

Equality Impact Assessment of University of Edinburgh Admissions Policy and Practices

4. The University of Edinburgh Admissions Policy

University of Edinburgh Admissions Principles

“The University of Edinburgh is committed to fair, transparent and consistent admissions practices.”

“The University is committed to equality in education. Students are selected on the basis of their individual merits, abilities and aptitudes.”

Approach to Equality Impact

The University needs to anticipate any possible negative impact on members of any protected characteristic group as a result of the implementation of its Admissions Policy and supporting policies and procedures, and to put in place mitigating steps to reduce the likelihood of such negative impact occurring. If applicants from any protected characteristic group, or any other under-represented group, are to be treated differently to other applicants, this must not result in disadvantage or negative impact for those applicants, and the reasons for the different treatment must be justified .

This equality impact assessment is designed to provide an overview of risks across the broad framework of Admissions policies and procedures and to put in place appropriate mitigating actions.

Equality profile of applicants

- UCAS currently collects data on the following equality characteristics of applicants using its HE application services: gender / age / disability / race. Information regarding the ethnic background of applicants is only provided to HEIs once an applicant is UF.
- The University currently collects data on the following equality characteristics of applicants applying directly via EUCLID: gender / age / disability / race.
- The University does not currently collect the following data for applicants / students: Religion; Sexuality; Gender Reassignment; Marital Status; Pregnancy/Maternity.
- Widening Participation has been included within the scope of the EIA because of its focus on under-represented groups. Members of protected characteristic groups may also belong to targeted widening participation groups.
- As new information on the equality profile of potential applicants becomes available, the findings of this equality impact assessment will need to be revisited.

| Category | Activity / Process / Policy with potential equality impact | Actions to be taken to: | Who by |
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| For information | Admissions policies and procedures The policies and procedures which support The University of Edinburgh Admissions Policy are each subject to individual equality impact assessments as part of the development or review process. This equality impact assessment is designed to provide an overview of risks across the broad framework of Admissions policies and procedures and to put in place appropriate mitigating actions. | | |
| Admissions Policy Aims | | | |
| The University is committed to equality in education. Students are admitted on the basis of their individual merits, abilities and aptitudes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimum entry requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minimum entry requirements are covered by the Admissions Selection Equality Impact Assessment. | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Selection criteria and selection processes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Activities and processes related to selection are covered by the Admissions Selection Equality Impact Assessment. | |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Contextual data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Undergraduate only ○ Use of contextual data recognises of the impact of social and educational disadvantage on academic achievement. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information on the use of contextual data is available to all applicants on the University's website ○ The system of flagging students who have WP or other contextual factors in EUCLID is being improved, which will help to monitor the academic performance and outcomes of different groups ○ A review of contextual data measures and their application is underway. | Student Recruitment and Admissions |
| The University aims to increase the diversity of its student population ... We therefore seek to attract a wide range of applicants from | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encouraging applications from people from under-represented groups: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ University of Edinburgh Equality Outcome 5: improve equity of access to education in the University http://www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/EqualityDiversity/Equality_Outcomes.pdf | Student Recruitment and Admissions |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applicants with disabilities ○ Training and implementation ○ Monitoring and review | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Policy and Procedure for Applicants with Declared Disabilities</i> (approved March 2014) ○ Annual training programme for all staff involved with admissions ○ Development of online training packages for admissions staff (due summer 2014) ○ Briefings on new policies, at College or School level and through existing structures such as PG and UG admissions updates ○ Review of the implementation and impact of new policies after one year ○ Schedule for systematic policy review, at least once every three years ○ Annual review of equality statistics through the Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) ○ Introduction of annual review of equality data for admissions as part of the review of equality impact assessments (due by December 2014) | |
| <p>The University aims to offer clear advice and guidance to prospective applicants to enable them to make informed choices</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Activities and processes related to this aim are covered by the Pre-application Equality Impact Assessment. ○ Student Experience Project: Applicant Experience strand – enhanced selection project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Research and pilot projects to identify what helps prospective applicants make the best choices, including the decision not to apply if appropriate | <p>Student Experience Project / Student Recruitment</p> |

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| | | | and Admissions |
| Section 3 - Selection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Activities and processes related to this aim are covered by the Admissions Selection Equality Impact Assessment. | | |
| Section 4 – Fraud and Plagiarism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Policy and procedure regarding admissions fraud (August 2012)</i> ○ Potentially higher risk of fraudulent documents from overseas applicants | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy is scheduled for review August 2015 ○ Bribery Act review, completed June 2013 ○ NARIC / IO anti-fraud training for admissions staff ○ Training for admissions staff to ensure consistent implementation of policy and procedures ○ UCAS provides “copycatch” plagiarism reports | Student Recruitment and Admissions |
| Section 5 – Disclosure of criminal convictions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Code of practice – student criminal convictions and disclosure assessment (April 2011)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy is scheduled for review April 2014 ○ Updated EqIA will be prepared as part of the review ○ Consideration of disclosed criminal convictions takes place after the selection decision has been made, to prevent the risk of discrimination | Student Recruitment and Admissions / Student Disclosure Assessment Panel |
| Section 6 - Applicants with declared disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Policy and procedure for applicants with declared disabilities</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Policy approved March 2014 ○ Consideration of declared disabilities takes place after the selection decision has been made, to prevent the risk of discrimination ○ EqIA has been completed for new policy (Feb 2014) ○ Briefings for admissions staff to be completed by end August 2014 | Student Recruitment and Admissions / All admissions staff |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● reduce risk of discrimination and/or unfair impact ● opportunities to promote understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Online training session to be developed June/July 2014 ○ Review of implementation and impact of new policy to be carried out at the end of first full cycle of implementation – November 2015 ○ Users will be involved in the review process | |
| Section 7 – Special circumstances | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Policy regarding special consideration of adverse circumstances</i> ○ <i>Applicant death protocol</i> ○ <i>Protocol for identifying high profile applicants to the University of Edinburgh</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Covers adverse circumstances affecting pre-application examinations etc. ○ This policy is due for review autumn 2014. ○ This protocol was reviewed in September 2013. EqIA screening was carried out. No potential equality impact was identified. ○ This protocol was reviewed in August 2013. EqIA screening was carried out. No potential equality impact was identified. | |
| Section 8 – Interaction between the University and the applicant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To be conducted in a professional, courteous and respectful manner | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clear expectations for acceptable staff behaviour towards all prospective students, their families and their advisors ○ Mandatory online training for all University staff on equality and diversity includes information on unconscious bias. This is reinforced through admissions training sessions on equality and diversity as part of the “Admissions and the Law” package. ○ Use of template letters and responses for emails, enquiries, feedback, appeals and complaints to | All admissions staff |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce risk of discrimination and/or unfair impact • opportunities to promote understanding <p>make sure that all applicants are receiving communications which meet a consistent standard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Using CRM system, Unidesk, in HSS to try and create a more streamlined approach to enquiries ○ Use of complaints data to monitor how well we perform | |
| Section 9 – undergraduate admissions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Undergraduate applications procedures are covered by the Application Equality Impact Assessment ○ Academic and non-academic entry criteria for undergraduate degree programmes is covered by the Selection Equality Impact Assessment ○ All applications received prior to the relevant UCAS deadline will be given full and equal consideration. No preference will be given to applications submitted early. Late applications will be considered at the discretion of the admitting College. ○ Applications for deferred entry will be considered on a case-by-case basis. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The University policy provides the Colleges with discretion to consider late applications, which will reduce the risks of negative impact on an applicant who is late because of a disability or illness, or other reason relating to a protected characteristic. Application of this discretion will come within the operational arrangements of each admissions office or PG administration office, and all staff working on admissions should be aware of their local arrangements. ○ Individual assessment means that specific circumstances, which may relate to a protected characteristic, can be taken into account. College | College admissions staff |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Policy and procedure regarding confirmation of examination results for undergraduate entry</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applicants with a disability or illness may be more likely to have to appeal exam results, and therefore may be affected more than others by this policy | <p>and School admissions staff should have clear guidance in their operational arrangements to ensure consistency in such individual assessments.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This policy was introduced in February 2014. ○ An equality impact assessment has been carried out, which has identified a possible risk of increased impact of the policy on applicants with a disability or illness. The risk is believed to be low. ○ Data will be monitored during the first year of implementation, and on an annual basis during the following three years, to ensure any negative impact is quickly identified and addressed. | Student Recruitment and Admissions |
| Section 10 – postgraduate admissions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Postgraduate applications procedures are covered by the Application Equality Impact Assessment ○ Academic and non-academic entry criteria for postgraduate programmes is covered by the Selection Equality Impact Assessment ○ Offers to postgraduate research programmes will only be made when the University can offer satisfactory research supervision in the area of the applicant’s intended research. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Work to develop policy and principles specifically for PG admissions is underway. ○ The commitment to offer PGR places only when satisfactory research supervision is available should benefit all potential students by reducing unrealistic offers, but is not expected to have an equality impact. | Student Recruitment and Admissions PGR admissions staff |

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| Section 11 - Feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Policy and procedure for admissions feedback, appeals and complaints</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● reduce risk of discrimination and/or unfair impact ● opportunities to promote understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The commitment to provide feedback to all unsuccessful applicants will provide information which may help improve any future applications ○ Use of template letters and responses for emails, enquiries, feedback, appeals and complaints to make sure that all applicants are receiving communications which meet the same standards ○ Generic feedback on unsuccessful undergraduate applications is available on University and College webpages ○ An offer to provide feedback is included in EUCLID messages to unsuccessful applicants | <p>All admissions staff</p> <p>College / School admissions offices</p> <p>College UG admissions staff / Student Recruitment and Admissions</p> |
| Section 12 – Complaints and appeals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Policy and procedure for admissions feedback, appeals and complaints</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Appeals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarity about the grounds on which we will consider an appeal, and the process to be followed, makes it easier for all unsuccessful applicants to understand the procedure. ○ Appeals are screened centrally, reducing impact on admissions officers. ○ Requests for appeals can be easily monitored through central screening. ○ Complaints: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New University-wide complaints handling procedure was introduced in March 2013, in line with Scottish Public Services Ombudsman requirements. Reviewed in March 2014. | <p>Student Recruitment and Admissions</p> |

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduce risk of discrimination and/or unfair impact • opportunities to promote understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ New procedure provides much clearer definition and process for complainants to follow. ○ Logging of frontline and investigation stage complaints allow for easier monitoring and review. ○ Review should identify common themes in the points raised, which can be used to enhance services, policies and processes for the following cycle. ○ Review will identify any complaints related to protected characteristics which can be assessed to identify any practices which are having a negative impact | Student Recruitment and Admissions / all admissions staff |
| Monitoring and review of Admissions Policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This policy will be reviewed annually by the Recruitment & Admissions Strategy Group and revised in light of changes in legislation and University regulations and strategic objectives. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ University of Edinburgh Admissions Policy provides an overarching framework for College and School admissions policies, operating processes and procedures ○ College and School level review of procedures should be done with reference to this equality impact assessment to ensure risk of a negative equality impact is identified and addressed, and that positive impacts can be identified and shared. | <p>Student Recruitment and Admissions</p> <p>College and School admissions offices</p> |