



### **Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).**

As part of the University's commitments in relation to the Equality Act 2010, we are legally bound to show "due regard" to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) when making decisions and setting policies. This duty focuses on the need to pay due regard to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups, and
- Foster good relations between different groups.

It is therefore essential that consideration is given to the 9 protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 in regards to any change, with positive and negative impact identified. Change in this context refers to, but is not limited to the following: strategy development; projects and plans; initiatives, policy and procedure creation or amendment; restructure. Evidence of consideration should be logged accordingly, to be referred to in response to any potential legal challenge, whereby the university would be expected to justify their actions and decisions.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process designed to ensure that policies, practices and initiatives are fair, meet the needs of our staff and students and that they do not unlawfully discriminate against any protected characteristic.

An EIA should form part of any decision-making process and not be seen as an add-on at the final stage. Assessing impact early avoids wasted time and resource, as changes and mitigations can be applied at the outset of the journey, using reliable data and/or engagement with key groups to inform and guide the change. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) are clear that engagement should be proportionate and relevant to the size of the organisation and the significance of decision.

It is imperative that the EIA is completed by the lead colleague responsible for the change in the university, to draw on their specialist knowledge and take ownership from the moment of conception, to the final decision and in regards to future monitoring. Further development will be required to record and measure original expectation, alongside possible further equality action.

The form on page 2 will enable you to reflect on the proposed change and assess the potential positive and negative impact from an equalities perspective on our university community.

<b>Title of EIA:</b>	Request for a Review of an Admissions Decision
<b>Lead colleague and contact details:</b>	Cathy Lambert, Academic Registrar

**Step 1:** Identify the proposed change e.g. strategy development; projects and plans; initiatives, policy and procedure creation or amendment; restructure

This Equality Impact Assessment covers the biannual review of the Request for a Review of an Admissions Decision. Specifically:

- a) An introduction has been added (section 1).
- b) The rationale section has been re-positioned as a purpose statement. The aim to 'ensure procedural parity between all applicants' has been amended to 'ensure that all concerns about admissions decisions and services are dealt with fairly, promptly and consistently' (section 2).
- c) A reference to the availability of the policy on the University-web-site has been added (para 3.1).
- d) It is recognised that an employer may wish to support an applicant for apprenticeship programmes (para 3.2).
- e) The grounds for a review have been simplified (section 4).
- f) A refusal to issue a Certificate of Acceptance for Study (CAS) has now been included (4.1.1).**
- g) The right of an applicant to raise concerns about service delivery has been added (4.1.3).
- h) Section 5.2 now states that to support timely investigations, a request for review should be sent within 10 working days of the date of a decisions and no later than 3 months after any concerns were first raised. This aligns with the accompanying form.
- i) Applicants with a disability or specific learning difficulties are invited to provide details of any adjustments to be considered during the review procedure (section 5.3).**
- j) The three-stage process is more detailed and defined (as informal, formal and review stages) to align with the University's student complaint policy. There is a greater emphasis on informal resolution (sections 6-8).
- k) Details on more expected timescales have been added (section 9).
- l) The policy has been changed to confirm that any requests for a review of admissions decision will *not* be stored as part of an application (section 12).
- m) A section has been added to confirm that the Policy and Procedure is approved by Academic Board, is published on the University's web-site and is reviewed biannually (section 13).
- n) Contact details have been simplified (section 14).
- o) A consistent paragraph numbering system has been applied throughout with some changes made to the ordering of content. For example, the section on Roles and Responsibilities appears as section 10 rather than section 3 in the current version.

p) Minor changes have been added to the accompanying form to align with the Policy and Procedure.

**Step 2: Please reference sources of data/information, consultation, or individuals/groups you have identified to explore equalities impact**

The review of the Request for a Review of an Admissions Decision was presented to Academic Strategy and Planning Committee on 14 February 2023 and to Academic Board on 9 March 2023. An Equalities Impact Assessment was not undertaken at the time.

Advice on the equalities impact assessment was sought from Lee McDermott in January 2024.

The policy has been informed by the following external guidelines and good practice:

- Admissions Policy and Procedures 2023, Equality Act
- 2010, UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part B: Assuring and enhancing academic quality, Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education
- The principles from the Schwartz review of higher education admissions (2004) and the work of Supporting Professionalism in Admissions along with the Universities UK Fair Admissions Review June 2019-November 2020

There had been no consultation with applicants as part of the Committees' consideration of this revised policy although student representatives are members of Academic Board. This policy was submitted to UCSU for review to seek additional student input prior to submitting this EIA.

UCSU have since provided feedback across all 3 admissions policies:

- Recognition of the range of 'types' of student (i.e. Apprentices) were noted and welcomed, with a particular reference to students with disabilities or other protected characteristics.
- Accessibility of the policies to applicants. In response, the policies on the web-site at [Policies \(cumbria.ac.uk\)](https://policies.cumbria.ac.uk) will be updated.
- Intersection with other policies once applicants recruited from external partners, for example through school direct and apprenticeships become registered students. In response, this is more a matter for our student complaints policies and the agreements that are reached on complaint handling when entering into partnerships.

	Acknowledge Potential Positive, Negative or Neutral Impact on Groups (please include relevant data if possible)				
		Action required	Person responsible	Target date	Progress to date
<b>Age</b> (consider older people, younger people, early-career researchers etc.)	Considered but no impact identified.				
<b>Disability</b> (including mental health and non-visible disability)	Positive impact	Applicants with a disability or specific learning difficulties are invited to provide details of any adjustments to be considered during the review procedure.	Admissions Manager	March 2023 (included in policy presented to Academic Board)	Implemented
<b>Gender reassignment</b> (including Trans and non-binary people, gender	Positive impact.	Gender neutral language already adopted throughout.  The opportunity to review the collection of preferred pronouns in the form will be explored.	Admissions Manager	March 2023 (included in policy presented to Academic Board)	Implemented

identity and gender expression)				January 2024	The opportunity to review the collection of preferred pronouns in the form will be explored.
<b>Marriage and civil partnership</b>	Considered but no impact identified.				
<b>Pregnancy and maternity</b> (including adoption)	Considered but no impact identified.				
<b>Race</b>	Considered but no impact identified.				
<b>Religion and belief</b> (including those without religion or belief)	Considered but no impact identified.				
<b>Sex</b>	Considered but no impact identified.				
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Considered but no impact identified.				
<b>Other International</b>	Positive impact	A refusal to issue a Certificate of Acceptance for Study (CAS) has now been included as a ground for review (3.1.1).	Admissions Manager	March 2023 (included in policy presented to	Implemented

				Academic Board)	
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<p><b>Step 4:</b> Next steps. Please consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is further monitoring/engagement required?</li> <li>- How will you measure mitigation in regards to potential negative impact?</li> <li>- How will you measure maximizing potential positive impact?</li> <li>- When will you review this EIA?</li> </ul>
<p>The policy was approved by Academic Board in March 2023 but the EIA has not been completed.</p> <p>The request for a Review of an Admissions Decision is subject to a biennial review. The next review is due in March 2025.</p> <p>The University regularly monitors the numbers and outcomes of any requests for an admissions decision to be reconsidered. This is reported to the University's Academic Board annually with a view to improving customer service. Monitoring reports will not contain any personally identifiable information.</p> <p>The opportunity to review the collection of preferred pronouns in the form will be explored.</p> <p>On completion of the EIA, the revised Policy will be published to applicants on the University's external <a href="#">admission policies web-site</a> and communicated to staff via the Global.</p> <p>There will be deeper consultation with the student body when this Policy is next reviewed.</p>

<b>Step 5:</b> Final review. Please confirm the lead colleague has reviewed this EIA and is satisfied it can be considered for final consultation/sign-off.			
Name:	Cathy Lambert	Date:	22/3/2024

**Step 6:** Institutional approval confirming that this EIA is satisfactory in terms of analysis, consultation and mitigation, acknowledging that future monitoring and review will be undertaken to assess actual impact.

Chair of Committee/Director of Institute/Head of Service:	EDIW Monitoring Group
Date:	4/4/24