Equality Impact Assessment: Screening Form

The Equality Impact Assessment process is used to ensure that University Policies, Procedures, Codes and Manuals, Services, Criterion and Practices comply with the Equality Act 2010. Throughout this document the word **'Policy'** will be used to refer to all policies, practices and provisions included within this process.

Policy	Policy for the responsible use of metrics in research assessment	
	Name	**Department**
Policy Owner	Martin Wolf	Open Research team, The Library
EQIA Assessor(s)	Zuzana Oriou	Department of Chemistry
	Martin Wolf	Open Research team, The Library
EQIA Contact:	Martin Wolf	Open Research team, The Library

Date of Assessment:	*D*	2	5	*M*	0	2	*Y*	2	0	2	1

1. What is the aim, objective or purpose of the policy?

- The objective of the policy is to state the principles that must inform any use of metric indicators in the assessment of research.
- The aim of using metrics responsibly is ensuring that their use is appropriate to the assessment, is transparent to researchers, and avoids using inappropriate measures.
- This Policy complements the Code of Practice for the Annual Assessment of Individual Research Performance.
- The University of Liverpool is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) meaning that we have committed to avoiding the use of journal-based metrics as surrogate measures of the quality of research in decision-making for funding, appointing and promoting staff, and to assess contributions of individual researchers, and instead assess research based on its own merits.
- This Policy applies to the use of metrics for University staff and research students for internal evaluation purposes and in support of their aims and development.

2. Who implements the policy?

Senate has ultimate responsibility for the University's use of metrics. University Research & Impact Committee will be the body responsible for effective oversight and management, including review of metrics usage in light of changing external factors. Library and Research & Impact Strategy staff will provide practical support for the effective and appropriate usage of research quality.

Equality Impact Assessment Form

3. Is the policy applied uniformly throughout the university?

YES *(Delete and explain if appropriate)*

The Policy has to be implemented across the whole institution. However, practical guidance on implementation will be developed together with each Faculty, and training on the responsible use of metrics will be provided, developed in conjunction with HR. Faculties and, as appropriate, Institutes, Schools and Departments, are responsible for the selection and application of discipline-specific metrics, ensuring that they remain in line with the University policy and statement and taking advantage of the professional guidance and support provided by the University.

This Equality Impact Assessment does not assess School/Institute or Department discipline specific metrics.

4. Which Equality Objectives and Areas of activity does this policy support or impact on? Explain how: *(see Equality Framework 2016-2026)*

The Policy directs staff involved in recruitment and assessment activities only to use metrics in conjunction with peer review and never in isolation.

Staff are to avoid use of metrics related to venue of publication. Measures based on venue of publication (e.g. the Journal Impact Factor) may indirectly disadvantage researchers near the start of their academic career or from countries with traditionally low rates of publishing in certain journals. Journal-based metrics also give no indication as to the quality of individual articles, and can vary widely between disciplines (preventing the ability to compare like-with-like). In this way the policy should support the objective of making improvements in the recruitment of some underrepresented groups by helping to avoid such indirect discrimination.

The Policy also directs staff to avoid use of metrics related to a researchers' whole career (e.g. h-index, total citations) as these measures may indirectly disadvantage those researchers who are more likely to have had career breaks (e.g. female researchers, disabled researchers), researchers whose careers may have largely been outside academia, and researchers whose disciplines do not rely heavily on journal publication.

5. What *equality* data have you used to assess the impact of the policy? Outline your key findings:

This may refer to the content of the policy and the implementation of the policy

Some of our major funders, such as the Wellcome Trust, are driving the more towards better use of research metrics by requiring the institutions they fund to have policies and procedures in place to ensure that any use of metrics in the assessment of researchers is appropriate both to the researcher(s) being assessed and the assessment question being asked.

Indicators such as the h-index, total citations, and (especially) total publications are indicators of productivity rather than quality, and are biased in favour of those with longer and uninterrupted careers. Requiring staff involved in assessment to ignore such metrics should therefore help avoid such bias.

Equality Impact Assessment Form

6. What *equality* groups and stakeholders have you involved / consulted with in the development of this policy? Outline your key findings:

The Policy was offered for consultation to the whole research community at the University via an online survey that was available throughout October 2020 and was heavily promoted through Faculty newsletters and university news stories. Additionally, all departments were contacted, and the Responsible Metrics Project Officer attended meetings with all departments to outline the policy and elicit feedback.

Over 200 responses to the survey were received, and feedback was used to inform the re-drafting of the policy. Within the feedback, no concerns were raised regarding how the policy would specifically impact researchers based on any protected equality characteristics.

Equality Impact Assessment Form

7. Is there any unlawful discrimination? and if so, can it be justified?

NOTE: Assuming that the metric policy does not result in discriminatory practices and bias, and that the changes adopted e.g. not taking into account journal reputation actually means there is no discrimination or nothing that could not be justified, then IT IS CORRECT to leave this table blank

Place a mark in the relevant boxe(s)	Direct	Indirect	Arising from a Disability	Failure to make a reasonable adjustment	Harassment	Victimisation	Instructing, inducing or causing dis'ation
Age			■	■			
Disability - Physical							
Disability - SpLD							
Disability - Mental Health							
Gender Reassignment/Identity			■	■			
Marriage & Civil Partnership			■	■	■		
Pregnancy & Maternity		■	■	■	■		
Race			■	■			
Religious Belief and Non Belief			■	■			
Sex (Gender)			■	■			

Equality Impact Assessment Form

Sexual Orientation			███████				
Can the discrimination be justified?							████

8. **Can we advance equality of opportunity / promote equality between different groups?**
   a. Remove or minimise disadvantages between different equality groups
   b. Take steps to meet the needs of different equality groups
   c. Encourage different equality groups to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation is disproportionately low.

9. **Can we foster good relations between different groups?**
   a. tackle prejudice, and
   b. promote understanding.

Place a mark in the relevant boxe(s)	8.A	8.B	8.C	9.A	9.B
Age					
Disability - Physical					
Disability - SpLD					
Disability - Mental Health					
Gender Reassignment/Identity					
Marriage & Civil Partnership					
Pregnancy & Maternity					
Race					
Religious Belief and Non Belief					
Sex (Gender)					
Sexual Orientation					
If Positive Action, Can it be justified?					

10. **If the policy discriminates and it CAN be justified outline what this justification is (include each justification):**

*If a policy discriminates and it CANNOT be justified then this policy is **illegal** and must NOT be implemented. All unjustifiable discrimination must be removed before the Policy is approved or the policy must be suspended immediately.*
None

11. If the policy can promote equality / foster good relations outline what this is:

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12. If the policy includes Positive Action outline what this is, why it is being used and justify its use:

*This is in relation to the justification of Positive Action in the Equality Act 2010. See **Positive Action Guidance***

13. If the policy includes an Occupational Requirement outline what this is, why it is being used and justify its use:

This is in relation to the justification of an Occupational Requirements as outlined in the Equality Act 2010

14. What data/information is required in the future to ensure effective monitoring?

What data will you collect and analyse to ensure the policy is not discriminating against staff/students, or that it is working as intended?

An implementation and monitoring plan has been drawn up to evaluate progress with the policy's adoption. There are certain actions that will be checked to see if they have been done:
- Job adverts will be regularly checked to ensure they do not refer to inappropriate measures, whether directly or indirectly (e.g. phrases like "track record of publication in high impact factor journals" will be removed, as they would breach the policy).
- Check number of managers who have undertaken responsible metrics training.
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15. Any other comments on the policy

16. What actions are required to be taken for this policy to comply with the Equality Act 2010? (if any)

If from the assessment you need to change the policy or its implementation, outline here what actions you need to take. This could include referring issues to other departments for action.

17. Potential for differential impact? (Tick)

Taking into consideration all of the above, rate the policy for its potential negative or positive impact on the equality of staff/students:

	Negative	Positive
None		
Low		
Medium		x
High		

NB. If negative Medium or High, a full impact assessment is probably required

18. Recommendation:

Full Impact Assessment Required	
Make amendments to policy	
Reject parts of policy	
Reject whole policy	
Approve parts of policy	
Approve whole policy	

If only parts of the policy are rejected/approved, outline what these are:

19. **Are the policy and the impact assessment approved?   YES**
Below state who has approved the EQIA and when this was done:

Date EQIA Approved:	*2021-02-25*
Person/Group which approved it:	*Martin Wolf*

Date EQIA Approved:	
Person/Group which approved it:	

Date EQIA Approved:	
Person/Group which approved it:	

Date EQIA Approved:	
Person/Group which approved it:	

Add in as many boxes to indicate all levels of approval e.g. committee X, committee Y