



## Equality Impact Assessment Template

Before carrying out EqlA, you should familiarise yourself with the University's EqlA Policy Statement and Guidance and Checklist Notes, and undertake our online training on Equality and Diversity and EqlA. 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)

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

<b>A. Policy/Practice (name or brief description):</b>  Black British UG Scholarship Programme
<b>B. Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (Mark <b>yes</b> against the applicable reason):</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Proposed new policy/practice - <b>Yes</b></li></ul>
<b>C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:</b>  <b>Name:</b> Lucy Evans  <b>Job title:</b> Deputy Secretary Students  <b>School/service/unit:</b> University Secretary's Group
<b>D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any of the following apply to the policy/practice, if it:</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance)</li><li>It is one which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqlA</li></ul>
<b>E. Equality Groups</b>  <b>To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant and why? (add notes against the following applicable equality group/s)</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Race (including ethnicity and nationality)</b></li></ul> <p>This programme pilots undergraduate scholarships exclusively for Black and other minority ethnic, home fee status undergraduate applicants/students, with an initial focus on a cohort of 12 recipients.</p> <p>The programme prioritises applicants with demonstrated financial need, consistent with existing Widening Participation scholarships, and in line with the policies and guidance of the Race Equality and Anti-Racist Sub-Committee (which includes broad Black and Minority Ethnic staff and student representatives).</p>

The programme aims to mitigate the substantial imbalance in experience and outcomes experienced by many students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds at the University of Edinburgh.

**Add notes against the following applicable statements:**

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

**The University of Edinburgh's Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee's (EDMARC) Ethnicity Report's Preliminary Findings**, reported to University Executive in June 2020, clearly demonstrated broad disparities between white and non-white students. Black students in particular are under-represented in the student population, and experience worse outcomes at every stage of their student journey at the University compared to their non-Black peers. Disproportionately fewer Black students apply to Edinburgh, are offered places to study, take up those offers, complete their degree, and graduate with Honours.

At Edinburgh the disparity in experience and outcomes for Black students is substantial. The key findings of the Thematic Review into the experience of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) students at the University of Edinburgh include, inter alia:

- The impact of attending an institution where BME people are in the minority can contribute to a sense of academic and social isolation
- There is an attainment or awarding gap between white and BME students at the University. BME students experience barriers related to both representation and cultural diversity within the curriculum and learning environments they encounter. Staff with a remit to improve BME inclusion and attainment also experience institutional barriers to achieving better outcomes.

**The Race Equality and Anti-Racist Sub-Committee of The University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee**, recently set out five key priority actions in the next year to address some of these disadvantages and disparities. These include addressing the achievement gap through curriculum reform and student support. Furthermore, point 5.10 of the Race Equality and Anti-Racist Action Plan sets out the goal to "explore the use of positive action and scholarships to boost the recruitment of BAME home and international students."

The University's **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Data Report 2024**, presented to University Executive March 12<sup>th</sup> 2024, highlights that the proportion of UG, UK domiciled black students in 2022/23 is effectively unchanged against data from 2019 – furthering underlining the challenges UoE face in driving a sustained uplift in numbers within this demographic.

Beyond the University, these findings are mirrored in a range of reports analysing the issues of BAME attainment in the higher education sector more broadly. **Universities UK's 2019 report "Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Student Attainment at UK Universities: #Closing the Gap"** highlights extensive evidence of disadvantage experience by BAME students in the UK relative to non-BAME. For instance, the report cites the gap between the likelihood of White -students and students from BAME backgrounds getting a first- or upper-second-class degree as – 13% among 2017–18 graduates.

The same report identifies a range of factors behind attainment disparities that disproportionately impact BAME, and especially Black/Caribbean ethnic groups, beyond financial disadvantage. These include:

- A lack of role models within HE representing all ethnic groups
  - Lack of parental support in understanding and participating in HE
  - A marked lack of diversity within senior HE leadership teams
- Challenges related to curriculum design and delivery

***The House of Commons Equality of Access and Outcomes in Higher Education in England 2023***, further details the challenges faced by BAME groups, again noting that Black students secure the lowest proportion of first class or upper second-class degree awards, and are second only to mature students in terms of drop out or non-continuation rates within UK universities.

Furthermore **A 2020 report from Runnymede Trust (“Taking stock – Race Equality in Scotland”)** shows BAME Scots are much more likely to live in poverty, with a poverty rate of 38% for Mixed, Black or Black British; 34% for Asian or Asian British, and 18% for White British. For 2017-18 a higher proportion of Scottish domiciled BAME applicants were from SIMD20 (21%) than White applicants (9%). More than half (53%) of Scottish domiciled Black applicants were from SIMD20.

The evidence above indicates that access and attainment disparities amongst Black/Caribbean and other BAME students, are linked to a complex combination of socio-economic and cultural factors. Attempts to address such disparities in access and outcomes will necessarily need to consider factors beyond financial disadvantage.

In response, this pilot proposes a Scholarship programme that proactively encourages applications from Black/Caribbean students, offering both financial and tailored pastoral support that address negative outcomes disproportionately experienced by this group.

- **Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this be will be addressed:**
- **If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups:**

This proposal constitutes positive action in providing support to overcome obstacles faced by this demographic, detailed above. As such, it will be governed by the same guidelines as inform equivalent positive action initiatives across the University, which must pass the two-stage test:

### **Stage 1**

Evidence provided in Section E demonstrates disadvantage suffered by persons who share a protected characteristic (in this case, race) where that disadvantage is linked to that protected characteristic. This evidence also demonstrates disproportionately low participation in higher education by Black, home fee status students compared to people who do not share that characteristic.

### **Stage 2**

The proposed programme constitutes a proportionate means of overcoming the disadvantage faced by this demographic.

A financial scholarship is an appropriate way to achieve our aim of mitigating the substantial imbalance in experience and outcomes experienced by many students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds at the University of Edinburgh, as it will remove substantial

(financial/access) barriers faced by this demographic. Prospective applicants will come from low-income households, meaning a scholarship is the most appropriate means of support; no other form of outreach or support would mitigate this barrier in such a way.

The University recognises that the programme encompasses initiatives that define eligibility further, i.e., sub divisions with the broader BAME definition – for example, ethnic identification as “mixed race”, or “of Caribbean heritage”. The University accepts these enhanced criteria as a necessary condition of philanthropic investment in the programme. This approach facilitates support of specific groups, but within the broader framework of intended target demographic/s.

It is understood that use of the phrase “British” is appropriate in promotional assets on the basis of being a widely understood criteria. This will be explicitly defined, within appropriate contexts, as holding recognised home tuition fee status.

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

This proposed scheme will advance equality of opportunity by removing a number of barriers, financial and otherwise, to Black students studying and succeeding at the University.

It will also contribute to improving the perception of the University amongst applicants, sending a clear message that the Edinburgh community values and proactively prioritises equality of opportunity, and diversity amongst our student body.

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

The scholarship does not directly contribute to fostering good relations.

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

Discriminating against scholarship applicants on the basis of race (as the criteria for the Scholarship does) is direct discrimination, which is unlawful unless such action meets the positive action two-stage test – which this project does, as demonstrated above.

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

The scholarships which comprise this programme are advertised via the University website, which all prospective students have equal access to. The scholarships are searchable via the University’s student funding service. The scholarships have been further promoted via our partner organisations’ social media channels

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

This scheme has been developed in response to the work of the Race Equality and Anti-Racist Sub-Committee of EDIC and developed collaboratively with staff from across the institution.

- **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:**

This proposal is designed to be proactive in advancing equality amongst under-represented groups within the University community. Home fee status applicants who experience financial

disadvantage, but do not share the protected characteristic of race, remain eligible for guaranteed scholarship support under the current Access Edinburgh Scholarship programme.

#### **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.

**Option 2:** Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.

**Option 3:** Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated/or justified

**Option 4:** Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.

As this work has already been initiated for several years, this policy falls under **Option 3**. The University is confident it can robustly justify and defend this programme within the parameters of positive action in pursuit of an agreed strategic priority.

#### **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).**

This programme will be reviewed at the end of the pilot (when 12 students are on campus) which will take the form of reviewing application stats from all years of the pilot, as well as differences in demographic within UG populations.

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

Formally, this will be reviewed at the end of the pilot. Informal review will take place regularly after the application windows are closed and offers have been given (next review Sept 2024).

The decision to take positive action in the form of providing the Scholarship under the existing criteria will be kept under review to ensure that the relevant condition still applies and that the action continues to be a proportionate measure to remedy the situation and achieve the relevant aim.

#### **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)):** Neil Burns: Senior Philanthropy Officer, Cara McKeown: Philanthropy Officer, Roy Biddle: Head of Philanthropy, Trusts & Foundations

**Accepted by (name):** Lucy Evans, Deputy Secretary Students

Date: 30.8.24

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