



## 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. Edinburgh Law School Sources of Support Questionnaire 2018

### B. Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (Mark **yes** against the applicable reason):

- Proposed new policy/practice **yes**
- Proposed change to an existing policy/practice
- Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice
- Other (please state):

At present, the only feedback we receive on our personal tutoring system and other sources of support comes through the NSS. The School's most recent annual quality report states that satisfaction with the personal tutor system is significantly below the University's target of 80% (62% on this year's NSS, 67% on this year's PTES). Common criticisms include (i) a lack of clarity about who to turn to for support; (ii) the multiple changes of personal tutor that some students experience; (iii) mandatory meetings being too few and too short; and (iv) a consequent sense that personal tutors lack knowledge of their tutees and their issues. Many comments state that students' experience varies, and that the level of support provided depends heavily on who one's personal tutor is. In light of this, and in order to make improvements to the system, a survey that elicits information about these issues is required. Since analysis of the questionnaire will be based on student experience of individual personal tutors and other sources of support, it is important that the questionnaire avoids gender, and other, biases.

### C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: Dr Chloë Kennedy

Job title: Senior Tutor

School/service/unit: Law

### 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
- **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**

## 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 questionnaire will be sent to all UG students, and will elicit responses that relate to academic and professional services colleagues involved in personal tutoring and other support services. The practice will therefore be relevant to a significant proportion of our academic and professional services colleagues and student body.

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

Literature exploring bias in these types of questionnaires and surveys exists, with gender being the most studied aspect. The research suggests that responses can be affected by bias and that respondents may give higher scores to some groups (e.g. male teachers) as a result. Further work on this has been undertaken by the University Student surveys Team. <https://www.ed.ac.uk/staff/data-matters/guidance-ceq-data>

Disability: From a technical point of view, the presentation of online surveys is barrier free in accordance with the strict guidelines of the WCAG 2.0 Level AA and was certified for this by a neutral organization, the Swiss foundation "Access for All"

As part of the Electric Paper quality management, the graphical interface of the complete system is tested for Web accessibility using suitable tools such as "WAVE"

The Student Survey Team conducted accessibility testing of the admin and the student applications and on the whole the application was accessible in line with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2 AA standard.

Reasonable adjustments can be made for those unable to complete the form online. This may mean on request providing the questionnaire in alternative formats or providing assistance to complete the questionnaire

The questionnaire will be in English only but as all participants will be enrolled in Edinburgh University courses where English is the main teaching language we do not envisage this will create any disadvantage.

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

Sources of Support Questionnaires are a new process in the School and wider University. Until the new approach to evaluation has allowed the School to gather consistent or large scale data that would permit a robust evaluation of bias effect, the policy cannot exhaustively be assessed.

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

As engaged members of the Law School, students have responsibility for providing constructive feedback on their personal tutoring and support service experiences using Questionnaires. Whilst students may provide critical feedback, they should ensure that it does not breach the University's Dignity and Respect Policy.

There has been regular contact between the School, Student Surveys and key stakeholders during the development of this questionnaire in 2017/18.

Online unconscious bias training for students is available. Like CEQs, the Sources of Support questionnaire will be anonymised and there will be no way to associate a student with a response that breaches the University's Dignity and Respect policy. Instances of inappropriate comments identified in student questionnaires are, however, low.

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

Potentially, through the continued analysis of data for evidence of gender bias.

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

Potentially, through the continued analysis of data for evidence of gender bias and through improvement of the relations between students and their sources of support.

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

There is no evidence that the questions set create any barriers for other groups.

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

The Data Matters website was the primary source of information for creating the questionnaire. It holds information on the policy, question set, links to unconscious bias training and materials available to promote the surveys with students.

The primary method of communication with students is through email when invited to participate in the survey. Student initial and reminder emails will contain the following paragraphs:

*The Law School takes student support seriously; in order to help us provide you with the best support possible, we'd be grateful if you could please complete the following survey. It is designed to collect feedback on how these support services are performing at present and to make improvements, wherever appropriate. Your name and student number will not be shared with us but we will be told your current year of study, the name of your personal tutor, and whether you are on the 'joint' or 'straight' law degree (we will distinguish between graduate and non-graduate students). It is important that we receive this information so that we can obtain a clear and detailed view of how our support services are currently operating across different student groups. Please avoid identifying yourself in any of your responses to the survey in order to preserve anonymity. The data we receive will be stored in accordance with the University Course Enhancement Questionnaire Policy*

*We encourage you to be aware of the potential for bias in the completion of these questionnaires, so we have developed a short section on the Student website which may be a helpful introduction for you: <http://edin.ac/2gAJEfQ> You also have a responsibility to provide*

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

*feedback in a manner which does not breach the University's Dignity and Respect Policy:*  
<http://edin.ac/1Cq0VZY>

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

The questionnaire has been reviewed and approved by the Law School Equality and Diversity Committee.

**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:**

No further points.

**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 3:** Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be 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).

- Promote the student online unconscious bias training, encourage students to complete it
- Remain in close contact with the Student Survey Unit regarding any examples of inappropriate comments and responses from students which breach the University's Dignity and Respect Policy

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

Semester One 2018/19

**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 (name(s) and job title(s)): Alex Nuth, Resources Manager, Edinburgh LAw School

Accepted by (name): Dr Chloë Kennedy, Senior Tutor, Edinburgh Law School

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018

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