



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

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.

A. Policy/Practice (name or brief description): **Pause of the Academic Promotion process for academic year 2025-26. Close of the Contribution Reward process for 2024-25 and 2025-26, with plans to replace with a scheme more fit for purpose.**

B. Reason for Equality Impact Assessment:

The ongoing programme of cost-saving measures has led to the decision to pause academic promotion until a more stable financial position is determined. This means that there will be no application process opening in the academic year 2025-26 for Academic Promotion. The current Contribution Reward process has been closed and if it returns, it will be replaced with a scheme which recognises exceptional performance more consistently.

When making the decision to close the contribution reward process, consideration was given to the inequities in the current scheme, and the outcome from the Grade Scale Changes which will provide 92% of colleagues with a pay progression increment this year (2025), on top of any future Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) pay increases.

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: **James Saville**

Job title: **Director of HR**

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 **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)? **Indirectly**
- It is one which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqlA? **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 partnership¹

The pause of Academic Promotion and the closing of the Contribution Reward processes applies to all staff, both academic and professional services. Therefore, because the provision is applied to all staff equally, the EqIA considers indirect impact on protected groups. In 2020, a pause of the processes also took place due to the Covid pandemic. Concerns were received relating to a loss of potential earnings and a loss of potential career progression. These were received from staff of all backgrounds, but most prominently from white male staff.

We have no detail or certainty of which staff would have applied for Academic Promotion or Contribution Reward in 2024-25 and 2025-26, so we have drawn on previous years data in the EqIA.

Gender Considerations:

In 2024 there were 286 successful academic promotion applications. Of these, 51% were male and 49% were female, compared to the academic staff population of 50% male and 50% female. From this data set, it does not appear that there would be a disproportionate impact on pausing promotion for women. Anecdotally, there is recognition that female applicants may wait longer to make an application for promotion, and are more likely to wait until they satisfy all of the criteria, whilst men are more likely to 'take a chance'. A pause could potentially then delay their promotion prospects further. It is also the case that academic promotion is one of the positive ways in which the gender pay gap can be decreased, through having more women in senior roles. Our data shows that women and men were promoted equally, however, in the last promotions round.

Consideration has been given to the fact that some women may career plan around pregnancy and maternity breaks, and that maternity leave can impact the pace of career progression, however making exceptions to the pause on this basis would be complex and potentially unfair on other protected groups.

In 2024 424 members of staff were successful in being awarded a contribution increment through the contribution reward process. 51% were female and 49% were male. Therefore, similar to the Academic Promotion process, the closing of the contribution reward process is not likely to have a disproportionate impact i.e., that more females are likely to miss out on increment progression compared to male.

In 2024 517 members of staff were successful in being awarded a lump sum through the contribution reward process. 54% were female and 46% were male. The same conclusions can be drawn as above.

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.

Race/Ethnic background:

In 2024 71% of the successful applicants for academic promotion were white and 19% were BAME. (with 10% unknown) This compares to 53% of the academic staff across the university who have declared their ethnicity as white and 17% who declared as BAME (with 30% unknown)

In 2024, 79% of successful contribution reward applications were from staff who declared their ethnicity as white and 8% declared as BAME (with 13% unknown) This compares to 12% of the university population who have declared as BAME, 60% who declared their ethnicity as white. This demonstrates that a higher proportion of white staff benefitted through contribution reward during that process, and pausing this process may not disproportionately impact on BAME staff This is an example of one of the challenges experienced with contribution reward, which we intend to address when reviewing and developing a more equitable process for recognising exceptional performance in the future.

Similar to gender considerations, anecdotally it is understood that BAME staff may wait longer to make an application for promotion and reward, to be more certain of meeting all of the criteria, or be held back longer by inequitable access to career enhancing support and systems, therefore a pause would potentially delay promotion/reward prospects further. However, pausing promotion for everyone could also be considered neutral if it means some groups are not moving ahead at a faster rate than others. We can, and should, use lawful positive action to help level the playing field and address racialised obstacles to progression where data and evidence clearly show that there are barriers.

Age Consideration:

In 2024 the average age of academic staff being promoted was as follows:

Chair/UE10 – 44 years

Reader – 41 years

Reader (Title Only) – 45 years

Senior Lecturer – 42 years

Senior Research Fellow – 44 years

Lecturer – 45.5 years

Grade 7 – 49.5 years.

This might indicate that a pause to the academic promotions process in 2025-26 would affect a specific age group. However, as stated above it is not known who would make an application and from what age group in 2025-26, therefore any potential inequality would have to be based on an assumption that the same age group would apply as 2024-25.

In 2024, 424 increments were awarded and 517 lump sums were awarded. The below table illustrates the number of increments and lump sums awarded in age group:

Age Group	Awarded Increment	Awarded Lump Sum
16-24	< 5	7
25-34	50	91
35-44	122	152
45-54	151	161
55-64	94	92
65+	< 5	14

Therefore, the 2024 data does indicate that the closing of the reward processes would impact two specific age groups more. However, again it is not known who would actually make an application and from what age group

This data also reinforces the inequities inherent in the current processes where it is apparent that staff in lower graded roles and younger staff are less likely to submit or be nominated. This will all be taken into account when considering any replacement approach for recognising exceptional performance.

Applying For Both Processes:

Consideration was given to individuals who applied through the academic promotion process and also the contribution reward process and if the removal of both processes would cause any additional inequality.

In 2024 eight academic member of staff that were promoted also received a lump sum contribution; no academics that were promoted received a contribution increment. Gender, ethnicity and age considerations were given and the data for 2024 is as follows:

Gender

Out of the 8 academics, 7 were female and 1 was male.

Ethnicity

- 6 of the academics identified as white
- 1 BAME
- In one case ethnicity information was not provided.

Age

- 3 applicants fell within the 35-55 age group
- 3 applicants fell within the 45-54 age group
- 2 fell within the 55-64 age group.

Disability

- 3 applicants did not have a known disability
- 5 applicants did not provide information regarding disability

The 2024 data indicates that staff applying for both promotion and lump sum award are mainly female and white. However, given the extremely small number of staff being affected by the ceasing of both processes in the same period and also having no information on who would come forward for promotion and contribution reward, no further measurement against the population can be made.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

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

The Athena Swan institutional submission provides data and insights on academic promotions and was reviewed. Particular attention was given to the success rates for promotion over a 5 year period, data is detailed in the table below and it does not appear that there would be a disproportionate impact on pausing promotion for women.

Gender	Grade	Average Success Rates for Promotion 2017/18 – 2022/23
Male	UE08	89.7%
Female	UE08	91.1%
Male	UE09	93.8%
Female	UE09	91.6%
Male	UE10	89.2%
Female	UE10	86.1%

- Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this will be addressed:
- If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups:
- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity²
- If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations:
- 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?

A communication was issued detailing the decision to pause the academic promotion process and close the contribution reward processes and the rationale for the decision was provided. This ensured all staff and managers were aware of the motivation for the decision. Consideration was given to those who do not have access to a computer and managers were encouraged to ensure the communication was cascaded to all staff.

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

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

The communications also confirmed reviews of academic promotion and the process for recognising exceptional performance during the pause/closing of processes to ensure any resumption or replacement will seek to address the weaknesses in the existing processes.

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.

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).

Continuous monitoring of concerns /feedback about the decision will be monitored and responded to accordingly.

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

The pause of the academic promotion will allow for a review of the processes to take place, taking into account feedback gathered from the previous year.

In future, we may choose to implement a revised, more fit-for-purpose methods of recognising the exceptional contributions of our colleagues in supporting the University's mission, that also improves some of the disparities in equality outcomes. Therefore, the current contribution reward processes will change in the future.

If any changes are to be made to these two key processes, these will be developed in partnership consultation with our Unions in the usual way.

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)): Nicola Malloch, HR Partner, Employee Relations and Employment Policy

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

Date: 5 June 2025

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