

## GSA SUMMARY REPORT OF EQUALITY CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT OF EQUALITY IMPACT

<b>Date of Assessment:</b>	September 2021	
<b>School of Executive Group Area:</b>	Registrar and Secretary	
<b>Department:</b>	Academic Quality Office	
<b>Lead member of staff:</b> <b>Email:</b>	John Leabody, Policy Officer <a href="mailto:j.leabody@gsa.ac.uk">j.leabody@gsa.ac.uk</a>	
<b>Area of decision making/title of policy, procedure, programme or relevant practice:</b>	<b>Student-Facing Professional Services Review</b>	
<b>Please indicate if this is:</b>	<b>New:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Existing/Reviewed:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>1. Summary of how equality, diversity and participation have been considered and due regard given to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):</b>		
<p>The Student-Facing Professional Services Review is one of the main ways in which GSA assures itself of the quality and provision delivered by its student-facing professional services. The identified aims of the Review process align with the <i>Scottish Funding Council Guidance to Higher Education Institutions on Quality</i>, which provides that the review of student-facing professional services should “allow the institution to reflect on the contribution of support services to the ‘quality culture’ within the institution, the ways in which the services engage with students to monitor and improve the quality of services, and the ways in which the services promote high quality learning and continuous quality enhancement”.</p> <p>Consideration is given to the PSED, and the policy makes explicit that GSA demonstrates its commitment to diversity and the promotion of equality by ensuring that due regard is given to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 in the implementation and application of this policy.</p> <p>Consideration of equality and due regard to the PSED has been applied throughout the Student-Facing Professional Services Review Policy, notably in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The aims and general approach of the student-facing professional services review process;</li> <li>• Within the Self-Evaluation Report (SER), which each service submits as part of the review process; the SER provides staff in the area under review with an opportunity to reflect on its operation, the student experience, as well as successes and challenges.</li> </ul>		
<b>2. Evidence used to make your assessment:</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The UK Quality Code for Higher Education (March 2018), specifically Expectations for Equality, i.e.:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.</li> <li>➤ The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.</li> <li>➤ The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.</li> <li>➤ The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		

- The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.
- **Scottish Funding Council Guidance to Higher Education Institutions on Quality: August 2017-2022 (Section 1.37):**
  - The review of student-facing professional services should allow the institution to reflect on the contribution of support services to the 'quality culture' within the institution, the ways in which the services engage with students to monitor and improve the quality of services, and the ways in which the services promote high-quality learning and continuous quality enhancement.

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

The potential for **positive, neutral or negative impact** on the three duties of the Equality Act 2010 has been identified as follows:

#### **3.1 Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act:**

- The aim of the annual Student-Facing Professional Services Review as outlined in (1) above is to ensure that the institution reflects on the ways in which student-facing professional services engage with students to monitor and improve the quality of services, and the ways in which the services promote high-quality learning and continuous quality enhancement.
- The purpose of the Review is to assess how students are engaged with, and to assess and monitor the quality of the provision and of services. It is also used to evaluate the extent to which the provision meets the needs of students, thus supporting a culture in which student-facing professional services are given the opportunity to reflect on their operation, successes and challenges, and to identify and monitor any areas for enhancement.
- The Student-Facing Professional Services Review is undertaken via a standardised process with the active involvement of the professional service team concerned in order to identify opportunities for relevant personal development, staff training and development opportunities.
- Each team will be expected to evaluate their service with consideration given to the PSED.
- Mainstreaming equality and delivery of the PSED is assured through embedding equality consideration into each aspect of the process and will be reflected in EIAs and the Review process and paperwork.

Therefore, the Review process as noted above is likely to have a **positive impact** on the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.

#### **3.2 Advance Equality of Opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it:**

- The process relating to the Student-Facing Professional Service Review facilitates the identification of any training priorities or continuing professional development needs

among staff working in that area, including consideration of the need for additional training in matters of equality and diversity.

- The process relating to the Student-Facing Professional Service Review ensures that the institution is able to identify any training priorities or continuing professional development needs, including consideration of the need for additional training in matters of equality and diversity. The Review Process allows professional services to detail in their Self-Evaluation Reports any activities undertaken to address any differentials in the experience and outcomes for different student groups. Any such differentials should be reported and examined as part of the review process to advance equality of opportunity.

The processes relating to the Student-Facing Professional Services Review is likely to have a **positive impact** on the need to Advance Equality of Opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The process applies to all persons equally.

### **3.3 Foster Good Relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it:**

The process related to the Student-Facing Professional Services Review is likely to have a **positive impact** on the need to Foster Good Relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it. The Self-Evaluation Report, which forms the basis of the Review process, is a collaborative evaluation which includes input and reflection by staff (from the department(s) under review) and student users of the service. The process therefore applies to all persons equally. Student feedback is a vital part of the process, allowing opportunity for feedback which will result in action. The Review process considers fitness for purpose and requires detailed consideration of student feedback. Core to the process is evidence-based reflection on how provision removes disadvantage and how the student experience can be enhanced. The process supports and enables Heads of Student-Facing Professional Services to take deliberate steps to improve the provision and the student experience of their service, aligning with and contributing to the delivery of GSA strategic priorities including Equality Outcomes.

It is explicit that the Professional Service should take deliberate steps to obtain the student view of the provision being reviewed, and to consult them specifically on the Self-Evaluation Report. Specific guidance for students, outlining the process and its purpose is provided.

The Review Panel meets with groups of students, and the Professional Service is required to take steps to ensure that the students who attend the meetings include representatives from as many different sections of the student body as possible.

With due regard to the PSED, **no actual or potential negative impact** on people from any protected characteristic group has been identified in relation to the application or implementation of the process noted above.

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

(Please complete the action plan in this section)

<b>Action</b>	<b>Equality Impact</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
<b><i>Monitoring and Reporting</i></b>			
The process for the Review of Student-	Inform delivery of the three needs of the	Academic Registrar	12 months

<p>Facing Professional Service Review will be reviewed one year after implementation and thereafter on a six-yearly basis to reflect the frequency of reviews.</p>	<p>PSED through identification of issues or themes arising and their relevance to the PSED and other relevant legislation.</p>		
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**5. Where/when will progress and the outcomes of your actions be reported and reviewed:**

A review of the Student-Facing Professional Services Review Policy will be carried out one year following its implementation and thereafter review will take place on a six-yearly basis with active involvement of the member/s concerned. Where a Student-Facing Professional Services Review identifies professional development needs, the Review Lead will develop a plan to address those needs.

In the case of the Review process, where a review identifies appropriate revisions and improvements in practice and procedures, these will be documented, actioned, monitored, and measured.

The Academic Registrar will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the Student-Facing Professional Services Review process.

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

The process of Review is in itself positive, in that it supports and enables Heads of Professional Services, with support as appropriate from their Senior Management Teams, to take deliberate steps to improve services and provision, remove barriers and/or discrimination, and support the student experience, therefore fostering good relations. It should also encourage participation from specific protected characteristics. As such, it is unlikely to have an adverse impact on any particular group of students, or negative consequences for protected characteristic groups, and could have a positive impact if facilitated effectively. The process outlined above will ensure that GSA maintains the highest standards of quality assurance and enhancement in accordance with the ELIR.

The process for conducting a Student-Facing Professional Services Review will assist GSA to ensure that it is contributing to GSA’s Equality Outcomes and complying with other relevant legislation, specifically the PSED and Scottish Specific Duties.

Robust and thoughtful engagement with the review process will therefore contribute directly to the delivery of GSA’s equality outcomes:

EO1: Actively foster and support an organisational culture in which dignity and respect for self and others is understood and practiced, where confidence is encouraged and promoted, and where ignorance, prejudice and bias is challenged.

EO2: Continue to evaluate our physical and digital environment, aiming to optimise accessibility and inclusivity by acknowledging and providing for the needs of our students, staff and stakeholders.

EO4: Improve lifelong outcomes for students by identifying and supporting those groups facing persistent inequality throughout and beyond their student learning journey into positive destinations.

Actions could include:

At the briefing meeting prior to the Review Event, the Review Panel should be directed appropriately with regard to issues of equality.

EDI will be included as an area to report upon within the framework.

Topics for Exploration *pro forma* for panel members. Included in this is the direction to consider how equality and diversity is supported within the Service.

**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	John Leabody
Position	Policy Officer
Date	28 September 2021

**Executive Lead**

Signed	Janet Allison
Position	Academic Registrar
Date	28 September 2021

**Equality Lead (Head of Student Support and Development)**

Signed	Julie Grant
Position	Head of Student Support and Development and Equality Lead
Date	01/10/2021