



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

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): **General Council Ordinance 186 proposed membership changes include that**

- The current reference in the Ordinance to Honorary Fellows should be retained but it should be made clear in the procedural guidance that it will apply only as originally intended to University Honorary Fellows, and not to College appointed Honorary Fellows.
- There should be no change in admitting Honorary Graduates to the Register.
- The specific academic awards that will in future qualify for membership of General Council should be determined by Court in consultation with the General Council, and drawn from those awards that are conferred at a graduation ceremony (whether in person or in absentia).
- All staff at grade 8 and above (or equivalent) should be eligible for General Council membership while in post, irrespective of job title.
- After Privy Council approval has been obtained to the changes, the implementation timetable and sequencing should be determined by Court, as advised by the University Secretary and the Secretary to the General Council.

The General Council is part of the formal governance structure of the University of Edinburgh. The University is required by law to maintain a register of General Council members. The General Council register of members is maintained in the Development and Alumni (D&A) CRM system, through which General Council communications are managed. Data security/confidentiality is maintained through appropriate technical and organisational measures. Graduate members are identified on import to the D&A system from the student system. Processes are in place to add other members manually, including eligible staff members from a report provided by HR systems.

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):

C. Person responsible for the policy area or practice:

Name: **Jenny Shaw**

Job title: **Head of Business Enhancement**

School/service/unit: **Development and Alumni, University Secretary's Group**

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**
- is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance)? **Yes**
- It is one which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqlA? **Yes**

E. Equality Groups

To which equality groups is the policy/practice relevant and why? (add notes against the following applicable equality group/s)

- **Age** – Date of birth is not required to maintain the General Council register. However, date of birth is recorded for graduate members on import from the student system (and used for reporting, data segmentation and identification purposes). It is not recorded for any other type of member.
- **Disability** – Communications sent by the General Council can be requested in an alternative format. Members are entitled to vote in General Council elections and can opt to do this by paper if they cannot or do not wish to do this online. Meetings that members can attend can be done in different ways – in person, online, recording.
- **Race (including ethnicity and nationality)** – Communications are only provided in English but as this is the main teaching language of the University we do not believe this would lead to any disadvantage. Nationality/ethnicity are not used in relation to General Council activities.
- **Religion or belief** – This is not used in relation to General Council activities.
- **Sex** - Title is requested so that individuals can be addressed appropriately in correspondence. The system has a gender neutral option. A title needs to be added but it is possible to give a gender neutral option.
- **Sexual orientation** – This is not used in relation to General Council activities.
- **Gender reassignment** – If a person was undergoing the process of gender reassignment they would be able to contact the office to ensure their details were updated how they wished so they were communicated with appropriately.
- **Pregnancy and maternity** – This is not used in relation to General Council activities.
- **Marriage or civil partnership**¹ - This is not used in relation to General Council activities. However, if someone gives the title 'Mrs' we can derive that they are married/or have been married. We record previous names to be able to help identify the correct individual if they contact us to update their information.

Add notes against the following applicable statements:

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

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.

We do and will continue to monitor all feedback for comments positive or negative related to any of the nine protected characteristics in relation to General Council membership. The main driver for proposing changes to the membership is to make graduate membership more equitable across types of awards and staff membership more equitable across professional and academic roles.

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

At this stage we feel we have sufficient evidence to proceed.

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

We do not believe this will result in any form of prohibited conduct for the reasons stated above and below. Reasonable adjustments would be put in place for disabled members e.g. provision of information in alternative formats or alternative ways to vote or participate in meetings.

- If the policy/practice contributes to advancing equality of opportunity²

We believe that this will advance equality of opportunity as widening the membership will likely include more individuals with different protected characteristics having the opportunity to participate in the governance of the University.

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

It is hoped that by showing we have considered any potential positive or negative impacts on any of the nine protected characteristics this demonstrates the commitment the University has to Equality and Diversity.

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

It is not anticipated that this should create any barriers.

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

If approved by Court, the change in membership will communicated on the General Council website and members by their preferred method of contact or by the method we have for them (e.g. email or letter). Communications will be offered in alternative formats free of charge upon request to disabled users.

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

We will monitor all feedback on regular basis for any comments positive or negative related to any of the nine protected characteristics and act accordingly.

- 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:

Nothing other than that stated above.

F. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

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

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.

For the reasons stated above and below.

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).

- **We will remind staff of the need to make reasonable adjustments for disabled members and offer to provide information in alternative formats.**
- **We will monitor all feedback for any comments positive or negative related to any of the nine protected characteristics and act accordingly.**

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

When there is any significant change to the membership or when we receive any positive or negative feedback related to any of the nine protected characteristics.

H. Publication of EqIA

Can this EqIA be published in full, now? **No**

If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply:
Publish after Court approval (next meeting 4th December 2023)

I. Sign-off

EqIA undertaken by (name(s) and job title(s)): **Jennifer Shaw, Head of Business Enhancement, Development and Alumni, Universities Secretary's Group**

Accepted by (name): *Leigh Chalmers*
Leigh Chalmers (Nov 13, 2023 09:09 GMT)

Vice Principal and University Secretary

[This will normally be the person responsible for the policy/practice named above. If not, specify job-title/role.]

Date: Nov 13, 2023

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