



Equality Impact Assessment Template

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.

<p>A. Policy/Practice (name or brief description):</p> <p>As part of the undergraduate admissions process/practice for some Edinburgh College of Art (ECA) programmes, applicants are required to submit a digital portfolio. The software tool for applicants to upload their portfolio and for ECA programme leads to assess and score these is being replaced by a cloud application.</p>
<p>B. Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (Mark yes against the applicable reason):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proposed new policy/practice• Proposed change to an existing policy/practice YES• Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice• Other (please state):
<p>C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:</p> <p>Name: Sarah Bailey</p> <p>Job title: Director of Undergraduate Admissions, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences</p> <p>Name: Olwen Gorie</p> <p>Job title: Head of Student and Academic Support Service, Edinburgh College of Art</p>
<p>D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any of the following apply to the policy/practice, if it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• affects primary or high level functions of the University YES• 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• It is one which interested parties could expect the University to have carried out an EqIA? YES
<p>E. Equality Groups</p> <p>To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant and why? (add notes against the following applicable equality group/s)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Age• Disability• race (including ethnicity and nationality)

- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage or civil partnership

The new tool and supporting guidance has the potential to affect all nine protected characteristics as it will apply to all applicants to ECA undergraduate courses that require to submit a portfolio in support of their application and to ECA programme leaders who will assess the portfolios.

- **Age** – applicants are not asked to give their age or date of birth to submit a portfolio in this system.
- **Disability** – The online portal must be accessible to both staff and students in line with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 AA standards. Full testing of the portal has been undertaken including compatibility with assistive software. A full accessibility statement has been added in line with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations. If a student was unable to access the portal for a reason related to a disability and we were unable to rectify this then reasonable adjustments would be put in place such as allowing them to submit their portfolio by an alternative method. Likewise if a disabled staff member was unable to access the portfolio submission portal and we were unable to rectify this, reasonable adjustments such as the provision of assistive software would be put in place.
- **Race (including ethnicity and nationality)** – the portal is in English but as English is the main teaching language of the University we do not believe this should create any significant issues. In addition, as the portfolio submission portal is online applicants can use online translation tools to assist them. Evaluation of applications are done anonymous and staff are offered unconscious bias training so no inferences on race can be made. We believe the portfolio submission portal is available in countries that have internet restrictions such as China and Russia.
- **Sex** – applicants are not asked to give their sex or gender in order to submit a portfolio to this system. Evaluations of applications are anonymous and staff are offered unconscious bias training so no inferences should be drawn on gender based on applicant names. Any emails sent to the students will be written in non-gender specific pronouns. Templates are set up at the start of the cycle in EUCLID (a University system). The current template that contains details of the portfolio submission uses the applicant's name in the salutation and is written with second person pronouns (you, your, yours). Any ad hoc emails that we were required to send would be written along the same guidelines.
- **Religion and Belief** – applicants are not asked to give their religious observance and are not required to provide a photograph which may be prohibited by some religions and beliefs.
- **Sexual Orientation**. At no stage in uploading their portfolio are applicants asked about their sexual orientation.
- **Gender Reassignment** – if an applicant was undergoing gender reassignment whilst in the process of submitting their portfolio the portfolio submission portal can update any changes as any changes are managed via UCAS and to the University of Edinburgh system Euclid and flow through to the portfolio submission portal.
- **Pregnancy and Maternity** – at this stage we do not envisage any positive or negative impact on this characteristic as the portfolio is evaluated anonymously

- **Marriage or Civil Partnership¹ - because the portfolio is evaluated anonymously we are not asking about personal titles such as Mr. Miss etc**

If offensive content were to be upload to the portfolio submission portal, appropriate action would be taken in line with University's dignity and respect policy.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

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

We have consulted with the Widening Participation Officer, Student Recruitment and Admissions, Disability and Learning Support Service (previously the Student Disability Service) and the Head of Disability Information, Information Services Group. Accessibility tested in accordance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 AA standards including compatibility with assistive software and an accessibility statement added as required by The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. We will review all feedback positive and negative regarding the 9 protected characteristics and act accordingly.

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

At this stage 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 equality groups:

We do not believe this process/practice will result in any form of prohibited conduct for the reasons detailed above and below. If a disabled student was unable to access the portfolio submission portal and we were unable to rectify this then reasonable adjustments would be out in place such as allowing them to submit materials in alternative manner. Likewise, if a disabled staff member was unable to use the portfolio submission portal we would put in place reasonable adjustments such as the provision of assistive software.

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity²

It is believed that the new tool will be easier and to use and file uploads will be quicker and therefore may make it easier for those applying from areas with weaker internet connections and for disabled users in that we believe the new portfolio submission portal to be more accessible as well as more useable.

- If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations
It is hoped that by considering impacts, positive and negative, on the nine protected characteristics via the implementation of the portfolio submission portal and subsequently this EqIA, we are showing that the University is continuing its commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion including ensuring the accessibility of its online systems.

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

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.

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

In order to use the portfolio submission portal the applicant must have access to internet and PC facilities. Therefore there is the potential to impact on those on lower incomes. However, in the UK free computer access is available from public libraries and similar arrangements are present in other countries so we believe this is unlikely to create any disadvantage.

All staff are provided with all equipment necessary to undertake their jobs.

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

Staff have received communication about the new portfolio submission portal by email and there will be demo sessions organised to help staff use the new portfolio submission portal which will take place online and in person. Information will also be provided on the Student Systems pages and ECA section of the website that sits in EdWeb. EdWeb is the University managed website and has been fully manually accessibility tested and has an up to date accessibility statement in line with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

All communication about the new portfolio submission portal will be made available in alternative formats free of charge on request by disabled users.

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

We will continue to review all feedback positive or negative for any comments regarding the nine protected characteristics and act accordingly. Where appropriate we will consult with stakeholders as required such as the Disability and Learning Support Service, Edinburgh Global etc.

- 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:

Nothing other than that stated 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

Option 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust **For the reasons detailed above**

~~**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. -~~

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).

Staff and managers will be reminded about the need to make reasonable adjustments and to provide information in alternative formats free of charge for disabled users. We will continue to review the implementation of the portfolio submission portal including all feedback positive and negative regarding the 9 protected characteristics and act accordingly.

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

It is proposed that the policy is reviewed 12 months from the implementation of the new software tool and the EqlA updated then or when we receive any positive or negative feedback related to the 9 protected characteristics

H. Publication of EqlA

Can this EqlA be published in full, now? **YES**

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

I. Sign-off

EqlA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): **Sarah Bailey**
Director of Undergraduate Admissions, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Accepted by (name): **Olwen Gorie**
Head of Student and Academic Support Service, Edinburgh College of Art

Date: 18/12/2023

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