

Terms of Reference Health and Safety Sub-Committee Equality Impact Assessment

The University requires staff to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and to take account of its results in the development of new and the review of policy documents and practices including projects and/or proposals (referred to collectively as a “policy/practice” in this form).

Please ensure you read the EqIA Guidance prior to completion of this form and familiarise yourself with the University’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy and have undertaken all compulsory equality, diversity and inclusion training.

More information relating to developments, facts and figures related to equality and diversity within the University as well as published EqIAs is available on the University’s website at [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion | Abertay University](#).

1. Equality Impact Assessment Checklist

Reason for the Equality Impact Assessment: Proposed changes/review of existing policy/practice

If selected Other, please provide more information: N/A

Please provide a brief description of the policy/practice (including aims and objectives):

Terms of Reference Health and Safety Sub-Committee. The purpose of the Terms of Reference (ToR) is to define the composition and responsibilities of the Health and Safety Sub-Committee (HSSC). The HSSC is responsible for reviewing all matters related to the health, safety, and occupational health of staff, students, and other individuals within the University environment.

The HSSC operates as a sub-committee of the People, Health and Equality Committee, which is a standing committee of the University Court.

This EqIA relates to the annual review of the ToR.

How does the policy/practice fit into the broader strategic aims of the University?

The document supports the University’s overarching objective to be a well-run, efficient and forward-looking organisation. By clearly defining the composition and responsibilities in its ToR, the HSSC ensures robust governance and accountability in managing health, safety, and wellbeing across the University environment.

Is there any evidence or concern that any of the protected characteristic groups have different experiences, issues or needs in relation to this document? Could there be a differential¹ impact on any protected characteristics? This should cover discrimination, equality of opportunity and relations between groups. Please use the additional information to record any notes on the rationale for your selection.

Characteristic	Potential Positive Impact	Potential Negative Impact	Additional Information
Age	Yes	No	Potential positive impact from health promotion. Any potential negative impact would relate to disability/health conditions rather than age.
Disability	Yes	Yes	E.g. need for adjustments for fire evacuation and other H&S; positive health support.
Gender Reassignment	Yes	No	Positive impact from health promotion/ services.
Marriage and Civil Partnership	No	No	N/A
Pregnancy and Maternity	Yes	Yes	People who are pregnant or nursing have particular H&S and OH needs.
Race	No	Yes	Language and culture may affect understanding/ implementation of H&S.
Religion or Belief	No	Yes	Potentially need to take account of religious dress in H&S measures.
Sex	Yes	Yes	Due to different health conditions/impacts, e.g. menopause, mental health, types of cancer.

¹ Differential impact = where the positive or negative impact on one particular protected characteristic is likely to be greater than on another.

Characteristic	Potential Positive Impact	Potential Negative Impact	Additional Information
Sexual Orientation	No	No	

2. Equality Impact Assessment Outcome

What is the recommended outcome for this policy/practice?

Outcome 1: No change required – the assessment is that the policy/practice will be robust.

Summarise any actions required to implement the findings and describe how the policy/practice will be monitored going forward, how you might involve equality groups or communities in the ongoing monitoring and ensure that impact is frequently reviewed.

No immediate action is required.

The Committee should ensure EqIA of all policy documents and other relevant proposals and practices within its remit.

The Committee may, however, wish to consider mechanisms for ensuring appropriate consultation and involvement. This may include

- the establishment of working groups or sub-committees with appropriate representation;
- inviting individuals with relevant lived experience to provide evidence on specific issues, particularly where these impact protected groups; referring specific issues or reports to staff or student equality consultative groups, such as the Lead Voices Forum
- to ensure that health and safety policies reflect the needs of all staff and students, and in particular those from underrepresented groups within the Committee's membership.

Declaration

I confirm that this equality analysis represents a fair and reasonable view of the implications of the policy/practice for all protected characteristic groups, and that appropriate actions have been identified to address the findings.

Approved by:	Date	Individual
Vanessa Kind, Governance and Policy Officer	September 2025	EqIA author [†]

Approved by:	Date	Individual
Eilidh Fraser, Director of People & Culture	23 September 2025	EqIA owner*

† for projects, this is the project proposer.

* for projects, this is the project sponsor.

3. Comprehensive Equality Impact Assessment

How important is the policy/practice in terms of equality in the University? Does it relate to an area with known inequalities or where equality objectives have been set by the University?

The HSSC plays an important role in supporting the University's equality objectives by ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all staff, students, and visitors. Its remit includes fire safety, occupational health, and environmental matters relating to H&S, all of which can impact individuals differently depending on their protected characteristics.

To address this, the Committee must ensure that its membership and practices can address the needs of diverse staff, students and others, particularly from protected groups, to help identify and remove barriers and positively support health at work. This includes considering the varied needs and experiences of individuals in areas such as fire evacuation procedures, accident and incident reporting, and access to occupational health support.

What do we know from existing data already held by the University and/or externally?

Are there any apparent gaps in knowledge?

The University does not currently collect or hold data on the protected characteristics of HSSC members. As most members serve in an Ex Officio capacity, the diversity of the Committee membership reflects the characteristics of those holding relevant job roles. Where gaps in lived experience or representation are identified, the Committee should be able to refer matters for additional consultation with staff and student equality forums or networks. The Committee does have the ability to "establish appropriate working groups or sub-committees from time to time as necessary to consider or deal with matters within the Committee's remit", as per responsibility (I).

There is limited external data available on the protected characteristics of HSSC members across the sector, which makes benchmarking diversity and representation challenging.

However, guidance by sector bodies such as [Scottish Code for Good Higher Education Governance](#), the [Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE), and [Universities and Colleges](#)

[Employers Association](#) (UCEA) provide guidance on inclusive practices in the governance of health and safety committees and emphasise the importance of considering equality, diversity, and inclusion in health and safety decision-making and ensuring the University meets its statutory obligations.

Internal data suggested that certain protected characteristic groups may experience health and safety issues differently. For example, disabled individuals may require Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) or use Evac-Chairs during fire evacuations. Occupational health matters may also intersect with characteristics such as age and sex, for instance, in relation to menopause support.

[Who is affected by the policy/practice and how have they been involved in the development of it?](#)

Staff who serve on the HSSC (all of whom are in an Ex Officio capacity) are directly affected, as they are represented in the membership based on the job role they undertake.

It also impacts wider staff, students, members of the Students' Association, Court members, and visitors, as the Committee oversees health and safety across the University environment.

The University invited the HSSC, including senior managers, staff, trade union representatives, and the Students' Association, to review the revised document and provide feedback. The Health and Safety Manager, Director of People and Culture (as chair of HSSC) and Governance team contributed directly to the annual review.

[Could this policy/practice lead to any positive, negative, intended or unintended impact on the University or any of its stakeholders? Could there be a differential² impact on any protected characteristics? Could any differential impact be adverse?](#)

The document is intended to have positive impacts on staff, students, and visitors, as the HSSC makes decisions that directly affect their safety and wellbeing.

It also supports the University Court in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities, including ensuring legal compliance and promoting the general welfare of students (13 and 14 of University Court's Primary Responsibilities).

By embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion into health and safety governance, the document contributes to a safer and more inclusive University environment. In relation to positive impact, all staff, students, and visitors are likely to benefit from the document, by outlining the Committee's responsibilities in providing assurance and oversight on campus health and safety matters.

² Differential impact = where the positive or negative impact on one particular protected characteristic is likely to be greater than on another.

The HSSC is required to give due attention to equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of its work, as per responsibility (n). This ensures that health and safety policies and procedures, including fire safety and occupational health, take into account and reflect the needs of individuals who share protected characteristics. One way in which this is achieved, for example, is through the reports provided to the Committee which include data disaggregated by protected characteristic. This helps members to identify disparities and disproportionate impacts on specific groups and make recommendations on appropriate mitigating actions.

There is potential for differential impact on individuals with protected characteristics, particularly as noted in s1.

Underrepresentation of these groups on or through the Committee may limit the diversity of perspectives in decision-making, potentially leading to health and safety policies that do not fully reflect the needs of all staff and students.

Given the high-risk nature of health and safety matters, inclusive representation is essential. The Committee is able “to establish appropriate working groups or sub-committees from time to time as necessary to consider issues or deal with matters within the Committee’s remit”, as per responsibility (l). This enables the Committee draw on additional expertise and consult with relevant staff and student equality networks where gaps in specific expertise and/or representation are identified.

What did this equality analysis conclude?

The equality analysis concluded that underrepresentation of individuals with protected characteristics on or by the Committee may limit inclusive decision-making and risk overlooking specific health and safety concerns affecting these groups.

To mitigate this, the Committee has the ability to undertake additional consultation where gaps in representation or expertise are identified, supported by responsibility (l) enabling the Committee to establish working groups or sub-committees as needed. Is any action required to be taken in response to the findings from the consultation?

No immediate action but see section 2 for recommended practice.

4. Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Legislation	Equality Act 2010; Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012
Strategy	Abertay University Strategic Plan and all sub-strategies
Policy	Equality and Diversity Policy; Policy Document Governance Policy; Project Governance Framework; Terms of Reference Health and Safety Sub-Committee
Procedures	Policy Document Governance Procedure
Guidelines	Equality Impact Assessment Guidance
Local Protocol	N/A
Forms	N/A

5. Additional Information

Audience:	Public
Applies to:	All University Members
Classification:	Corporate Governance
Category:	Equality Impact Assessment
Subcategory:	Health and Safety
Author [†] :	Governance and Policy Officer
Owner [*] :	Director of People and Culture
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[†] for projects, this is the project proposer.

^{*} for projects, this is the project sponsor.

For the purposes of this policy document and related policy documents, terms are defined in the Policy Document Library Glossary.

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