

GSA SUMMARY REPORT OF EQUALITY CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT OF EQUALITY IMPACT

Date of Assessment:	June 2017	
School or Executive Group Area:	Registrar and Secretary	
Department:	Jill Brown, Assistant Policy Officer, Policy and Governance	
Lead member of staff: e-mail:	Jill Brown, Assistant Policy Officer, ji.brown@gsa.ac.uk	
Area of decision making/title of policy, procedure, programme or relevant practice:	Programme and Course Closure Policies and Supporting Pro Formas	
Please indicate if this is:	New:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Existing/Reviewed:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>1. Summary of how equality, diversity and participation have been considered and due regard given to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):</p> <p>The Programme and Course Closure Policies and Pro Formas have been developed to ensure that, when the decision has been made to close a programme or course, academic standards are maintained throughout the closure process, and the needs of the student considered throughout.</p> <p>The Programme and Course Closure Policies and supporting documentation follow a process which ensures that all closure proposals satisfy Boards of Studies and Undergraduate and Postgraduate Committee (UPC), and that the assurance and review of academic quality and standards is in keeping with GSA expectations. The University of Glasgow may also wish to be assured of the process in place and how the student experience is managed. Consultation, which includes the views of student representatives, is conducted and analysed throughout the process, and is included in the documentation submitted to Academic Council.</p> <p>The Programme and Course Closure Policies and supporting pro formas are compatible with the QAA standards (UK Quality Code for Higher Education, in particular, Chapter B8: Programme Monitoring and Review) which integrate equality and diversity. The Quality Code, which GSA embraces, promotes an inclusive approach by embedding consideration of equality and diversity matters throughout. Additionally, both the Programme and Course Closure Policies state that the PSED and any differential impact of proposed closure on a protected characteristic group or groups must be considered, assessed and used to inform any decision relating to a programme or course closure.</p>		
<p>2. Evidence used to make your assessment:</p> <p><u>Quantitative</u></p> <p>The policies and documentation being considered are tools utilised for aiding the management and arrangements for programme and course closures, therefore quantitative data is not available or applicable in the context of conducting this EIA.</p>		

Qualitative

Systematic analysis of copies of the:

- Course Closure Policy and supporting pro forma;
- Programme Closure Policy and supporting pro forma.

The Programme and Course Closure Policies require that QAA standards are met when proposing a closure and that any differential impact on protected characteristic groups are taken into account in decision making; however, explicit confirmation of this is not currently requested in the supporting pro formas. Aligning with the QAA may not be enough to ensure that all issues have been considered and any negative impact mitigated before the decision to close a programme or course is made.

Anecdotal

When the MDES in Animation was closed in 2014, the Programme Closure Policy was followed and the relevant pro forma completed, confirming that all students had completed the programme – with the option to repeat, if required – upon its closure. It confirmed that Academic Services (now Policy and Governance and Academic Registry) were consulted during the process to ensure that the Quality Code and academic quality and standards were adhered to throughout. As well as being consulted about the closure of this programme, students were consulted regarding the new programme that was being developed. This demonstrates that the needs of students were taken into account and no differential impact on any protected characteristic group was evidenced. This is practice which should be systematically applied in the future.

The Closure Policies were developed in 2013 and have been utilised once for the closure of the programme identified above; therefore further anecdotal information and evidence of consultation is not available.

3. Outline any positive or negative impacts you have identified:

No evidence of negative impact has been identified however there is potential to promote positive impact in relation to the following:

- Significant consultation with staff and students is a requirement throughout the process, with potential for equality or diversity issues to be raised, addressed and shared with other areas in order to mitigate any potential for negative impact as a consequence of closure and better deliver the PSED across academic provision. While consultation with student cohorts is positive, this process may not be inclusive (some groups may be excluded or not make their needs known). The policies and pro forma should be revised to confirm that *all* students affected should be consulted.
- The current Pro Formas for both Programme and Course Closure, though they adhere to the QAA Quality Code, do not explicitly require the diversity and equality implications of a closure to be considered. An explicit requirement that due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) must be given would bring increased awareness of the differential impacts that a closure may have on all students regardless of protected characteristic.
- The Programme Closure Policy references that *Programme Leaders should assess the possible impact and take into account the diversity of protected characteristics and of prior educational experience*; however, there is not currently an explicit requirement for an EIA to be evidenced when completing a pro forma. If the policy was revised to include this it would

offer the opportunity to identify any adverse impact on persons with protected characteristics and for measures to be put in place to remedy or mitigate any identified effects, offering the opportunity for a positive impact for all students

- There is potential when closing a course or programme, that it may disadvantage some students, if elements of that programme or course are particularly accessible, relevant or engaged with the experience or representation of identity groups related to protected characteristics. This may arise in the context of course or programme closure and the requirement to conduct and report the outcomes of an EIA would ensure that this possibility and its mitigation is a consideration in decision making with regard to closure.

4. Actions you have taken or planned as a result of your findings:

Action	Equality Impact	Person responsible	Time frame
For both Programme Closure and Course Closure Policies, a statement should be added to ensure that the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) are being implemented and considered in the application of the process.	This will promote the mainstreaming of equality and diversity within the decision making process for course and programme closures.	Policy and Governance to update the Programme and Course Closure Policies.	June 2017 Complete, subject to approval.
For Programme Closure, a statement should be added to the policy to explicitly state that due regard to the PSED must be demonstrated and an Equality Impact Assessment undertaken when submitting a proposal for closure to Executive Group. A question should also be added to the Programme Closure pro forma to confirm that the EIA has been completed and its outcomes considered.	This will ensure that any impact on equality or diversity is identified before any key decisions are made and inform the decision making process.	Policy and Governance to update the Programme Closure Policy and pro forma to reflect this	June 2017 Complete, subject to approval
For Course Closure, a question should be added to the pro forma requiring confirmation that an EIA has been undertaken for the programme to which the course relates, and its outcomes considered in line with the requirements of PSED.	This will promote the mainstreaming of equality within the decision making process for course closures.	Policy and Governance to update the Course Closure Pro forma.	June 2017 Complete, subject to approval.
The Programme Amendments and Course Approval and Amendment Group (PACAAG) remit to be updated to reflect that course closure documentation is considered by this group.	Having this documentation scrutinised at PACAAG will inform academic standards and ensure that equality impact is considered.	Policy and Governance to update the PACAAG Remit	August 2017 Complete, subject to approval.
For both Programme and Course	This will assist in	Policy and	June 2017

closure, the policies and pro forma should be revised to confirm that <i>all</i> students affected should be consulted and that consultation should encompass the student perspective on the impact of a proposed closure from an equality and identity perspective.	ensuring the full student cohort is engaged with and identity/equality based concerns considered from the student perspective.	Governance to update both policies and pro formas.	Complete, subject to approval.
--	--	--	---------------------------------------

5. Where/when will progress and the outcomes of your actions be reported and reviewed:

The revised Programme and Course Closure Policies and Pro Formas will be considered at UPC and Academic Council in September 2017 before they are published on the GSA website. Following this, all Programme and Course Closure documentation will be reviewed and discussed at relevant GSA Committee Meetings, who will ensure that equality and diversity are continually assessed and considered. Additionally, the requirement to complete an EIA as part of a Programme Closure Proposal will ensure that decision making by the Executive Group in this regard is informed in relation to equality.

6. How will your actions and intended outcomes contribute to the delivery of GSA's equality outcomes:

The actions will contribute to GSA's Equality Outcomes (2017-21) ensuring that the process of course and programme closure explicitly engages with the diverse needs of students and that due regard is given to the PSED.

It is the intention that equality analysis be integrated as a core part of the decision making process, ensuring that any potential impact on equality will be considered before a decision is made, any negative impacts are mitigated, and good practice identified and shared.

The outcome of your assessment:

No action (no potential for negative or positive impact)

Action to remove barriers/mitigate negative impact

Action to promote positive impact

Sign-off, authorisation and publishing

Review Lead

Name	Jill Brown
Position	Assistant Policy Officer
Signature	Jill Brown
Date	15.08.2017

Executive Lead

Name	Craig Williamson
Position	Registrar and Secretary
Signature	Craig Williamson
Date	15.08.2017

Equality Lead (Head of Student Support and Development)

Signature	Jill Hammond
Date	10.08.2017