**Equality Impact Assessment**

**1. Equality Impact Relevance Check**

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| Name of policy, practice, activity or proposed decision: Removal of 3rd diet which is currently used by students who “ defer” to the second diet as their first diet then fail or “double defer” both the first and second diets. | | | | | | | |
| Purpose/Aim of above: To reduce the burden on staff of the organisation and administration of the 3rd diet of exams which is disproportionate to the benefit received by the very small number of students who engage with this diet. The third diet is conducted during August, which is a traditional holiday period, and those staff involved in the third diet cannot take holidays during the exam and marking period which may impact on their childcare responsibilities.  We are currently the only University in Scotland which offers a 3rd diet and we are seeking to fall into line with sector norms. | | | | | | | |
| Faculty or Professional Services area responsible: Academic Registry and all faculties | | | | | | | |
| Could any aspect of the policy/practice /activity/proposal impact on individuals or groups with a protected characteristic (PC) or on a specified institutional strategic priority/Equality Outcome (EO)? Yes | | | | | | | |
| Protected Characteristics (PC)/Equality Outcome (EO) | Is there likely to be an impact? | | | What is the nature of the impact on the individual or group with the pc? | | | |
| Yes | No | Unknown | Positive | Negative | Neutral | Unknown |
| Age (PC) |  |  | x |  |  |  |  |
| Disability (PC)/Accessibility and Inclusion | x |  |  |  | There is a higher proportion of students with ARUAA’s (and therefore potentially disabled) who undertake the 3rd diet at present. They would no longer have this option to recover their grades and may not be able to progress to their next year of study |  |  |
| Gender Re-assignment (PC) |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |
| Marriage and civil partnership (PC) |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |
| Pregnancy and Maternity (PC) |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |
| Race (including ethnicity, nationality and skin colour) (PC) |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |
| Religion or belief (PC) |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sex (PC) | x |  |  |  | There are marginally more males than females who undertake the 3rd diet at present. This is consistent with national statistics that show females have marginally higher academic performance than males in UG degrees. |  |  |
| Sexual orientation (PC) |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |
| Caring responsibilities (PC) | x |  |  | Staff with caring responsibilities during the summer holidays would have more flexibility in working arrangements during August by removal of this diet. |  |  |  |
| Mental health and wellbeing (EO) | x |  |  | Staff workload would be reduced by producing assessments and administering this diet, if it was cancelled |  |  |  |
| Experience of being in the care system (“care experienced”) |  | x |  |  |  |  |  |

If the answer is YES or UNKNOWN to any of the above then an Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan must be completed and you should proceed to Section 2. If the answer is NO to all the protected characteristics/equality outcomes then proceed to Section 3.

**2. Equality Impact Assessment Action Plan**

Will this policy practice/activity/proposal help the university to meet the 3 parts of the Positive Equality Duty or fulfil its strategic equality priorities/Equality Outcomes? Please expand on your reasoning in each section and summarise the evidence you have considered?

1. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or any other prohibited conduct? Consideration should be given here to the potential for discrimination relating to the full range of characteristics listed above.

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| No |

1. Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it?

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| No |

1. Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it?

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| --- |
| **No** |

1. **Assist the University to achieve its published** [**Equality Outcomes 2017-2021**](https://www.stir.ac.uk/media/stirling/services/policy-and-planning/documents/EqualityOutcomes20172021.pdf)

*e.g. enhancing mental health and wellbeing, improving gender balance across the institution, improving intercultural awareness*

This change has been proposed to relieve work pressure on staff therefore, through its implementation, we anticipate that it will enhance the mental health and wellbeing of those staff involved.

We also anticipate that this change will assist staff who are carers in relieving the pressure of deadlines and additional work during the school holiday period.

***Mitigation:***

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| There are a disproportionate number of students with disabilities who undertake exams in the 3rd diet at present:  We have an effective extenuating circumstances process for those students who undertake assessment but whose performance is adversely affected by circumstances which are described in the policy. If the 3rd diet is removed, students who undertake assessment would have the option to apply under this policy for consideration, whereas currently they are encouraged to defer their examination. The current terms of reference of that committee would be adequate to consider further cases that would otherwise have applied for deferral.  The extenuating circumstances sub-board cannot change final module marks where a student has not yet been able to demonstrate having met all the module learning outcomes however they may, where deemed appropriate, discount elements (i.e. adjust the weighting) of a modules assessments to reach an amended, agreed mark or discount modules in classification profiles. Alternatively, where a student has not yet met all the learning outcomes nor completed all the assessment elements the sub-board may recommend an alternative assessment, to enable the student to do so, in agreement with the module-coordinator.  Long term illness or disability where special arrangements have already been made for assessments or where such arrangements could have been made if the University had been made aware at the appropriate time are normally excluded from the consideration of the board as the ARUAA adjustments are deemed to have mitigated the effects of the disability in the first instance. However, it is open to the board to consider the particular circumstances of the case to determine whether the steps already taken have sufficiently mitigated the impact of the disability, or additional issues, which the student has experienced. |
| Students who fail to progress due to failing module(s) have the option to retake the module in the subsequent year, though in some professional subjects they may require to take a leave of absence until they can do so. This can have financial implications for students who do so, in terms of student funding; the cost of undertaking further modules. The University does operate a hardship fund which can help in these circumstances. |

***Action Plan:***

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Action/ Change Required*** | ***Responsibility*** | ***Timescale*** | ***Resources Required*** | ***What issue/ problem will this action address?*** |
| Students with disabilities are supported to reach their potential in their studies proactively through the provision of ARUAA adjustments; our Accessibility and Inclusion policy which mainstreams good practice such as the use of “Listen Again” and additional support such as through study mentors and Student Support Services. By taking this approach, we aim to ensure that disabled students have equivalent opportunities to succeed in their studies in the first instance, without the need for deferred examinations. If the third diet is removed Support Services and faculties will work proactively with students to ensure they have the best chance to succeed at the first or second diet. | ***Co-ordinated by SSS*** | ***On-going*** | ***current*** | ***To requirement of some disabled students for addition*** |
| Student behaviours need to be managed through good and early communication so that students are aware of their options so they can make informed decisions about deferring examinations at the first and/or second diet. | ***SSS and Exams Office*** | ***Immediate on implementation*** | ***N/A*** | ***Student behaviours which lead to them applying for deferred examination*** |
| We have an effective extenuating circumstances process for those students who undertake assessment but whose performance is adversely affected by circumstances which are described in the policy. If the 3rd diet is removed, students who undertake assessment would have the option to apply under this policy for consideration, whereas currently they are encouraged to defer their examination. The current terms of reference of that committee would be adequate to consider further cases which would otherwise have applied for deferral.  The extenuating circumstances sub-board cannot change final module marks where a student has not yet been able to demonstrate having met all the module learning outcomes however they may, where deemed appropriate, discount elements (i.e. adjust the weighting) of a modules assessments to reach an amended, agreed mark or discount modules in classification profiles. Alternatively, where a student has not yet met all the learning outcomes nor completed all the assessment elements the sub-board may recommend an alternative assessment, to enable the student to do so, in agreement with the module-coordinator.  Long term illness or disability where special arrangements have already been made for assessments or where such arrangements could have been made if the University had been made aware at the appropriate time are normally excluded from the consideration of the board as the ARUAA adjustments are deemed to have mitigated the effects of the disability in the first instance. However, it is open to the board to consider the particular circumstances of the case to determine whether the steps already taken have sufficiently mitigated the impact of the disability, or additional issues, which the student has experienced. | ***Exams Office and Chief Examiner*** | ***Immediate on implementation*** | ***N/A*** | ***Mitigating effect of loss of 3rd diet on disabled students who may require further assessment intervention*** |
| Students who fail to progress due to failing module(s) have the option to retake the module in the subsequent year, though in some professional subjects they may require to take a leave of absence until they can do so. This can have financial implications for students who do so, in terms of student funding; the cost of undertaking further modules. The University does operate a hardship fund which can help in these circumstances. | ***Student Programmes*** | ***On-going*** | ***current*** | ***To provide a final safety net to students affected by this change*** |

**3. Monitoring and Review**

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| How and when will impact of the actions noted above be monitored? Who will be responsible for this? Where will findings of the impact be reported?  The impact of this action will be monitored through evidence from Student Support. In addition, Extenuating Circumstances Boards report annually to ULTQC ; Student Programmes report to ULTQC annually on progression and failure rates. This will be co-ordinated via ULTQC and will be reported on as part of annual progression reporting to that committee. | | | |
| Equality Impact Assessment completed by | ….......................................................... (Signature 1)  ….......................................................... (Signature 2) | Date |  |

*Once the EIA has been submitted to Edna Docherty,* [*hd2@stir.ac.uk*](mailto:hd2@stir.ac.uk)*, it will be published on the University website by Policy and Planning.*