



Equality Impact Assessment

A. Policy or Practice (name or brief description):

Code of Practice on Learning From and Responding To the Student Voice

B. Reason for screening (delete as applicable):

- New policy/practice

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: **Lisa Scattergood**

Job title: **Student Surveys Coordinator**

School/service/unit: **Student Experience Project**

D. Screening Analysis

1. Does the policy or practice affect primary or high level functions of the University? **Yes**
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)? **Potentially**
3. Is the policy or practice one on which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqIA? **Yes**

If the answer to any of these questions is 'Yes', an EqIA 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**

F. Sign-off

Screening undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): **Linda Bruce, Head, Quality Assurance Team, Academic Services**

Accepted by (name): **Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards & Quality Assurance**

Date: **19 June 2013**

G. Equality Impact Assessment

Before assessing the policy/practice, ensure that you have a clear understanding of the purpose of the policy or practice, the context, the intended beneficiaries and the results aimed for.

In answering the questions below:

- Bear in mind that the extent of EqIA should be proportionate to the relevance of the policy/practice to equality. It may not be practicable or necessary to answer every question or address every potential scenario.
- Focus mainly on aspects of the policy/practice that are most relevant to the question, to ensure most attention is given to the most important areas.
- Relate answers to consideration of the available evidence and address any gaps or disparities revealed, where feasible without disproportionate effort. For new policies, assess potential impact.
- Describe any action identified to address any issues highlighted.
- Where there is potential for adverse impact, but the policy/practice will still be applied, indicate the rationale for that decision.

Initial/partial EqIA: in some circumstances - particularly for new policies/practices – there may be limited information on which to base EqIA. In these cases, the EqIA should be carried out to the extent possible and should identify arrangements for monitoring/investigation of equality impact and for fuller EqIA in future.

Wholly positive impact: Some policies/practices may be viewed as having only positive equality impact. For these, consideration should still be given to ensure that no adverse impact is overlooked and to ensure that full advantage is taken of the positive impact, e.g. through effective communication. However, the effort involved in carrying out EqIA should not be excessive.

1. Overview. Indicate the current status of the policy/practice or the stage of development/review. Also note any general comments here regarding the relevance and significance of the policy/practice to equality. Which aspects of the policy/practice are particularly relevant (which should be the main focus for EqIA)? On what aspects of equality does the policy/practice particularly impact?

This is a new code of practice. It provides further guidance on the key principles set out in the Policy on Learning From and Responding To the Student Voice for gathering student opinion on their experience of academic life and the wider service offering, and for responding to the student voice. The views of students within equality groups may be included in feedback from students. Of particular relevance to equality are the principles and guidance regarding ethical surveying of students, use of multiple sources of information, use of methods for surveying which should not disadvantage any student from participating, response to feedback on a timescale appropriate to student needs, and communication to students of actions taken in response to their feedback.

2. To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant? Policies/practices applying to substantial groups of students or staff will be relevant to all equality groups, which should be noted. However, also indicate any equality groups for which the policy/practice is particularly relevant, and why.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act are (delete any that are not relevant):

- Age
- Disability
- race (including ethnicity and nationality)
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy and maternity
- marriage or civil partnership¹

The code of practice is relevant to the whole student body and to all equality groups.

In answering the questions below consider each of these equality groups. As part of this, consider diversity within, as well as between groups (e.g. different disabilities, different racial groups). Consider the implications of combinations of protected characteristics e.g. issues of relevance to women may vary once race, religion and age are taken into consideration. Also consider the impact on those with caring/family responsibilities (which tends to impact more on women).

3. What evidence is available about the needs of relevant equality groups? E.g. information/feedback from equality groups or other stakeholders, involvement or research with equality groups or individuals, equality monitoring data, service monitoring data, information for other similar policies/practices, staff surveys, research reports, demographic information, audit, inspection or management reports and recommendations.

Where are the gaps in evidence? If there is insufficient information to properly assess the policy, how will this be addressed? If information cannot be gathered now, consider building monitoring into the plans for implementation/review of the policy/practice. Note: the resources put into collecting evidence should be proportionate to the relevance of the policy/practice to equality.

The code of practice is designed to apply to the whole student body and to be consistent with the needs of all equality groups.

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**
5. Are reasonable adjustments built in where they may be needed? **The code of practice contains the principle that the methods used to survey the student opinion should not disadvantage any student from participating.**
6. Does the policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity²? Will it help to:
- remove or minimise disadvantage
 - meet the needs of different equality groups
 - encourage increased participation of particular groups
 - take account of disabled people's impairments?

The code of practice sets expectations about the conduct of student surveying which have the potential to contribute positively to all areas above.

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.

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

7. Is there an opportunity in applying this policy/practice to foster good relations between people in any protected group and those who are not³? Will it help to tackle prejudice and/or promote understanding?

Improved effectiveness in learning from and responding to the student voice has the potential to contribute positively in these areas.

8. 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? **The code of practice is designed to cater for the different needs of the equality groups.**
9. 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)?

There is no evidence of higher or lower uptake of the opportunity to respond to surveys by any of the equality groups.

10. Is any equality group excluded from participating in or accessing the service or functions? If so, why?

No.

11. 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? **The principles are designed to ensure that consideration is given to removal of barriers.**
12. How are relevant equality groups or communities involved in the development, review and/or monitoring of the policy or practice? **Consultation has been carried out with Edinburgh University Students' Association.**
13. 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.

H. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

There is a legal obligation to take account of the results of the EqIA 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.

Option 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust. There is no evidence of potentially unlawful discrimination and all reasonable opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations have been taken, subject to continuing monitoring and review.

³ This question does not apply to the protected characteristic of marriage or civil partnership.

I Action and Monitoring

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

No action required.

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

This aspect will be reviewed as part of overall monitoring of the impact of the code of practice.

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

Major review scheduled for 2015/16, however a review of impact is likely to take place in July/August 2014.

J. Publication of EqIA

EqIAs are published on the Equality and Diversity website.

There is a statutory requirement to publish EqIAs within a reasonable period. However, in some circumstances there may be valid reasons to limit what is published or to delay publication.

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? Yes

J. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): **Linda Bruce, Head, Quality Assurance Team, Academic Services**

Accepted by (name): **Tina Harrison, Assistant Principal Academic Standards & Quality Assurance**

Date: **19 June 2013**

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