

**Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Recording Form**

Please refer to the notes and examples in the EIA Guidelines to help complete this record.

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| Title of Activity/Proposal/Policy/Practice | Edinburgh College Complaints Handling Procedures | | EIA Team and Lead Member of Staff (names of all people involved in this EIA) | * Complaints Handling Coordinator * Quality Assurance Manager * Quality Assurance Team Leader * Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead * Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement * Curriculum Leader Quality | Date | 14/05/2024 |
| Type of Policy/Practice/ (tick box) | New |  |
| Existing | x |
| Revised |  |

**Step 1 – Plan your process**

Considering the aims of the policy/proposal and the people will be involved.

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| What are the aims and purposes of the activity/ decision/ new or revised policy or procedure?  See Note 1 | Our Complaints Handling Procedure reflects the Edinburgh College commitment to valuing complaints. It seeks to resolve customer dissatisfaction as close as possible to the point of service delivery and to conduct thorough, impartial and fair investigations of customer complaints, so that we can make evidence-based decisions regarding concerns raised and take appropriate action to improve and enhance our services. |
| Who will be affected?  See Note 2 | Students, Public, All Staff |
| Who will be consulted?  See Note 3 | Senior Management Team  Complaint Handling Team  Access and Inclusion Strategy Group  Edinburgh College Students Association  Users of the complaint process |

**Step 2 – Consider the Evidence**

What are the evidence we need and how we can gather them?

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| What evidence is available of how the policy/decision, etc. affects, or may affect, protected groups?  Evidence could be quantitative, qualitative or anecdotal.  Do we have enough evidence to judge what the impact may be?  See note 4 | * Record of complaints Spreadsheet – add in field for protected characteristics where known or identified. * SPSO Model Complaint Handling Procedure (MCHP) * Key Performance Indicators and monthly and annual complaint reports * Learning From Complaints * Internal audit/verification of complaint handling procedures * Customer complaint satisfaction survey * External audit findings * Website accessibility |

**Step 3 – Assessing the impact**

This involves:

* Considering relevant evidence relating to people who share a protected characteristic
* Assessing the impact of applying a decision of a new or revised policy or practice against the needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and each protected characteristic.

How will the policy / decision help the College to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty?

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| **Eliminating discrimination, harassment, and victimisation** | **Advancing equality-**   * **Removing disadvantage** * **Meeting different needs** * **Encouraging participation** | **Fostering good relations**   * **Tackling prejudice** * **Promoting understanding** |
| * Edinburgh College complaint handling procedures are based on SPSO’s Model Complaint Handling procedures for public sector bodies in Scotland. * The College is committed to a fair and transparent process. * All complaints are fairly investigated by the Complaint Investigator with guidance from the Complaints Handling Team. * Based on facts identified through investigation, the Complaints Handling Team write up a draft outcome letter which is agreed with the Complaint Investigator then reviewed and signed off by the Vice Principal. * Following completion of College procedures an escalation procedure is available for independent third-party review | * Complaint information is easily accessible on the College website, staff & student intranet. * Complaint Handling Team is well experienced, professional and committed to a fair process for all. * There are a range of ways in which complaints can be made, face to face, phone call, letter, e-mail, complaint form. * Documentation and guidance can be made available in different formats and languages where possible. | * We conduct a complaint survey to assess the satisfaction of the complaint’s procedure. * Staff roles and responsibilities are detailed and defined. These documents are publicly available. * Staff engage with a range of CPD opportunities to standardise and enhance current practices. * There is staff guidance to support positive engagement in the complaints handling process. * There are strong established professional relationships with SPSO colleagues and the College Complaint Handling Network. * We always seek to learn from complaints and take action to improve and enhance services for all. |

See Note 5

Key Questions to ask:

1. What potential positive/neutral/negative impacts can be identified?
2. What does evidence demonstrate about positive/neutral/negative impacts for different protected characteristic groups? E.g. statistics on participation, progression or outcomes, feedback or complaints
3. Does the policy/procedure/practice/decision take account of the needs of people with different protected characteristics? How is this demonstrated?
4. Does it affect some groups differently? Is this proportionate?

See Note 6

| Protected characteristic | Potential  Positive Impact Y/N | Details of Expected Positive Impact | Potential Negative Impact Y/N | Details of Expected Negative Impact |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Age | Y | * The College is committed to address any age-related prejudice, harassment or discrimination. * Child Friendly Process to ensure any child 18 and under has their right to make a complaint and feel fully supported during this process. * Complaints can be made by phone, face to face or e-mail. * Impartial and fair investigation to make evidence-based decisions. | Y | * Older members of the community may struggle with technology and this could be a barrier with engaging in the complaints process. * Young students may fear treatment that would disadvantage them in their course. * Young students may have a lack of trust in the system and may believe that complaining won’t make any difference. |
| Disability | Y | * The College is committed to address any disability-related prejudice, harassment or discrimination. * In the Complaint Form we ask if additional support is required to access any other services. * We advise in the Stage 2 outcome letter that they can seek independent support or advocacy to help further progress the complaint. * Complaints can be made by phone, face to face or e-mail * Impartial and fair investigation to make evidence-based decisions. | Y | * Some complainants may not want to disclose disabilities for fear of being disadvantaged. * Some individuals experiencing mental health difficulties may not fully understand the process and may have unrealistic expectations of outcomes. * Complaints of structural barriers or reasonable adjustments may not always be satisfactorily resolved due to financial constraints or awarding bodies’ criteria. |
| Gender reassignment | Y | * The College is committed to address any gender-related prejudice, harassment or discrimination. * Impartial and fair investigation to make evidence-based decisions. | Y | * Some individuals may experience: * Lack of trust * Fear of being treated differently * Fear of not being believed * Not feeling safe * Upset at being mis-gendered and incorrect use of pro-nouns |
| Marriage/civil partnership (relevant in employment law) | Y | * The College is committed to treat everyone fairly regardless of their marital status. * Impartial and fair investigation to make evidence-based decisions | Y | * Complainants may have separated parents with different views on the complaint resulting in the complainant being confused. |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | Y | * The College is committed to address any pregnancy/maternity-related prejudice, harassment or discrimination. * A complaint outcome can be extended to accommodate medical or other appointments. * Impartial and fair investigation to make evidence-based decisions. | Y | * Complainants may be reluctant to inform the College about their pregnancy fearing of judgement or impact on their course. * Speaking with complainants to gather evidence may be impacted by medical or other appointments. |
| Race | Y | * The College is committed to address any race-related prejudice, harassment or discrimination. * Complainant can request assistance with translation. * There are a range of ways in which complaints can be made, face to face, phone call, letter, e-mail, complaint form. * Impartial and fair investigation to make evidence-based decisions. | Y | * Some complainants may * fear being treated differently * have a lack of trust in the process * There may be a language barrier/translation issues in making a complaint or communication during the complaint investigation. |
| Religion or belief | Y | * The College is committed to address any faith-related prejudice, harassment or discrimination. * A complaint outcome can be extended to accommodate religious events/festivals. * Impartial and fair investigation to make evidence-based decisions. | Y | * Some complainants may:   + Fear of being treated differently   + No trust in complaints process * Complaint outcomes may be affected by the timing of major religious events and festivals when planning assessment schedules. |
| Sex | Y | * The College is committed to address any sex-related prejudice, harassment or discrimination. * Impartial and fair investigation to make evidence-based decisions. | Y | * Male/Female investigator may impact on complainant’s trust in complaints process. * Additional support may be required for complainants who experience sexual harassment. |
| Sexual orientation | Y | * The College is committed to address any prejudice, harassment or discrimination based on person’s sexual orientation. * Impartial and fair investigation to make evidence-based decisions. | Y | * Some complainants may: * Have no trust in complaints process * Fear of being treated differently |

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| Other  characteristic  See Note 7 | Potential  Positive Impact Y/N | Details of Expected Positive Impact | Potential Negative Impact Y/N | Details of Expected Negative Impact |
| Social deprivation | Y | * The College is committed to address detriments experienced by those who are socially deprived. * Challenge bursary/funding procedures/timelines. * There are a range of ways in which complaints can be made, face to face, phone call, letter, e-mail, complaint form. * Complainants can authorise a 3rd party to make a complaint on their behalf. * Impartial and fair investigation to make evidence-based decisions. | Y | * Financial circumstances may impact the ability of students to make a complaint with no access to IT equipment/phones a home. * No LDT as a low-level course. * Lack of support at home to help make a complaint. |
| Care Experienced people | Y | * The College is committed to address detriments experienced by those who are care experienced. * Complainants can authorise a 3rd party to make a complaint on their behalf. * Impartial and fair investigation to make evidence-based decisions. | Y | * Students may have experienced a disrupted educational journey and may find it hard to trust in the complaints process. |
| People with caring responsibilities | Y | * The College is committed to address detriments experienced by those who have caring responsibilities. * Complaint timelines can be extended. * Complainants can authorise a 3rd party to make a complaint on their behalf. * Impartial and fair investigation to make evidence-based decisions. | Y | * Students may be impacted by conflicting priorities and worries and concerns. * A lot of time off College to care for family member resulting in the complainant not having the time to make a complaint or be able to assist with the investigation. |
| Any other groups that need to be taken in consideration?  People with low literacy skills | Y | * The College is committed to address detriments experienced by those who have low literacy skills. * Complaints can be made by phone, face to face or e-mail * Complainants can authorise a 3rd party to make a complaint on their behalf. * Impartial and fair investigation to make evidence-based decisions. | Y | * Complainants may not fully understand written processes or procedures. * Complainants may not trust the complaints process. |

**Step 4 – Acting on the results of the assessment.**

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| What actions can be taken or amendments made to policy to reduce the negative impact?  See note 8 | * Continue to promote complaints as a positive learning process for the College. * Ensure the College Complaints process is accessible to everyone, and complainants understand the various ways they can make a complaint to the College. * Complainants are informed of the additional support they can access during the complaints process. * Provide staff with guidance and training to support staff to fully understand the complaints process and to conduct meetings/investigations with respect, impartiality and fairness. * Update Complaints webpage to ensure all information is accessible and easy to understand. * Offer MS Form version of Complaint form as a tool to assist individuals to make complaints. * Ensure Complaint information is available on Student Intranet. * Monitor the nature of Complaints by protected characteristics (where known or identified). |
| Is there a need to address any gaps in evidence? | * Protected characteristics to be logged on complaint spreadsheet |
| How will equality be advanced/ good relations be fostered? | * Complaint Surveys sent out with all complaint outcomes * Staff Guidance to support staff who are part of a complaint |
| Who has been involved in carrying out this assessment? | * Complaints Handling Coordinator * Quality Assurance Manager * Quality Assurance Team Leader * Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Lead * Assistant Principal Quality & Improvement * Curriculum Leader Quality |
| If you cannot fully review the impact now, what else must be done, by/with whom and why? | Impact has been fully reviewed. |

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| **Recommended decision:** (place an x against relevant outcome)  See note 9 | Outcome 1: Proceed – no potential identified for discrimination or adverse impact, and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken |  |
| Outcome 2: Proceed with adjustments to remove barriers identified or to better promote equality | **X** |
| Outcome 3: Continue despite having identified some potential for adverse impact or missed opportunity to promote equality |  |
| Outcome 4: Stop and rethink as actual or potential unlawful discrimination has been identified |  |
| Any other recommendations? | | |
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**Step 5: The monitoring and review stage**

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| **Plan actions to reduce negative impact, advance equality and monitor the impact of the policy, proposal or decision**   * Please indicate if there is any data which needs to be collected as part of action to be taken and how often it will be analysed. * Indicate how the person responsible will continue to involve relevant groups and communities in the implementation and monitoring of the policy, etc. * How will the impact of the policy/procedure/decision be monitored?   See Note 10 | | |
| **Action to be Taken:** | **Person Responsible:** | **Completion/Review Date:** |
| Promote Complaints as a positive learning process for the College. | * Complaints Handling Team * Communications and Marketing Team | September 2024 |
| Ensure the College Complaints process is accessible to everyone, and complainants understand the various ways they can make a complaint to the College. | * Complaints Handling Team * Communications and Marketing Team | September 2024 |
| Complainants are informed of the additional support they can access during the complaints process. | * Complaints Handling Team * Communications and Marketing Team | September 2024 |
| Provide staff with guidance and training to support staff to fully understand the complaints process and to conduct meetings/investigations with respect, impartiality and fairness. | * Complaints Handling Team * Organisational Development Team | December 2024 |
| Update Complaints webpage to ensure all information is accessible and easy to understand. | * Complaints Handling Team * Communications and Marketing Team * EDI Lead | October 2024 |
| Offer MS Form version of Complaint form as a tool to assist individuals to make complaints. | * Complaints Handling Team * Development Team | October 2024 |
| Ensure Complaint information is available on Student Intranet. | * Complaints Handling Team * Development Team * Edinburgh College Students Association | October 2024 |
| Protected characteristics data to be collected on complaint spreadsheet, reported on quarterly and yearly in SMT report from session 24/25. | * Complaints Handling Team * EDI Lead | October 2024 |
| **Signature of Lead: Complaints Handling Co-ordinator**  **Date: 15/05/2024** | | |

**Step 6 – Review and Publication**

See Note 11

Please send the completed EIA record to [equality@edinburghcollege.ac.uk](mailto:equality@edinburghcollege.ac.uk) for

* review by Quality and Improvement;
* publication in whole or in part on the College website.

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| **Date of Review** | **27/08/2024** |
| **Date of Publication** | **28/08/2024** |