

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of Policy: Student Admissions

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### Step 1: Identify aims of the policy

What is the **purpose** of the policy?

Student Admissions is a cross-college function. There are several strands, including other policies, which contribute to Student Admissions (see attached mind map). The other policies are:

- fee waiver/tuition policy
- guidance
- interview guidelines

Who is affected or intended to **benefit** from this policy and in what way?

Potential applicants; applicants and existing students who progress onto further study.  
Staff involved in interviews

### Step 2: Consider the evidence

What data or evidence do you intend to use for the purposes of the assessment?

General College data can be summarised as follows:

#### **Ethnicity:**

The overall ethnic profile for the Forth Valley area is 1.13% (Census 2001)

The overall ethnic profile of FVC is 4.49% (07/08)

The baseline figure for students from non-white ethnic groups for Scotland was 4.7% in 2005/06

#### **Disability:**

The number of students at FVC declaring a disability is 7.51% (07/08)

The baseline figure for students declaring a disability for Scotland was 14% in 2005/06

#### **Gender:**

The gender split in FVC is 56% female, 43% male (07/08)

In 2005/06 the baseline figure for Scotland was 57% female, 43% male

Analysis of the data relevant to admissions is as follows:

#### **No offer**

2006:

Applicants with no offer after interview	343
Number of applicants with a disability	72
Percentage of total	21%

2007:

Applicants with no offer after interview	239
Number of applicants with a disability	62
Percentage of total	26%

### **Unconditional Offers**

The total number of unconditional offers (following interview) in 2007 was 2742. The number of offers to applicants with a disability was 442. Thus, 16% of the total number of applicants given an unconditional offer had a disability.

The most significant aspect to emerge from the analysis of the data, is a lack of transparency around the reasons given for no offer. It is impossible to say why the reasons have been given or indeed, what the reasons mean. For example, many of the reasons are vague, e.g. “does not meet conditions”, “you did not meet the necessary interview criteria”.

There should be clearer definitions for the reasons for no offers.

The interview criteria should be explained.

Some criteria, e.g. did not attend information evening – is this clearly communicated to applicants that attending an information evening is a condition of the interview/offer process?

In some cases, it is noted that the reason for not offering a place is because the applicant did not turn up. Reasonable adjustments for interviews? Are applicants asked to let us know if they may need any.

Interviewing is an area in which unconscious discrimination may occur, based on human nature, being biased towards someone. Need to ensure that custom and practice around interviews/making offers is as transparent as possible and correct procedures are in place and always followed.

In terms of the data, there does not appear to be an adverse impact against any applicants in terms of their ethnicity in this process.

Generally, there does not appear to be an adverse impact on those with a disability.

### **Step 3: Assess likely impact**

What does the information you have tell you about how this policy might **impact positively** on equalities groups?

No offer data v unconditional

Although, no adverse impact on ethnicity and disability-from evidence, difficult to draw from conclusions

Policies in place to support the student applications process

Interview guidance is available.

What does the information you have tell you about how this policy might **impact negatively** on equalities groups?

Lack of transparency around “no offer” reasons

- more detail required/clearer definitions

Lack of clarity around interview criteria – better information to applicants

Lack of evidence of reasonable adjustments e.g. alternative date

Interview process is open to unconscious discrimination

Are there **other factors** that might help to explain the adverse impact?

No mandatory staff training currently for staff who interview

Could the policy be amended to **promote equality of opportunity** or meet the positive duties?

Suggest policy statement on student admissions is created which outlines roles and responsibilities as well as a positive statement welcoming applications from all

#### **Step 4: Consider alternatives**

What changes to the policy could be introduced to **reduce the adverse or negative impacts** identified in step 3?

Mandatory interview training for staff

Course information sheets produced by departments

Constructive feedback at interviews – use a checklist

Detailed feedback after interview to student records

Analyse withdrawal data to determine whether there is a link to student admissions

What changes could you introduce to **promote equality of opportunity**?

Marketing/advertising – targeting specific groups

### **Step 5: Consultation**

What consultation have you carried out?

An interim summary report was sent out to external agencies for comment, the report was also highlighted to staff via a news item and all staff email. A focus group of students from the student union was also consulted.

Comment from the student union was that the interview process requires to be longer and more robust.

How successful has this been, and what can you do in the future to improve this process if necessary?

Stakeholders were given the opportunity to comment. In the future it is hoped we will use an internal group of stakeholders regularly.

### **Step 6: Taking Action**

What action will you take?

- a policy on Student Admissions requires to be developed
- teaching staff who interview need to be trained regarding disclosure and additional support needs
- guidelines for interview questions need to be developed
- course information sheets need to be developed
- fee waiver policy requires to be developed

Who will take that action?

Student Records, marketing and curriculum and quality teams

When will that action be taken?

Jan 2010

**Step 7: Make monitoring arrangements**

How will the policy be monitored?

The policy will be monitored via the internal review procedures for policies and by the central EQIA group.

**Step 8: Publish assessment report**

What are the arrangements for publishing?

The report is available at [forthvalley.ac.uk](http://forthvalley.ac.uk)