



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):

Absence Management Policy

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

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

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: **Aileen Thomson**

Job title: **HR Partner – Employee Relations & Employment Policy**

School/service/unit: **Human Resources**

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)? **Yes**
- 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)

- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Age
- Pregnancy and maternity

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

- On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups:
 - **Disability** – Disabled employees may require adjustments to be made to the workplace or working arrangements in order to neutralise/mitigate any adverse impact their disability has on their attendance. The policy makes specific provision for employees with disabilities to alleviate any detriment.
 - **Gender Reassignment** – The policy accommodates for time off for medical appointments which includes those in relation to gender reassignment so no detrimental impact to equality group.
 - **Age** – It should not be assumed that older workers require more protection, or that younger workers are less vulnerable to health and safety risks (XpertHR, 2019) - UoE absence stats on days missed by absence reason and by age group do not corroborate that older employees are more susceptible to illness or injury or that younger employees record higher levels of short-term absence. The policy should be applied consistently while taking individual circumstances into account.
 - **Pregnancy and Maternity** – Pregnancy-related illness would not in itself cause the formal absence management process to be invoked therefore there is no beneficial or adverse impact on this equality group. Pregnancy-related absence will be discounted as far as the absence management policy is concerned, albeit pregnant employees must still follow the policy's reporting and certification requirements.

- Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this be will be addressed: **Current system based recording mechanisms are inconsistent and therefore potentially unreliable. The launch of the policy will be paused until the new core system (People & Money) is launched (Phase 2 launch in April 2022) to ensure managers are trained on the system and absence can be recorded consistently and accurately. Data will be more easily obtainable to those who require to perform analysis.**

- If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups: **In the practical application of this policy, managers will seek advice from HR before proceeding to a formal review of an individual's attendance. This will reduce the risk of potential discrimination by inexperienced managers. The review points which set out the expected standards of attendance are clearly explained as the point at which a manager should review and consider an employee's attendance record, rather than automatically triggering a formal review meeting. The Occupational Health Service are frequently signposted throughout the Absence Management procedure to ensure thorough information is gathered before decisions are made.**

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity¹: **Reasonable adjustments will be identified and considered for implementation through the process detailed in the policy, avoiding any disadvantage to disabled employees which may arise as a consequence of their disability/ long-term health condition.**

- If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations: **Employees will be offered support where appropriate, and signposted to internal and external sources of support and information.**

¹ This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership

- If the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?
- How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant? **Policy will be communicated to a broad range of stakeholders through presentations, briefs and updates. It will be made available to all staff via the university webpages following an internal communication. We will consider those who do not have access to email and ensure line managers are involved in cascading information. All old/local versions will be decommissioned**
- How equality groups or communities are involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice? **There has been three working group discussions about the policy, comprising of HR colleagues, Business Managers and TU representatives. They were consulted during the process and given full opportunity to review and comment on all aspects of the policy, in addition to our usual consultation processes e.g. HRPDG, CJCNC etc. In addition, the policy author liaised with the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion team during the development of the policy.**
- 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: **As this policy applies to all employees, including GH employees and those with multiple positions, there is no detriment to any group. It recognises the obligations we have to our employees (taking account of disability, pregnancy etc) and the support they can be provided with during illness or injury.**

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.
Yes. Made clear in section E.

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 EqIA and how the policy or practice will be monitored in relation to its equality impact (or note where this is specified above). **No specific actions required. Any minor amendments will be made as required on an ongoing basis. The policy will be reviewed in line with any significant changes to the legal position on absence, relevant statutory requirements or any other related matter.**

Monitoring will be carried out by HR by way of provision of accurate advice and reporting of any inequalities identified in practice. New HR system will facilitate automated reporting to enhance access to records, statistics and recording of application of policy.

2. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed? **In the absence of any legal/ statutory changes, the policy will next be reviewed in 2025**

H. Publication of EqIA

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? **Yes/No**

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)): Aileen Thomson, HR Partner, Employee Relations & Employment Policy; Caroline Wallace, Senior Partner, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Accepted by (name): Linda Criggie, Deputy Director Human Resources

Date: December 2019

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