



Ulster University Policy Screening Pro-Forma

Introduction

In line with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998, the University is required to ensure that its policies are reviewed to assess their likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations on specific groups of people (i.e. the Section 75 categories¹). This review is called policy screening. Screening ensures that equality of opportunity and good relations are central to policy decision-making and service provision (i.e. they are mainstreamed).

During policy screening, the impacts associated with a policy are assessed using relevant quantitative or qualitative data. These data provide evidence to inform the screening decision. The screening decision may be to carry out an equality impact assessment (i.e. 'screen in' the policy), or not to carry out an equality impact assessment (i.e. 'screen out' the policy). Furthermore, where policies are screened out, there may also be a decision to introduce measures to mitigate the likely impact of the policy, or to introduce an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

In the context of Section 75, the term 'policy' is very broadly defined. 'Policy' includes any strategy, policy (proposed/amended/existing) or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten, internal (relating to staff) or external (relating to those who are, or could be served by the University). This means that all of the University's planning decisions, service changes, corporate strategies, policy development, practices, guidelines, procedures and protocols, and corporate/strategic decisions etc, both written and unwritten, must be screened.

Policy screening is usually carried out by the policy decision-maker who has the authority to make changes to that policy, in conjunction with any other staff members who implement the policy, staff members from other relevant work areas and/or any key stakeholders. Policy Implementation Unit (formerly Equality and Diversity Services) staff assist in the screening process. It is more effective and efficient if screening takes place whilst the policy is in the early stages of development or policy review.

¹ The Section 75 categories are religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status, sexual orientation, sex, disability and dependants.



This policy screening pro-forma has been developed using the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland's (ECNI's) template to ensure that all policies are reviewed systematically and consistently. Part 1 of the pro-forma focuses on the scope of the policy (i.e. information about the policy), whilst Part 2 contains the screening questions. Part 3 contains the screening decision, and Part 4 contains the approval, authorisation and review date details.

Parts 1-3 of the pro-forma must be completed and attached to the final draft of the policy before each can be considered (*and approved*) by Senior Management Team.

Following this, and in line with the University's 'Procedures for developing, introducing and reviewing University of Ulster Policies', the policy owner must inform the Head of Governance and Legal Services that the policy has been approved. Once the Council of the University has been informed of the policy (either directly or through an appropriate Committee), the policy owner can then promulgate the policy and develop appropriate training or awareness raising material in relation to the policy.

The final approved pro-forma and policy will be made available to the general public during the University's policy screening consultation exercises and will be available on the University's web pages. Policy screening consultation exercises will take place twice a year, as appropriate.

Part 1

Information about the policy

Note: 'Policy' includes any strategy, policy (proposed/amended/existing) or practice and/or decision, whether written or unwritten.

Name of the policy

Ulster University Student Support Fund Policy And Procedures

Is this an existing, revised or a new policy

Revised policy

What is it trying to achieve? (Intended aims/outcomes)

The aim of the Policy is to ensure a fair and transparent assessment process for students applying to the Support Fund. The aim of the Support Fund is to provide financial help to students whose access to Higher Education might be inhibited by financial considerations, or who for whatever reason, including physical or other disability, face financial difficulty in meeting their living costs.

Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?

If so, explain how.

Disabled students, mature students (over 25 years), students with dependents, students from care and homeless students all receive priority within this policy.

Who initiated or wrote the policy?

Student Health and Wellbeing Advisory Service Manager / Student Finance Coordinator

Who owns and who implements the policy?

PVC (Academic Planning, Partnerships and International Affairs)
Implemented by Student Support under governance of the Student Support Funding Sub Committee

Part 1

Implementation factors

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision? (Please select one answer)

Yes

No

If yes, are they

Yes Financial (Availability of funds from DEL, monies available in fund when applications are made.)

Yes Legislative (Definition of a Home student, changes in legislation.)

Yes Other (The Policy complies with the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) (NI) Support Fund Guidance.)

Main stakeholders affected

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

Staff

Students

Other service users (e.g. prospective students, conference delegates)

Other public sector organisations

Voluntary/community/trade unions

Other, please specify _____

Part 1

Other policies with a bearing on this policy

Policy	Policy Owner
DEL Guidance 2014-2015	DEL
Widening Access & Participation Policy	PVC (Learning Teaching & Student Experience)
Data Protection Policy	Office of the University Secretary
Tuition Fees Schedule	Director of Finance

Available evidence

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? (Please specify details for each of the Section 75 categories)

Note: evidence can come from many sources. Examples include the University's management information systems, internal or external research, surveys or consultation exercises. Anecdotal evidence such as feedback from service users may also be used.

Section 75 category	Details of evidence/information
Religious belief	The University's student Equal Opportunities data (2013/14) were reviewed. Religious belief was not found to impact on or have any relevance to this policy as the policy is applicable to all students.
Political opinion	The University does not collect data on Political Opinion. Political opinion was not found to impact on or have any relevance to this policy. The policy is applicable to all students.
Racial group	The University's student Equal Opportunities data (2013/14) were reviewed. Racial group was not found to impact on or have any relevance to this policy as the policy is applicable to all students
Age	Census data indicates that the age group 18-25 years is shrinking which leads to universities having to work more closely with adult returners, particularly in areas of low participation and those already in the workplace (Census 2011).

Part 1

	<p>Ulster's Student Support Fund DEL annual monitoring return indicates that within the 2013/14 undergraduate population, 34% of students successfully funded were aged 18-20 years, 44% were aged 21-24 years and 22% were aged 25+ years. In the postgraduate population successful applicants, 0% were 18-20 years, 61% were 21-24 years and 39% were 25+ years.</p>
Marital status	<p>The University's student Equal Opportunities data (2013/14) were reviewed. Marital status was not found to impact on or have any relevance to this policy as the policy is applicable to all students</p>
Sexual orientation	<p>The University does not collect data on the sexual orientation of students. Sexual orientation was not found to impact on or have any relevance to this policy as the policy is applicable to all students</p>
Men and women generally	<p>The University's student Equal Opportunities data (2013/14) indicated that 56.72% of registered students were female and 43.28% were male. Anecdotal evidence would suggest more women than men are carers for children. Therefore it would be expected that women are more likely to apply for and benefit from the Support Fund.</p>
Disability	<p>The University's student Equal Opportunities data (2013/14) indicated that 8.29% of students registered with the University had disclosed a disability. .</p> <p>This information was cross-referenced with the Student Support Fund annual monitoring return. This indicates that 10% of all successful applicants in 2013/14 were disabled and 12% of successful post-graduate applicants in 2013/14 were disabled.</p>
Dependants	<p>The University's student Equal Opportunities data (2013/14) indicated that 16.2% of students have dependents. 67.9% of these were female. 69.5% of undergraduate students with dependants were female and 65.9% of postgraduate students with dependants were female.</p> <p>The University's Student Support Fund DEL annual monitoring return indicates that in 2013/14, 13% of successful undergraduate applicants had dependents, whereas, 8 % of successful postgraduate applicants had dependents.</p>

Part 1

Needs, Experiences and Priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision? (Please specify details for each of the Section 75 categories)

Section 75 category	Details of needs/experiences/priorities
Religious belief	None Identified
Political opinion	None Identified
Racial group	None Identified
Age	Student Support data and anecdotal evidence would suggest that older students 21+ years are more likely to need funding as they are more likely to have dependents and additional living expenses
Marital status	None Identified
Sexual orientation	None Identified
Men and women generally	Anecdotal evidence suggests more women students are likely to be lone parents or have caring responsibilities than men. Therefore women with caring responsibilities are more likely to benefit from this policy.
Disability	Anecdotal evidence would suggest that disabled students are more likely to require additional financial support whilst they are at University. Therefore students with a disability are more likely to benefit from this policy.
Dependants	Anecdotal evidence suggests more women students are more likely to be lone parents or have caring responsibilities. Therefore they are more likely to benefit from this policy.

Part 1

Consultation

Consultation with relevant groups, organisations or individuals about the policy can provide useful information about issues/opportunities which are specifically related to them (i.e. evidence to inform the policy). Please indicate whether you carried out (or intend to carry out²) any consultation exercises prior to equality screening?

No. This policy will be considered by the internal committee structure prior to adoption.

² Please contact equality staff in the Policy Implementation Unit (PIU) if you intend to carry out a consultation exercise prior to equality screening your policy. The PIU will assist you to align some of the consultation questions with the screening pro-forma, so that you receive more meaningful responses.

Part 2

Screening

Introduction

The answers to the following screening questions will assist the University in making a decision whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment on the policy. The following information is provided to help you to identify and comment on the level of likely impact of the policy in questions 1-4:

Select 'major' impact if:

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there are insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

Select 'minor' impact if:

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations;
- e) Differential impact observed and opportunities exist to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

Part 2

Select 'none' if:

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Taking into account the evidence presented in Part 1, please complete the screening questions (Questions 1-4).

Part 2

Screening questions

1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? (Please provide details)		
Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? (minor/major/none)
Religious belief	The policy is unlikely to have any impact on equality of opportunity for this category	none
Political opinion	The policy is unlikely to have any impact on equality of opportunity for this category	none
Racial group	The policy is unlikely to have any impact on equality of opportunity for this category	none
Age	The policy is likely to have a positive impact on equality of opportunity for older students	minor
Marital status	The policy is unlikely to have any impact on equality of opportunity for this category	none
Sexual orientation	The policy is unlikely to have any impact on equality of opportunity for this category	none
Men and women generally	The policy is likely to have a positive impact on equality of opportunity for women with caring responsibilities	minor
Disability	The policy is likely to have a positive impact on equality of opportunity for students with disabilities	minor
Dependants	The policy is likely to have a positive impact on equality of opportunity for students with caring responsibilities	minor

Part 2

2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?		
Section 75 category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief		No. The policy applies to all students.
Political opinion		No. The policy applies to all students.
Racial group		No. The policy applies to all students.
Age		No. The policy applies to all students. The policy currently prioritises funding for mature students
Marital status		No. The policy applies to all students.
Sexual orientation		No. The policy applies to all students.
Men and women generally		No. The policy applies to all students. The policy currently prioritises funding for students with dependents
Disability		No. The policy applies to all students. The policy currently prioritises funding for students with disabilities
Dependants		No. The policy applies to all students. The policy currently prioritises funding for students with dependents

Part 2

3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? (Please provide details)		
Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact (minor/major/none)
Religious belief	The policy is unlikely to impact on good relations between people of different religious beliefs	None
Political opinion	The policy is unlikely to impact on good relations between people of different political opinion	None
Racial group	The policy is unlikely to impact on good relations between people of different racial groups	None

4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?		
Good relations category	If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
Religious belief		No, the policy has no relevance to religious belief
Political opinion		No, the policy has no relevance to political opinion
Racial group		No, the policy has no relevance to racial group

Part 2

Additional considerations

Multiple identity

<p>5 Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, please provide details of any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities? (<i>For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people</i>). Please include details of any data which you have used to determine/identify this impact</p>	
<p>Section 75 categories (please specify)</p>	<p>Details of policy impact and details of data which describes the policy impact</p>
<p>Age, Sex, Dependants, Disabilities</p>	<p>The policy currently prioritises funding for mature students, students with dependants (who are more likely to be women), and students with disabilities. A student may fall into more than one of these priority categories.</p>

Disability Duties

<p>6. Does the policy provide an opportunity to encourage disabled people to participate in University life?</p>	
<p>If Yes, provide details</p>	<p>If No, provide reasons</p>
<p>Yes, the policy prioritises disabled students to receive financial assistance particularly where DSA is unable to meet particular costs</p>	

Part 2

7. Does the policy provide an opportunity to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?	
If Yes, provide details	If No, provide reasons
	No, it is technical in nature

Part 3

Screening decision

Based on the evidence considered and outlined in Part 1 and the responses to the screening questions (Part 2), please indicate the screening decision for this policy:

Note: The University should take particular care not to screen out policies that have a procurement aspect if there is potential to promote equality of opportunity through the procurement of services.

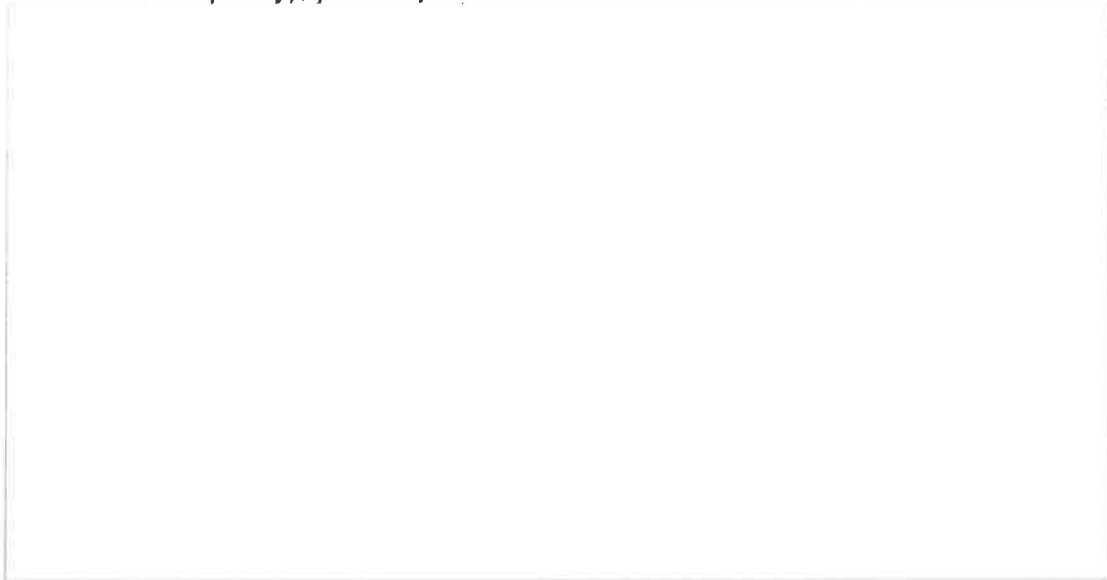
Screen In the policy (subject the policy to an Equality Impact Assessment)
i.e. the likely impact is 'major' in respect of one, or more of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories

Screen out the policy without mitigation or an alternative policy proposed to be adopted (no Equality Impact Assessment)
i.e. the likely impact is 'none' in respect of all of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories

Screen out the policy and **mitigate the impacts on equality by amending or changing the policy, or by developing an alternative policy or action** (no Equality Impact Assessment)
i.e. the likely impact is 'minor' in respect of one, or more of the equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories

Part 3

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment (i.e. 'screen in' the policy), please provide details of the reasons.



If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment (i.e. 'screen out' the policy), please provide details of the reasons.



Part 3

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment (i.e. 'screen out' the policy) and mitigate the impacts on equality by amending or changing the policy, or by developing an alternative policy or action, please provide reasons to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy:

The likely impact is "**minor**" in respect of one or more of the equality of opportunity and or good relations categories. The policy is likely to have a **positive impact** on equality for these categories. In line with University policy, the Student Support Fund Policy will be reviewed two years after it has been implemented and, if necessary amended.

Part 3

Timetabling and prioritising

If the policy has been 'screened in' for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	
Social need	
Effect on people's daily lives	
Relevance to the University's functions	

Note: The Total Rating Score will be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the University in timetabling. Details of the University's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable will be included in its quarterly Screening Reports.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

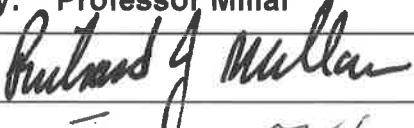


Yes

No

If yes, please provide details:

Part 4

Approval and authorisation

	Position/Job Title	Date
Screened by: Professor Millar	PVC APPIA	18.5.15
		
Approved by:  	University Secretary	16/7/15

Note: Following approval by Senior Management Team/Senate, the policy owner must inform the University Secretary that the policy has been approved. Once the Council of the University has been informed of the policy (either directly or through an appropriate Committee), the policy owner can then promulgate the policy and develop appropriate training or awareness raising material in relation to the policy.

A copy of the screening pro-forma will be made available on the University's website and be made available on request.

Review

Note: Policies must be reviewed at least every two years, but sooner if changes in legislation or other variables require review.

This policy is due for review (in terms of its impact on equality of opportunity and good relations) by the policy owner on:

18.5.2017
(Insert date)