



University of the
Highlands and Islands
Oilthigh na Gàidhealtachd
agus nan Eilean

Equality Impact Assessment Guidance





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Introduction

A significant number of the University's policies, practices, strategies, procedures, decisions and systems of work, whether written or unwritten, impact on people - staff, students, visitors or other service users. An analysis of that impact or consequence on people needs to be undertaken to ensure that the policy, procedure, strategy or practice is not disproportionately disadvantaging individuals on the basis of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

Not all of these characteristics will be relevant for every policy, procedure, practice or decision.

Equality impact assessment is about considering how our activities, functions, strategies, programmes, services or processes may impact, either positively or negatively, on different sectors of the population in different ways. We cannot know whether or not a policy is having a disproportionate effect on some groups unless we compare the outcomes for different groups.

The primary purpose of an impact assessment is to determine:

- **The extent of differential impact upon different groups.**
- **Whether any differential impact is adverse.**
- **Identification and implementation of appropriate alternative processes/measures to remove or minimise the adverse impact.**

The assessment conducted should result in the promotion of equality of opportunity. It is the outcome of the impact assessment that makes it a valuable tool, not the process itself. Impact assessment can result in the identification and publication of best practice.

Conducting a 5 Step Equality Impact Assessment

A 5 step equality impact assessment will be conducted on activities, functions, strategies, programmes, services or processes which impact on people. Existing policies, procedures and practices will be assessed in line with a Prioritisation Plan and at the time of any revisions; new policies, procedures, practices and decisions will be assessed at the time of production as part of the approval procedure.

Step 1: Considering the Evidence

Step 2: Assessing the Impact

Step 3: Acting on the Results

Step 4: Publishing the Results

Step 5: Monitoring and Reviewing

The attached **Equality Impact Assessment Form** - a screening tool which has been designed following guidance from the Equality Challenge Unit - provides the template to be used in assessing the impact that a policy, procedure, practice or decision may have on those who have a protected characteristic. It assumes background knowledge and understanding of the policy, procedure, practice or decision being made. The author or owner of the policy, procedure or practice or the decision maker should lead the assessment. Information or data, including anecdotal evidence, will be required to support the assessment. The involvement of others will be useful in ensuring a broad spectrum of experiences and viewpoints. It will be the responsibility of the policy owner or author or decision maker to ensure the impact assessment has been conducted and the screening tool completed.

An exemplar Equality Impact Assessment using the tool can be found in the Appendices.

Using the Screening Tool

The tool enables the identification and statement of the aim, objective or purpose of the policy, procedure or practice and the different population groups who may be affected by it.

Steps 1 and 2: Considering the Evidence and Assessing the Impact

Who will be affected?

Consider here everyone that the proposed activity, decision, new or revised policy or procedure may have an impact on eg staff, students, external visitors etc.

Who will be consulted?

It will be important to consult those who will be affected and to seek expert support and guidance where required eg managers, external agencies, partners etc.

Key issues to consider include:

- **Does the policy use complex language? Or is it written and presented in a way which is easy to understand?**
- **Does it use language which is inclusive, free from bias and stereotyping?**
- **Do any images used, perpetuate stereotypes?**
- **Are there any accessibility issues which would present barriers to the application of the policy, procedure, practice or decision being made**
- **What evidence is available to facilitate the Equality Impact Assessment of this policy, procedure, practice, service or decision? Consider qualitative, quantitative and anecdotal evidence.**

Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation:

- Consider if it is likely that anyone will be treated less favourably or disadvantaged because of their protected characteristic.
- Could it lead to different outcomes for different protected groups?

Advancing equality of opportunity:

- Will the needs of staff and students with different protected characteristics be met?
- Could the policy lead to increased take up or participation by protected groups?
- Are there any opportunities to proactively advance equality for specific protected groups and/or between protected groups?

Promoting good relations:

- Have steps been taken to tackle prejudice and promote understanding?
- How have relevant individuals, groups or organisations been involved/consulted in developing and impact assessing this policy?

Step 3: Acting on the Results

Having considered the evidence and assessed any possible impact on those with protected characteristics, please state the action to be taken which justifies or reduces impact.

- Where potential positive impacts are identified, state justification of proportionate impact.
- Where potential negative impacts are identified, state action to reduce or justification of proportionate impact.
- Where no negative impact is identified, state action to monitor/review in the future.
- How is/will equality of opportunity be proactively advanced?
- State what changes will be made/action taken?
- How are/will good relations be fostered?
- How will relevant individual groups or organisations be involved or consulted?
- State what changes will be made/action taken?

Carrying out an Equality Impact Assessment may highlight other potential impacts or opportunities for further action such as specific data collection eg the monitoring and gathering of further evidence. State what further additional action will be made/taken.

Further assessment may be needed if there are possible significant impacts and advice can be sought from the Helen Duncan, Equality Outcomes Adviser or the Equality Lead in your organisation.

Please forward completed Equality Impact Assessment forms to Nicholas Oakley, Governance and Policy Officer.

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Further assessment may be needed if there are possible significant impacts and advice can be sought from the Helen Duncan, Equality Outcomes Adviser or Nicholas Oakley, Governance and Policy Officer.

Please forward completed Equality Impact Assessment forms to Nicholas Oakley, Governance and Policy Officer.

Step 4: Publishing the Results

Under legislation the University is required to demonstrate that it has conducted equality impact assessments and to publish information on assessments completed on its website. Upon request, completed assessments may be made available.

Step 5: Monitoring and Reviewing

Monitoring and reviewing the decisions made during an Equality Impact Assessment will ensure and demonstrate that the actions taken are effective and appropriate. Equality Impact Assessments will form part of a continuous quality review process embedded in the university's governance and management framework. Team and department managers are responsible for overseeing the implementation of Equality Impact Assessments.

Completed Equality Impact Assessments are to be monitored by the Nicholas Oakley, Governance and Policy Officer.

Equality Impact Assessments are to be reviewed in accordance with the appropriate cycles for quality review processes.



Equality Challenge Unit

Protected Characteristics	Definitions
Age	Where this is referred to, it refers to a person belonging to a particular age (eg 32 year olds) or range of ages (eg 18 - 30 year olds).
Disability	A person has a disability if s/he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
Gender Reassignment	The process of transitioning from one gender to another.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<p>In Scotland, marriage is no longer restricted to a union between a man and a woman, but also includes same-sex couples.</p> <p>Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must be treated the same as married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).</p>
Pregnancy and Maternity	Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.
Race	Refers to the protected characteristic of Race. It refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.
Religion or Belief	Religion has the meaning usually given to it but belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (eg Atheism). Generally, a belief should affect your life choices or the way you live for it to be included in the definition (eg veganism).
Sex	A man or a woman.
Sexual Orientation	Whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

Source: Equality and Human Rights Commission 2014

Steps 1 and 2: Considering the Evidence and Assessing the Impact

What positive/negative equality impacts can be identified for each of the 3 needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty?

Public Sector Equality Duty Needs	Detail of Potential Positive/ Neutral/ Negative Impact	Evidence
<p>Eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation:</p> <p>Consider if it is likely that anyone will be treated less favourably or disadvantaged because of their protected characteristic.</p> <p>Could it lead to different outcomes for different protected groups?</p>	<p>Making trips mandatory may impact adversely on disabled students - access to buildings, facilities and transport during trip.</p> <p>Policies and practices of the external visit partners need to be considered.</p> <p>Where there is an imbalance of young and mature students or male and females and where there are students who are the only ones with a particular protected characteristic, there may be potential for some students to feel isolated so consideration needs to be given to this.</p> <p>Religion or Belief: consideration will need to be given to prayer times/sensitivity to individual beliefs eg veganism.</p> <p>To be able to consider all protected characteristics fully it is recommended that potential trips are 'checked out' prior to the event to be able to establish any possible negative impact.</p> <p>Some external trips may be unsuitable for pregnant mothers. Consider possible alternatives.</p> <p>As some external visits will take place outside of normal class times it is necessary to consider those students who have dependants or child caring responsibilities.</p>	<p>Statistics in respect of student achievement and outcomes broken down by protected characteristic.</p> <p>Data showing breakdown of protected characteristics by course?</p> <p>Anecdotal evidence from staff and students about previous experiences and benefits.</p> <p>Consultation with external partners to ensure and agree appropriate access, content, delivery approaches etc.</p>

<p>Advancing equality of opportunity:</p> <p>Will the needs of staff and students with different protected characteristics be met?</p> <p>Could the decision lead to increased take-up and or participation by protected groups.</p> <p>Are there opportunities to proactively advance equality for specific protected groups and/ or between protected groups?</p>	<p>Current low participation could be a result of students' protected characteristics so research would need to be conducted to find out why they do not attend and potential solutions where an equality impact is a barrier.</p> <p>Potential issues include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability (lack of accessibility for those with mobility or hearing impairments). • Gender (timing of trips for those with caring responsibilities). • Religion and belief (accommodating religious practice in visit timings/ locations; some groups of students may have parental objections to them staying overnight unchaperoned). • content and delivery of talks/ activities etc eg language used, references, how student relationships are handled. 	<p>Consultation with students and staff to be conducted.</p> <p>Consultation with external partners to ensure and agree appropriate access, content, delivery approaches etc.</p>
<p>Promoting good relations:</p> <p>Have steps been taken to tackle prejudice and promote understanding?</p> <p>How have relevant individuals, groups or organisations been involved/consulted in developing and impact assessing this policy?</p>	<p>Fostering good relations between students and external partners, with a potential long-term impact on access to the industry for a diverse range of students may for example lead external partners to think about disability access or gendered assumptions about their industry.</p> <p>Potential positive impact due to increased interaction between different groups using services.</p> <p>Potential negative impact if requirements of different groups are not accommodated.</p>	<p>Evidence gathered from consultation with staff and feedback on potential solutions.</p>

Department/Section:
Author/Owner:

Date of Assessment:
Signature:

Review Due:
Date:

Step 1

Aim of proposed activity/decision/new or revised policy or procedure:

Mandatory external student trips.
Improve outcomes/achievement for students.

New
Revised
Existing

Who will be affected?

Students, Staff team, external partners.

Who will be consulted?

Students on the course, previous students, staff team, external partners, HOC, E & D Adviser.

Evidence available:

Qualitative: Course Annual Reports, Self Evaluation Reports - student/ staff experience related to retention, participation and success for those who have attended external visits in the past.

Quantitative: Numerical data on student participation in external visits and success on their course.

Anecdotal: Staff/student thoughts about the impact external visits have on the overall learning experience.

Step 2

Potential Positive/Negative/Neutral Impact Identified. P, N, N/I	Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage/Civil Partnership*	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Eliminating Discrimination	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n
Advancing Equality of Opportunity.	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n
Promoting Good Relations.	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n	p,n

Step 3

Action to be taken:

- Work with visit partners so that there are reasonable adjustments to visit locations transport, facilities and activities where needed.
- Encourage students to work together in class so that minority groups do not feel isolated: consider putting a 'buddy' system in place.
- Seek advice where necessary from members of staff who have an equality role.
- Consult with students to find out why they don't attend the visits and what would encourage them to attend.
- Review of activities/content with visit partners to ensure inclusive of all students.
- Possible subsequent actions may include:
- Possible abandonment of policy and review of whether the learning outcomes of the visits could be achieved in a different way for those who cannot attend, eg through videos, visits to your organisation by external experts.
- Flexibility in timings of visits/locations.
- The gathering and recording of additional data/statistics generated from other potential impacts/opportunities for further action.

Summary of EIA Outcome – please tick

No further action to be carried out
 Amendments or changes to be made
 Proceed with awareness of adverse impact
 Abandon process – Stop and Rethink

Please forward completed EIA forms to Nicholas Oakley, Governance and Policy Officer.

Is it likely that the policy, procedure, practice, service or decision **could have** either a **positive or negative impact** on those with protected characteristics?

Protected Characteristics	Considerations – Negative Impact
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imbalance of young/mature people in a class may have an adverse impact on engagement. • Changes to course location/hours due to caring responsibilities. • Appropriate content of activities/materials.
Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of PLSP support requirements. • Students may feel isolated. • Changes to course location/hours. • Access to buildings/facilities on external visits. • Policies and practices of external visit partners need to be considered. • Design of buildings and teaching spaces may have an impact on those with a mobility or hearing impairments.
Sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imbalance of genders in a class may have an adverse impact on engagement. • Changes to course location/hours due to caring responsibilities.
Gender reassignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students may feel isolated. • Students in transition may be required to attend regular appointments.
Race	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students for whom English is a second language may find it easier to have difficult conversations in a quiet space. • Students may feel isolated. • Acknowledgement and understanding taken in to account of cultural differences.
Religion or Belief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodating religious practice during working hours. • Prayer space/ablution facilities. • Availability of appropriate catering. • Potential parental objections to students staying away from home overnight and being unchaperoned. • Potential for some students to appear lethargic due to fasting. • Content and delivery of talks/activities etc eg language used, references, how student relationships are handled.

Sexual Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• LGBT students may feel anxious about discussing issues if they feel that confidentiality is not assured.
Pregnancy or Maternity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students may feel isolated.• Students will be required to attend regular appointments.
Marriage/Civil Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not applicable to students.• Need to consider discrimination for staff.

Positive impact

- Potential for positive impact on equality of opportunity if policies, procedures, practices, services and decisions meet the needs of all those with protected characteristics.
- Potential for positive impact on equality of opportunity through ensuring that services are inclusive of all students.
- Learning about potential impacts could increase understanding between staff of diversity and difference.

Department/Section:
Author/Owner:

Date of Assessment:
Signature:

Review Due:
Date:

Step 1

Aim of proposed activity/decision/new or revised policy or procedure:

- New
- Revised
- Existing

Who will be affected?

Who will be consulted?

Evidence available:

Step 2

Potential Positive/Negative/Neutral Impact Identified. P, N, N/I	Age	Disability	Gender Reassignment	Marriage/Civil Partnership*	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation
Eliminating Discrimination									
Advancing Equality of Opportunity.									
Promoting Good Relations.									

Step 3

Action to be taken:

Summary of EIA Outcome – please tick

- No further action to be carried out
- Amendments or changes to be made
- Proceed with awareness of adverse impact
- Abandon process – Stop and Rethink

Please forward completed EIA forms to Nicholas Oakley, Governance and Policy Officer.