



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): Online registration form and questionnaire
B. Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (delete as applicable): <ul style="list-style-type: none">Proposed change to an existing policy/practice
C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice: Name: Meg Stroud Job title: Administration Manager School/service/unit: University of Edinburgh Counselling Service
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 University - NoIs relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance)? YesIt 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? (delete any that are not relevant): This EqIA deals with the change from having two downloadable forms (from our website) which need to be completed offline to a web form that needs to be completed online when students want to access the Student Counselling Service (SCS). All students are entitled to access the Service and therefore the change in policy has the potential to affect all protected characteristics. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Age: - The form asks about date of birth but this is for identification purposes only. In the course of an academic year we can have several students with the same first name and surname. Date of birth is for verification only. Date of birth is not used to make any decisions about who can access our Service.Disability: - The online form is compatible with assistive technology and in compliance with World Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2 (WCAG v2). If a

disabled user is unable to complete the form for a reason relating to their disability we would ensure an alternative format, assistance or other reasonable adjustment would be put in place. The form includes a section for students to record any reasonable adjustments they would require for the meeting.

- **Race** - (including ethnicity and nationality): The form is in English but as English is the main teaching language of the University we would not envisage this would create a disadvantage. If a student needed a form in another language we would do what was possible within our means to meet this request.
- **Religion or belief**: - we do not ask this question though if a student has beliefs there is an opportunity to discuss this with a counsellor during the initial appointment. There is also a section on the form for the student to record any particular needs such as a same sex counsellor etc. Appointments are held at a range of dates and times and the student can request that appointments do not take place on certain dates or times due to religious observance.
- **Sex** - the forms are available 24/7 and we offer the opportunity of evening appointments during semesters that can allow students with caring responsibilities to access our Service, which research has shown falls predominately on females. The form does not ask any questions about gender.
- **Sexual orientation**:- the form asks nothing about an individual's sexual orientation
- **Gender reassignment**: - we ask for the student's first name and surname on the form. Student records have the ability to change for those in the process of transitioning.
- **Pregnancy and maternity**: - the form does not ask about this. Appointments are arranged at a variety of times to allow for students to arrange childcare that suits
- **Marriage or civil partnership**¹:- We do not ask about this on the form.

Add notes against the following statements where applicable/relevant:

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

We have consulted with the IS Disability Information Officer for advice on the needs of disabled users and she has completed an accessibility audit of the form to ensure it meets Website Content Accessibility Guidelines versions 2 and is compatible with assistive technology.. We also contacted Chaplaincy and the International Office who have reported no concerns or potential issues.-

All students finishing counselling have the opportunity to complete an evaluation which allows the Service to monitor and address any positive or negative comments related to any of the nine protected characteristics.

- Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this be will be addressed: - At this time we feel we have sufficient evidence to proceed.
- If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups: - We do not envisage that this change to policy will lead to any form of prohibited conduct and steps have been taken to ensure no protected characteristic is discriminated against.
- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity² The change in practice will make the forms more accessible for disabled users and

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.

consequently enable disabled users to more easily access SCS. This should also result in fewer requests for forms in alternative format.

- If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations: By improving the accessibility of the forms we hope to demonstrate to the University committee the commitment the University has to Equality and Diversity and in particular to demonstrate to disabled students that the University will undertake all it reasonably can to meet their needs.
- If the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups? - We do not envisage that this change in practice will create a barrier for any group. The University provides free 24 hour PC access to all students and offers the opportunity to complete the form in person to students who not own their own PC. The Service can offer assistance to complete the form for whatever reason.
- How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant? - All communication about the change in policy will be available in alternative formats upon request. If the online forms are not accessible students can email or phone and arrange for the forms in an alternative format and/or to obtain assistance in completing them.
- How equality groups or communities are involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice? - Students complete an evaluation at the end of their counselling which allows them to feedback on any equality or diversity issues. We also have a comments box in our waiting room which allows students to comment anonymously about issues concerning our Service. We have consulted with Viki Galt, Disability Information Officer who has tested the forms for accessibility. All feedback will be monitored for any equality and diversity issues and acted on accordingly. If any changes are made to the online content or format these will be run past the relevant groups such as the IS Disability Information Officer, or Chaplaincy and International Office if appropriate.
- 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:- By ensuring the forms are more accessible, in particular to disabled students, we aim to reduce any potential for discrimination. By reducing the need for alternative formats and ensuring the content of the questions on the form are appropriate we hope to demonstrate to all users the University's commitment to Equality and Diversity 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.

For the reasons stated above.

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). We will continue to monitor feedback for any positive or

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

negative issues related to any of the nine protected characteristics. Staff will be advised about reasonable adjustments e.g. alternative formats.

2. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed? - The EqIA and practice will be updated if there are any changes to the online forms content or administration or if there is any feedback related to the nine protected characteristics not addressed within this EqIA.

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)): **Meg Stroud, Administration Manager**

Accepted by (name): **Ronnie Millar, Director**

[This will normally be the person responsible for the policy/practice named above. If not, specify job-title/role.]

Date: **22 May 2015**

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