# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Impact Assessment

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| **Title of Policy, Procedure, or Function:** Neurodiversity Equality Policy |
| **School/Directorate:** The Directorate of People |
| **Author/Position:** Janine Chalmers, Head of Organisational Development | **Date created:** November 2021 |

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| **1. Aims and purpose of Policy, Procedure, or Function:**The Neurodiversity Equality Policy has been developed to support neurodiverse staff and students as well as managers and teaching staff. The campus Trade Unions have been supportive of the development of the Policy. The aim of the Policy is to contribute to raising awareness of neurodivergence, challenge negative stereotypical views, show that a diversity of cognitive approaches is a source of strength and value to the University and ensure that teaching, learning, research, and employment practices at the University are accessible to individuals who are neurodiverse. Furthermore, the Policy is intended to encourage neurodiverse staff and students to share that they are neurodivergent and seek reasonable adjustments and support if necessary. |
| **2. Stakeholders:**This Policy applies to all staff and students at the University of Aberdeen. |
| **3. Additional Consultation/Involvement** |
| Organisation/person consulted or involved  | Date, method, and by whom | Location of consultation records |

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| The Staff Disability Network | 7th of February 2022 via Microsoft Teams by Mark Paterson  | Ceit Mackintosh |
| The Inclusion Practitioners Team | 8th of February 2022 via Microsoft Teams | Ceit Mackintosh |
| The Human Resources Partnership Team | 21st of January 2022 via email by Fiona Macaskill26th of January 2022 via email and word document by Lindsey Hamilton | Ceit Mackintosh |
| Policy Review Group | 31st of January 2022 via email by Mike McConnell 31st of January via email by Laura Benvie | Ceit Mackintosh and Janine Chalmers |
| Abbe Brown | 7th of February 2022 via email and Word document | Ceit Mackintosh and Janine Chalmers |
| Lesley Muirhead  | 8th of February 2022 via email | Ceit Mackintosh |
| Digital Accessibility Group | 10th of February 2022 via Microsoft Teams | Ceit Mackintosh |
| Maria-Grazia Cascio | 21st of February 2022 via email | Ceit Mackintosh and Janine Chalmers |
| Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee | 21st of February 2022 via Microsoft Teams | Janine Chalmers |
| Clemence O’connor | 3rd of March 2022 via email and Word document | Ceit Mackintosh and Janine Chalmers |
| Tim Arnot | 7th of March 2022 via email | Ceit Mackintosh |
| Rachel Phillips  | 21st of March 2022 via email | Ceit Mackintosh |
| Lucy Drysdale  | 30th of March 2022 via email and Word document | Ceit Mackintosh |
| Student Support Committee | 19th of May 2022 | Ceit Mackintosh |
| Policy Review Group  | 21st and 26th of April 2022 via email | Ceit Mackintosh and Janine Chalmers |
| Laura Benvie | 29th of April 2022 via Microsoft Teams | Ceit Mackintosh |
| Senior Management Team | 21st of April and 19th of May 2022 via Microsoft Teams | Janine Chalmers |
| Partnership Negotiating Consultative Committee | 5th of May and 19th of May 2022 via Microsoft Teams | Ceit Mackintosh and Janine Chalmers  |
| Lucy Leiper  | 20th of May 2022 via email | Ceit Mackintosh and Janine Chalmers |
| Policy and Resources Group | 8th of June 2022 | Janine Chalmers |

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| a) Brief summary of results of consultation indicating how this has affected the Policy, Procedure, or Function |
| * It was suggested that the Policy highlights and includes the strengths of Neurodivergence, and this has been embedded throughout as well as in Appendix D.
* Various formatting changes were suggested by the Policy Review Group and Digital Accessibility Group, and these were all addressed. The feedback was mainly related to hheadingsand numbering.
* A number of individuals expressed that they felt that neurodiversity was not a disability, although it can be a disability under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. This was addressed in section 4.1
* Section 5.2 and Appendices B and C were added to more clearly show how a neurodivergent student or staff member could seek support if needed.
* Section 5.8 was added to address intersectionality.
* Section 5.9 was developed to reassure staff that they can seek support without a formal diagnosis.
* Section 5.10 was added to address associated mental health issues.
* Support specifically for PGRs was included as well as clarifying their status as students but in some circumstances as staff too.
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| **4. Monitoring** |
| a) Detail method of monitoring of the Policy, Procedure, or Function and by whom |
| The Neurodiversity Equality Policy will be reviewed 12 months after implementation by a Working Group that will include relevant individuals. The EDI team will have responsibility for monitoring the Neurodiversity Equality Policy.  |
| b) Detail how monitoring results will be utilised to develop the Policy, Procedure, or Function |
| The monitoring results will be collected and analysed. Feedback on these suggested changes will be sought from relevant groups, networks, and committees. The Neurodiversity Equality Policy will be amended as necessary. |
| c) Timescale of monitoring including proposed datesThe Neurodiversity Equality Policy will be reviewed a year after implementation which will be September 2023. |

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| 5. Impact assessment |
| Select what impact there will be on each group: |
| Characteristic | Positive Impact | No Impact | Negative Impact | Not Applicable |
| Race |  | X |  |  |
| Disability (impact may differ according to physical, cognitive, and mental health conditions and impairments): | X |  |  |  |
| British Sign Language (BSL) |  | X |  |  |
| Neurodivergent | X |  |  |  |
| Gender |  | X |  |  |
| Age |  | X |  |  |
| Sexual Orientation |  | X |  |  |
| Religion, Belief or No Belief |  | X |  |  |
| Gender Reassignment |  | X |  |  |
| Non-Binary |  | X |  |  |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership |  | X |  |  |
| Pregnancy and Maternity |  | X |  |  |
| Parents and Carers |  | X |  |  |
| Socio-Economic Group  |  | X |  |  |

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| a) For each negative impact identified above, please state your mitigating actions below with timescales. |
| N/A |
| b) How does this Policy, Procedure, or Function contribute to eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and advancing equality of opportunity? |
| The Neurodiversity Equality Policy highlights the existing services available to neurodiverse staff and students in the University. The Disability Team and the Student Learning Service can provide specialist guidance, and the HR Team can provide guidance to staff and managers. Job candidates will be offered opportunities throughout the recruitment and selection process to share that they are neurodivergent and to request reasonable adjustments. Prospective students will have the option to share that they are neurodivergent and seek reasonable adjustments in advance of commencing their studies and throughout their studies. [The Student Pathway](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/students/documents/Disability%20Pathway%20Final%20Version.pdf) provides detailed guidance on this. Staff and students will be treated fairly and with respect, if they choose to share that they are neurodivergent.The Policy contributes to raising awareness of neurodivergence and challenging negative stereotypical views. It details the legal obligations of staff to ensure that teaching, learning, research, and employment practices at the University are accessible to individuals who are neurodiverse. This means that reasonable adjustments should be implemented, and the University will put these in place where appropriate to support staff and students to maximise their wellbeing, their contribution to the University, and to support them to achieve their learning goals. Furthermore, the Policy details that steps will be taken to ensure that policies, practices, and culture are inclusive of neurodivergent staff and students and do not directly or indirectly create barriers to participation in University life. The Policy highlights that the University recognises that many people who are neurodivergent may not have had a formal diagnosis and that this is more likely to be the case for older people, women, and those from ethnic minorities. Furthermore, the Policy details the challenges behind receiving a formal diagnosis. Waiting times for an NHS Assessment are lengthy and private assessments incur a cost.The Policy details that each staff member and student is unique and that there can be an overlap between neurodivergent conditions. Furthermore, it is highlighted that neurodivergent conditions may intersect with other protected characteristics, leading to additional barriers to employment or learning.These above elements in the Policy will contribute to the elimination of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and advancing equality of opportunity of neurodiverse staff and students. |
| c) How is the Policy, Procedure, or Function likely to promote good relations between people with different protected characteristics? |
| The Policy highlights that neurodiversity will intersect with a number of protected characteristics such as other disabilities, age and gender. Therefore, although the University’s staff and student body is diverse, many will share characteristics and the University is taking forward further work on how intersectionality impacts on employment or learning outcomes.Overall, the Neurodiversity Equality Policy seeks to educate to dispel myths around neurodiversity and eliminate discrimination. Thus, the Policy will generate a greater understanding of neurodivergence from our diverse staff and student body. |

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| **7. Publication** |
| 1. Provide details of arrangements to publish assessment:

This Equality Impact Assessment will be published on the Policy and Governance webpage where other EIAs sit. It will be shared with the staff and student equality networks and through the staff and student’s newsletter.  |

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| **8. Review Date:** September 2023 |

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| Author (Name and Position): Janine Chalmers |
| Authors signature: |

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| Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Team member (name): Ceit Mackintosh |
| Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Team member signature: Ceit Mackintosh |

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| **9. Date of submission to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee:**  |
| **Approval** Yes No  |