

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)



What is Equality Impact Assessment?

- The thorough and systematic analysis of the potential or actual effects of any new or current policy to determine whether it has a differential impact on identifiable groups of people.
- It is a means of identifying effective practice and where there is a negative impact it provides an opportunity to identify service or policy improvements that will minimize or eliminate any potential detriment or better promote equality of opportunity and outcomes.
- An anticipatory process that allows institutions to predict possible barriers faced by equality target groups.

What do we mean by policy?

For EIA 'Policy' means policy, practice, provision or criterion.

Policy is set of procedures that influences and determines the way an institution carries out its business (eg staff development policy).

Practice is more informal than a policy and refers to a customary way of operation or behaviour, perhaps built up over a number of years. It can be identified through being routinely performed, locally (eg working hours).

Provision is an action which serves to provide for, or meet the requirements or particular needs of people (eg sports facilities).

Criterion is the basis by which comparisons or judgements are made, often against particular reference points (eg student hardship fund criteria).

The Legal Context

- Specific duty to assess the impact of policies to promote race, disability and gender equality.
- Duty to prevent discrimination on the basis of age, religion or belief and sexual orientation in employment, higher education and in provision of services.
- Legal requirement to publish the outcome of EIAs.
- However, it is important to recognise the importance and benefit of equality impact assessment not simply in relation to legal compliance, but also as a route to best practice and to delivering more effective, more appropriate and more inclusive policies.

An example ...

Equality Impact Assessment of a Student Complaints Procedure:

Information available on how the policy is working includes:

Equality monitoring data on the profile of complainants by race, gender and disability; the types of complaint raised (including complaints with some discrimination/equality element); the outcomes of the complaints; and information gathered through a student survey on race equality.

Analysis of the information reveals three key issues:

1. Male students are far more likely to complain than female students.
2. There are very few racially-related complaints but there are informal reports of discrimination or unfair treatment.
3. A significant number of minority ethnic students feel that their complaints of racial discrimination or unfair treatment were not handled sensitively.

Example cont ...

To respond to these findings, the University takes the following action:

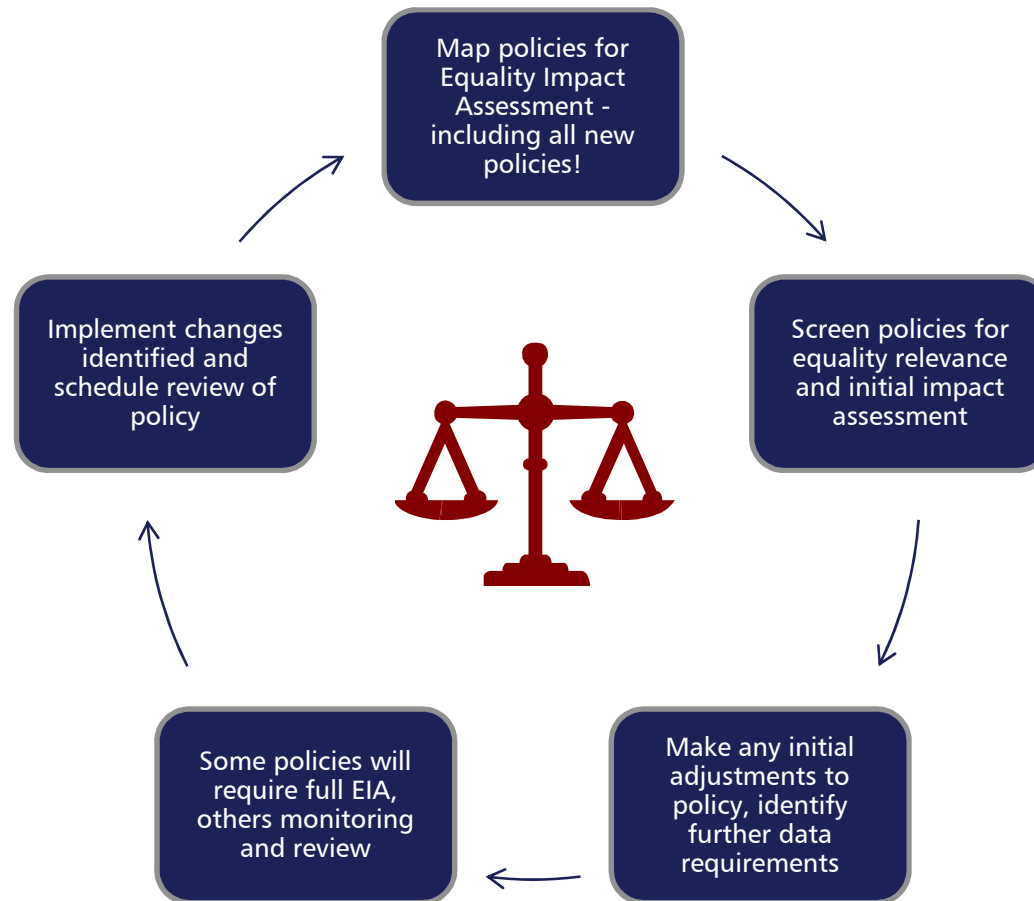
It works with the Equality & Human Rights Commission to try to understand why so few complaints are received from female students, and why apparent instances of racial discrimination or unfair treatment are not reported through the complaints procedure.

Training is organised for staff handling complaints, to develop their confidence and competence in dealing with sensitive issues.

The university asks the LGBT Student Society and the Disability Working Group for feedback on the complaints procedure.

The university reviews the information that students receive about the complaints procedure to ensure it is appropriate and makes information about the procedure more prominent on the student intranet.

Equality Impact Assessment Stages



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What is equality impact assessment?



Introduction

An EIA is a **systematic and thorough analysis** of a proposed or existing policy/strategy, which **establishes and records** whether the policy affects different groups of people in different ways.

The assessment involves **gathering and reviewing** evidence to help identify the effect of the policy and **taking action to eliminate any actual or potential discrimination** or disadvantage that is identified. Impact assessment also looks for opportunities to **promote equality**.

The focus of EIA is on whether the policy has or could have an **adverse impact on equality target**

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