 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):   **ISG-Managed Libraries Reopening**   This EqIA relates to the reopening of the eleven ISG-managed libraries following the temporary closure of the buildings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The eleven libraries are as follows: • Art and Architecture Library   • Edinburgh College of Art Library   • Law Library   • Main Library   • Moray House Library   • New College Library   • Noreen and Kenneth Murray Library   • Royal Infirmary Library   • School of Scottish Studies Archive and Library   • The Lady Smith of Kelvin Veterinary Library   • Western General Hospital Library
B. Reason for Equality Impact Asessment (delete as applicable):   • 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: **Gavin McLachlan**   Job title: **Vice-Principal and Chief Information Officer**   School/service/unit: **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

Overview
Following the closure of all ISG-managed library buildings in March, digital resources and services have been the main method of support given to teaching, learning and research throughout this period. Welcome Week, from Monday 14ᵗʰ September onwards, represents the formal start of the new academic year, and is an appropriate date for a return to access of the physical library buildings, and their requisite collections. Work began upon blanket closure in March, with the top priority to ensure that users and staff have a safe and secure environment, working in buildings that have been adapted to comply with social distancing and enhanced hygiene standards among other significant protocols. A notable prerequisite of returning to a library is that [the Scottish Government has made the wearing of face coverings](#) in these buildings, reading rooms and study spaces mandatory. Exemptions do exist, albeit there is an expectations for users to wear a face covering.

Phased programme of library re-openings
The reopening of the ISG-managed libraries is part of a University-wide phased programme, beginning with services based in the Main Library, which was identified as a priority for access to research materials. This EqIA concerns phases 3 and 4. Please note that some timescales and services are subject to change.
- Phase 1, complete:
- **Appointment based visits to the Centre for Research Collections**
- **Click and collect book service, Main Library**
- **Book returns**
- **Scanning for E-Reserve and resource lists from Main Library Collections**
- **Managing new books delivered to the Library**
- **Producing University cards for priority groups**

- Phase 2, complete
- **Pilot Click and Collect service rolled out to selected library sites, namely New College Library and Law Library**
- **The Lady Smith of Kelvin Veterinary Library opens to final year students-only, limited services**

- Phase 3, 14ᵗʰ September (target date)
- **Main Library opens 08:30-23:59**
  - **EdHelp service desk semester services hours**
  - **uCreate (3D print; queue and collect; equipment loans; workshops)**
  - **Browsing of book stock to borrow**
  - **Interlibrary loans service**
  - **Main Library café**
- **All Library Sites open (except Art and Architecture)**
  - **Opening hours 10:00-16:00, Monday to Friday**
  - **Limited study spaces, including open access PCs**
  - **Browsing of book stock to borrow**
  - **Book return**
  - **Limited services**
  - **Helpdesks same as opening hours**
- **Interlibrary loans service**

- Phase 4, 21ˢᵗ September (target date)
- **Main Library 08:30-23:59 until further notice**
- **Other Libraries open through their standard Semester hours**

- **Art and Architecture Library excepted**
- **University Collections Facility (limited services until 28 September)**

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]

The need to ensure the Health and Safety of all staff and users, as per government guidelines, means that the restriction of users accessing facilities can, at this stage, be seen as a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Although the reopening of the libraries shall, in line with government guidance, limit access to a set number of users, there is a possibility that those with parental / caring responsibilities, those who observe times of religious observance and some disabled users may be disadvantaged by the reduced opening hours and facilities. However, at this time, it is necessary for the protection and safety of all staff and users and, as previously emphasised, a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

Staff working at the ISG-managed libraries have been consulted in advance of the reopenings to alleviate concerns around a return to work and any subsequent personal impact. Staff will not be forced to return to work on campus if they feel unsafe doing so and will not be penalised for this.

Disabled users and staff that access the libraries will have their reasonable adjustments in place (as per prior to the pandemic and closure of the library), whereas any new adjustments needed due to the change in working procedures will be discussed with their line manager, or, in the case of students, the Student Disability Service, and implemented appropriately. Any disabled staff member or user with a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) will have this reviewed before returning to the libraries. Accessible toilets will remain open in all locations. All of the lifts (including fire evacuation lifts) will be available. Access to the library buildings will feature a one-way system to ensure social distancing guidance is maintained. Signage has been erected and checked for accessibility, whereby possible improvements, including matt printing, removal of continuous capitals and use of a sans serif font et cetera, have been implemented. However, there may be some issues with the signage for those with colour blindness, and as such steps have been taken to minimise this impact. All emergency exits will be available during an emergency evacuation. The panel that alerts if any user has activated the alarm in the accessible toilets will be monitored by staff at all times. The central emergency evacuation team is now fully operational again after lockdown will aid any disabled users to evacuate the building (via fire evacuation lift or evacuation chair) as required. For buildings outside the central evacuation team remit normal disabled evacuation procedures will remain the same as before lockdown. Where a one way system has been introduced and queuing systems, adjustments will be made for staff and students who are unable to adhere to this e.g. because the route involves stairs or because there they are unable to stand

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[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.

for protracted periods of time. Likewise as with all public buildings, exemptions for face coverings are permitted for those with specific health conditions and disabilities. The accessible study rooms across all locations will operate as usual although only on a pre booked basis. Any disabled staff or students who are unable to queue will be able to go straight into the building by identifying themselves to a member of staff. There should always be a member of staff around the queue who a disabled use could approach. Booking space is booked via a booking app or website. Both of these need online systems have been checked for accessibility in line with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 AA standard including compatibility with assistive technology and accessibility statements added in line with The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018.

In the Main Library, only individual staff and users will be allowed in each of the library buildings, meaning they should not be accompanied by children, albeit the baby changing facilities are available. At this time the policy on access to the libraries for those with children will not apply as only individual staff and users should enter the libraries.

All the information regarding applicable one-way systems and other signage related to COVID-19 is in English, but there are accompanying symbols. As English is the main teaching language of the University, it is not believed that this should lead to any disadvantage.

For those staff and users who may be undergoing gender reassignment, there are sanitary boxes in both male and female toilets at the Main Library, albeit there are currently no gender neutral toilets at the Site Libraries.

The resources and facilities in the libraries do change during the opening hours, as indicated in the aforementioned 'phased programme of library re-openings' section. However, the opening hours have been planned to maximise the resources and facilities that are available to all staff and users, while acknowledging that the full resources of the requisite libraries will not be available during these hours.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

- On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups:
All libraries have undergone a Risk Assessment, as per Health and Safety Executive guidance, alongside that of the Scottish and UK governments. The University has established a governance process for reopening all buildings, which the ISG-managed libraries have followed accordingly. Various bodies and groups have consulted on each stage of this process, including but not limited to the University Senior Leadership Team, Human Resources, Health and Safety, Estates, Fire Department, Trade Unions and IT and Library managers.

- Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this be will be addressed:
It is felt there is sufficient evidence to proceed with the reopening of the ISG-managed libraries. All feedback, whether positive or negative, from users and staff will be monitored, with particular attention given to any equality issues that may be raised.

- If application of this policy/practice leads to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups:
The reopening of the libraries is not believed to result in any form of prohibited conduct. Although it is recognised that for Health and Safety reasons access, facilities and services are limited as are opening hours, which may lead to disadvantage, for the overall wellbeing of users, this is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

While this proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim does not apply to direct discrimination, the University does not believe that reopening the libraries will lead to any form of direct discrimination. Staff with caring responsibilities, disabled staff, staff who are self-isolating, or staff with other protected characteristics, may be unable to work the proposed hours and this will be discussed with their line manager to ensure no disavanatge. As mentioned above, reasonable adjustments will be reinstated for staff, and added or adapted as necessary.

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity[2]

At this stage, the reopening of the libraries shall continue a process of the return to full facilities and services provided by the University, including those related to specific protected characteristics. It is hoped that continuing this process, namely planning for a return to full services and facilities, the University demonstrates a desire to ensure good practice for individuals from all protected characteristics. Operating an onsite physical service ensures those users who prefer to or need a place to study and work outside their homes are afforded this option this may help those in situations of domestic abuse, those who do not have a quiet space or IT facilities required to work/study from home, those who are experiencing isolation and anxiety associated with living and working/studying from home.

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

As mentioned above, a reintroduction of services and facilities, particularly for those related to the nine protected characteristics, will hopefully demonstrate our commitment to Equality and Diversity, whereby no individual is placed at a disadvantage.

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

As mentioned above, staff who are self isolating or have particular concerns will be able to discuss with their line manager and reach an appropriate solution. The reopening of buildings and facilities may have a beneficial effect on those on lower incomes as they will have access to free IT facilities and broadband in heated premises.

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

Staff and users will be made aware of the reopening by a variety of methods, including email and line management communication. Information will also be provided on The University of Edinburgh (EdWeb) website, which is governed by the Web Accessibility Policy, emphasising that University of Edinburgh websites should adhere to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1 AA standards and also be compatible with assistive technology. Disabled users will be able to request alternative formats, free of charge, for any of the communications about the collective library reopening. As required by The Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018, an accessibility statement has been added to the EdWeb site.

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

The Information Services Disability Information Team and Student Disability Service have been consulted. We will continue to monitor all feedback, positive or negative, related to any of the nine protected characteristics.

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

- 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.

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. (Delete the options that do not apply):

~~**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.
For the reasons stated above and below, it is recognised that the collective reopening of buildings and facilities may result in services continuing in a restricted manner for some protected characteristics. However, this has been implemented in order to ensure safety, and therefore is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim. Furthermore, it is not believed this staged reopening will result in any form of prohibited conduct.

~~**Option 3:** Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated~~

~~**Option 4:** Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated.~~

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).
   - **Remind managers of the need to ensure reasonable adjustments have been reviewed, reinstated, adapted and put in place as necessary.**
   - **Remind staff of the need to provide alternative formats free of charge for disabled users.**
   - **Ensure staff are made aware of the need to make reasonable adjustments for those who are unable to queue, follow the one way system, wear masks etc.**
   - **Continue to monitor all feedback and any comments, positive or negative, related to any of the nine protected characteristics and act accordingly.**

2. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?
   The policy will be subject to continual ongoing reviews, whether at a collective or local level, as per phase 3 of the Scottish Government roadmap pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, should any critical issues arise, then immediate steps will be taken to address these issues and avoid any negative impact on users and staff of each of the eleven ISG-managed libraries, with this EqIA updated accordingly.

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: **Kevin Haddow, Facilities Operation Manager, IS Corporate, Information Services Group**

Accepted by (name): **Gavin Maclachlan, Vice Principal and Chief Information Officer, Information Services Group.**

Date: **9ᵗʰ August 2020**

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