



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH

Equality Impact Assessment Template

You'll find it useful, before filling in this assessment template, to complete the online course: [Introducing Equality Impact Assessment](#)

This template is designed to be used alongside the:

EqIA [Guidance and Checklist](#)

EqIA [Policy Statement](#)

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

A. Key Information	
Policy/practice name:	Staff Engagement Survey
School/Dept:	Talent and Development with CAM
Assessed by: (name & job title)	Elora Oosterhoff, Assistant HR Partner, Talent and Development
Sign off by: (name & job title)	Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services
Sign off date:	18 November 2024
Review date:	October 2026

B. Reason for EqIA	(check one)
New policy/ practice is proposed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Change to existing policy/practice is proposed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe in Section D below)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

C. Who will be impacted by this proposal?

Consider carefully how your proposal will impact both positively and negatively on people from different groups.

Consider the 9 protected characteristics as below in your proposal. There may be other identity characteristics that you wish to also include in your impact assessment. Please indicate below (with a tick) which groups could be affected by your proposal.

Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Race (including ethnicity and nationality)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Marriage and civil partnership ¹	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Religion or belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Pregnancy and maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sexual orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other characteristics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>				

D. Consideration of Impact

Show your considerations of how the above identified groups may be impacted. The following prompts will help you to reflect:

- What information and evidence do I have about the needs of relevant equality groups – is this sufficient to fully assess impact?
- Could this policy/practice lead to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, or create barriers or less favourable treatment for particular groups and how can you mitigate any negative impacts?
- Does this policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations?
- How can I ensure that communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all relevant groups?

BACKGROUND. The University of Edinburgh is committed to ensuring that our improvement activities do not disproportionately disadvantage any of our staff, particularly individuals or groups who have a Protected Characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and that they proactively advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This EqIA contributes to continued assessment of potential differential impacts of implementing the 2025 all-Staff Engagement Survey.

OBJECTIVE. To deliver the University's bi-annual Staff Engagement Survey until 2030, the end of Strategy 2030.

The University has made a visible commitment to continuous improvement in staff experience, making this a great place to work and study through [Strategy 2030](#) and the associated [People Strategy](#). The Engagement Survey provides an opportunity for all staff

¹ Note: only the duty to eliminate discrimination applied to marriage and civil partnership. There is no need to have regard to advancing equality or opportunity or fostering good relations in this respect.

to feedback on their experiences as an employee of the University and serves an important role in engagement, not only to provide valuable data to support and develop strategic objectives, but also as an opportunity to demonstrate the institution's commitment to enabling employees to express their voice and to promote a listening culture. The survey design and approach support and impact on all aims of the People Strategy, in particular 'we are all citizens of the University, and we feel part of and care about what happens here' and 'we are all included, informed, and involved in what goes on at the University' and results help focus activities and initiatives to better support staff and 'create an environment that fosters a warm community, where everyone feels proud to be part of our University' ([People Strategy](#)).

PROCESS. The Staff Engagement Survey is carried out every two years using a standard set of questions. We will use the same question set developed for the 2018 and 2023 staff surveys, with minor amendments for clarification. This will allow the University to better understand emerging themes over time.

An external specialist supplier, People Insight, has been engaged to deliver the 2025 survey and potentially the remaining surveys of this strategy period (2027 and 2029) to ensure consistency of approach. Key stages of the survey process include communication, collection, and analysis of data, sharing insights.

IMPACT FOR THOSE WITH PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS. This survey contributes to ongoing efforts to implement the University's [People Strategy](#), specifically in relation to creating a listening culture and informed decision-making at all levels of the organisation. All eligible employees* will be encouraged to participate and have their voices heard. Consideration is given to potential impacts on all groups, but especially those with a protected characteristic, for all stages of the survey process (communication, collection, and analysis of data, sharing insights).

* Eligible staff are those employed on University of Edinburgh terms and conditions as of 31st December 2024.

1. What information do I have about the needs of relevant characteristics – do I have sufficient information and evidence to fully assess impact?

Under the Equality Act 2010 there are 9 protected characteristics: age, disability, gender, religion/belief, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and

maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. For the 2025 Staff Engagement Survey, the key issues identified are around accessibility (we want to encourage all staff to participate) and confidentiality (no participant should feel discouraged by concern over confidentiality).

DATA SOURCES

The project team have carefully reflected on each aspect of the procurement, design and communication of the survey and have identified several groups that may need consideration at each stage of the survey implementation to engage fully. These include staff with a disability, staff who may experience challenges or anxiety around accessibility of the digital platform, including compatibility with digital aids like screen readers or require large print; staff who may feel anxious or fear giving feedback due to perceptions or previous experience of prejudice; staff for whom English is not a first language; and those who wish to participate but may require more targeted communication by their managers to do so, such as those on maternity, shared parental leave, long-term leave or those with caring responsibilities. Although their working practices do not constitute a protected characteristic, we also have considered ways to ensure that non-desk-based staff who are sometimes more remote from technology, can participate easily.

5.6% of staff have declared a disability, 13.2% of staff are of ethnic minority, and many are currently on either maternity leave, parental leave, or long-term leave. The University is cognizant that there may also be a significant number of staff with various protected characteristics that have not been disclosed. Therefore, at each stage of the Survey (communication, data collection, analysis and sharing of results) the implementation team has set in place mechanisms to ensure the survey is accessible and that all staff are confident that their responses will be kept confidential and anonymous.

In this case, the relevant data sources are (a) the range of protected characteristics (given above), and (b) the mechanisms used to administer and then report the staff survey, which will both inform the discussions of key issues identified.

Data protection and confidentiality mechanisms have been laid out in more detail in the DPIA written for this survey implementation. For access, please visit the [University Data Protection webpages](#)

2. **Consider carefully if there is potential for discrimination or barriers, what you can do to mitigate these, and capitalise on any beneficial measures that you can put in place. Where there is potential for adverse impact, but the policy/practice will still be taken forward, note the justification for that decision. You may, of course, find that there is nothing in your policy/practice that leads to barriers or discrimination, and all that is needed in this case is for you to note this in the form.**

KEY POTENTIAL BARRIERS IDENTIFIED: ACCESSIBILITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

ACCESSIBILITY. There is a risk of creating barriers by not properly assessing whether our communications reach all staff and by not ensuring that our survey platform is easy to use and understand.

Platform considerations. The survey will be conducted using the digital platform provided by People Insight. The project team have carefully considered best practice and government legislation in digital platform accessibility to ensure that all staff members, including those with protected characteristics such as age, disability, and ethnic minority backgrounds, can fully engage with the platform and its contents. These include considerations for individuals with conditions like dyslexia or dyspraxia, those that are non-native English speakers, and those who may be less familiar with digital survey technologies or visual impairments.

The following elements were addressed to enhance the platform's usability and ensure accessibility for all users:

- User-Friendliness
- Intuitiveness
- Look and Feel
- Organizational Structure Support
- Form Controls: Simplification of question structures, particularly avoiding complicated ranking systems that can be challenging to interact with)
- Colour Schemes and Text: Implementation of a default theme that adheres to the AA contrast level as outlined in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version

2 (WCAG 2), ensuring that text and background contrasts are suitable for users with visual impairments.

Further to this, staff will be able to:

- change colours, contrast levels and fonts
- zoom in up to 300% without the text spilling off the screen
- navigate most of the website using just a keyboard
- navigate most of the website using speech recognition software
- listen to most of the website using a screen reader (including the most recent versions of JAWS, NVDA and VoiceOver)

Question Set

The question set was created for the 2018 Engagement Survey, following extensive consultation, and confirmed still fit for purpose when reviewed in 2023. The proposed approach for the 2025 survey is to adopt the same questions used in the 2018 and 2023 to ensure continuity of data and enable meaningful benchmarking, with only minor changes for increased clarity. The survey contains 39 questions with 4 open (free text) questions. This question set includes questions around bullying and harassment and discrimination, which will be used to inform analysis of trends over time and future work in areas where relevant.

The implementation team and People Insight will work together to create clear instructions in plain language that helps staff understand what they are being asked in the survey, resulting in higher participation and fewer dropped questions. We have many staff members for whom English is not their first language as well as those with a disability, for example dyslexia, for whom this will be particularly important. Language considerations include:

- Accessibility: the survey structure reflects accessibility requirements and takes into consideration a wide range of aspects, including: using simple language and short sentences, avoiding unnecessary jargon, and creating a clear structure
- Inclusion: survey questions use inclusive language that is sensitive to difference and enables psychological safety. For example, most questions are set on a Likert scale (five questions on an ordered scale from strongly disagree to strongly

agree). Additionally, statements are phrased in a clear way so that staff can agree or disagree clearly. For example, 'The University manages change effectively.'

- Survey logic is avoided to maximise survey completion.
- Respondents will be reassured that their data will be kept confidential to encourage honest answers and equal ability to complete the survey.

Targeted Communications

A communication plan for staff, leaders and managers is being developed.

Considerations will be given to targeted messages to the University's diversity networks (EDI Committees, Disabled Staff Network, Edinburgh Race Equality Network (EREN), EUSA Liberation Groups, Staff BAME Network, Jewish Staff Network, Staff Pride Network) and reminders to line managers of staff on maternity leave or long-term leave to encourage the opportunity to participate. This is to promote a key principle of inclusion, the avoidance of discrimination, and a desire to hear all staff voices.

Non-desk-based staff

Most non-desk-based staff work in our Accommodation, Catering and Events and Estates departments (for example, staff in hospitality, security, and facilities) with many jobs not requiring the regular use of computers and therefore are not generally provided with a university computer. Also due to the nature of the work, it is in these areas that we have the highest percentage of part-time staff or those that work irregular hours. Additionally, we believe there is a high proportion of staff of ethnic minority, women, and those aged 55+ among this group. To ensure that these, and all our staff, have equal opportunity and access to the survey, the survey platform will be compatible with computers and mobile phones.

All staff will be able to access the survey in two ways, via:

- a personalised email providing a unique link that People Insight will send to all employees with a university staff email account (primary method)
- an open link/QR code. Staff using the open link will be required to enter their employee number to access. This is to allow for only one submission per person and for responses to be appropriately assigned within the University's

organisational structure. Guidance will be given for how to easily find and use employee numbers for this purpose

The decision not to use paper surveys was made on the advice of People Insight and in consideration of improved confidentiality. The project team is liaising with managers and communications leads in departments with large numbers of non-desk-based staff to ensure appropriate support is in place locally to enable staff to take part in the survey. In some areas this will include setting up drop-in spaces where staff can access the survey on computers using the open link.

Managers and Supervisors will be supported and encouraged to share information about the survey and how to access it with their teams. Posters providing the survey QR code and clear instructions will be made available. Additionally, a pre-survey training session for managers will be conducted (and recorded for those who cannot make it) prior to the survey going live to ensure they have the information needed to support participation and knowledge sharing.

CONFIDENTIALITY. There is a risk of creating barriers and avenues for discrimination by not applying mechanisms to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

Collection and analysis of data

To ensure our staff are confident that their responses remain confidential and cannot be tracked back to individuals, the University has contracted People Insight to support the administration of the survey, analysis and reporting and theming. The University will only see anonymised data and will not be privy to raw qualitative data (i.e., data that has not been redacted for confidentiality purposes). People Insight will gather, analyse, and disseminate information according to safe and established data protection methods. Results will be shared on People Insight's dashboard. Further information about the established data protection mechanisms can be found in the DPIA (Data Protection Impact Analysis) on the [University Data Protection webpages](#).

Sharing insights

Using an external provider intends to promote positive engagement with the survey and build confidence that all responses remain confidential and that data protection methods are strictly used. This is designed not only to ensure legal and best practice requirements are met, but also to mitigate any less favourable treatment towards individuals based on results and particularly in relation to protected characteristics.

3. Does this policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations? encourage increased participation of groups for example by taking account of disabled people's needs?

The Staff Engagement Survey is designed to contribute to the understanding of the needs of all staff and how they feel about working at the University. A key purpose of delivering the survey and using insights drawn is to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relationships.

E. 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.	(check one)
Outcome 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 2: Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 3: Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be justified.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Outcome 4: Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects which cannot be prevented/mitigated/or justified.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>F. Action and Monitoring</p> <p>Describe any actions you will take to address the findings of this EqIA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can I involve equality groups or communities in the ongoing monitoring, review, and potential future development, of this policy/practice? <p>Describe how the policy/practice will be monitored going forward, to ensure that impact is frequently reviewed. Make sure you add a review date in Section A above.</p>
<p>An overall lesson learnt exercise will be conducted once the survey has been delivered. Any learnings in relation to equality and inclusion will be captured to be considered in future surveys.</p>

While the implementation team and People Insight will support organisational units with guidance for interpreting and using the survey results, responsibility for implementing specific actions based on the survey's insights rests with individual areas.

G. Publish

Send your completed EqIA to the HR EDI team (equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk) to published, and keep a copy for your own records.