THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

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): Hybrid Workplace Policy

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

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

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: Jo Roger

Job title: HR Director – HR Partnering

School/service/unit: CSG, Human Resources

D. An Impact Assessment should be carried out if any if 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)?
- 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)

- Age
- Disability
- race (including ethnicity and nationality)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment

- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage or civil partnership[1]

See table on page 3, for full assessment of each equality group.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

- On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups: see detail in table below

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

  - We cannot accurately identify those staff who will not be able to benefit from the policy because their roles require them to be campus-based 100% of the time. However, all staff can benefit from other opportunities to work in a more flexible way e.g. Flexible Working Policy.

- If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups: N/A

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity[2]: see detail in table below

- If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations: see detail in table below

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

  - This policy provides new opportunity for some groups to work in a more flexible way moving forward, who previously did not ordinarily have the option to work in part off-campus. Hybrid working won't be an option for some staff in the University population where the nature of their work, requires 100% on-campus presence. However, it does not present any particular barriers for this cohort by offering this flexibility to others. The spread of roles to which this policy may not apply, is varied and should not disproportionately disadvantage any particular equality group. More detail can be found in the table below.

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

  - The policy will be published to HR Policies A-Z webpage, it may be requested in an alternative format if required.

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

  - Equality groups have been involved throughout the development of this policy, through various fora e.g. staff surveys, focus groups, feasibility study and testing.

[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

Protected Characteristics	Evidence of impacts and opportunities	Overall assessment and recommended actions
Age	Staff in the 35-54 age range are more likely to have dual caring responsibilities for both parents and children[3]. Some of these staff may face challenges in working from home e.g. adequate space and privacy. Others may find it much easier to balance work and caring responsibilities in the home environment. Older staff are more likely to have or develop impairments as part of the normal aging process, and may find remote working helpful in managing and mitigating symptoms or difficulties. Being able to work off campus may assist staff who want to avoid risks of, or are not able to, travel on public transport as a result of age-related disabilities or health vulnerabilities. Early years childcare responsibilities (primarily younger staff) may make home-working difficult for some, while others may find it easier to accommodate nursery drop-off and collection.	Recognise that off campus working may enhance inclusion for some but not others. While working off-campus should not be used to replace childcare or other caring commitments, we should have trust in our staff and a flexible approach to fulfilling requirements of role and focus on outputs rather than time spent on tasks. Training and support for managers in managing distributed teams and making decisions about hybrid working should be available.
Disability	Staff who require specific physical equipment may be impacted negatively if this cannot be provided in two locations or as a portable solution. Working in home surroundings may be beneficial for some disabled staff in managing and mitigating	Disabled staff should be equipped for off campus working should this be agreed as suitable for the business, the team and the individual, with reasonable adjustments put in place. Consideration should be given to reserving desks with specialist adjustments for specific staff.

[3] Sandwich carers - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk)

Disability (continued)	symptoms or difficulties, such as impact on energy levels. Working at home, or in a location closer to home, may be helpful in enabling staff to attend appointments and engage in community-based therapies, particularly those that typically take place within the home. Some staff experiencing mental ill health may find working remotely beneficial whereas others may feel more isolated. Not having a dedicated desk on campus may impact disabled staff who require adjustments, or who are not able to physically clear their desk at the end of the day. Being able to work off campus may assist disabled staff who want to avoid risks of, or are not able to, travel on public transport. Offering opportunities for hybrid working may positively impact on diverse recruitment as we are able to attract a greater number of disabled staff. Neurodiverse staff may experience challenges in regular changes to place and uncertainty of space, particularly in open plan offices and without a dedicated desk. However, increased flexibility in deciding where work is carried out may be a benefit for some staff in this group.	Recognise that off campus working may enhance inclusion for some but not others. All staff must be equipped with knowledge of, and access to communication aids such as captioning, and examples of good practice in staying connected. Consideration should be given to offering hybrid working opportunities in job adverts, to attract disabled candidates. Hybrid working should be considered in discussions on reasonable adjustments.

Disability (continued)	Risk that communications are not always accessible. Staff with disabilities that affect communication may find it difficult to stay in touch with colleagues when working remotely.	
LGBT+ **(Sexual orientation and Gender reassignment)**	LGBT+ people may be working in environments where they are unable to be themselves, and this may be either on or off campus. This may impact marginalisation and impact on mental health. Staff going through transition may find being less visible to others easier.	No member of staff, will be compelled to work from home where they feel home working is an unsuitable place of work for them. The ability to work remotely should include non-home locations. Consideration should be given to temporary periods of full remote working, with transitioning staff given every opportunity to participate in virtual meetings, encouraged to appear 'on camera' but equally supported in remaining 'off camera' as they prefer.
Pregnancy & maternity	Pregnant staff may find it helpful to work from home if it becomes uncomfortable or difficult to travel. Pregnant staff may also find it easier and more comfortable to take rest breaks in the home environment.	Working patterns and location should be reviewed as standard as part of annual review conversations, with more frequent reviews as necessary or requested by the staff member or manager, or as identified through the risk assessment process.
Sex/Gender	Women are more likely to take on the majority share of caring responsibilities. This may make home-working (e.g. adequate space and privacy) difficult for some, while others may find it much easier to balance work and caring responsibilities in the home environment.	Recognise that off campus working may enhance inclusion for some but not others. Part-time and full-time workers should be treated fairly and equally in decisions about whether hybrid working is suitable for their role; not doing so may have a disproportionate gendered effect.

Sex/Gender (continued)	Providing more flexibility to balance work and caring may positively impact on the Gender Pay Gap, by enabling more women to work full-time, and positioning part-time working as a true choice rather than as the only choice. Supporting men to engage with hybrid working may enable their greater involvement in childcare and impact positively on gender equality. Women are at increased risk from domestic abuse and gender-based violence. Women and trans men going through the menopause may benefit from the ability to control their working environment.	We should have trust in our staff and a flexible approach to fulfilling requirements of role and focus on outputs rather than time spent on tasks. No member of staff will be compelled to work from home where they feel home working is an unsuitable place of work for them. The ability to work remotely should include non-home locations. Line managers should be sensitive to requests to work exclusively on campus and staff shouldn't have to explain their decisions.
Race/ethnicity	Offering opportunities for hybrid working may positively impact on diverse recruitment as we are able to attract a greater number of BAME staff from more diverse parts of the UK, who may not be in a position to fully relocate. Risk of reduced visibility of diversity in our staff population.	Consideration should be given to offering hybrid working opportunities, in job adverts to attract diversity. We must seek every opportunity to increase the visibility of our talented and diverse staff regardless of their working location.
Religion or belief	Working off campus may provide increased flexibility to observe religious practices, particularly if facilities are limited on campus.	Consideration should be given to regular patterns of hybrid working, as well as more fluid patterns.
Marriage & civil partnership	Staff who live alone may feel isolated when working remotely.	No member of staff will be compelled to work from home where they feel home working is an unsuitable place of work for them.

Marriage & civil partnership (continued)	Single parents may find remote working beneficial in balancing work and caring responsibilities. Staff going through divorce or relationship breakdown may find remote working challenging.	The ability to work remotely should include non-home locations.
Other groups e.g. care experience, SIMD status, carer status etc.	Parents may be impacted if schools are closed in future; this may have a positive impact (e.g. if someone can work from home they may be able to support home schooling) or a negative impact (e.g. not able to attend online meetings at specific times). Staff who do not have sufficient space at home may find it more difficult to work off campus. Some staff may have difficulties adapting to new technology and ways of working. Some staff may not have access to a sufficient quality broadband supply, and may not be able to purchase equipment needed to adapt their home.	The ability to work remotely should include non-home locations. No member of staff will be compelled to work from home where they feel home working is an unsuitable place of work for them. Travel costs may be reduced if someone works off campus on a regular basis. Staff should have access to equipment, skills and training to enable working off campus where appropriate.

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**

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).

    - Line Managers Guidance will link to this assessment, in order that managers can consider the various impacts in their consideration of requests made by staff members. As requests are informal in nature, local areas, with the support of their HR Partners, will monitor the effectiveness of the application of this policy in reducing and/or resolving equality impacts.
    - Case studies will be gathered throughout the first year post-launch in order to create a bank of best practice, and published as an illustration for others.

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

    - The policy will be subject to a review one year post-launch, biennially thereafter.

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)): Aileen Thomson, HR Partner – Employee Relations & Employment Policy and Caroline Wallace, Head of HR - EDI

Accepted by (name): Jo Roger, HR Director – HR Partnering

Date: 13 March 2023

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