



# **EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

## **Policy Statement and Guidance**

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Equality Impact Assessment Policy Statement and Guidance/ 13 August 2020/Review Date August 2023

## History of Changes

<b>Version</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>	<b>Authorised by</b>	<b>Date</b>
1.1	Addition of new EIA template at end of guidance	J Stalker	30 March 2017
1.2	Updates to policy statement and guidance to align with new template	J Stalker	2 May 2017
1.3	Update to procedure for publication and review	S Fraser	16 August 2017
1.4	Links updates	S Fraser	13 August 2020

## **Equality Impact Assessment Policy Statement**

West Lothian College is committed to ensuring that the needs of our staff and students are considered on an individual basis and that staff and students are given equitable opportunities to work, study and achieve success.

The Equality Impact Assessment process will promote equitable opportunities for all by ensuring that we consider our policies, procedures and practices with regard to their impact on individuals or groups of individuals who may have one, or more, protected characteristic.

The Equality Impact Assessment process will identify actions to be taken where a negative impact on an individual, or group of individuals, with one, or more, protected characteristic has been identified.

Staff responsible for originating policies, procedures and practices will use the Equality Impact Assessment guidance and template to carry out an Equality Impact Assessment. The outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment will be recorded on the Equality Impact Assessment template and uploaded to the College document management system.

Equality Impact Assessments will be reviewed in line with the review dates of policies and procedural documents

## **Equality Impact Assessment Guidance**

### **What is an equality impact assessment?**

An equality impact assessment (EIA) is a tool that helps West Lothian College (WLC) make sure our policies, procedures and practices are inclusive and do not discriminate against an individual, or group, with one, or more protected characteristics. This process ensures the College delivers excellent services by considering the diverse needs of students and staff.

By carrying out EIAs, WLC ensures that our services comply with the requirements of equality legislation.

Further web based information resources on the range of issues considered as part of an EIA, as well as background and procedural information, can be found in the [Useful Information](#) section.

### **What is the purpose of an EIA?**

EIAs offer an opportunity for WLC staff to think about the impact of our work on students and other members of staff. EIAs ensure that equality is placed at the centre of policy development and review, service delivery and decision making. EIAs should be used to take action that promotes equitable opportunities for all.

### **The EIA process focuses on:**

- initial screening
- scoping and defining
- information gathering
- making a judgement
- action planning and
- publication and review

### **EIAs can be used to:**

- increase participation with students and staff in policy, procedural and project development
- change the culture of public decision making by encouraging more transparency and
- proactively promote equality and put it at the centre of college decision making.

## **How are EIAs carried out?**

The EIA process should be used when developing or reviewing:

- strategy
- policy
- procedure
- function
- decision making
- project
- reviews
- services
- organisational change
- practices and activities

At the end of the process there will be a summary report published to let people know the outcome of the assessment. The actual process is completed using the Equality Impact Assessment Template attached at the end of the guidance.

## **When are EIAs carried out?**

In line with statutory requirements, WLC must conduct impact assessments as soon as new policies, practices, decisions etc are considered. It will be an integral part of the development process. Existing policies and procedures will have EIAs conducted on them as part of the rolling policy review process.

## **Who carries them out?**

The responsibility for conducting EIAs lies at the service level. Appropriate managers are responsible for conducting EIAs, when necessary. Frontline staff are important in the assessment process as they will be involved in implementing actions and changes that the assessment identifies as being necessary.

Equalities officers have an important role to ensure that their colleagues are properly trained in how to carry out EIAs, supporting staff to improve EIAs where needed and monitoring the quality of EIAs being produced.

When considering the equalities implications it is necessary to involve others who may offer challenge to views or some evidence of impact.

## **Why do we carry them out?**

The EIA process is legal requirement and good practice; it should be seen as a means to help WLC to improve its policies, strategies, procedures, practices

Equality Impact Assessment Policy Statement and Guidance v1.4 August 2020/Review Date August 2023

etc. EIAs also have an important part to play in helping guide an institution through organisational change and development. They should be conducted in such a way as to benefit the whole of the WLC community, and not just certain groups.

In practice this means meeting the general duty in relation to students and staff as follows:

- to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by law
- to advance equality of opportunity
- to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

### **Who are the target equality groups?**

The EIA focuses on certain target groups. These groups are known to experience more disadvantage than others. For instance they may be more likely to be adversely affected by, or omitted from the benefits of, a policy or service.

The groups cover certain ‘protected characteristics’ set out in the Equality Act 2010. The EIA focuses on these protected characteristics to try to find out whether or not people who share them are benefiting from a strategy, policy, service, project, decision etc.

The protected characteristics (last updated 9 June 2014) are:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership (not a protected characteristic for Further and Higher education)
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

These groups are not homogeneous and people within these groups have different and individual needs. Many will be members of several of the targeted groups. Their experience of unlawful discrimination can involve a variety of factors which should be considered as part of the EIA process.

### **After the Assessment**

Once an EIA has been conducted it is important to make certain that correct monitoring and review mechanisms are in place to ensure that predicted

Equality Impact Assessment Policy Statement and Guidance v1.4 August 2020/Review Date August 2023

outcomes and outputs are delivered. These should be factored into the initial EIA process and timelines for the review and development of the item agreed and published along with the policy, project, strategy, decision etc.

If circumstances change or unexpected situations develop that could impact upon a policy, project, strategy, etc the relevant items should have another EIA conducted upon them as necessary in light of the changed circumstances.

EIA should be attached to the document to which it refers and the document sent to the Executive Office to be collated and published on the College website. A copy should be kept by the author for their records.

### **Signing off an EIA**

It is important that the completed EIA is reviewed by a competent person who is not responsible for the policy, procedure or practice and who has not been involved in completing the EIA.

The EIA should be completed by the responsible manager or individual and should be signed off by another competent person.

### **Useful Information**

Information, guidance and advice is available on the internet to help you to understand the issues which are addressed through the EIA process and more generally as part of the Equalities agenda. The following are useful resources to consider for some of the questions posed by the EIA process. Further web based searching is encouraged to help expand and develop issues and ideas more fully.

### **Useful links**

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/scotland/> - Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/?publicationTypes=statistics&page=1> - Scottish Government Statistics

<https://www.webarchive.org.uk/wayback/archive/20180514212529/http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2002/06/14850/5330> - Guidance on how to ensure that equalities groups are included in consultation exercises.

## Equality Impact Assessment

Before carrying out an EIA, you should familiarise yourself with the College's EIA Policy Statement and Guidance, along with further information and resources which are available on iShare

EIA covers **strategies, policies, procedures, plans, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services**, but will be referred to hereinafter as 'policy/practice'.

<b>Policy/Practice (name or brief description):</b>	<b>Internal Verification Policy and Procedure and Guidelines</b>
<b>Strategy/Policy includes Equalities Statement of Inclusiveness? Yes/No</b>	<p><b>Text to be included in strategy/policy:</b></p> <p><b>Statement of Inclusiveness</b></p> <p>West Lothian College is an inclusive organisation and all policies, procedures, strategies, plans, provisions, criteria, functions, practices and activities, including decisions and the delivery of services are assessed to consider the impact on staff and students covered by the Equalities Act 2010 by the completion of an Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA). Protected characteristics are defined as age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership (in employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.</p> <p>Please see end of this document for EIA.</p>
<b>Reason for Equality Impact Assessment (choose from the following options):</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed new policy/practice</li> <li>• Proposed change to an existing policy/practice</li> <li>• Undertaking a review of an existing policy/practice</li> </ul>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other (please give detail):</li> </ul>	
<b>Person responsible for the policy area or practice:</b>	
Name:  Job title:	
<b>An Equality Impact Assessment must be carried out if the policy/practice:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• affects <b>operational</b> or <b>strategic functions</b> of the College</li> <li>• is relevant to the promotion of equality (in terms of the Public Sector Equality Duty 'needs' as set out in the Policy and Guidance)</li> </ul>	
Why the EIA is being carried out	
<b>Equality Groups</b>  Relevant to the Policy/Practice, identify which of the undernoted equality groups are impacted upon:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• race (including ethnicity and nationality)</li> <li>• religion or belief</li> <li>• sex</li> <li>• sexual orientation</li> <li>• gender reassignment</li> <li>• pregnancy and maternity</li> <li>• marriage or civil partnership</li> </ul>	

**Record your assessment against the following statements:**

Statement	Equality assessment
Detail the evidence of the needs of the identified equality groups and any gaps in information	
Will application of this policy/practice lead to discrimination (direct or indirect), harassment, victimisation, less favourable treatment for particular equality groups?	
If yes, how will the policy/practice be changed to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity	
State how this policy/practice will foster good relations:	
Will the policy/practice create any barriers for any other groups?	
If yes, how will the policy/practice be changed to contribute to advancing equality of opportunity	
Which equality groups or communities have been consulted in the development and review of this policy/practice?	

<b>Equality Impact Assessment Outcome</b>	
Select one of the four options below to indicate how the development/review of the policy/practice will be progressed and state the rationale for the decision. (Delete the options that do not apply):	
<p><b>Option 1:</b> No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice is/will be robust.</p>	

<p><b>Option 2:</b> Adjust the policy or practice – this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality and/or to foster good relations.</p> <p><b>Option 3:</b> Continue the policy or practice despite the potential for adverse impact, and which can be mitigated</p> <p><b>Option 4:</b> Stop the policy or practice as there are adverse effects cannot be prevented/mitigated against.</p>	
<b>Monitoring</b>	
<p>When will the policy/practice next be reviewed?</p>	
<b>Publication of EIA</b>	
<p>Can this EIA be published in full, now? Please state Yes or No</p> <p>If No – please specify when it may be published or indicate restrictions that apply:</p>	
<b>Sign-off</b>	
<p>EIA undertaken by</p> <p>Name: Date:</p> <p>Accepted by person responsible for the policy/practice named above:</p> <p>Name: Date:</p> <p>Approved by Equalities Committee</p> <p>Date:</p>	

Retain a copy of this form for your own records and attach a copy to the bottom of the document to which it refers. Send to [lbyrne@west-lothian.ac.uk](mailto:lbyrne@west-lothian.ac.uk) for review and publication.