

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

**What:** An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool to help institutions ensure that their policies, practices and decisions are fair, meet the needs of staff, and don't inadvertently discriminate against any protected group.

**Why:** Scottish colleges, universities and the SFC are covered by the general and specific duties of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) set out in the Equality Act 2010<sup>1</sup>. The general PSED requires all institutions to have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
2. Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
3. Foster good relations between different groups

The specific duties require institutions to assess and review new and revised policies and practices against the general PSED, to use evidence, act on the results, and publish the EIA accessibly. EIAs help the college and university sectors meet their statutory obligations to advance equality.

**How:**

1. Identify a policy owner to analyse the new or revised policy, operational practice, funded project or process to determine whether it might have a differential impact on a particular group in terms of equality, diversity and human rights.
2. Complete the EIA form and send it to the institutional E&D policy lead for internal QA.
3. Seek approval of the EIA from the appropriate director or manager after the QA process is complete.
4. Return final, approved EIA to the E&D policy lead and (as appropriate) publish internally or on institutional website.
5. Review and update the policy as required.

<b>TITLE OF Activity</b>	SGSSS Saltire Emerging Researcher Programme
Policy Owner	Diane Gill
Directorate / School / Organisation	SGSSS
Date EIA Commenced	01/07/2021
Date EIA Completed	05/07/2021
Policy/practice signed off by Management	SGSSS Director
EIA Review date and frequency	Review Date: 1 <sup>st</sup> October 2021 and then every 6months
Date EIA Quality Assessed <sup>2</sup>	05/07/2021
Date EIA approved by Director / Manager	

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/external/equality-act-2010-psed-specific-duties-for-scotland.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> It is an expectation that the policy owner completes this form but it is good practice to have a draft version EIA considered by someone involved in equalities

EIA Publication Date	

## Equality Impact Assessment Form

### Stage 1: Summary

<b>Title of activity</b>	SGSSS-SFC Saltire Emerging Research Scheme for the Social Sciences Exchange Programme
<b>EIA Lead Colleague</b>	Diane Gill
<b>Who else is involved in the EIA?</b>	List of colleagues: Jamie Pearce, Kiril Sharapov, Mhairi Mackenzie, Jo Ferrie, Flaminia Ratieri, Caroline Wallace, Dorothy Miel, SGSSS Student reps
<b>Is this a new or revised policy?</b>	<b>New</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Revised</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>When will the policy be reviewed?</b>	<b>October 2021 prior to launching the programme</b>

### Stage 2: Scoping and evidence gathering

<b>Reason for introducing or revising the activity</b>	The overarching aim is to facilitate opportunities for doctoral students and ECRs in the social sciences to develop new research relationships with European research partners that create legacy materials and relationships for the wider community. As per our widening access commitments, we seek to minimise any barriers to participation in the scheme, especially for protected and under-represented groups.
<b>Intended outcome(s) and impact of the activity</b>	The intended outcomes of the scheme are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enabling research collaboration activity with European partners;</li> <li>• fostering the development of long-term relationships between Scottish and European social science researchers, leading towards the development of future joint research initiatives;</li> <li>• identifying common research priorities, promoting the sharing of research ideas (themes, data, new methodologies etc.) and sharing approaches to fostering inclusive research cultures between Scottish and European researchers;</li> <li>• building professional networks with European collaborators;</li> <li>• enabling the transfer of knowledge between Scottish and European partners, connecting researchers and expertise with the wider community;</li> <li>• establishing networks with non-academic collaborators (policy makers, businesses, third sector organisations) and engage with the wider population through public engagement activities;</li> <li>• developing future leadership skills to develop capacity for application to, for</li> </ul>

	example, the UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship programme.
<b>Evidence considered in developing this EIA.</b>	<p>Due consideration has been given to the Public Sector Equality Duty: Equality Act 2010 (PSED) and the impact on those with protected characteristics and/or who are underrepresented in the SGSSS community and may face additional challenges to participating in the scheme. We have drawn extensively from the the SGSSS widening access strategy and action plan (June 2021), which was created based on <a href="#">research</a> recently undertaken by the SGSSS Widening Access intern, which highlighted challenges faced by underrepresented groups in the postgraduate research (PGR) community. This research was done under the guidance of a short-life working group consisting of stakeholders from academia, the doctoral community, SGSSS external partners and funders (e.g. SDS and SFC) and colleagues from widening participation/EDI teams.</p> <p>The barriers this EIA seeks to address are split into two main areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers to a successful application: this may include: confidence, social capital and access to relevant networks for developing a proposal.</li> <li>• Barriers to participation: this may include: confidence, caring responsibilities, financial constraints, health or cultural constraints.</li> </ul>
<b>Who was consulted?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff groups – SGSSS Directorate and team, SGSSS Deans and Supervisory board members (representation drawn from 16 partner HEIs), University of Edinburgh Senior management and University of Edinburgh Senior HR Partner – Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion</li> <li>• Students – SGSSS student representatives</li> </ul>
<b>How did the consultation shape the activity?</b>	<p>Through consultation three key elements emerged to support EDI and minimise participation. There are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Programme Support: Various inputs to support the application process and ongoing placement support to tackle challenges likely to be faced by under-represented groups.</li> <li>2. Programme design: We know from our widening access research that students from certain backgrounds are less confident in establishing networks or developing their own proposal for a placement. In addition to the support mentioned above, we have also created two strands for competition, one for independent proposals and one applying to established projects. Furthermore, within the programme design, we will support flexible models of delivery such as a hybrid or completely virtual models, supporting those with commitments or barriers that may prevent prolonged overseas travel.</li> <li>3. Funding: In recognition that individual from certain groups require additional support to participate which has financial implications we seek to remove any potential barriers through a discretionary EDI fund.</li> </ol>

### Stage 3: Identifying outcomes and impact

<b>Consider the equality assessment within the context of the broader staff or student journey including recruitment, retention, progression, promotion, training etc.</b>	
<b>1. How does your activity contribute to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation? Please describe.</b>	<b>Positive</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Negative</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising awareness of institutional vision and values for equality and diversity as part of the learning on exchange and embedded in our assessment of applications.</li> <li>• Commitment to providing supportive, constructive feedback to all applicants to the scheme</li> <li>• Pre-departure training in cultural intelligence that includes understanding and challenging discriminatory behaviours</li> </ul>	<b>No effect</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>2. State how your activity advances equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not? Please describe.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SGSSS Widening Access report highlighted the challenges faced by first generation scholars who typically share a protected characteristic or are from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Specifically, this group was highlighted as having less confidence in approaching potential supervisors (and by extension potential European partners) and applying in a highly competitive landscape. The scheme will address this in a number of ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two strands of the scheme: one where applicants develop their own proposal and one where they apply to an existing partnership.</li> <li>• Pre-application webinar to support those applying (a model successfully deployed in our studentship competitions), in particular focussing on how to develop relationships with partners</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We will seek to minimise disadvantage for researchers with a disability and those with caring responsibilities (who are more likely to be female and/or older and/or from an underrepresented socio-economic group). The scheme will allow flexibility in design permitting those with barriers to a prolonged period overseas through a hybrid or virtual placements. Examples of how this could work will be outlined in the application guidance and pre-departure webinar.</li> <li>• We will support the needs of equality groups that are different from the needs of others e.g. those with a disability, through a dedicated EDI budget to support special requirements such as special transport requirements or specialised software</li> <li>• We will support those from under-represented groups through pre-departure training in cultural intelligence that includes understanding and challenging discriminatory behaviours. To support the above-mentioned, we will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the various placement options clear and provide transparent information to applicants through guidance and an application webinar</li> <li>• Include information on the EDI budget as part of the application form (it already exists within our standard expenses policy)</li> <li>• Collect equalities data from our applicants that allows us to monitor whether we are encouraging applications and whether those applicants are being successful (this is part of our wider strategy on monitoring from pre-entry PhD through to successful completion and future career progression).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>Positive</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Negative</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No effect</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>3. How does this policy foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not? Please describe.</b></p> <p>In addition to the support and training mentioned above, the scheme will facilitate cohort building and shared problem solving/peer support between participants through ongoing virtual coffee mornings, a private discussion board and a buddy system. There will also be an end of placement event where participants will be supported to reflect on their experience and share learning across the group. Finally, SGSSS will develop case studies for the website with the goal of showcasing different experiences. At least one of the case studies would be situated in the EDI section as part of showcasing the diversity of our population.</p>	<b>Positive</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Negative</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>No effect</b> <input type="checkbox"/>

## Stage 4: Analysis of impact/outcomes

In terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty, please indicate whether the impact of the policy or practice that this EIA covers is positive or negative. Justify your assessment using the data and evidence you have already gathered (via statistics, consultation, etc.)

**Describe the positive impact of the policy here:**

The activity will have a positive impact by removing/minimising barriers that may otherwise prevent those in the groups listed from participating. Currently we run a scheme that allows ESRC-funded students to visit an overseas institution. This activity will open the opportunity up to a much wider group, some of whom have precarious funding and limited means.

As we get examples from these groups participating, we will be able to showcase this in the EDI section of our website, thus having a further positive impact and encouraging further applications to the scheme.

Overall, the approach to this activity is aligned with four objectives from our broader Widening Access Strategy: democratising information, adapting a whole person approach to assessment, monitoring progress and celebrating and supporting the diversity of our PhD population.

**Please select which group(s) will be affected by the positive impact:**

<b>Age</b> (e.g. older people or younger people)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Race</b> (e.g. people from black or any minority ethnic groups)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender</b> (e.g. women or men)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Disability</b> (e.g. people with visible or non-visible disabilities, physical impairments or mental health conditions)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender Identity</b> (e.g. people who will change/have changed/are changing their gender from that assigned at birth)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religion or Belief</b> (e.g. belonging to a particular religion, holding a particular belief, or have no affiliation to any particular religion or belief)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sexual orientation</b> (e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Maternity and Pregnancy</b> (e.g. women who are pregnant/on maternity leave/breastfeeding)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Socio-economic groups</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Care Experience</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Human rights compliance</b> (e.g. civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Describe any negative impact of the activity here:**

<b>Potential impact:</b> Unable to offer enough financial support for those with caring responsibilities or other health/economic challenges.	<b>Mitigating response:</b> Availability of EDI fund Opportunities for online/ hybrid engagement. Operating within a national HEI partnership will allow opportunities to leverage shortfall monies from our partner
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	institutions.
<b>Potential impact:</b> Lack of accessibility to application webinar and subsequent training due to timing/other commitments	<b>Mitigating response:</b> Offer training online and record where possible. Create support in different formats – e.g. application webinar, recording and detailed guidance; pre-placement support offered as virtual coffee mornings, discussion boards and 1-1 buddy system.
<b>Please select which group(s) will be affected by the negative impact:</b>	
<b>Age</b> (e.g. older people or younger people)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Race</b> (e.g. people from black or any minority ethnic groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender</b> (e.g. women or men)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Disability</b> (e.g. people with visible or non-visible disabilities, physical impairments or mental health conditions)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender Identity</b> (e.g. people who will change/have changed/ are changing their gender from that assigned at birth)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religion or Belief</b> (e.g. belonging to a particular religion, holding a particular belief, or have no affiliation to any particular religion or belief)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sexual orientation</b> (e.g. lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Maternity and Pregnancy</b> (e.g. women who are pregnant/on maternity leave/breastfeeding)	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Socio-economic groups</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Care Experience</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Human rights compliance</b> (e.g. civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights)	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Stage 5: Identifying options and course of action

<b>Select a recommended course of action:</b>	
<b>Outcome 1:</b> Proceed – no potential for unlawful discrimination or adverse impact has been identified.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Outcome 2:</b> Proceed with adjustments to the policy to remove or mitigate potential negative impacts and/or to better advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Outcome 3:</b> Continue despite having identified some potential for adverse impact or missed opportunity to advance equality and human rights (justify this decision below). <b>Reason to continue:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Outcome 4:</b> Stop and reassess policy as actual or potential unlawful discrimination has been identified ( <i>this would normally be identified as the policy is developed or reviewed, prior to the EIA process</i> )	<input type="checkbox"/>

## GUIDANCE NOTES

### Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance

#### Purpose

This guidance is intended to help colleges and universities complete EIAs using a template based on the SFC Equality Impact Assessment process.

#### What is an EIA?

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool designed to help assess and evidence that policies, practices and decisions are fair, consistent, meet the needs of staff and students, and don't inadvertently discriminate against anyone.

An EIA process should be accessible, credible, efficient and meaningful in demonstrating that the institution is committed to the general and specific Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED).

#### Why carry out EIAs?

To demonstrate that policies and processes are developed and updated in a way that is fair, complies with legislation, and advances equality for all.

The EIA process helps anticipate potential positive and negative impacts associated with an institution's work. It enables us to set out how we will monitor impacts, and how we will avoid or mitigate potential negative impacts.

The legislative requirements met when carrying out an EIA are the [Public Sector Equality Duties](#) from the Equality Act 2010. [The Scotland Act \(1998\)](#) makes provisions for the protection of human rights within Scotland. Any subordinate legislation must not be incompatible with the [Human Rights Legislation](#). Considering socio-economic factors in an EIA process demonstrates a commitment to help deliver Scottish Government objectives for fairness, participation and tackling inequalities as set out in the [Programme for Government](#) and [Post-16 \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#). This is in addition to considering [protected characteristics](#) under the Equality Act 2010. There is a statutory duty to promote and safeguard the rights of [children and young people](#), in particular those with the poorest outcomes, including students with Care Experience; this should be taken into account when carrying out EIAs.

#### Delivering on the Public Sector Equality Duties

Under the general Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), all institutions are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it

This applies to how an institution acts as an employer; how it develops, evaluates and reviews policy; how it designs, delivers and evaluates services; and how it commissions and procures from others.

The PSED applies to eight of the nine protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

The PSED also applies to marriage and civil partnership, in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination in employment. To comply with the Scottish specific duties of the PSED, institutions are required to demonstrate how they have assessed the impact of policies and practices against the needs of the general duty – EIAs are the tool for this.

## When do you carry out an EIA?

When a new policy or procedure is being developed, or an existing policy is being updated, you should undertake an EIA. The EIA should be conducted at the beginning of the policy development process; evidence gathered should inform the policy, with clear links between the equality impact assessment and the policy itself. Ideally, EIAs should be published once finalised, so the process should be transparent and robust.





## How do you carry out an EIA?

### Stage 1: Background information

Clarify whether the policy is new or revised. For revised policies with an existing EIA, review the original impact assessment to build on previous findings.

Identify the Policy Owner and Lead Author of the EIA.

The Policy Owner and Lead Author should select a team of contributors who have a thorough understanding of the policy and its context to enable a proper EIA to be undertaken. (This might include those with the knowledge to suggest appropriate alternative policies in cases where negative impacts are identified by the EIA.)

The Equality and Diversity (E&D) policy lead supports the process if aspects are unclear, but undertaking the EIA is the responsibility of the relevant policy owner/team.

The process of developing an EIA might involve a single meeting with relevant people or an ongoing process over time, depending on the requirements and timescales associated with developing the new or revised policy.

### Stage 2: Scoping and evidence gathering

All EIAs should include a description of the policy and its aims, why it has been developed and the intended outcomes/impact. Some of the questions that might be asked:

- Who initiated the policy?
- Who has responsibility for implementation of the policy?
- What is the legal, policy and practice context of the proposal?
- How does it relate to other policy?
- Does it seek to fulfil any targets set, for example, by Scottish Government?
- What are the resource implications of the policy?
- Who do we need to gather information from?

Identifying evidence that might be needed and where to find it is a key part of the scoping stage. This could involve highlighting gaps in existing evidence or commissioning research to fill the gaps (depending on the scope, scale and severity of impacts).

The Lead Author/Policy Owner must evidence any potential impacts of the policy on equality, diversity and human rights. The types of evidence are qualitative, quantitative and case law. The qualitative and quantitative evidence can be internal and/or external. An example of external benchmarking and information that needs to be considered at this stage is the [Scottish Government Equality Toolkit](#) and [SFC's Learning for All publication](#), [Equality Challenge Unit's statistical reports Colleges in Scotland](#), [HESA](#).

Consultation ensures the voices of those (likely to be) affected by the policy are heard and taken into account as part of the EIA process.

### **Stage 3: Identifying outcomes and impact**

The EIA should clearly demonstrate in this section how the policy complies with the general Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED): [Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\) Quick Start Guidance](#)

If the policy is assessed to have no effect on the PSED and does not breach human rights the reason for this assessment must be clearly stated. In general, the expectation is that new and revised policy should aim to demonstrate a clear commitment to the three general duties of the PSED.

### **Stage 4: Impact Analysis**

The details of the positive impact on the groups identified must be described at this stage.

The negative impact/s must be mitigated to a reasonable, justifiable level. Any policy at risk of breaching human rights or showing no regard for the three main duties of the PSED should be abandoned or fully revised.

### **Stage 5: Identifying options and course of action**

There are 4 options available on completion of the EIA. A brief summary of which outcome applies should be included here, along with any other recommendations. The options are:

**Outcome 1:** Proceed – no potential for unlawful discrimination or adverse impact has been identified.

**Outcome 2:** Proceed with adjustments to the policy to remove or mitigate potential negative impacts and/or to better advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

**Outcome 3:** Continue despite having identified some potential for adverse impact or missed opportunity to advance equality and human rights (justify this decision).

**Outcome 4:** Stop and reassess policy as actual or potential unlawful discrimination has been identified.

Where the EIA process identifies actions to be taken to advance equality and/or mitigate negative effects of the policy, the Policy Owner is responsible for ensuring these actions are undertaken.