

Background

The Equality Act 2010 places a legal duty on the University to demonstrate that we have had 'due regard' to the aims of the equality duty in our decision making. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed new or revised policies or practices is one of the key ways in which this 'due regard' can be demonstrated.

Implications for the University

In practice, this means that key University policies, strategies and decisions must be equality impact assessed for their impact on people with different protected characteristics¹. Policy owners and senior managers responsible for proposing policies, strategies and decisions are accountable for ensuring that this is done using the University equality impact assessment (EIA) template and guidance.

When is an EIA required?

Policies, strategies and decisions that have a ***significant impact on people*** should be equality impact assessed. These are the key aspects of University business that may result in different outcomes for people, or have a negative or disproportionate impact on a person's experience. For example, policies relating to staff or student recruitment, strategies relating to learning and teaching, and decisions around organisational change should be equality impact assessed.

Example 1: A University decides to close down its nursery as part of a cost cutting exercise. An equality impact assessment is required to establish if this decision will result in a negative impact on women and individuals from different racial groups, both staff and students, and determine what alternative arrangements can be put in place to mitigate the negative impact.

¹ The protected characteristics covered by this duty are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnership but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination.

When is an EIA not required?

'Minor' policies and procedures and decisions that do not have a significant impact on people do not require an EIA. Any potential impact on equality should still be considered at discussion, agreement and implementation stage, particularly if there is a 'one size fits all' approach.

Example 2: A proposal to roll out mandatory compliance training for all staff in a department may not require an EIA, but the proposal may still have an equality impact e.g. on part-time staff. Statistically part-time staff are more likely to be female, and plans to ensure that disadvantage does not occur as a result of the proposal should still be agreed.

Example 3: The National Student Survey (NSS) report presented to Senate may not require an EIA as it is a routine report of results at institutional and programme level. However, the policies and strategies that guide the University's practice in relation to the areas that the NSS focuses on would require to be equality impact assessed as they have a potent impact on equality. For example, the way a programme is taught and assessed or the way that feedback is provided, or the provision of learning resources may all result in different outcomes and satisfaction rates for males, females, students with a disability, students from different cultural backgrounds or age groups. While the NSS report may not have an EIA, the core functions that inform the results will require EIAs.

What if there is no evidence?

If the response to a question is 'unknown' or 'unsure', these are legitimate answers particularly if the proposal is new, or if there is no current evidence. However, the equality impact may become more apparent during the implementation of the proposal. Therefore, there is an expectation that plans for monitoring the equality impact are outlined, together with an appropriate timescale.

Further information

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance "[Fair financial decisions in further and higher education](#)" provide key information and examples²;

If further guidance and advice are required, please contact the [Equality and Diversity Advisor](#)

² Although the focus of the report is on financial decisions, the principles apply to strategy and action planning.

1. DESCRIBE

1.1. Name of policy/strategy/decision

1.2. Owner

1.3. Date

1.4. Aims of policy/strategy/decision

1.5. Who does the policy/strategy/decision affect?

1.6. Could there be any potential implications for equality, or people with protected characteristics?

For example, does the application or implementation of the policy, strategy or decision result in different outcomes for people? Does it take into account different needs? Is there a disproportionate number of people affected by the activity compared with the general population, or are there a higher proportion number of complaints from a particular group?

2. ASSESS

What are the implications, positive or negative (and evidence for this) of the policy/strategy/decision in relation to GCU’s duty to have due regard to the need to:

2.1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation?

For example, is there evidence to show that the proposal and related actions:

- *Benefit particular groups, particularly to alleviate discrimination or harassment?*
- *Result in less favourable treatment for particular groups – e.g. is there risk of a higher proportion of complaints from a particular group compared to the general population?*
- *Take account of the methods of achieving the proposal if it has a specific target or outcome – e.g. are there equality risks associated with the methods of achieving a target or outcome?*

If there is no evidence, indicate if the evidence gap can be addressed, for example through consultation or through monitoring and review.

2.2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it?

For example, is there evidence to show that the proposal and related actions:

- *Help to remove disadvantage or encourage the participation of particular groups?*
- *Result in particular groups having reduced access or participation compared to the general population?*
- *Take account of the methods of achieving the proposal if it has a specific target or outcome – e.g. are there equality risks associated with the methods of achieving a target or outcome?*

If there is no evidence, indicate if the evidence gap can be addressed, for example through consultation or through monitoring and review.

2.3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it?

For example, is there evidence to show that the proposal and related actions:

- *Help to tackle prejudice or promote understanding?*
- *Result in the needs of people from a particular group not being met?*
- *Have been informed by consultation or engagement with people or groups likely to be affected?*
- *Take account of the methods of achieving the proposal if it has a specific target or outcome – e.g. are there equality risks associated with the methods of achieving a target or outcome?*

If there is no evidence, indicate if the evidence gap can be addressed, for example through consultation or through monitoring and review.

3. ACTION
3.1. If a negative impact has been identified, how will this be addressed?
<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are there any immediate actions required to ensure that there is no discrimination?</i> • <i>What steps will be taken to reduce any negative impact in the future?</i>
3.2. If changes have been made to the policy/strategy/decision as a result of this assessment, outline the changes
<p><i>Indicate that no changes were required or highlight the changes made</i></p>

4. MONITOR AND REVIEW
4.1. How will the implementation of the policy/strategy/decision and its impact on equality be monitored and reviewed?
<p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Can the impact on equality be considered routinely as part of the review cycle or annual planning process?</i>

5. PUBLISH
Please email this completed form, along with the policy/strategy and any other relevant information ³ to equality@gcu.ac.uk for publishing on the Equality and Diversity website and annual reporting in line with Equality Act 2010 requirements.

6. SIGN OFF	
6.1. EIA	Date
6.2. Equality and Diversity Advisor	Date

³ Information or evidence may be removed if it is commercially sensitive or personal information