# UoE logo

Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) Guidance

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# Introduction

This guidance will help you undertake an EqIA, and is set out to work alongside the

[EqIA Template](https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/about/reports/impact-assessment/guidance). The sections A-G noted in this guidance correspond with the sections to fill in on the template. There is a check box included here for you at the end of each section to help you navigate your way through making the assessment.

You’ll find it useful, before filling in the assessment template, to complete the online course:

[Introducing Equality Impact Assessment](https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/about/reports/impact-assessment/training). There is also training provided by local EDI teams and the Disability Information team.

You should also familiarise yourself with the [EqIA Policy Statement](https://policies.ed.ac.uk/).

# What is an EqIA?

An EqIA is a process of assessing policies, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services. The process involves assessing a policy/practice to ensure that it will not cause discrimination in relation to the Protected Characteristics, as defined in the [Equality Act 2010](https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/about/legislation) or other characteristics/groups.

The University has a legal duty under the [Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012](https://equality-diversity.ed.ac.uk/about/legislation) toassess the impact of our proposed, new or revised policies and practices – subject to relevance and proportionality – with regard to the need to:

* eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
* advance equality of opportunity
* foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic

and people who do not share it.

The University requires staff to conduct an EqIA and to take account of its results in the development of a new or revised policy/practice. This requires considering taking action to address any issues identified, such as removing or mitigating any negative impacts, where possible, and taking full advantage of any potential for positive impact.

# A. Key Information

This section of the template is where you set out the policy/practice name, who is responsible for carrying out the EqIA and for signing it off, and when the assessment will be reviewed.

The assessment should be done by someone who has a detailed understanding of the policy/practice and who is in a position to ensure and necessary changes are made. Usually this is the person responsible for developing the policy/practice. The person who signs off the EqIA usually has the responsibility for the policy/practice.

Setting a review date is important to ensure that ongoing monitoring takes place. Where you have identified gaps in evidence or uncertainty of impact, an early review date may be appropriate. In general, a review should take place within 3 years.

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| **Section A: Key Information complete** |  |

# B. Reason for EqIA

This section of the template captures why an EqIA is needed. Ideally, you should start an assessment at the earliest stages of development or revision of a policy/practice to inform your decision-making. Remember that the effort involved in assessing should be proportionate to the relevance of the policy or practice to equality. It may not be necessary to answer every question or address every potential scenario.

An assessment should be done if any of the following apply:

The policy/practice:

* 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’ set out in the introduction above).
* is one on which interested parties could reasonably expect the University to have carried out an EqIA.

Note that all formal committee papers include a question about EqIAs on the cover sheet to enable decision-makers to ensure that the University is meeting its duties.

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| **Section B: Reason for EqIA complete** |  |

# C. Who will be impacted by this proposal?

The first stage is to think carefully about how your proposal could impact, both positively and negatively on people with different characteristics. It’s useful to fill in the table on the template which shows the nine protected characteristics, as an initial focus exercise. The protected characteristics are:

Age

Disability

Gender reassignment

Marriage or civil partnership[[1]](#footnote-1)

Pregnancy or maternity

Race (including ethnicity and nationality)

Religion or Belief

Sex

Sexual Orientation

There are other equality groups that you may want to consider, such as socio-economic backgrounds and carers, as relevant to the policy/process.

Also consider diversity within, as well as between groups, for example different disabilities or different faiths, as impact may differ. Consider the implications of combinations of characteristics, for example, issues of relevance to women may vary once race, religion and age are taken into consideration.

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| **Section C: Who will be impacted by the proposal? complete** |  |

# D. Consideration of impact

At this stage, you can use the template to note down your assessment process, including considerations and evidence of impact and any measures that you will put in place to mitigate negative impacts or promote positive impacts.

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 outcomes.

Identify who else needs to be involved in carrying out the EqIA. This can be decision-makers, frontline staff implementing the policy, representatives of equality groups etc. Should you need support to identify groups, please contact the EDI team.

There are some prompts given in Section D of the template which may help you to reflect. Here is some further guidance for each of the prompts given in the template:

* ***What information do I have about the needs of relevant characteristics – do I have sufficient information and evidence to fully assess impact?***

You may have staff equality monitoring data, population demographic information, information for similar policies/practices from other areas in the University or benchmarking from other higher education institutions, information and feedback from stakeholders, involvement or research with equality groups or individuals, service monitoring data, staff survey data.

Where are the gaps in evidence? If you don’t have sufficient information to properly

assess the policy/practice, how can you gather more information? If information cannot be gathered, consider building monitoring into the plans for timely and regular review of the policy/practice once it has been launched.

* ***Would this policy/practice lead to discrimination, harassment, victimisation, or create barriers or less favourable treatment for*** ***particular characteristics, and how can you mitigate any negative impacts?***

Consider carefully if there is potential for discrimination or barriers, what you can do to mitigate these, and capitalise on any beneficial measures that you can put in place. In the extremely unlikely event where there is potential for adverse impact, but the policy/practice will still be taken forward, ensure that the justification for that decision is fully noted and compliant. You may, of course, find that there is nothing in your policy/practice that leads to barriers or discrimination, and all that is needed in this case is for you to note this in the form.

* ***Does this policy/practice contribute to advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations?***

Will it help to remove or minimise disadvantage; or encourage increased participation of particular groups for example by taking account of disabled people’s needs?

You may assess that the policy/practice has only positive impact. If so, make sure that no adverse impact is overlooked and ensure that full advantage is taken of the positive impact, for example through effective communication.

You might be able to connect people, build communities and enable communication between groups in a new way as part of the policy/practice; fostering good relations between people. It may help to tackle prejudice and promote understanding. You might choose to gather feedback from the stakeholders/partners/decision-makers that you are involving to consider this question, and then put into practice how these relations might be fostered.

* ***How can I ensure that communication of the policy/practice is made accessible to all relevant groups?***

Consider your communication strategy to ensure that your communications are accessible to all, and that you aren’t missing any communication channels to relevant groups, including staff who are not desk based. Ensure that you include an accessibility statement and note that alternative formats of communication are available free of charge on request.

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| **Section D: Consideration of impact complete** |  |

# E. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

In this section, having considered all the sections of the EqIA form, you should indicate one of the four possible outcomes. There is some further guidance given here regarding each outcome:

**Outcome 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.**

There is no evidence of potential for unlawful discrimination, and all reasonable opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations have been taken, subject to continuing

monitoring and review.

**Outcome 2: Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.**

This may involve removing or changing any aspect of the policy/practice that creates any negative or unwanted impact. It may also involve introducing additional measures to reduce or mitigate any potential negative impact.

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

Set out the rationale for this decision, including how the decision is compatible with our legal obligation. In the extremely unlikely event where there is potential for adverse impact, but the policy/practice will still be taken forward, ensure that the justification for that decision is fully noted and compliant.

**Outcome 4: Stop the policy or practice – if there would otherwise be unlawful discrimination or adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be prevented/mitigated.**

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| **Section E: EqIA outcome complete** |  |

# F. Action and Monitoring

Summarise any actions required to implement the findings of this EqIA in this section

Describe how the policy/practice will be monitored going forward, how you might involve equality groups or communities in the ongoing monitoring, and ensure that impact is frequently reviewed. Make sure you add a review date in section A above.

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| **Section F: Action and** **Monitoring complete** |  |

# G. Publish

EqIAs are published on the Equality and Diversity website at:

[Published EqIAs](https://www.ed.ac.uk/equality-diversity/about/reports/impact-assessment/a-z-assessments)

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. You should indicate on your submitted assessment if there have been reasons for limiting or delaying.

1. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)