

# UNIVERSITY OF EXETER EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

## GUIDANCE FOR VCEG AND COUNCIL

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### Purpose of this document

1. To outline to VCEG and Council Members their responsibilities regarding equality considerations when making decisions;
2. To outline the responsibilities of authors of VCEG/Council papers regarding the undertaking of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for all proposals for *new University policies and procedures (or substantive updates to existing ones)*, which are presented to VCEG or Council (or other decision-making Groups as appropriate) for approval.

### Responsibilities of VCEG and Council

3. When making major policy decisions, VCEG and Council need to evidence that due regard has been given to the need to:
  - a) Eliminate discrimination;
  - b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic<sup>1</sup> and those who do not;
  - c) Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

### The Purpose of the EIA

4. In order to make effective decisions relating to key policy and procedural change, VCEG and Council must be informed of the impact any changes may have on people (i.e. staff, students, or other users), and any equality law implications new or revised policies may have.
5. The EIA is designed to provide assurance that these issues have been taken into consideration when formulating new, and amending existing, policies and procedures.
6. Ideally, an EIA should be carried out *before* a recommendation is submitted for formal approval to VCEG and Council, in order that the conclusions of the EIA can be taken into consideration when making key decisions.
7. The Equality and Diversity Team are able to advise if Report authors are unsure whether their proposals require the completion of an EIA.

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<sup>1</sup> Protected characteristics are:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion or belief
8. Sex
9. Sexual orientation

### How to carry out an EIA

8. An EIA Form (ANNEX B) must be completed, and is available to download on the HR website at [www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/equality/equalityimpactassessments/handbook/](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/equality/equalityimpactassessments/handbook/).
9. Carrying out an EIA involves systematically assessing the potential (or actual) effect a policy or procedure has on people in relation to the 'protected characteristics' identified by equality legislation. This assessment may include consultation with trained members of the Equality Impact Assessment Consultation Group (which involves discussion with individuals who possess any of the protected characteristics). The Equality and Diversity Team will be able to advise if this is necessary.
10. Following the assessment, the author of the Report may decide on one of three possible outcomes:
  - 1 – **No change needed:** the EIA demonstrates there is no potential for discrimination or negative impact on protected characteristics and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.
  - 2 – **Change needed:** the EIA identifies potential for discrimination or negative impact on protected characteristics and/or opportunities to improve promotion of equality. Recommendations should be made on how to address issues identified to remove barriers and/or better promote equality.
  - 3 – **Change needed, but not possible:** the EIA identifies potential for negative impact on protected characteristics or opportunities to promote equality, but it is not possible to make improvements. Justification for continuing without recommendation for change being made should be clearly set out e.g. significant resource implications disproportionate to benefits which could be achieved; or conflicts with other legislation/duties.

### When to carry out an EIA

11. The EIA should be undertaken before Reports are submitted to VCEG/Council for consideration.
12. Provided all steps in the process (outlined below) are taken, in most instances the EIA process should be completed between 2-4 weeks.
13. It may not always be possible to complete the EIA process in advance of Reports being presented to VCEG/Council. If this is the case, the EIA should be carried out retrospectively, and VCEG/Council should make their decision on the basis that a retrospective EIA is undertaken and that the EIA concludes that no change is needed.
14. Outcomes of retrospective EIAs would only be reported back to VCEG and Council in cases where it has been concluded that change is needed.

### What needs to be included in VCEG/Council papers?

15. Any written proposals, submitted to VCEG and Council, which advocate the creation of new, or fundamental alterations of existing, policies and procedures must include an 'Equality Considerations' section within the Report. This section will outline the results of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) or, where it has been concluded that an EIA is not necessary, justification for that conclusion.
16. An example of possible wording for the 'Equality Considerations' section is provided at ANNEX A.

### **The EIA Process (step-by-step)**

1. The Report author is required to complete an Equality Impact Assessment Form – form available at [www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/equality/equalityimpactassessments/handbook/](http://www.exeter.ac.uk/staff/equality/equalityimpactassessments/handbook/)
2. Completed EIA form and supporting documentation to be submitted to the Equality and Diversity team at [equalityanddiversity@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:equalityanddiversity@exeter.ac.uk).
3. Documentation assessed either by E&D Team and Senior HR colleagues or by wider Consultation Group (consisting of staff and student volunteers trained in the EIA process) – the Equality and Diversity team will advise.
4. Feedback from assessment to be formally communicated to Report author by Equality and Diversity team (via EIA Final Outcome Form). Where a potential adverse impact has been identified, feedback may include recommendations for amendments. Author to consider feedback and recommendations and communicate response via Section B of Final Outcome Form which is then returned to the Equality & Diversity office.
5. If further action is recommended (and the author accepts this recommendation), the Equality and Diversity team will advise on next steps. However, if no further action is required, the author should include an 'Equality Considerations' section within their report detailing the outcome of the EIA process, and may then proceed with submitting the report to VCEG/Council for consideration.

### **Contact**

- Please contact Dorcas Cowan regarding any aspect of the EIA [d.m.cowan@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:d.m.cowan@exeter.ac.uk)
- Please direct any VCEG queries to Dr Victoria Alcock [v.j.alcock@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:v.j.alcock@exeter.ac.uk)
- Please direct any Council queries to Jill Williams [jill.williams@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:jill.williams@exeter.ac.uk)

## ANNEX A

### SAMPLE 'EQUALITY CONSIDERATIONS' PARAGRAPH FOR VCEG/COUNCIL PAPERS

#### Equality Considerations

*(Please use one from the following 1 – 4 and delete those that do not apply)*

1. The following is a summary of the Equality Impact Assessment of **[policy/procedure/proposal]** dated **[dd/mm/yy]**:
  - (a) All protected characteristics were considered as part of the assessment
  - (b) The following potential or actual negative impacts were identified: **[describe which characteristic and in what way]**
  - (c) The following positive impacts have been identified: **[describe which characteristic and in what way]**
  - (d) Neutral impacts have been identified for the following characteristics, and therefore it is our view that the policy will not have a positive or negative impact compared to others: **[describe which characteristic]**
  - (e) As a result of this assessment, the following amendments/changes have been made: **[summarise changes made if applicable]** **OR** (f) This assessment did not identify any equality issues which need to be addressed.
2. An Equality Impact Assessment is currently being undertaken, and VCEG/Council will be informed should any issues that require their attention arise.
3. It is concluded that the policy/procedure/proposal is not relevant to equality because [explain the reasons why this is the case e.g. in the case of policies/decisions that have no impact on people, there is no way in which people will experience discrimination]. Therefore an equality impact assessment has not been conducted.
4. The paper does not relate to a new or amended policy/procedure/proposal and therefore does not require an equality impact assessment.

**ANNEX B**

**EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM**



**Equality Impact Assessment**

*Please refer to the guidance notes provided in italics for each question.*

**1. College/Service/Department:**

**2. Name of policy being assessed:**

*For the purpose of the EIA process, the use of the term “policy” refers to the full range of functions, activities and decisions for which the University is responsible. This includes both current and new policies.*

**3. Who is the policy holder/who has the authority to make changes to the policy?**

*Please complete both the name and job title of the policy holder (or the person who has authority to make changes to the policy).*

**4. What is the purpose of the policy?**

*What is the function of this policy and how is it used on a practical level? This should be a simple summary of the main aims of the policy and how it is implemented and used on a day to day basis.*

**5. Are there any other policies, procedures, guidance documents, etc that will interact with the policy?**

*Please provide any details which may help to provide context to the policy and its implementation.*

**6. Who was consulted when the policy was first written?**

*Were any staff, students, trade unions or others involved at the policy development stage? If so, please provide details.*

**7. Who does the policy affect?**

*This should clarify the intended target of the policy and could include staff; students; customers; visitors to the campus. Does it have the potential to affect the whole University population; just staff; just students; or specific departments? Do you know numbers of people who may be affected?*

**8. Who implements the policy, and what steps will be taken to ensure the effective and consistent implementation of the policy?**

*Please provide details of who is directly responsible for implementing the policy/and how it is intended to be implemented e.g. in the case of a new/revised policy, how will this be communicated to those affected; are briefings/training sessions required?*

9. What impact is the policy likely to have on the following protected characteristics?

Protected characteristic <sup>2</sup>	Positive impact <sup>3</sup>	Negative impact <sup>4</sup>	Neutral impact <sup>5</sup>	Unclear	Please explain
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Disability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marriage and civil partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pregnancy and maternity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
International Students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<sup>2</sup> Protected characteristics are as identified by the Equality Act 2010 (with the exception of 'International Students' – although not a protected characteristic, please indicate whether there is likely to be an impact on the internationalisation agenda).

<sup>3</sup> A **positive impact** is one in which a person or people will experience an advantage or benefit, this includes positive action to overcome a disadvantage, meet needs or encourage participation (e.g. a service sets up a disability service user forum to help design and plan service provision so that disabled people's needs are taken into account).

<sup>4</sup> A **negative impact** is one in which a person or people will experience a disadvantage (e.g. a wheelchair user can't get in to the building to access the service).

<sup>5</sup> A **neutral impact** is one where there is no disadvantage; experience will be the same for everyone (e.g. everyone can access the service including disabled people).

**10. If any answers are 'negative' can this be justified on the basis of a legal requirement?**

Yes  No

**If 'yes', please explain:**

*Some negative impact may be justified on the basis of a legal requirement or applicable exemption including where positive action is undertaken or where there is a conflict with other legislation e.g. health and safety. If this is the case, please explain.*

**If 'no', what can be done to remove the negative impact?**

*Are there any changes which could be made to the policy to remove (or minimise) the negative impact? If you are unclear what changes could be made to remove or minimise the negative impact and would welcome suggestions via consultation with the wider University community, please state so here and at Q13 below.*

**11. More generally, is there anything that could be done in terms of the content and/or implementation of this policy to improve the positive impact?**

*Consider whether there are any changes which could be made to the policy and/or its implementation to improve the positive impact on any of the protected characteristics.*

**12. Is this policy subject to approval by VCEG/Council following completion of this Equality Impact Assessment? If so, please indicate the date by which the Assessment must be completed to ensure timely submission to VCEG/Council:**

*Authors of policies which require approval by Council/VCEG should allow time for the EIA process to be completed **before** it is submitted to Council/VCEG for consideration. Where possible, you should allow **at least 4 weeks** from the date of submission to the Equality & Diversity Office for the EIA process to be completed.*

**13. Would this policy benefit from consultation with the wider University community?**

*Wider consultation **may** be helpful if the policy is customer-facing; subject to significant change; or affects a large proportion of the community.*

Yes  No

**If 'yes', would it be helpful if this consultation included staff and/or students?**

Staff  Students

**14. This Equality Impact Assessment was completed by:**

Name(s):

Job title(s):

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**Telephone:**

**Email:**

*Provide email addresses of all those involved in completing the EIA*

**Signature(s):**

*To be signed by all those involved in completing the EIA*

**Date of assessment:**

*DD/MM/YY*

**15. This Equality Impact Assessment was checked and signed off by the policy holder:**

**Name:**

*Provide name of policy holder (or person who has authority to make changes to the policy)*

**Job title:**

*Provide job title of policy holder (or person who has authority to make changes to the policy)*

**Telephone:**

*Provide telephone number of policy holder (or person who has authority to make changes to the policy)*

**Email:**

*Provide email address of policy holder (or person who has authority to make changes to the policy)*

**Signature:**

*To be signed by policy holder*

**Date:**

*DD/MM/YY*

Once completed please return (a) a signed hard copy of this form and (b) an electronic version to Helen Booker, Equality & Diversity Office, Room 356, Northcote House, The Queens Drive, Exeter, EX4 4QJ or [equalityanddiversity@exeter.ac.uk](mailto:equalityanddiversity@exeter.ac.uk) If you have any queries please ring 01392 72 2037.