



Equality Impact Assessment
On-line Distance Education Policy

Part 1 - Policy Overview and Responsibilities

Please describe briefly the Policy being assessed:

On-line Distance Education (ODE) Policy

All new ODE Programmes must be approved as per the University of Edinburgh Approval Process. This, together with the University's expectations for the provision of ODE, is set out in the University's Code of Practice on On-line Distance Education (ODE).

The University's provision of ODE must be reviewed on a regular basis. Schools will prepare each year a brief statement in their Annual Quality Assurance Report of the experiences of all ODE programmes, highlighting any problems and explaining how issues raised from student feedback have been or will be addressed.

This policy has been developed to ensure that:

- The academic standards of the University of Edinburgh are maintained.
Appropriate pastoral and academic support has been considered and formalised.
Procedures are in place for the approval and on-going monitoring of ODE programmes.
The legal responsibilities of the University of Edinburgh have been met.

Is this Policy : Existing: [] New: X [] Being updated or changed: []

Please explain why the Policy is being introduced or changed or an action is being undertaken.

The policy is being introduced as a result of the work of the University's Quality Assurance Committee Task Group to consider the University's provision against the Quality Assurance Agency's Indicators of Sound Practice: Flexible and Distributed Learning (including e-learning). The Task Group identified good practice and possible gaps into existing University provision. Whilst there were many examples of guidance, local policy and good practice at School and College level, it was felt that a University-wide policy was necessary to give an overview of University expectations and standards.

Outline the main stakeholder groups and their contribution to the Policy.

Representatives from Schools which host ODE programmes and the Vice President (Societies & Activities) EUSA were included in the Task Group. Contact was made with other relevant task groups and working parties and, in particular, the Director of Learning Technology CMVM, who was also a member of the Distance Education Initiative, was invited to a Task Group meeting to comment on the ODE documentation.

Who will be affected by this Policy? (e.g. staff, students, only women, visitors, disabled people)

Staff and students

Please explain any potential risks (of any kind) either from implementing or failing to implement the Policy

The policy will ensure consistency of approach to the quality assurance of ODE by staff across the University and lays out the expectations for students undertaking ODE programmes. It is possible that failure to implement could lead to a confusion of the University-wide expected standards.

Initial EIA undertaken by: (Name/s and Job Title/s)

V McFarlane, Academic Policy Officer

Date:

13 June 2012

Full EIA undertaken by: (Name/s and Job Title/s)

Date:

On behalf of: (Title and/or Dept):

Academic Services/Academic Registry

EIA signed off by Line Manager/Head of Department : (Name and Job Title)	Date:
Linda Bruce, Academic Policy Manager	18 June 2012

Can this EIA be published? **Yes: X No:**

Part 2 - Initial Equality Impact Assessment

Using the table below, please consider the potential impact of the Policy on the following groups and provide an explanation. Please also consider whether you think the Policy could help the University meet its Public Sector Equality Duty.

Consider what information you will need to make an initial assessment of the potential impact e.g. feedback from stakeholders, relevant staff/students data; external evidence/benchmarking; expert advice. University wide staff and student data is available at: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/monitoring-statistics/overview>

If you know at the outset that you want to carry out a full impact assessment, e.g. because the Policy has a significant impact on a large number of people, you may proceed directly to Part 3, without completing Part 2.

Protected Characteristic Groups	Is there likely to be a positive or negative impact on any of the groups. Is this likely to be significant or minor? Provide an explanation of this assessment	Is there an opportunity to reduce discrimination for any of the protected groups?	Is there an opportunity to advance equality of opportunity for any of the protected groups?	Is there an opportunity to foster good relations between people in a protected group and those who are not?
Race (including ethnic origin and nationality)	Positive impact	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sex	No impact			
Disability	Positive impact	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sexual Orientation	No impact			
Religion or belief	No impact			
Age	No impact			
Pregnancy/Maternity	No impact			
Gender Reassignment	No impact			
Marriage or Civil Partnership	No impact			

INITIAL EIA OUTCOME	Mark X below as appropriate	What level of priority would you give this Policy and what other action will be taken?
No impact identified	X	(e.g. Low : No further EIA action required for 3 years)

Beneficial impact only identified	X	(e.g. No further EIA required but state how you/the University will promote the beneficial effects)
Minor negative impact		(e.g. Low or Medium, Full EIA required within 6 -12 months and/or other action)
Potential significant negative impact (take account of the impact itself; the scale of the policy; and the potential for reputational damage)		Full EIA required as soon as possible or before the Policy is approved. Proceed to Part 3 - Full Impact Assessment

If a Full Assessment is required:

Consider the timescale for conducting a Full Assessment, e.g. in relation to external factors such as Committee meetings or other deadlines?

Record the details of those carrying out the Full EIA in Part 1.

If no Full Assessment is required:

How will this Policy be monitored?

The Policy will be reviewed through the Quality Assurance Committee to ascertain how it is working in practice in Schools and Colleges during the first year of operation.

Academic Services will review the Code of Practice after December 2012 in line with the QAA review of collaborative provision documentation.

When will the EIA be reviewed?

Date:
After December 2012.

If you do not require a full EIA and so have not used Part 3 of the form, you may delete Part 3. Once completed, send this EIA Form to equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk