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):

Temporary revised marking practices for the assessed work of final year undergraduate students in the School of Informatics in Semester 2 2022/23 to take account of the UCU Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB)

A separate EqIA was undertaken in May 2023 to identify the impact on students. This EqIA identifies the impact on staff.

To take account of the Industrial Action 2022/23 Guidance issued by the University on 5 May 2023 (Industrial Action Guidance on Learning and Teaching 2023 v 5 May 2023.pdf), the School of Informatics introduced the following temporary revised marking practices for final year undergraduate marking in Semester 2 2022/23:

1. Project Marking:

   a. Where marks from both markers are available, the School will proceed as normal.
   b. For projects where only one of the usual two marks are available, one of two senior members of academic staff within the School will act as a second marker. The School will divert from its usual double-blind marking approach: the second marker will have access to the first marker's marking report and will confirm whether or not they are content with the assessment. The full marking report will be submitted, and all projects marked in this way will be subject to the usual moderation process and flagged to the External Examiner.
   c. For projects where no marks are available, two alternative senior members of academic staff will mark the project. Where there is any disagreement, the project will be passed for moderation.

2. Exam Marking:

   a. Professional services staff in the School's Teaching Office (ITO) will model the impact of missing exam marks and will identify those final year students who are likely to have more than 20 credits' worth of course results missing due to the MAB.
   b. In these cases, the exam papers of the students concerned will be picked out and marked on a pass / fail basis with the aim of ensuring that all final year students have at least 60 credits' worth of final year marks available. This will be

sufficient for the Board of Examiners (BoE) to determine whether or not the student concerned should graduate.

3. Board of Examiners (BoE) Outcomes:

   a. A number of outcomes will be possible:

      - Award degree with classification (usual practice)
      - Award degree with cautious classification and upgrade at a later date when more marks are available
      - Award degree without classification and provide classification later when more marks become available
      - Award an ordinary or no degree, where this is a certain outcome

   b. It will be for the BoE to determine whether it should award a cautious classification or no classification if the difference between the best and worst case scenario is large.

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):

Usual practice is:

- **for both markers to mark projects independently, before exchanging marks / marking forms. The School is deviating from this practice by allowing the second marker to have access to the first marker's report.**
- **for the project supervisor to be the first marker for any project as domain expert and someone who is deeply familiar with the project set-up. The School is deviating from this practice where the project supervisor is participating in the MAB.**
- **All marks are usually available at the time of the BoE**

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: **Professors Jane Hillston and Bjoern Franke**

Job title: **Head of School and Director of Teaching**

School/service/unit: **School of Informatics**

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 – directly affects the conduct of assessment**
- is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance)?
- It is one which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqIA? **Given that the impact of the change of practice on different groups of students is unclear it would be expected that an EqIA is undertaken to assess the impact on students and such an EqIA has been undertaken for**

students. Staff participating in MAB have requested the School undertake an EqIA to assess the impact on staff.

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]

The changes to marking practices are being implemented for all final year Informatics' UG students for marking that would normally have been undertaken by staff participating in MAB.

As such, the change to marking practices could affect staff undertaking the additional work on behalf of those staff participating in MAB, as a consequence of the MAB, any of whom may be within any or all of the above equality groups.

The changes to mark practices do not affect those participating in MAB given participation in MAB was a personal choice - beyond potentially having an impact on the effectiveness of their actions. There may have been some staff within the above equity groups who may have found it more difficult to choose not to take part in MAB, however that is beyond the scope of the School's EqIA on the changed marking practices as the decision to participate in MAB was not a School decision.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

- On any available information about the needs of relevant equality groups:

  No information gathered about the specific needs of equality groups – temporary measures implemented at speed

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

  No information gathered about the specific needs of equality groups – temporary measures implemented at speed

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

  The changes to practice will impact workload for those staff undertaking additional marking and administrative duties to implement the change of

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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.

practice. Some staff will therefore receive less favourable treatment than others during the Semester 2 2022/23 marking and Board of Examiners' period.

The changes to practice will also impact the effectiveness of those staff participating in the MAB, however those staff will not receive less favourable treatment than others during the Semester 2 2022/23 marking period as a result of this change of practice.

The inconsistency of experience / disadvantage for staff undertaking additional duties as a result of the change of practice will have arisen through their roles within the School. There is no reason to believe that staff belonging to particular equality groups will be more or less affected than any other staff member.

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

  No

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

  No

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

  As noted above, the most disadvantaged staff will be those undertaking additional marking and administrative duties during the Semester 2 2022/23 marking and Board of Examiners' period. There may be limitations of annual leave that the staff can take, however the impacted staff would rarely take annual leave at this time. Some staff may work more hours than their contracted hours. There is no reason to believe that staff belonging to particular equality groups will be more or less affected than any other staff member, however it is noted that the School's Teaching Office is made up of largely female staff. Their workload, and the need for additional work beyond contracted hours, will be monitored by their line manager.

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

  Staff impacted by the additional workload will be advised of the changes of practice and given the opportunity to raise concerns.

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

  Academic staff undertaking the additional marking workload were involved in the development of the change in practice. Professional services staff were involved in the development of procedures for the processing of marks and preparation for Board of Examiners, and adjustments to workload and practices made as necessary.

- 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:

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

The practices being adopted are deemed necessary in the circumstances, but are unpopular with those staff participating in the MAB, regardless of whether they belong to a particular equality group.

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.

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

The temporary changes to marking practices will continue. It is recognised that they will disadvantage some staff, but there is no reason to believe that staff belonging to particular equality groups will be more or less affected by the changes than any other staff. The proposed changes to marking practices aim to give final year Informatics' students the best possible chance of graduating in July 2023 in the unideal circumstances caused by the MAB.

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).

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

There will be ongoing review of the marking practices in the coming months as the marking of the assessed work of MSc and continuing UG students continues. If any unanticipated equality impacts become apparent, marking practices will be reviewed and revised to remove or minimise these impacts.

H. Publication of EqIA

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? Yes/No

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)):

Joy Candlish
Director of Professional Services
School of Informatics

Accepted by (name):

Professors Jane Hillston and Björn Franke
Head of School and Director of Teaching
School of Informatics

[This will normally be the person responsible for the policy/practice named above. If not, specify job-title/role.]

Date: **5 July 2023**

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