**Equality Impact Assessment Guidance**

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# **What is an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) and why do we need to complete one?**

For Scottish universities, EIAs are a legal requirement under **the** [**Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012**](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2012/162/regulation/5/made)**.** Universities are required to have “due regard” to the three main needs of the general equality duty:

* Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the [**Equality Act 2010**](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents)
* Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant [**protected characteristic**](https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights) and persons who do not share it
* Foster good relations between people who share a [protected characteristic](https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights) under the [Equality Act 2010](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents) and those who do not share it

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of the following nine protected characteristics:

* Age
* Disability
* Gender reassignment
* Marriage or civil partnership
* Pregnancy or maternity
* Race
* Religion and Belief
* Sex
* Sexual Orientation

In meeting the requirement to undertake Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs), universities must:

* Assess the impact of the developing and revising of functions, activities and decisions against [protected characteristics](https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights). This will be referred to as policies and procedures throughout the guidance and the Equality Impact Assessment template
* Monitor their policies and procedures for any adverse impact on [protected characteristics](https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights)
* Publish the results of the assessment

Effective equality and diversity impact assessment also assists in the identification and management of risk, particularly reputational, legal and financial risks relevant to policies or procedures.

The University seeks to support staff and students where reasonable and practicable across a wider set of equality areas. These may include where staff and students identify with:

* Experience of being in the care system
* Being estranged from family
* Being a refugee or asylum seeker
* Identifying with a particular socio-economic background
* Membership of a trade union

The University takes a proactive approach to embedding and mainstreaming the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion across all areas of work and study through [**Aberdeen 2040**](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/2040/inclusive/index.php), the University’s strategic plan.

The University of Aberdeen is committed to equality, diversity, and inclusion and to creating a working and learning environment that is inclusive and welcoming. It is vital if we are to translate that commitment into practice, that the University ensures that its policies and procedures are not directly or indirectly discriminatory.

**Intersectionality**

An intersectional approach is taken to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) activities by the University. Intersectionality is a concept that recognises how social identities, such as race, gender, sexuality and socio-economic group, intersect and influence each other, creating unique experiences and forms of discrimination and privilege. Taking cognisance of intersectionality has supported the University in addressing the unique challenges our diverse community face, encouraged meaningful communication and enabled collaboration across the University.

## The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Team

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team’s role is to advise and support authors when requested to do so to ensure that the process is accurate and correctly assesses the impact of the policies and procedures being examined. This role additionally includes a requirement to ensure that an accurate audit trail is maintained regarding the process and that the result of the assessment process is published in accordance with University policy. The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Team can be contacted via [**edi@abdn.ac.uk**](mailto:edi@abdn.ac.uk).

# **Undertaking an Impact Assessment**

Revised or newly developed policies and procedures require completion of an Equality Impact Assessment as part of the approval process. An impact assessment should be viewed as an integral part of this process. The Equality Impact Assessment should be considered at the outset and as a continuous process alongside the policy or procedure development or review.

The impact assessment process consists of one Equality Impact Assessment form which can be found in [**Appendix A**](#_Appendix_A:). The process can be seen in figure one below.

**Figure one:** Equality Impact Assessment process

## Monitoring and Data Collection

Robust data collection is central to the impact assessment process. An impact assessment will require the collection of relevant quantitative or qualitative data.

The data collected should where possible, help to identify whether the policy or procedure is likely to have or has had an adverse impact on protected characteristics groups.

If unjustifiable adverse impact is detected through the analysis of monitoring

data then action should be taken to remedy this. Support with this can be sought from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team.

## Consultation

Central to the development and progression of equality is the need to consult within the University and with external organisations where appropriate.

Consultation should occur at an early stage in the planning and development of a new or revised policy.

**Who to consult**

It is important to consider who the key stakeholders are that are likely to be affected by the policy or procedure directly or indirectly and which organisations, groups and individuals are likely to have a legitimate interest in the policy or procedure. Consideration should be given to external consultations with partner agencies and relevant equality groups. It is advisable to conduct internal consultations with staff and student associations and networks. The University has achieved more effective and meaningful results by working closely with such groups.

**What to consult on**

Data gaps identified in the data collection stage should be used to guide the consultation process. Policy or procedure developers or reviewers may wish to consult on research conducted by other Higher Education Institutions on similar policies or procedures.

**How to consult**

Methods of consultation could include focus groups, interviews or surveys. Communication may involve face-to-face meetings, online meetings, email or social media. It is important to ensure a realistic timeframe for involvement is set and that physical and digital accessibility is considered when conducting the consultation process.

[**The Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (EDIC)**](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/governance/equality-diversity-and-inclusion-committee-9357.php) is responsible for overseeing the strategic direction of all Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion activities supporting the Aberdeen 2040 strategy. EDIC will review and provide feedback on all Equality Impact Assessments.

## Review of Policies, Practices or Functions

Equality Impact Assessments are an ongoing process. Existing and proposed policies and procedures will require periodic review dependent on the impact of the policy or procedure following equality, diversity, and inclusion assessment.

Following assessment of the University’s policies and procedures a review date will have been established dependent on the impact. The possible ratings for impact are positive impact, no impact, and negative impact. If an adverse impact is identified action should be taken to remove the negative impact.

It is intended that reviews will occur following three years after implementation of the policy or procedure.

## Publishing

The University is required to publish the results of each impact assessment undertaken. Following approval from the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team the results of the Equality Impact Assessment will be published on an ongoing basis on the [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion webpages](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/working-here/governance-policy-and-guidance-13323.php#panel13403).

It is the responsibility of the author to ensure that this documentation is published timeously and appropriately. Assistance with this can be sought from the [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion team](mailto:edi@abdn.ac.uk).

Information will be published in accordance with the [Data Protection Act 2018](https://www.gov.uk/data-protection).