# Equality Impact Assessment Template

If you require this template in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background please contact HRHelpline@ed.ac.uk.

You'll find it useful, before filling in this assessment template, to complete the online course:
Introducing Equality Impact Assessment

This template is designed to be used alongside the:
EqIA Guidance and Checklist
EqIA Policy Statement

EqIA covers policies, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services, but will be referred to as 'policy/practice' hereinafter.

| A. Key Information | |
|---|---|
| **Policy/practice name:** | Living with AI |
| **General background/aims of policy/practice:** | Living with AI is an online course designed and delivered by the Scottish AI Alliance as a key commitment to the delivery of Scotland's AI Strategy. Living with AI Is open to the general public which will focus on introducing AI and how it is used in our lives and society. The course is available on an accessible platform (Reach360), available for free, and has passed accessibility checks for accessibility devices, screen readers, etc. The course is currently only available in English, but the primary audience for the course is the people of Scotland. |
| **School/Dept:** | The Data Lab, College of Engineering |
| **Assessed by:** (name & job title) | Dawn McAra-Hunter, Programme Manager |
| **Sign off by:** (name & job title) | Steph Wright, Head of Scottish AI Alliance |
| **Sign off date:** | 21 February 2025 |
| **Review date:** | |

| B. Reason for EqIA | (check one) |
| --- | --- |
| **New policy/ practice is proposed** | ☒ |
| **Change to existing policy/practice is proposed** | ☐ |
| **Other** (describe in Section D below) | ☐ |

**C. Who will most impacted by this proposal?**
Consider carefully how your proposal will impact both positively and negatively on people from different groups.

Consider the 9 protected characteristics as below in your proposal. There may be other identity characteristics that you wish to also include in your impact assessment. It is expected that you will consider all equality groups for impact. Please indicate below (with a tick) which groups you feel will be most affected by your proposal.

| Age | ☐ | Race (including ethnicity and nationality) | ☒ | Marriage and civil partnership[1] | ☐ |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Disability** | ☒ | **Religion or belief (including no religion or belief)** | ☐ | **Sex** | ☐ |
| **Gender reassignment** | ☐ | **Pregnancy and maternity** | ☐ | **Sexual orientation** | ☐ |
| **Other characteristics** | ☒ | | | | |

**D. Consideration of Impact**
Show your considerations of how all of the above protected characteristics may be impacted. The following prompts will help you to reflect:

- What information and evidence do I have about the needs of relevant equality groups – is this sufficient to fully assess impact?

- Could this policy/practice lead to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, or create barriers or less favourable treatment for particular groups and how can you mitigate any negative impacts?

- Does this policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations?

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[1] Note: only the duty to eliminate discrimination applied to marriage and civil partnership. There is no need to have regard to advancing equality or opportunity or fostering good relations in this respect.

- How can communication of the policy/practice be made accessible to all relevant groups?

The following considerations have been made for each group:

1. **Age**
    - *Positive Impact:* The course will provide an opportunity for individuals across different age groups to gain skills in AI, which could enhance career prospects and social engagement.
    - *Negative Impact:* Both older and very young learners may have varying levels of digital literacy. The platform may not be intuitive for users who are less familiar with online learning environments.
    - *Mitigation:* User guides and tutorials on using the platform are available. Further resources for learning are provided outwith the LMS platform environment.
2. **Disability**
    - *Positive Impact:* The course's platform (Reach360) is accessible, including features for users such as screen readers, closed captions, and alternative navigation.
    - *Negative Impact:* Some learners with more severe disabilities may still face challenges that aren't fully addressed by current accessibility features.
    - *Mitigation:* Continuously review and improve accessibility features, based on feedback from users with disabilities.
3. **Gender**
    - *Positive Impact:* The course is designed to be inclusive of all genders, with content free of gender bias. This supports learners of all genders.
    - *Negative Impact:* Learners may feel discouraged to participate due to pervading perceptions of AI as being a male dominated area.
    - *Mitigation:* Continuously review and improve content based on user feedback to ensure the course content highlights diverse role models from all genders, focusing on equitable access to AI learning and career opportunities.
4. **Race**
    - *Positive Impact:* The course is open to all individuals, regardless of race, and could enhance the understanding of AI's impact on diverse communities, thus promoting inclusivity.
    - *Negative Impact:* The course is only available in English, which may limit access for non-English-speaking individuals from ethnic minority groups who may not have English as their first language.
    - *Mitigation:* In the short to medium term, partnering with local organisations to offer delivery of the course in diverse languages. In longer term, providing access to the course in a variety of languages, including BSL.
5. **Religion or Belief**
    - *Positive Impact:* The course is neutral in its content, not promoting any specific religious or belief system. It provides equal opportunities for individuals of all religious backgrounds.
    - *Negative Impact:* There may be a lack of understanding of how AI impacts people from different religious or belief systems, especially in regard to ethical issues around AI.

- o *Mitigation:* Continuously review and improve content based on user feedback to ensure the course content highlights emerging issues around faith, religion and belief.
6. **Sexual Orientation**
   - o *Positive Impact:* The course content is designed to be inclusive and free of discrimination, providing equal access and opportunities for LGBTQ+ individuals.
   - o *Negative Impact:* There could be an implicit bias in the portrayal of AI professionals, as the field is often perceived as dominated by heterosexual, cisgender individuals.
   - o *Mitigation:* Continuously review and improve content based on user feedback to ensure the course content highlights emerging issues around the LGBTQ+ community.
7. **Pregnancy and Maternity**
   - o *Positive Impact:* The course's online, self-paced structure ensures that pregnant or maternity-leave individuals have the flexibility to complete the course at their own pace.
   - o *Negative Impact:* There may be additional barriers for individuals who are on maternity leave or experiencing pregnancy-related health issues and are less likely to engage with online learning.
   - o *Mitigation:* Course materials and access will be available at flexible times.

## Other Groups Impacted Beyond Statutory Protected Characteristics

- **Geographic Location:** People in rural or remote areas of Scotland may face difficulties with internet access or bandwidth issues, limiting their ability to participate in the course.
  - o *Mitigation:* Offline learning options will also be available, as well as partnerships with local organisations for access to computers and internet.
- **Socioeconomic Status:** Individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may not have access to necessary devices or internet connectivity.
  - o *Mitigation:* Partnering with community organisations or government programs to provide access to technology or internet services.

## Information and Evidence on the Needs of Relevant Equality Groups

- Research into Scotland's demographics and digital learning patterns will provide insights into specific needs. Feedback from users will be essential for understanding the impact on different groups, particularly in terms of access to technology and digital literacy. Partnerships with a variety of different organisations will ensure ongoing collection of information evidence regarding needs of groups.
- *Sufficiency of Evidence:* Ongoing engagement with community groups, especially those representing people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and low-income individuals, will ensure that the evidence is sufficient for assessing impact.

## Potential for Discrimination or Less Favourable Treatment

- The online course has the potential to exclude certain groups, particularly those with disabilities or from non-English speaking backgrounds.
- *Mitigation:* Ongoing review of course accessibility and inclusion efforts, as well as direct consultation with groups who may face barriers, will help minimise any discriminatory impacts.

**Advancement of Equality of Opportunity and Fostering Good Relations**

- The course promotes equal access to AI knowledge, which contributes to advancing equality of opportunity, especially for disadvantaged groups.
- It also fosters good relations by providing an inclusive platform where people from different backgrounds can learn about AI.

**Communication of the Course**

- The course will be communicated via accessible methods, including easy-to-navigate website design, promotional materials in accessible formats (e.g., large print, screen reader-compatible content), and outreach through community organisations.
- Offering information about the course through channels that are accessible to non-English speakers, people with disabilities, and other groups will ensure that all relevant groups are aware of the course.

| **E. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome** <br> 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. | (check one) |
|---|---|
| **Outcome 1:** No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust. | ☒ |
| **Outcome 2:** Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations. | ☐ |
| **Outcome 3:** Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be justified. | ☐ |
| **Outcome 4:** Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects which cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified. | ☐ |

**F. Action and Monitoring**
Describe any actions you will take to address the findings of this EqIA.

- How can I involve equality groups or communities in the ongoing monitoring, review and potential future development, of this policy/practice?

Describe how the policy/practice will be monitored going forward, to ensure that impact is frequently reviewed. Make sure you add a review date in Section A above.

We will review this policy on a six-monthly basis.

Any new iteration of Living with AI is tested in beta before a wider public release. And we will continue to engage with community groups most likely to experience barriers in accessing the course to ensure that we tackle and remove barriers as much as possible. As we aim to reach the widest possible audience with Living with AI, ensuring equitable access is absolutely key to the programme.

**G. Publish**

Send your completed EqIA to the HR EDI team (equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk) to published, and keep a copy for your own records.