



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):

Research Publications & Copyright Policy (2021)

This policy supersedes the existing Research Publications Policy and will allow University of Edinburgh researchers to make their work available on an open access basis as required by research funders under [Plan S](https://www.coalition-s.org) (<https://www.coalition-s.org>). Plan S requires that researchers share their findings in an open access way and this policy firms up this process in the University. The policy does not state a specific researchers must publish their research merely that research should be made available in an open access forum.

B. Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (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: Dominic Tate

Job title: Head of Library Research Support

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

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)? **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 partnership¹

The policy has the potential to affect all staff and students and members of the general public as research findings will be made openly available to all and therefore may impact on all nine protected characteristics.

However, the protected characteristic of disability may have the greatest impact, as this relates to accessing the online policy through the use of an electronic device (either desktop or mobile). Researchers are free to make their research open access in the manner they wish but guidance will be provided on the need to consider accessibility as part of the publication process. The University website (EdWeb) will host the policy. EdWeb is governed by a Website Accessibility Policy, which is designed to be accessible as far as possible in line with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA standard, including compatibility with assistive technology such as voice recognition software, screen readers or screen magnification software. Moreover, EdWeb holds an Accessibility Statement, as per The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Reasonable adjustments will need to be in place should a disabled user be unable to use the system, and that we were unable to rectify.

Another significant consideration is race, whereby the research will mainly be in English and the policy is written in English, which is mitigated by the fact that the main teaching language of the University is English. There is a potential positive effect in that by providing the policy online, users can access the information and subsequently use browser translation tools to convert to their preferred language.

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. All research published as part of the open access policy will already be peer reviewed previously published research so there should be no discriminatory or offensive content. If any discriminatory or offense content was found the Universities' disciplinary procedures would be followed.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

- On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups: **Consultation has been undertaken throughout the development of this policy, including University Executive (forthcoming), various committees (Library Committee; College Research) and groups (Research Policy, Human Resources Policy Development). Moreover, we have discussed with the University and College Union (UCU) Trade Union and Information Services Group (ISG) Disability Information team. We will monitor all feedback for any comments, positive or negative, related to any of the nine protected characteristics.**

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.

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

At this stage, it is felt we have sufficient evidence to proceed.

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

We believe that this process will not lead to any prohibited conduct for the reasons detailed above and below. Should a disabled user prove unable to access the policy, or be able to access the open access research and we were also unable to rectify this issue, reasonable adjustments would be put in place. This could include utilisation through assistive technology, or in provision of an alternative format. A review of these measures and the policy itself, alongside any feedback received, positive or negative, on all nine protected characteristics will be continually undertaken.

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity²

The Research Publications & Copyright Policy gives authors more control over their work. It allows authors to comply with funder requirements and to re-use their own work. It allows authors to make their works Open Access immediately, meaning anyone can read their work. By examining the potential positive and negative impacts of all the protected characteristics, it is hoped that this demonstrates the University's commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, specifically through enhancing equality of opportunity.

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

It is hoped that by considering impacts, positive and negative, on all the protected characteristics via the policy, and subsequently this EqIA, we are showing that the University is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. We have considered ways to mitigate and provide support and information to users in these groups.

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

Users will require a means of accessing the information, including internet access. Staff and students have free, 24 / 7 IT facilities at the University, principally at the George Square Main Library. In the UK, libraries offer free internet access, whereas similar arrangements exist in other countries.

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

A comprehensive communications plan will ensure that the new policy will be communicated to all authors ahead of its implementation in January 2022. This will include information about the measures and policy itself, available on University-hosted webpages, governed by a Web Accessibility Policy (based on the WCAG 2.1 AA standards). Staff will also be informed by email through appropriate channels. Any and all information will also be available in alternative formats for disabled users, free of charge, on request.

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

The Scholarly Communications Team welcomes feedback and suggestions regarding this policy. We will monitor all feedback for any comments, positive or negative, related to any of the nine protected characteristics and act accordingly. Should we receive any negative feedback, we will take all appropriate steps to resolve the issue

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

and work towards updating the policy through the appropriate governance process, which may include consulting with various stakeholders again.

- 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 that stated 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 detailed 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).

We will monitor all feedback for any comments, positive or negative, related to any of the nine protected characteristics and act accordingly. We will also advise staff of the need to make reasonable adjustments where appropriate, including need to provide information in alternative formats, free of charge, upon request throughout the lifespan of the policy.

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

Although the policy has a formal review date of January 2023, a review shall take place if there are any significant changes to the policy. Moreover, a review will take place should feedback be received, positive or negative, 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? **No**

If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply:

Publication immediately after the policy is signed-off by University Executive.

I. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): Theo Andrew, Scholarly Communications Manager, Library Research Support, Library and University Collections, Information Services Group

Accepted by (name): Dominic Tate, Head of Library Research Support, Library and 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: 02.09.21

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