



## 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):

#### **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)**

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 has introduced the following temporary revised marking practices for its final year undergraduate students 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. The 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 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):

**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.**

**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 of 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? **Yes – given that the impact on different groups of students is unclear.****

**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<sup>1</sup>

**The changes to marking practices are being implemented for all final year Informatics' students. As such, they could affect any or all of the above equality groups, depending on the make-up of the study body.**

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 undermine the consistency of student experience that is usually provided by the School adhering strictly to the University's Taught Assessment Regulations when marking assessed work. Some students will undoubtedly receive less favourable treatment than others during the Semester 2 2022/23 marking process.**

**The students who will receive the least favourable treatment during the marking process are:**

- those who have undertaken courses in academic year 2022/23 where Course Organisers / markers are participating in the MAB;
- those whose project should have been marked by staff who are participating in the MAB. The most disadvantaged students will be those where both of their project markers are participating in the MAB.

**The inconsistency of experience / disadvantage will have arisen through chance. There is no reason to believe that students belonging to particular equality groups will be more or less affected than any other student.**

**Despite the revised marking practices, the normal practice of marking anonymously will continue, which will remove opportunities for discrimination against particular equality groups.**

---

<sup>1</sup> 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.

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity<sup>2</sup>

**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 students will be:**

- those who have undertaken courses in academic year 2022/23 where Course Organisers / markers are participating in the MAB;
- those whose project should have been marked by staff who are participating in the MAB. The most disadvantaged students will be those where both of their project markers are participating in the MAB.

**The most affected students will still be able to graduate on 3 July 2023 with the rest of their cohort. However, they may graduate with an unclassified degree (classification to be provided at a later date) or with a provisional classification that is insecure and subject to change. This may create significant barriers for students who require a specific classification, for example to enable them to undertake postgraduate study or to take up a conditional offer of employment.**

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

**Students will be provided with information about the way in which their assessed work was marked and treated after the meeting of the Board of Examiners.**

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

**N/A**

- 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:

**The practices being adopted are deemed necessary in the circumstances, but are unpopular with final year students, 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.

---

<sup>2</sup> This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership

**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 students, but there is no reason to believe that students belonging to particular equality groups will be more or less affected by the changes than any other student. The proposed changes to marking practices aim to give final year Informatics' students the best possible chance of graduating on 3 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 weeks as the marking of the assessed work of final year 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)):

**Philippa Ward**  
**Head of Student Services**  
**School of Informatics**

Accepted by (name):

**Professors Jane Hillston and Bjoern 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: **30 May 2023**

