GSA SUMMARY REPORT OF EQUALITY CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT OF EQUALITY IMPACT

Date of Assessment:	November 2013
School / Department:	IT
Lead member of staff:	Gordon McLoughlin
Location of impact assessment documentation (contact or web link):	g.mcloughlin@gsa.ac.uk
Area of decision making / Title of policy, procedure or relevant practice:	**IT strategy**
Please indicate if this is:	New: ✓ Existing/Reviewed: ☐ Revised/Updated: ☐

Summary of how equality, diversity and participation have been considered and due regard given to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):

The 'Developing IT Strategy Group' was created to assess current and future provision of technologies, and in doing so recognising and embedding equality considerations in the process of development. Primary focus was given to disability access, although the impact on other protected characteristics, such as age, was also considered.

Evidence used to make your assessment:

The assessment was comprised of three main categories: provision of IT hardware; provision of IT software; website accessibility.

Hardware
Evidence was gathered by means of group discussions held with departmental representatives from Human Resources and Marketing and Communications. Hardware provision was also assessed for availability and accessibility.

Software
In addition to the discussions already mentioned, evidence on machine setup provision was assessed, and survey data from 2012 gathered by the Learning Resources department was examined to look at awareness of software provision and accessibility software. The review suggested that awareness of this type of software could be higher among staff.

Web site accessibility
A review was conducted of the GSA website to assess adherence to WCAG 2.0, W3C and WAI standards.

Outline any positive or negative impacts you have identified:

Hardware
Positive impact can be identified through the provision of laptops for disabled students in order to meet need. However, the potential for negative impact due to high demand for this service was noted alongside the ongoing government reviews relating to Disabled Student Allowance funding. This may also negatively impact on International students with a disability.

Software

Positive impacts include a wide range of software, including literacy support and accessibility features, which seeks to address the needs of students with disabilities.

The Learning Resources department hold Assistive Technology awareness sessions for staff and students as part of their ongoing Twilight Class programme. The Learning Resources annual survey also includes questions about student and staff use of assistive software to improve awareness and obtain feedback.

However as, until now, the availability of hardware and software has not been co-ordinated, there is potential for negative impact due to inconsistency of approach to software provision and ensuring compatibility with hardware. For example, the current capital bid process can result in inconsistent approaches for purchase of new or updated software licenses.

There could potentially be negative impact due to difficulties associated with customising accessibility setting across multiple computers when students move between working environments.

Website accessibility

Negative impact was identified for users with vision-related disabilities due to inaccessible fonts, and no accessibility features built in. Possible negative impact also for users with disabilities relating to concentration, sequence processing or text decoding who might find the site difficult to navigate.

Summary of the actions you have taken or plan to take as a result:
(Please attach your action plan)

Hardware
- Align the assistive technology needs for students and staff to a more strategic approach for the provision and budgetary allocation of appropriate IT hardware.
- A more coordinated approach to the specification, procurement, deployment and inventory of IT hardware should be managed by the School's IT department.
- Hardware to support staff is currently met on a case-by-case basis. For example lightweight laptops for staff with mobility issues or larger monitors for staff with low vision.
- IT hardware and peripherals for staff with a disability requires review and update.

Software
- Develop a central software register and maintenance programme for all IT software in use within GSA. Ensure that an assistive software budget is created within the mainstream IT budget.
- Develop standard software images for deployment on GSA staff and student computers
- Technology support for staff with a disability requires review and update.

Website accessibility
- Accessibility tabs have been added, as have carousel controls
- Evaluate the need for the provision of text to speech and reading support software toolbars that could be built into the GSA website. For example, Recite or Browsealoud.
- Include Hearing Loop information on the web site
- Confirmation of adherence to WCAG 2.0 guidelines
- Review of web site to further assess accessibility of the web site to involve a range of users including students, staff and potential applicants.
- Recommend a more formal review of web site accessibility and usability

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Summary of what you anticipate will change as a result of your actions and where / when these

will be reported and reviewed:

Hardware
Positive impact will be achieved through:
- The technology needs of disabled students and staff at GSA will be met in a more cohesive, structured and timely manner and provide more effective support than through the current decentralised and capital expenditure procurement processes.
- Visibility of the age and specification of IT hardware in use will enable the IT department to ensure standard specifications and processes to better support our staff and students and ensure hardware compatibility with up to date software to ensure accessibility and usability.
- A small stock of alternative hardware to support staff with a disability will be created (e.g. large monitors, ergonomic mice, lightweight laptops)
- Staff will receive more effective support through appropriate assessment and timely provision of suitable hardware.

Software
Positive impact will be achieved through:
- Appropriate software and licensing arrangements will ensure students and staff are able to benefit from consistent and regularly maintained software. This will also insure good accessibility and usability of software.
- Enhances support of IT software and ensures assistive software and accessible software and operating features are included in standard configuration.
- Staff receive more effective support through appropriate assessment and timely provision of suitable software.

Website accessibility
Positive impact will be achieved through:
- Improve accessibility to the GSA website for potential students, staff and students. Promote good practice for supporting users with a disability or students whose first language is not English.
- Clarity on the accessibility standards in use.
- Opportunity for sustainable review and development process to include feedback and input from a range of user groups, including disabled users and people whose first language is not English.

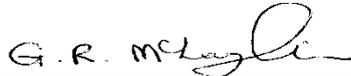**State how these changes will contribute to the delivery of GSA's equality outcomes:**

The strategy does not directly impact upon any of the specific outcomes, but may certainly contribute to equality outcome 1, whereby those with a hidden disability will feel more supported in their use of IT.

The outcome of your assessment:

No action – no potential adverse impact ☐

Amendments or changes to remove barriers / promote positive impact ✓

Proceed with awareness of adverse impact ☐

Sign-off, authorisation and publishing:

Review Lead

Name	Gordon McLoughlin
Position	Director of IT
Signature	*G. R. McLoughlin*
Date	May 2015

Executive Lead

Name	Craig Williamson
Position	Registrar
Signature	Craig Williamson
Date	May 2015

Equality Lead (Head of Student Support and Development)

Name	Jill Hammond
Signature	Jill Hammond
Date	May 2015