



## 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](http://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):** Refurbishment of Centre for Research Collections (CRC) Reading Room (Main Library room 6.02)

The CRC Reading Room opened in 2008 as a result of the Main Library Redevelopment Project. Consultation of collections in the CRC Reading Room increased by 60% between 2009/10 and 2017/18 and the service's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary has provided an opportunity to review how the Reading Room should be reconfigured to have capacity for increased users and the facilities to reflect current research trends.

Feedback from users regarding the environment in the reading room is positive, however staff have become aware of features that pose a risk to the collections due to the increase in consultations:

1. The staff area (north-east corner of the room) is small and unsuited to multiple requests to view archive material at the same time. The corner desk design is an inefficient use of space.
2. Users who require most help (e.g. with large format items and microfilm) are furthest away from the desk.
3. There are poor computing facilities for users who require access to secure resources through a PC, such as Lothian Health Service Archive databases and digital works in the art collection.
4. During Summer 2018, the room reached capacity as visiting researchers and volunteers / student interns were at high levels.
5. There is no direct access from the staff area in to the main reading room space. Staff frequently knock into the edges of the desk when going to assist users.

This project aims to address these issues by redeveloping the space.

**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: Joseph Marshall

Job title: Head of Special Collections and the Centre for Research Collections

School/service/unit: Information Services Group (ISG) / Library & University Collections / Special Collections

**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 No
- 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)

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To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant and why? (add notes against the following applicable equality group/s)

- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex: N/A
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Marriage or civil partnership :

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

- On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups:  
The CRC is open to all staff, students, visitors, Library members including Alumni and the public and therefore has the potential to impact all nine protected characteristics. However, we feel that the protected characteristics of disability and race are the most likely to experience an impact.

- Disability: The CRC is located within the Main Library which is accessible to disabled users and has accessible toilets with left and right hand transfer on each floor and disabled egress provision. There were 4750 students registered with the University Student Disability Service in 2017/18, 11.5% of the student population. Source:

[https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/2017-18\\_sds\\_statistics\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/2017-18_sds_statistics_factsheet.pdf). As part of the redevelopment the IS Disability Information Officer was consulted. The CRC is staffed at times during opening hours, with two service points (with hearing counter induction loops) where users may access assistance: CRC reception desk and CRC reading room invigilation desk. As part of the refurbishment we are replacing the manual adjustable height study desks with electric adjustable height study desks to make them more accessible for disabled users. These will be located closer to the service point to make it easier for users to request assistance. The layout of the space is being professionally designed by architects with consideration for access and space. The new invigilation desk for issuing materials will be standard desk height (not raised) with knee-space for users who need to sit or access the desk with a wheelchair.

- Race (including ethnicity and nationality): The Main Library is accessible by persons of all ethnic and national groups. In 2017/18 there were 11,991 students domicile in Scotland on entry; 10,710 domicile in other parts of the UK; 5,258 in the EU; 13,280 overseas; 70 in the

Channel Islands and Isle of Man (total student population 41,309). Source: [http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/gasp/factsheet/Student\\_Factsheet\\_31072018.pdf](http://www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/gasp/factsheet/Student_Factsheet_31072018.pdf)  
Signage in the Library, the CRC and the reading room (as well as the majority of the texts) are in English but as this is the main teaching language of the University we do not envisage any disadvantage.

- Pregnancy and Maternity- children are not permitted in the Reading Room and users under 17 must be supervised (this is covered in the EqIA IS-Main Library Access Policy for Users with Children October 2018. If someone was waiting with young children for a user there are baby changing facilities on the ground floor of the Main Library.

- Gender and Gender Reassignment – at present there are no gender neutral toilets in the Main Library but we have placed sanitary disposal boxes in the male toilets as well as the female toilets. The accessible toilets are gender neutral but are prioritised for use by disabled users.

- Any gaps in evidence/insufficient information to properly assess the policy, and how this be will be addressed:
  - o At this stage we feel 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:
  - o It is not expected that the redevelopment will lead to any form of prohibited conduct due to the reasons detailed above and below.. We will monitor usage and all comments for any feedback positive or negative related to the nine protected characteristics and act accordingly. Where we are unable to accommodate a disabled user needs within the reading room we will make reasonable adjustments as far as possible, for example consulting collection materials in a separate room under staff supervision if the user needs to be able to use voice recording equipment to make notes.
- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity
  - o The redevelopment should make the reading rooms more accessible to disabled users by proving electronic adjustable height desk rather than manual, and the addition of knee-access space at the invigilation desk. There will be changes to the layout of the room due to its new orientation but no changes to the lighting or other environmental factors.
- If there is an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations:
  - o By improving the accessibility of the reading room and in particular improving the adjustable height desk provision it is hoped the reading room will become more accessible to disabled users. It is hoped that by making these changes we demonstrate the commitment ISD and the University has to issues of Equality and Diversity.
- If the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?
  - o There is no charge for using the reading room so there should be no barriers for users on low incomes. The reading room has a staffed helpdesk so users who require any assistance can easily access this. The helpdesk has a lowered height section and a counter hearing induction loop installed.
- How the communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all groups, if relevant?
  - The changes made to the area will be available to users utilising a wide variety of electronic and print methods. Any communication about the service on the University web must comply with the University Web Accessibility Policy which is based on the Web Content accessibility Guidelines 2.1 AA standards. Disabled users may request the information in an alternative format and this will be provided free of charge.

- How equality groups or communities are involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice?
  - o The Information Services Disability Information Officer has been involved in reviewing the development of the new service.
  - o We will continue to monitor all feedback for any comments positive or negative related to the nine protected characteristics and act accordingly.
- 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:
  - o None other than that mentioned 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

Option 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.

- o For the reasons stated above. The redevelopment will be monitored through its first year of operation, and any feedback taken into account and changes made where reasonable.

**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).

- The Project Manager for the project will ensure that electronic adjustable desks are included in the specifications.
- Staff will be made aware of the need to provide information about the service in alternative formats and to make reasonable adjustments.
- We will monitor all feedback (positive and negative) for any comments related to the nine protected characteristics and act accordingly.

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

We will review and update the EqIA when we receive any positive or negative feedback related to any of the nine protected characteristics or when there are any further changes to the redevelopment.,

**H. Publication of EqIA**

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? Yes

**I. Sign-off**

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): Fran Baseby, CRC Services Manager

Accepted by (name): Joseph Marshall, Head of Special Collections & Centre for Research Collections

Date: 13/05/19

Retain a copy of this form for your own records and send a copy to [equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk](mailto:equalitydiversity@ed.ac.uk)