



Equality Impact Assessment

A. Policy or Practice (name or brief description): **Change of screening tool used to screen for dyslexia. The new screening tool used will be the Dyslexia Adult Screening Test (DAST).**

B. Reason for screening (delete as applicable): **This is a new policy/practice, which followed on from a change to an existing policy/practice.**

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: **Sheila Williams**

Job title: **Director**

School/service/unit: **Student Disability Service**

D. Screening Analysis

1. Does the policy or practice affect primary or high level functions of the University? **No.**
2. Is the policy or practice relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' set out in the introduction above)? **Yes.**
3. Is the policy or practice one on which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqlA? **Yes.**

If the answer to any of these questions is 'Yes', an EqlA should be carried out on the proposed/revised policy or practice at an early stage and in any event before it is finalised.

E. Screening outcome

Equality Impact Assessment required: **Yes.**

Record notes about the screening process or outcome here: **The initial equality Impact assessment has been carried out by an Assistant Director in the Student Disability Service. This will be reviewed after a year.**

F. Sign-off

Screening undertaken by: Melanie Scott, Assistant Director

Accepted by (name): **Sheila Williams, Director, Student Disability Service**

Date: **27/07/15**

G. Equality Impact Assessment

1. Overview: **It can often be difficult to identify dyslexia conclusively in adults. While many dyslexic peoples successfully acquire strategies to overcome their difficulties, it is not unusual for these to re-emerge, particularly during times of stress and with academic work in Higher Education. In this context, before referring students for a lengthy and costly diagnostic assessment which may have significant implications for the student, it is important that the SDS carry out as effective a screening as possible. The screening tool used previously by the Student Disability Service was the Lucid Adult Dyslexia Screening (LADS), a computerised dyslexia**

screening system for adults. LADS was used in the SDS for at least the last 8 years; however Advisors using this screening tool have consistently reported over a number of years that the LADS is not effective or reliable, especially when many students being screened may have more subtle, atypical forms of dyslexia. Advisors and also psychologists assessing for SDS have been consulted and feel that LADS is not the most effective or reliable tool for screening students in Higher Education for dyslexia.

The current status is that from August 2015 SDS will use a combination of the continued use of the detailed background interview by Advisors, a 10 minute free writing sample by the student, and, in cases where there remains a lack of clarity about referral from these procedures and there is a need for further tools to be used, the Advisors will then use subtests of 5 subtests from the Dyslexia Adult Screening Test (DAST). The DAST has been extensively tested and also trialled by the SDS and it is an effective and reliable screening tool.

2. The main focus of the EqIA is to ensure that disabled (primarily dyslexic) students are not in any way disadvantaged or discriminated against by this change. **To a lesser extent the change may also benefit students whose first language is not English, as the new screening may be an additional tool that can be used to supplement the international screening tool used with this cohort.**
3. Evidence about the effectiveness of a range of screening tools and procedures currently available for the student population and in particular about the DAST:
 - **Collating feedback from Advisors carrying out screening at the SDS**
 - **Collating feedback from Psychologists assessing students for dyslexia at the SDS (the key staff who are responsible for making definitive diagnoses of students with dyslexia)**
 - **Researching screening tools used in other Higher Education institutions throughout Scotland and the rest of the UK.**
 - **Researching screening tools currently on the market for screening for dyslexia**
 - **Considering and evaluating what might constitute a 'good' screening – i.e. a system that has a research basis and is therefore centred in looking at phonological processing, lexical access, working memory and speed of information processing relevant to dyslexia diagnosis and consideration of the most time efficient and effective screening procedure**
4. Might the application of this policy/practice lead to discrimination, harassment or victimisation? Might it result in less favourable treatment for particular equality groups or give rise to indirect discrimination? **No.**

It is a legal requirement, under the Equality Act 2010, for Higher Education Institutions to anticipate the needs of disabled students by considering accessibility and providing disabled students with the same opportunity as their peers to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes. In order to consider the needs of disabled – in this case dyslexic students - it is necessary to evidence the impairment. To support students to obtain this evidence, SDS needs to screen students to consider if referral for a diagnostic assessment is required. An effective and efficient screening before referral for full assessment is a vital step in our duty of care to students to avoid unnecessary and potentially stressful further assessment. This fulfils the legal requirement to anticipate the needs of disabled students, and uses means that are as effective and time efficient for students as possible.

5. Are reasonable adjustments built in where they may be needed? **Yes. Advisors will be able to use a variety of tools and in cases where English is a second language or there are other language issues we can also use the screening tools used for International Students.**

6. Does the policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity?
The change to a more effective and efficient screening process for dyslexia will ensure that students are more likely to be referred for appropriate and necessary diagnostic assessment and will ensure that there is a more nuanced and effective screening. Students whose first language is not English will continue to be offered alternative appropriate screening using the international screening process developed by the Student Disability Service in 2013.

7. Is there evidence (or an expectation) that people from different equality groups have different needs or experiences in relation to the policy/practice? If so, what are they?

As stated above, we have an alternative screening process that is used with international students whose first language is not English and this will continue to be offered to these students to ensure that their different needs will be adjusted for.

8. Is there evidence (or an expectation) of higher or lower uptake by any equality group(s)? If so, give details of the differences and the reasons for these (if known)?

The policy applies to students with potential specific learning difficulties/dyslexia whose first language is English (see 6 and 7 above).

9. Is any equality group excluded from participating in or accessing the service or functions? If so, why? **No. See response to section 6, 7, and 8.**

10. Does the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups? For example, because of the time when the service is delivered or because of restricted income? Is the communication of the policy/practice accessible to all groups?

No.

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

The Student Disability Service (SDS) has monitored the previous screening tool for the last two years and the Assistant Director has consulted with the psychologists assessing students at SDS. Incoming students will not be aware of screening tools – either current or future and are unlikely to be able to make any judgement on the effectiveness of the screening used, as they would not have experience of a variety of tools. Students who have prior diagnoses of dyslexia and who provide reports are not required to be screened again before being referred for an updated assessment when that is required. Ongoing feedback from the annual survey is collated by the SDS and will be reviewed in June 2016.

12. Are there any other points to note regarding the potential or actual impact of applying the policy or practice, with regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and promote good relations? If so, note these here.

- **The relevant Assistant Director will monitor Advisor responses and Advisor experience of student responses to the new screening procedures.**

- **The relevant Assistant Director will monitor the subsequent outcome of full diagnostic assessment to ascertain the effectiveness of referrals as a result of positive indications from the screening procedures**

H. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

There is a legal obligation to take account of the results of the EqlA in the development of a new or revised policy or practice. This requires considering taking action to address any issues identified, such as removing or mitigating any negative impacts, where possible, and exploiting any potential for positive impact. Clearly any unlawful discrimination must be eliminated.

Having considered the answers in section G, select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed. Delete the options that do not apply.

I. Action and Monitoring

1. Specify the actions required to implement the findings of this EqlA.

Training of all relevant Advisors to use the DAST. This is already nearly complete and will be complete by August 2015.

State how the policy or practice will be monitored in relation to its equality impact (or note where this is specified above).

The SDS will monitor and review the implementation of the revised policy at regular staff and team meetings, as well as seeking general student feedback as part of the annual evaluation of the service.

Views to be sought from Advisors carrying out screening with disabled students. Disabled students are surveyed in relation to their experience at the SDS.

Views to be sought from psychologists assessing students, as they will have access to the screening documents produced from use of the new tools and procedures.

2. When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?
August 2016.

J. Publication of EqlA

EqlAs are published on the Equality and Diversity website. Can this EqlA be published in full, now? **Yes.**

J. Sign-off

EqlA undertaken by: **Melanie Scott, Assistant Director, Student Disability Service**

Accepted by: **Sheila Williams, Director, Student Disability Service**

Date: **27/07/15**

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