**University of Stirling**

**Equality Impact Assessment Template**

This template should be read in conjunction with the [guidance on equality impact assessment](https://stir.app.box.com/file/676999536175).

# Equality Impact Relevance

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| Title of policy, practice, activity or proposed decision | Academic Integrity Policy and Academic Misconduct Procedure amendment |
| Purpose/aim of above | The purposes of the amendments are to:   * Make the definitions of academic integrity, academic misconduct and related terms easier to understand for students and staff * Clearly differentiate between poor academic practice as part of the learning process and academic misconduct. Introducing courageous conversations as part of that learning process * Align penalties for academic misconduct more appropriately with the offences, to achieve the difficult balance between acknowledging the importance of academic integrity and penalising offences with measures which are appropriate but do not have disproportionate impact on the students involved |
| Faculty or Professional Services area responsible | Academic Registry |
| Will the policy/practice/activity/proposal impact on people? | Yes – an EIA is required. Proceed to section 2. |

1. **Identifying and mitigating risks of disadvantage and discrimination**

If not appropriately designed and delivered could any aspect of the policy/practice/activity/proposal result in a differential impact for people sharing a particular characteristic, and, if so, could this result in disadvantage, discrimination, harassment, victimsation or any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act (2010)[[1]](#footnote-1)? In answering these questions, please summarise the evidence you have considered and the issues you have identified.

*Note: 9 of the characteristics listed are protected in law under the Equality Act 2010. These are denoted below by (PC). The other characteristics are those which the University has identified should be considered as part of its work to achieve its published equality outcomes.*

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| **Characteristic** | **Is there potential for a differential impact between people who share a characteristic and those who do not? (YES/NO/UNKNOWN)** | **If yes, is there potential for that differential outcome to result in disadvantage/ discrimination? (YES/NO/UNKNOWN)** | **If disadvantage was identified, is this lawful, justifiable and proportionate[[2]](#footnote-2)?**  **(YES/NO/ UNKNOWN)** | **Summarise the reasoning behind your findings, and any evidence you have drawn upon in coming to that conclusion.**  **If the answer to any of the 3 questions is “unknown”, note what steps will be taken to investigate further.** |
| Age (PC) | no |  |  |  |
| Caring responsibilities | no |  |  |  |
| Disability (PC) | yes | yes | no | Care will need to be taken to ensure that students with dyslexia are supported in understanding the policy and in complying with its terms which required attention to detail e.g. referencing appropriately; receiving proofreading support |
| Gender identity | no |  |  |  |
| Gender Re‐assignment (PC) | no |  |  |  |
| Marriage and civil partnership (PC) | no |  |  |  |
| Mental health and wellbeing[[3]](#footnote-3) | yes | yes | no | Students experiencing illness or any sort can feel under more pressure to cheat when they are not coping as is demonstrated by experience in academic misconduct panels.  Attending a panel can be very stressful. |
| Pregnancy and Maternity (PC) | no |  |  |  |
| Race (including ethnicity, nationality & skin colour) (PC) | yes | yes | no | Students whose first language is not English may struggle to understand the policy and the UK approach to academic integrity may not be familiar to them. This is backed by experience of panels and feedback from INTO UoS. |
| Religion or belief (PC) | no |  |  |  |
| Sex (PC) | no |  |  |  |
| Sexual orientation (PC) | no |  |  |  |
| Socio-economic status | no |  |  |  |
| Experience of the care system (“care  experienced”) | no |  |  |  |

# Promotion of equality and good relations

Does this policy/practice/activity/proposal help the University fulfil its [statutory duties to promote equity and good relations](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/essential-guide-public-sector-equality-duty-scotland.pdf) between people who share a characteristic and those who do not?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Characteristic** | **YES/NO/ UNKNOWN** | **Summarise the reasoning behind your findings, and any evidence you have drawn upon in coming to that conclusion.**  **If the answer is “unknown”, note what steps will be taken to investigate further.** |
| Age (PC) | no |  |
| Caring responsibilities | no |  |
| Disability (PC) | no |  |
| Gender identity | no |  |
| Gender Re‐assignment (PC) | no |  |
| Marriage and civil partnership (PC) | no |  |
| Mental health and wellbeing[[4]](#footnote-4) | no |  |
| Pregnancy and Maternity (PC) | no |  |
| Race (including ethnicity, nationality and skin colour) (PC) | no |  |
| Religion or belief (PC) | no |  |
| Sex (PC) | no |  |
| Sexual orientation (PC) | no |  |
| Socio-economic status | no |  |
| Experience of the care system (“care experienced”) | no |  |

1. As a result of the thought and engagement process in steps 2 and 3, if you have identified (a) risks of disadvantage, discrimination, harassment or victimisation; or (b) opportunities to help better promote equity and good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who do not, summarise below **what steps need to be taken/adjustments need to be made to** the policy/practice/activity/proposal

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Characteristic** | **Steps/adjustments required to mitigate risks of disadvantage/discrimination or promote equity and good relations** |
| Age (PC) |  |
| Caring responsibilities |  |
| Disability (PC) | One of the purposes of the amendment is to simplify the language used in the policy to support understanding. We have system of adjustments for those students with disabilities to give them more time to complete work, proofreading support (in person and through using technology). We aim to have a system of EDI monitoring in handling academic misconduct cases to ensure this cohort is monitored and support can be identified if necessary. |
| Gender identity |  |
| Gender Re‐assignment (PC) |  |
| Marriage and civil partnership (PC) |  |
| Mental health and wellbeing[[5]](#footnote-5) | Our ARUAA system provides support to students with mental health or wellbeing issues as they complete their work to help avoid undue pressure resulting in cheating. We have also refined the policy to consider the student experience of panels to make them less intimidating, for example by avoiding group meetings for students involved in collusion cases. Penalty guidance does now emphasis that the Panel should consider mitigating circumstances in deciding a penalty, which could include the mental or physical state of the student. |
| Pregnancy and Maternity (PC) |  |
| Race (including ethnicity, nationality and skin colour) (PC) | One of the purposes of the amendment is to make the terminology used in the policy clearer for students to understand. This will be helpful to those whose first language is not English. A clear distinction is made in the policy between poor academic practice, which can be part of learning and academic misconduct. The former will no longer attract penalties or a misconduct record. This distinction will help support students coming from different cultural backgrounds who may inadvertently stray into poor academic practice and they will be supported to ensure they understand where they went wrong and how to improve under the new process. A module is under construction to explain to student what good academic practice is and this will be shared with all new students and can be used to support those who have been found to have used poor academic practice. Some guidance can be made available in a range of languages. |
| Religion or belief (PC) |  |
| Sex (PC) |  |
| Sexual orientation (PC) |  |
| Socio-economic status |  |
| Experience of the care system (“care experienced”) |  |

1. **Action Plan**

Summarise any actions required as a result of the EIA

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action/change required** | **Responsibility** | **Timescale** | **Resources required** | **Who else needs to be involved in approval of**  **actions/resources?** |
| Student Guides to be developed for key aspects of the policy | Dean TQE lead | Autumn 2021 | N/A | Co-operation of a range of colleagues |
| Introduction of academic integrity module | SLS | Autumn 2021 | Already budgeted | Dean TQE |
| Training for staff on implementing the policy | Academic Development | ongoing | In budget | Chief Examiners; SLS INTO UoS |

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| **Equality Impact Assessment completed by[[6]](#footnote-6)** | Professor Alison Green, Dean for Teaching Quality Enhancement  Iona Beveridge, Academic Registrar | Date:  16 July 2021 |

Once the EIA has been completed and signed off, please submit to [equality@stir.ac.uk](mailto:equality@stir.ac.uk)

Findings of the EIA including the action plan will be published, in line with the University’s statutory duties.

1. See appendix 2 of the full guidance on conducting an EIA <https://stir.app.box.com/file/676999536175> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Consider the definitions of discrimination in the Equality Act (2010) – refer to guidance. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Note people with mental health conditions are protected under the disability elements of the Equality Act 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Note people with mental health conditions are protected under the disability elements of the Equality Act 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Note people with mental health conditions are protected under the disability elements of the Equality Act 2010. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Note that an EIA should be carried out by at least two people responsible for the policy, activity, practice or proposal. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)