



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

Equality Impact Assessment Template

If you require this template in an alternative format, such as large print or a coloured background please contact HRHelpline@ed.ac.uk.

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:

EqlA [Guidance and Checklist](#)

EqlA [Policy Statement](#)

EqlA 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 | |
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| Policy/practice name: | Unattended desk monitoring and clearance pilot |
| General background/aims of policy/practice: | <p>Improve availability of vacant study spaces during peak usage (exam period) by monitoring and clearing desks which have belongings on, and no user present in Main Library only.</p> <p>Facilities team during routine patrols (target times 10:30 and 15:30), monitor for desks which have belongings on them and no user present. This work will see them monitor and record the desks, and if found to be still not-in-use and no change to desk the belongings will then be boxed, if on a third patrol the belongings are still in-place they will be taken to the EdHelp desk and processed as lost property. This pilot will run the 5th to the 9th of May 2025</p> |
| School/Dept: | Information Services Group Corporate Facilities |
| Assessed by: (name & job title) | Bob van de Sande Study Spaces Supervisor |
| Sign off by: (name & job title) | Craig Robertson Facilities Operations Manager |
| Sign off date: | 29/04/2025 |

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| Review date: | 29/08/2025 |
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| B. Reason for EqIA | (check one) |
| New policy/ practice is proposed | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Change to existing policy/practice is proposed | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other (describe in Section D below) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

C. Who will most 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. It is expected that you will consider all equality groups for impact. Please indicate below (with a tick) which groups you feel will be most affected by your proposal.

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|------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Age | <input type="checkbox"/> | Race (including ethnicity and nationality) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Marriage and civil partnership¹ | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> | Religion or belief (including no religion or belief) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sex | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gender reassignment | <input type="checkbox"/> | Pregnancy and maternity | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sexual orientation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other characteristics | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |

D. Consideration of Impact
 Show your considerations of how all of the above protected characteristics 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?

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.

- Does this policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations?
- How can communication of the policy/practice be made accessible to all relevant groups?

This change in process will affect students during their time of most stress (exams). During this time, the additional stress of trying to find a vacant study space can be an additional stress which is unneeded.

Quantification of the numbers of study spaces across campus indicate 5,500 centrally available and another 4,000 school-specific spaces. This near 10,000 spaces is inline with our Russel Group comparable institutions so the demand on Study Spaces is largely down to poor management.

While healthy study, including breaks, is to be encouraged, what has been observed is students leaving belongings for >4 hours to 'reserve' a space. This prevents other students from using a space, and causes much friction.

This new process is designed to minimise this 'reserving' of desks, commonly known as desk hogging, in order to maximise the number of desks available at peak times. It will build on the success of the scheme running on Level 1 of the Main Library for the last few exam diets, and use existing staffing resources to carry out the checks.

The process is multi-stage, with a warning slip left on desks noted to be unattended (starting at 10:30am). This is then photographed and the desk number recorded. On the next patrol, if it is still unattended, the belongings re-photographed, a slip added and belongings will be removed and stored at lost property at EdHelp desk).

This change will improve equality of opportunity and foster better relations. The current approach of non-intervention has resulted in multiple documented negative incidents between students resulting from 'desk hogging'. We believe that it should be the responsibility of the University to tackle this problem rather than for library users to navigate this tension where ambiguity has come about as a result of a non-interventionist policy.

It has also been remarked that the ability to reserve desks in this way often by leaving high value electronics (e.g. laptops, tablets) in place privileges those for whom the consequence of losing or having their belongings stolen are lowest. While class or socio-economic background are not currently a protected characteristic it has been proposed as a potential future candidate as a protected characteristic. This intervention will help foster an environment where equality of opportunity to access to the library is enhanced and having a consistently applied policy will foster better relations between library users, and with staff.

EUSA have been involved in agreeing the process and also advertising it.

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| 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 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"/> |

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| F. Action and Monitoring Describe any actions you will take to address the findings of this EqIA. <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? 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. |
| EUSA (VP Education, Dylan Walsh) has been heavily involved in both designing, advertising this new process, as part of improving the study space experience for students. There will be “lessons learned” sessions with both student groups and staff following the pilot, with a view to improving the process for the next next diet. |

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| 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. |