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):
Library Reserve Collection Lending Times

Establish Section wide policy of all libraries lending overnight Reserve items from 4pm in all 10 Site libraries on every day of opening when the library building is open past 7pm. Return times will be standardised also to 90 minutes after library Helpdesks open, so 10:30am during the week and 1:30pm at weekends.
Reserve loans are for 3 hours, so overnight lending will start from 3 hours before the library closes in any library closing before 7pm.
This change helps particularly users of the High Use Books (HUB) in the Main Library that will see all overnight loans of Reserve items be borrowed from 4pm, and returned at 10:30am during the week and 1:30pm at weekends.

It should be noted that Reserve loans will automatically be marked for return the next day from 2pm when the library is closing at 5pm that day, as a 3 hour loan will take the return time past the library closing time.

During semester, our larger central site libraries are open most nights till 10pm as well as the 24/7 opening of the Main Library.

The standardisation of policy across all libraries is that overnight borrowing of Reserve items will be from 4pm for libraries open later than 7pm that day, including the HUB in the Main Library. This means that when the Main Library is open 24/7, all Reserve loans will be available for overnight borrowing from 4pm.When central Site Libraries are open till 10pm, then overnight Reserve borrowing will also be from 4pm.

Return times of overnight borrowed Reserve items should be 90 minutes after opening of the respective Helpdesks (not the library building). This translates to 10:30am during Monday to Friday, and at weekends, 1:30pm for libraries that are open. This has not changed. An anomaly exists for overnight borrowed Reserve items to be returned to the Main Library at 10:30am on a Saturday. The proposal is that all overnight borrowed items should be returned at 1:30pm at weekends at every site.

The change of policy is an effort to simplify Reserve item lending information and make it easier to convey to users. This would hopefully result in less confusion and possibility of heavy fines if students have confused when the item is due to be returned. Current overnight lending times for Reserve items are confusing for staff and users due to variability across libraries and days of opening.

Currently Reserve lending times for overnight Reserve loans are 2pm if a library closes at 5pm, 7pm if a library closes at 10pm or if it is a HUB item at Main Library. At weekends, Reserve loans are borrowed from 2pm, or 4pm in the case of the HUB Main Library, but only on a Sunday.

Reserve items are due back in the case of 10:30am for HUB Main Library on a Saturday and 1:30pm on a Sunday, and 1:30pm for all other weekend opening libraries.
This change will help clarity by making Reserve lending times 4pm in all libraries open past 7pm, and having return times standardised across all sites. The change will be particularly helpful when considering the Main Library HUB section.

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

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

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: Hannah Mateer

Job title: Head of Collections Services

School/service/unit: Library & University Collections, Information Services Group

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 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 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]

All protected groups are users of our libraries so potentially a change to how we operate just now may impact any user from these 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.

Some users of any of these groups may find the change an advantage. At some Library sites, it will mean items can be picked up for collection earlier than previously, which may have a benefical effect on those with caring / parental responabilties, some disabled users and those who observe specfic times of religious observance . In addition the simplification of the policy across library sites so they are the same may prove benefical to many users and reduce the chance of fines arising from misunderstandings etc.

Any complaints will be noted by Help Services indicating any detrimental nature of this change. We are aware that making the hours of collection of some items earlier may mean that users who cannot get to the libraries later may find the books they wished already taken. However, this is a risk inherent to the HUB collections, and this change is designed to help mitigate accordingly. It is very much hoped that this change will be advantageous to all users and simplify communication of this lending policy for staff.

There is a potential impact on race as the information about the policy change is written in English; however, this is consistent with the main teaching language of the University. A potential positive impact involves the user utilising online browser language translation tools, and we do not believe this will lead to any disadvantage.

Information about the policy change will be hosted on University webpages. The University webpages, which we call EdWeb, hold an Accessibility Statement, as required per the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. The University has a web accessibility policy, which is based on the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version (WCAG) 2.1 AA standard, including compatability with assistive technology.

The University vision involves a continuing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion for both students and staff. The University has a single Equality Strategy to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are guiding principles in our pursuit of academic excellence.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

- On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups:
  We have consulted with the ISG Disability Information Team and Student Disability Service (SDS), and will continue to monitor all feedback positive and negative for any impacts on any of the nine protected characteristics and act accordingly.

- Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this be will be addressed:
  At this stage, we feel we have sufficient information to proceed.

- If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups
  We do not believe that this change will result in any form of prohibited conduct for the reasons detailed above and below. If any disabled user required a reasonable adjustment this would be put in place. Present adjustments of 'double loan time for Short Loan and Reserve copies' will continue for all disabled users. There is no separate arrangement solely for the Reserve collection of books but exists as outlined above.

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity[2]
  By allowing borrowing of books that can be kept overnight earlier in the day in some libraries, this may have a positive effect for those that are unable to come to the library in the evening to borrow these overnight loans. This includes those with caring

---

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

or parental responsibilities, some disabled users and some users who adhere to times of religious observance. There may also be a potential benefit to some groups by making the policy uniform and more straightforward, reducing the chance of confusion and fines.

- If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations: This particular change is unlikely to have a particular effect positive or negative, except that we are hoping that all groups will understand more readily our lending policy and avoid the stress of any library fine.

- If the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups? It is not envisaged that this policy will create any barriers, but we will monitor any comments of users in this respect. The service does not involve any cost or access to IT facilities. Furthermore, the University offers free 24/7 access to IT facilities to all staff and students, meaning there should be no impact on those with lower incomes / lower socioeconomic status.

- How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant? Communication of the change will be made through various channels, including web pages, social media and local adverts. Information about the policy change will be hosted on University webpages. The University webpages, which we call EdWeb, hold an Accessibility Statement, as required per the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. The University has a web accessibility policy, which is based on the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version (WCAG) 2.1 AA standard, including compatibility with assistive technology. Specifically, the Library website will contain information on both the borrow and renew books page alongside the HUB Collection page. All communication will be made available in alternative formats free of charge upon request.

- How equality groups or communities are involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice? We will use feedback collected via a variety of methods, including email, online comments, person-to-person at any Library Helpdesk alongside local notice / graffiti boards. All of these items will help gauge how users have found the changes to borrowing time. Staff feedback has instigated this change initially in the hope of helping customers. Furthermore, we will review all feedback positive and negative for any comments related to any of the nine protected characteristics and then act accordingly. This may include consultation with relevant groups such as the Student Disability Service, Staff Disability Network, Edinburgh Global, Chaplaincy, EUSA, trade unions 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 what is mentioned above and below.

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 listed above and below.

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).
   Lending to be monitored over academic year '22-'23 to respond to user queries and complaints. Complaints will be monitored also in respect of this change. Furthermore, all feedback will be monitored for any potential positive or negative impacts on any of the nine protected characteristics. We will remind library staff of the need to make reasonable adjustments where applicable, and to provide information in alternative formats, free of charge, upon request.

2. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?
   An annual review is due to occur in August 2023. Moreover, we will review the policy should any significant changes occur (i.e. opening times or library closures) or when we receive any positive or negative feedback related to any of the nine protected characteristics. On each of these occasions, the EqIA will be updated.

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)): Karen Bonthron, EdHelp Services Manager (Central Site Libraries), User Services Directorate, Information Services Group.

Accepted by (name): Hannah Mateer, Head of Collections Services, Library & University Collections, Information Services Group.
[This will normally be the person responsible for the policy/practice named above. If not, specify job-title/role.]

Date: 17 August 2022

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