THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

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): **University Learning and Teaching Strategy**
B. Reason for Equality Impact Asessment (delete as applicable): • Proposed change to an existing policy/practice **The University's current Learning and Teaching Enhancement Strategy was due for review in 2015-16, and the Senate Learning and Teaching has developed a new Learning and Teaching Strategy to replace it.**
C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice: Name: **Tom Ward** Job title: **Director of Academic Services** School/service/unit: **Academic Services**

D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any if the following apply to the policy/practice, if it:
 	
• affects primary or high level functions of the University
  Yes (subject to comments in Section E)
• is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance)?
  Yes (subject to comments in Section E)
• It is one which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqIA?
  Yes (subject to comments in Section E)

E. Equality Groups To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant and why? (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[1]

The Strategy applies to all the University's taught courses and programmes, and all the students on them and the staff teaching and supporting the teaching on them, and therefore affects all equality groups.

Equality Impact Assessments involve assessing the impact of policies and practices in terms of the University's requirements under the general equality duty set out in the Equality Act. The Strategy is not a policy or practice – it is a high-level document setting out broad aims and objectives for the University (which in many respects articulate aspects of the University's Strategic Plan). Since the Strategy does not set out how these aims and objectives will be implemented (ie how they will change University policies and practice), it is not possible to conduct a formal Equality Impact Assessment on the Strategy. It will however be important for the University to undertake Equality Impact Assessments when developing specific policies and practices associated with implementing elements of the Strategy.

While it is not possible to conduct a formal Equality Impact Assessment on the Strategy, it is possible to provide some broad reflections on the aspects of the Strategy which may be more likely to have implications (whether positive or otherwise) for the University's delivery of the general equality duty. These broad reflections are set out below.

Add notes against the following statements where applicable/relevant:

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

On an annual basis, the University's Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) produces data regarding student populations and outcomes based on available data on protected characteristics.

- Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this be will be addressed:

N/A – There are no gaps that are preventing the proper assessment of the Strategy. It however is possible that, when undertaking Equality Impact Assessments regarding specific policies and practices associated with implementing the Strategy, the University will encounter gaps in evidence.

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

There are no grounds for thinking that the Strategy itself would lead to discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or less favourable treatment for particular equality groups. The University will however need to be sensitive to this issue when developing policies and practices to implement the Strategy, since it is possible that certain approaches to implementing elements of it could have the potential for discrimination,

---

[1] 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.

harassment, victimisation, or less favourable treatment for particular equality groups. Particular elements of the Strategy that may require particular attention when developing policies and practices for implementation, to ensure they do not result in discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or less favourable treatment for particular equality groups, include:

- **"Exploring how learning analytics systems can help Personal Tutors provide effective academic support and enhance learning outcomes" (while Learning Analytics systems can assist students in their learning and assist the University to support them, it can also under some circumstances inadvertently lead to data being used in ways that reinforce unconscious bias and / or discrimination against particular groups – and the University will need to ensure that it designs systems that recognises and addresses this risk)**
- **"Developing robust sources of evidence on the quality of teaching" (while robust data on the quality of teaching can assist the University to avoid adverse treatment of particular equality groups when rewarding and recognising excellence in teaching, it will be important to recognise and address the potential unconscious bias that can emerge in certain types of data eg survey data).**
- **"Ensuring through the Service Excellence Programme that that the University has high quality, efficient student administration and support services" (SEP has the potential to lead to various changes of policies and practices, and it will be important to consider the equality implications of them)**

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity[2]

Some specific elements of the Strategy have the potential to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity (depending on the policies and practices associated with implementation), for example:

- **Highlighting the importance of "Using the curriculum to promote inclusion, equality and diversity."**
- **Aiming to facilitate "effective representation of student views at all levels of the University and across all modes of study" (this has the potential to strengthen the voice of all students, including those from equality groups).**
- **"Reviewing how accessible, high quality, and well-provisioned pastoral support is best provided and accessed within Schools and from specialist support services" (in some cases pastoral support can be particularly valuable to students from particular equality groups).**
- **"Simplifying academic policies and processes regarding learning, teaching and assessment whilst ensuring that all students across the University are treated equitably." (the commitment to equal treatment for all students)**

For each of these elements of the Strategy, the extent to which they advance equality of opportunity will depend on how the University approaches implementation.

- If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations:

Some specific elements of the Strategy have the potential to foster good relations (depending on the policies and practices associated with implementation), for example:

---

[2] This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership

- **"Supporting our academic units to build a strong sense of community for both staff and students"**
- **"Continuing to develop peer support for learning"**

- If the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?

There are no grounds for thinking that the Strategy itself, or the development of policies and practices to implement any particular elements, would create barriers for any groups. The University will however need to be sensitive to this issue when developing policies and practices to implement the Strategy.

- How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant?

The Strategy will be made available in alternative formats when requested.

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

The Senate Learning and Teaching Committee, which is responsible for the Strategy has consulted widely on the Strategy with Colleges, Schools and support groups, as well as with the Edinburgh University Students' Association and the UCU. LTC includes representation from the Edinburgh University Students' Association, who can provide input on behalf of their Liberation Groups, which represent equality groups. When developing, reviewing and monitoring particular policies and practices to implement elements of the Strategy, the University will need to consider the appropriate approach to involving different groups and communities.

- 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 comments above.

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 [Strategy] 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).

No actions required in relation to the Strategy itself. The University will however need to undertake EqIAs as appropriate regarding the development of policies and practices in order to implement elements of the Strategic Plan. The University should also continue with its activities to monitor the overall student experience for different equality groups, including:
- **The annual EDMARC reports regarding student populations and outcomes**

- **Schools considering equality and diversity data as part of quality assurance processes**
- **Reflecting on equality dimensions when interpreting student survey outcomes.**
- **Reflecting on whether patterns of student academic appeals are highlighting any equality issues.**

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

2019-20

H. Publication of EqIA

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

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

I. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): **Adam Bunni, Head of Governance and Regulatory Team, Academic Services**

Accepted by (name): **Tom Ward, Director, Academic Services**
[This will normally be the person responsible for the policy/practice named above. If not, specify job-title/role.]

Date: **11/01/17**

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