

GSA SUMMARY REPORT OF EQUALITY CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT OF EQUALITY IMPACT

Date of Assessment:	February 2021	
School of Executive Group Area:	Registrar and Secretary	
Department:	Governance	
Lead member of staff: Email:	Edna Docherty H.Docherty@gsa.ac.uk	
Area of decision making/title of policy, procedure, programme or relevant practice:	IT Usage Policy for the Board of Governors	
Please indicate if this is:	New:	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Existing/Reviewed:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

The **IT Usage Policy for the Board of Governors** was implemented in 2020 and aims to ensure the appropriate use of all of GSA's computing and network facilities. The policy applies to all members of GSA's Board of Governors (including the Chair, Independent Governors, Ex Officio Governors, Elected Staff and Student Governors, and Trade Union Governors) (hereinafter known as Governors) and was developed to enhance and aid data security and the personal management of workflows. Where Governors are members of GSA staff, they must also comply with GSA's [Staff Acceptable IT Use Policy](#) and where a policy conflict occurs, the stricter policy will be deemed to apply.

A review of this policy has been undertaken after its first year of operation to ensure that the policy remains fit for purpose and to identify any further matters that should usefully be addressed within the policy and the PSED was considered as an integral aspect of the policy review process. Alongside the review, an Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken, to ensure that it applies equally and fairly to all members of the Board of Governors and executive officers with due regard to the three needs of the Equality Act 2010, i.e.

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act:
2. Advance Equality of Opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it:
3. Foster Good Relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

2. Evidence used to make your assessment:

- A review of the current IT Usage Policy, implemented in 2020.
- In line with this policy and GSA's Staff and Student Acceptable IT Use Policies, and in order to protect the integrity of the GSA network facilities and IT systems, e-mail use may be monitored from time to time by way of automated software and/or human monitoring. Recent monitoring has revealed that out of a total of thirteen Independent Governors, six currently use their personalised GSA email address as the primary form of communication for Board-related business. Whilst it is recognised that the use of GSA email addresses might, unintentionally, complicate matters for some members, all members of the Board of Governors are encouraged to use their personalised GSA email address in line with the terms of this policy.
- As this is a relatively new policy, evidence will be examined as it is gathered, acting on individual feedback as it arises and collating usage data to enable us to monitor uptake of the facilities that have been made available to Board members as a result of this policy.

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

The IT Usage Policy for the Board of Governors is specific to a business perspective, aimed at enhancing and aiding data security and the personal management of workflows. Following review of this policy, the potential impact in respect of the three duties of the Equality Act 2010 has been identified as follows:

.1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act:

This policy does not appear to have any adverse impact on people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not. One of its general principles is that in all matters pertaining to their role as members of the Board, Governors are encouraged to use their unique personalised GSA email address in order to ensure the security and confidentiality of matters considered by them as Board members and comply with relevant University regulations and UK legislation related to the use of Information Systems and Data, as noted within the policy.

.2 Advance Equality of Opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it:

This policy does not appear to have any adverse impact on people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

Nevertheless, should there be potential for any negative impact on age, for example if an individual is unfamiliar with technology and requires assistance with basic ICT skills, the GSA IT User Guide provides advice and support on topics arising from the use of computers at GSA. A link to this resource is included under 2.2 of Section 2: General Principles of the revised policy.

Likewise, should there be potential for any negative impact on Disability, for example dyslexia or visual impairment, and the individual requires additional support in this regard, a full range of Assistive Technology applications is available which can be installed upon request. Again, this support is highlighted within the revised policy, under 2.2 of Section 2: General Principles.

One of the benefits of Governors having a GSA email address is that they have access to a number of e-learning modules currently available to all GSA staff, e.g. Equality and Diversity in the Workplace; Identifying and Responding to Student Mental Health Problems, Data Protection, Health and Safety, all of which are available on the staff intranet. This is in addition to any equality and diversity awareness training offered to Board members as part of their continuing professional development.

Board members are also provided with an electronic device, e.g. tablet, and access to internet and email facilities, to enable them to gain access to information that will assist them within their role.

The revised IT Usage Policy also includes a link to the GSA IT User Guide which provides advice and support on topics arising from the use of computers at GSA, and this is included under 2.2 of Section 2: General Principles. In turn, this User Guide includes a signpost to the full range of Assistive Technology applications that can be installed upon request by contacting the [Staff IT Service Desk](#).

Guidance for Conducting Virtual Meetings, a document produced by the Corporate Governance Office, has also been made available to all Board members and contains a link to easily accessible training information with regard to Zoom, GSA’s video-conferencing facility. It has been proposed that this guidance is signposted within the revised policy.

.3 Foster Good Relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

This policy has a neutral impact on people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

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

Action	Equality Impact	Person Responsible	Timeframe
<p>Monitoring and Reporting In line with this policy and GSA’s Staff and Student Acceptable IT Use Policies, and in order to protect the integrity of the GSA network facilities and IT systems, e-mail use may be monitored from time to time by way of automated software and/or human monitoring.</p>	<p>The proposed amendments to the policy have the potential to advance equality through clearer signposting of guidance and the provision of relevant support in relation to IT Usage and appropriate practice.</p>	<p>Assistant Secretary to the Board (and Senior Policy Officers)</p>	<p>Applied on an ongoing basis.</p>

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

The Assistant Secretary to the Board will continue to monitor the appropriate use of all of GSA's computing and network facilities in line with the terms of this policy, and will where appropriate report to the Audit and Risk Committee.

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

The implementation of appropriate monitoring and reporting with regard to email use, will provide data on the policy's effectiveness to aid data security and enhance the personal management of workflows.

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

Signed	Edna Docherty
Position	Senior Policy Officer
Date	February 2021

Executive Lead

Signed	Craig Williamson
Position	Registrar and Secretary
Date	24.02.2021

Equality Lead (Head of Student Support and Development)

Signed	<i>Julie Grant</i>
Position	Head of Student Support Services
Date	22.02.2021