



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): STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY
B. Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (delete as applicable): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Proposed new policy/practice
C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice: Name: GAVIN DOUGLAS Job title: DEPUTY SECRETARY, STUDENT EXPERIENCE School/service/unit: USG
D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any of the following apply to the policy/practice, if it: <ul style="list-style-type: none">affects primary or high level functions of the Universityis 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? (delete any that are not relevant): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Disability (specifically, those with mental health issues) While the data on University of Edinburgh students is not yet available to confirm this, it is believed that mental health issues may also be more prevalent in students because of <ul style="list-style-type: none">sexual orientation and/orgender reassignment and thus the policy is indirectly relevant to these groups as well. Add notes against the following statements where applicable/relevant: <ul style="list-style-type: none">On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups:

Particular aspects of the higher education experience and environment can cause stress for some students. Transition points in life can be particularly challenging: at the start of their courses, many students are likely to be adapting to significant changes in their lifestyle at a time when they are themselves adjusting to study. Such students may benefit from access to appropriate support which may range from informal advice from a trusted friend or colleague, access to self-help materials and techniques through referral to specialist counselling services.

There is a growing recognition that students with clinically recognised levels of mental health difficulties are studying in larger numbers. This is partly attributable to more inclusive admissions practice, but may also reflect increased numbers of young people suffering from mental illness at an earlier stage in life. According to reports by the RCP (2011) and UUK (2015) students suffering from mental health difficulties face many particular challenges in accessing NHS support if/when they leave home to join University and may need to be supported to access local services. Such students may also benefit from specialist support from the University including access to a mental health mentor, specialist counselling etc.

- *Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this will be addressed: In order to build a more effective outreach strategy, further analysis is needed of the prevalence of mental health issues in the University student population by a wider range of demographics, including socio-economic, geographic, gender, sexual orientation. This will be gathered by relevant services over the next 12 months.*
- *If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups: this policy should not lead to any such discrimination.*
- *If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity¹ The policy sets out a range of mechanisms to reduce stigma associated with mental health and to enhance services by the University for students with mental health issues. By increasing access to information on support, by training more staff in delivery of frontline support and by refining service delivery on the basis of careful segmentation and targeting, fewer students with mental health issues should need to seek time off from study, leading to improved equality of opportunity for these students.*
- *If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations: The development of activities such as Mental Health & Wellbeing Week, student led activities, as well as the development of greater numbers of staff trained in talking about and responding to mental health issues, should foster better relations between those with mental health issues and those without.*
- *If the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups? No.*
- *How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant? The policy will be presented in accessible PDF format online on the University website and alternative versions can be made available on request.*
- *How equality groups or communities are involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice? Students have been represented by the relevant Students' Association sabbatical officer with responsibility for student welfare. The policy has further been reviewed by the Student Mental Health and Disability Liberation Group convener on behalf of her constituent members, and the policy will*

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

be the subject of an open meeting during Mental Health Awareness Week 2017 to which equality groups and communities will be invited.

- 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: *See points above. This policy is intended to reduce discrimination against students suffering from mental health issues, improve their chances of graduating successfully from the University and build better understanding and build better awareness with other members of the community so that they can better relate to / understand / support those from mental health issues.*

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.

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). *Implementation of the policy will be monitored by a cross-University Advisory Group including students and expert staff. Impact will be evaluated via use of the Warwick-Edinburgh Wellbeing Scale from 2017 with a representative sample of students from 2017, and there will be periodic appreciative inquiries into the University's progress towards becoming a University that enables and supports its students to flourish.*
2. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?

June 2018

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)): Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary (Student Experience)

Accepted by (name): Professor Helen Cameron, Director of Medical Education / Chair of the Student Mental Health Strategy Group

Date: 27 Jan 2017

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

