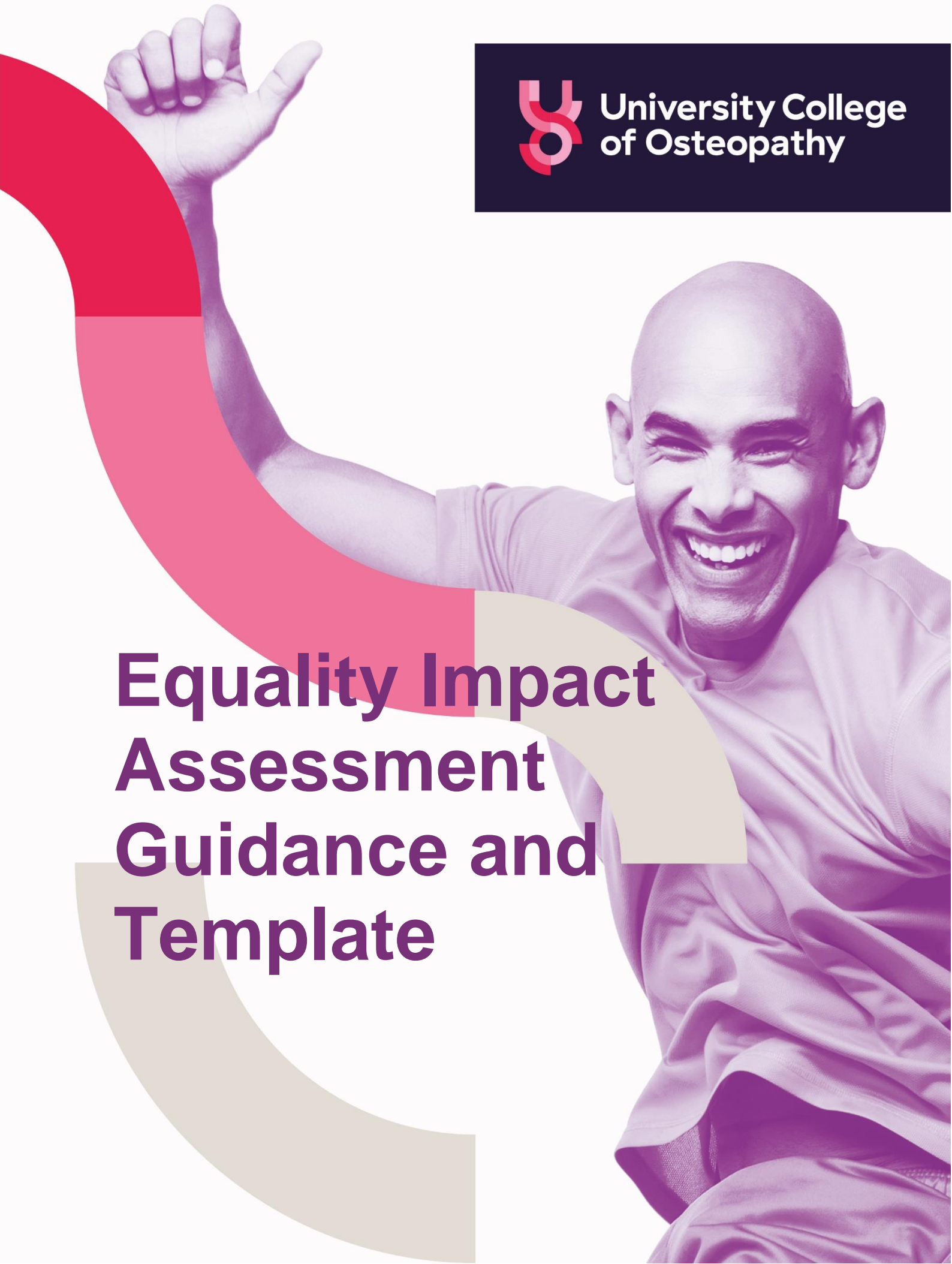




University College
of Osteopathy

Equality Impact Assessment Guidance and Template



Core Documentation Cover Page

Equality Impact Assessment Guidance and Template

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Equality Impact

Positive equality impact (i.e. the policy/procedure/guideline significantly reduces inequalities)	X
Neutral equality impact (i.e. no significant effect)	
Negative equality impact (i.e. increasing inequalities)	

If you have any feedback or suggestions for enhancing this policy, please email your comments to: quality@uco.ac.uk

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the process of planning and reviewing policy and other strategic, operational and change management plans, the University College of Osteopathy (UCO) will review sufficient evidence to consider whether the decision would have a disproportionate impact on people sharing one or more of the following protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race – including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality
- Religion or belief – including lack of belief
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- marriage and civil partnership

The purpose of the EIA is to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This specific duty means that the UCO must consider relevant evidence in order to understand the likely or actual effect of policies and practices on people with different protected characteristics.

This includes:

- ensuring the policy or practice does not unlawfully discriminate;
- identifying and mitigating any adverse impacts on people with protected characteristics;
- considering how the policy or practice could better advance equality of opportunity;
- considering whether the policy will affect relations between people with different characteristics.

Having considered this, the UCO must have 'due regard' (i.e. give appropriate weight) to the results of such assessments. This requires the UCO to consider taking action to address any issues identified, such as addressing negative impacts, where possible.

2. WHEN TO ASSESS IMPACT

Assessing the impact of policies and practices on the UCO's ability to comply with the general equality duty should be integral to the development and review of policies from the outset. It is important to monitor the actual impact of a policy as it is implemented, and the assessment should be revisited as part of any review.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All UCO employees involved in the development and drafting of policy must read the UCO Equality and Diversity Policy and this guidance document.

The Equality Committee will review new policy and where there have been major changes to an existing policy. A review of the EIA will also form part of the policy approval process via relevant committees. The Head of Human Resources can provide further guidance to all UCO employees undertaking EIAs.

4. HOW TO ASSESS IMPACT

This section sets out a suggested step-by-step guide to assessing the impact of policy and practice.

4.1 PROPORTIONALITY

UCO written policy and procedure will normally be subject to an EIA. Where it is not practicable or proportionate to undertake an assessment of the impact on people with protected characteristics in respect of a particular practice or planning document, this decision should be recorded and a rationale provided. Practices and documents with high relevance, such as strategic budgetary decisions, changes to service delivery (including withdrawal or reorganisation of services), student or staff recruitment and remuneration policies should always be subject to an assessment, to determine impact on groups of people who share protected characteristics.

4.2 RELEVANCE

In order to decide whether an assessment should be conducted, relevance to the general duty should be considered. If an important policy is not assessed because it is wrongly considered irrelevant, the authority may implement decisions which create or perpetuate inequality, and ultimately be open to legal challenge. It is important that the reasons for the decision are explained and recorded.

4.3 SCREENING FOR RELEVANCE

The first step will be to conduct a 'screening' process, to determine whether a policy should be subject to assessment. Screening is an exercise that helps to determine relevance; it should not be a proxy for proper assessment.

The following questions can help to identify relevance. This is not an exhaustive list.

- Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community (therefore be likely to have significant effect on groups of people with protected characteristics)? **The relevance of a policy will depend not only on the number of those affected, but also the significance of the effect on them.**
- Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered in terms of people with protected characteristics?
- Does it relate to the UCO equality objectives and outcomes?
- Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities? (For example, the gender pay gap)
- Does it relate to a policy where there is significant potential for reducing inequalities or improving outcomes? (For example, widening participation)
- Does it relate to an area where there is a lack of published research or other evidence?

4.4 EVIDENCE

It is important to have as much up-to-date and reliable evidence as possible about the needs and experiences of the different groups the policy is likely to affect. You may have a pool of general information on which to draw, such as demographic information, service-level monitoring data, and recommendations from audit and inspection reports. This may need to be supplemented for the specific policy under consideration.

You may find it difficult to find the necessary information about particular characteristics. Where there is insufficient information appropriate action should be taken, such as involving relevant people or groups.

Where it is not possible to gather new information in time to inform the assessment, you should consider including such actions in your plans to monitor and review the policy.

APPENDIX 1: EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

Step 1: Identify the Policy or Document Subject to an EIA

The term policy is interpreted broadly in equality legislation, and refers to anything that describes what we do and how we expect to do it.

The following document provides a structure to undertake an EIA. This may be adapted to take into account additional information required and all EIAs should be documented.

Policy title	
New policy or review	
Policy owner	
Responsible committee	

Step 2: Further Information

Identify those responsible for drafting and implementing the policy.	
Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy.	
Are there associated objectives of the policy/document? If so, please explain. <i>This can include statutory requirements e.g. ACAS or sector initiatives.</i>	
Explain all those who will be affected by the policy/document and the impact.	
Explain all those who have been consulted in the planning and drafting of this policy/document.	
Describe how the policy has been communicated to those who would be directly or indirectly affected by it.	
Explain the outcome(s) that the policy aims to achieve.	
Explain the factors could contribute to the outcome(s).	
Describe any factors could detract from the	

outcome(s).

Step 3: Assess the Impact on Difference Groups of People

Diversity within, as well as between, groups should be considered: for example disabled people with different impairments; people from different racial groups; or different age groups. If it is decided that assessment is not relevant to some groups, this should be recorded and explained.

In the table below, please indicate whether the policy affects particular groups of people in any of the following ways:

Positive impact: a policy or practice where the impact on a particular group of people is more positive than for other groups, e.g. accessible website design. It can also include legally permitted positive action initiatives designed to remedy workforce imbalance, such as job interview guarantee schemes for disabled people who meet the minimum criteria.

Negative impact: a policy or practice where the impact on a particular group of people is more negative than for other groups (e.g. where the choice of venue for a staff social occasion precludes members of a particular faith or belief group from participating).

Neutral impact: a policy or practice with neither a positive nor a negative impact on any group or groups of people, compared to others.

Characteristic	Positive impact	Negative impact	Neutral impact	Reasons / comments
Gender: Male				
Gender: Female				
Race: including ethnic or national origin, colour or nationality				
Disability: consider both physical and mental health disability				
Sexual orientation: Gay Lesbian Bisexual				

Gender reassignment				
Age: Older people (50+)				
Age: Younger people (17 – 25)				
Religion or belief – including lack of belief				
Pregnancy and maternity				
Marriage and civil partnership				

Step 4: Promoting Equality

Provide a brief description of how this policy promotes equality.	
If there is no evidence that the policy promotes equality, describe changes, if any, that could be made to achieve this.	
If there is a negative impact on any groups describe how this impact be legally and objectively justified, e.g. recruiting a female osteopath to work within a community clinic based in a women's refuge centre.	
Detail how and when the EIA will be reviewed.	

Step 5: What action should be taken next?

The duty specifically requires you to have due regard to the results of your assessment. Having considered the potential or actual impact on protected groups, you should be in a position to make an informed judgement on what should be done. There are four main steps that you can take:

- **Option 1 - No major change:** your assessment demonstrates that the policy is robust. The evidence shows no potential for discrimination and that you have taken all opportunities to advance equality and foster good relations, subject to continuing

monitoring and review. If you reach this conclusion, you should document the reasons why and the evidence used to support your decision.

- **Option 2 - Adjust the policy:** this involves taking steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality or to foster good relations. It may be possible to remove or change the aspect of the policy that creates any negative or unwanted impact. You may decide to introduce additional measures to reduce or mitigate any potential negative impact.

It is lawful under the Equality Act to treat people differently in some circumstances, for example taking positive action or putting in place single-sex provision where there is a need for it. It is both lawful and a requirement of the general equality duty to consider if there is a need to treat disabled people differently, including considering and implementing reasonable adjustments.

The impact of any changes needs to be fully understood and assessed to ensure that they do not have unintended consequences and can really achieve the impact expected.

- **Option 3 - Continue the policy:** this means that you adopt or continue with the policy, despite potential for adverse impact or missed opportunities to advance equality. As part of the assessment for impact, you should clearly set out the justifications for doing this and it must be in line with the duty to have due regard. In cases where you believe discrimination is not unlawful because it is objectively justified, it is particularly important that you record what the objective justification is for continuing the policy, and how you reached this decision.
- **Option 4 - Stop and remove the policy:** if there are adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated, you should consider stopping the policy altogether. If a policy shows unlawful discrimination it **must** be removed or changed.

Having determined potential impact on people who share a protected characteristic and identified the action required to address any issues which have arisen, you must then take action to implement any necessary changes. You may find it helpful to develop an action plan setting out the actions which have been identified; the individuals responsible for implementing the actions; and the timescales for completion.

The result of the assessment and the reasons for it will then need to be brought to the attention of the decision-maker, if it is not the person assessing the policy.

Step 6: Monitoring and review

The actual impact of the policy will only be known once it has been introduced and implemented. It is necessary to use monitoring, evaluation and review processes to ensure that the actual impact matches with the impact which was anticipated, and that relevant actions have been implemented.