



## 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](http://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):** Use of ExamOnline software for summative assessments in Biological Sciences

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

- Proposed new policy/practice
- Proposed change to an existing policy/practice **Yes**
- Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice
- Other (please state):

**C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:**

Name: Dr. David Cavanagh

Job title: Senior Lecturer in Immunology

School/service/unit: Biological Sciences

**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? **YES**

**E. Equality Groups**

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

- **Age**
  - The practice could disadvantage older students who may be less able to type at reasonable speeds compared to handwritten answers.
  - The option of producing a handwritten answer in a standard examination book will be retained for any student who requests it.

- **Disability**

- The practice should advance equality of opportunity since it will 'mainstream' a practice which is currently allowed under some adjustment schedules as it allows typed answers, which will be of benefit for students with adjustment schedules requiring typed/computer-based examinations due to conditions such as dyslexia and dyspraxia.
- This online system also reduces the chances of loss of data by computer failure, as local and/or server backups of students' examination answers are made every 30 seconds.
- Students with visual impairments can customise the appearance of the exam script to suit their own reading needs – e.g. text enlargement, text and background colour options
- Allows students with reading difficulties relating to conditions such as dyslexia to customise the appearance of the exam script and their answers to suit their own reading needs.
- There is capability within the software to interface with speech recognition software and screen reading software, but we have not tested these functions. We have no immediate plans to implement the use of this software for blind or mobility impaired students until we can show that it is at least as useful as present examination arrangements organised by SDS.
- There is a potential disadvantage in that other HE institutions using ExamOnline have identified keyboard noise as a distractor for some students, so some adjustment may need to be made for students who have attention difficulties or who routinely need quiet examination spaces
- The option of producing a handwritten answer in a standard examination book will be retained for any student who requests it

- **Other equality groups:**

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## **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.

We estimate that the introduction of ExamOnline as an assessment tool will be of benefit to all students and will advance equality, as feedback from earlier trials indicated an overwhelmingly positive experience for almost all examinees. 26/29 students stated that they would be happy to use the system again, with three students stating that they could write faster than they can type. In particular, the small number of students with dyslexia were positive about the experience. As mentioned above, all students will be given the option of taking any such exam using handwritten examination books if requested, so implementation of this exam format should not disadvantage any student from the equality groups identified as potentially affected.

## **G. Action and Monitoring**

1. Specify the actions required for implementing findings of this EqlA and how the policy or practice will be monitored in relation to its equality impact (or note where this is specified above).

We are actively surveying staff and students as this system is rolled out to ensure that any issues are identified as soon as practically possible. The student disability service is being actively consulted to ensure that the most effective strategy is being adopted. Consultation with the SDS and with students will continue throughout the 12-month roll-out period, to ensure that use of ExamOnline is aligned with the needs of the equality groups identified.

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

This policy will be reviewed at every point of use of the examination software in the next 12 months, and again at the end of that period.

#### H. Publication of EqlA

Can this EqlA be published in full, now? Yes

#### I. Sign-off

EqlA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): David Cavanagh [Convenor, Curriculum Council, SBS]

Accepted by (name): Patrick Walsh [Director of Teaching SBS]

Date: 30/11/2017

Retain a copy of this form for your own records and send a copy to [equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk](mailto:equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk)