor the new process ongoing to review positive or negative feedback/comments related to any of the protected characteristics.

Despite the revised process having slight potential for sensitive information to be revealed, we feel that the risk is proportionate for the required situation.

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

June 2021

H. Publication of EqlA

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

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

I. Sign-off

EqlA undertaken by **Rebecca Shade, Policy & Projects Officer (Student Experience)**

Accepted by **Andy Shanks, Director of Student Wellbeing**

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

Date: **June 2020**

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