GSA SUMMARY REPORT OF EQUALITY CONSIDERATION AND ASSESSMENT OF EQUALITY IMPACT

Date of Assessment:	**21st July 2017**
School or Executive Group Area:	Research & Enterprise
Department:	Research & Enterprise
Lead member of staff: e-mail:	Dr Alison Hay / a.hay@gsa.ac.uk
Area of decision making/title of policy, procedure, programme or relevant practice:	GSA Research & Knowledge Exchange Ethics Policy 2016 & GSA Research Ethics Code of Practice 2016

Please indicate if this is:	New:	☐
	Existing/Reviewed:	X

1. Summary of how equality, diversity and participation have been considered and due regard given to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED):

GSA's Research Ethics Policy is based on the principles of beneficence ('do good') and non-maleficence ('do no harm'); justice and respect for autonomy are also woven into the policy. The GSA Research Ethics Code of Practice accompanies the policy but is distinct from it. The policy identifies the obligations of *researchers* in respect of ethical conduct of themselves and in their research projects; the code of practice sets forth minimum standards in respect of *ethical issues.*

The main stakeholders of the policy are GSA research staff and PGR students on a direct basis; the public / external audience on an indirect basis.

Due regard has been given to the PSED as an integral aspect of reviewing the Policy and Code of Practice.

2. Evidence used to make your assessment:

The GSA research ethics policy was designed to reflect the level of governance required while still supporting the research objectives of both staff and the institution alike. The review of the policy sought to strengthen it by ensuring a consideration of research ethics was built in to any new research project; new research funding application and on-going piece of research whose direction (and therefore ethics) might have altered. As well as safeguarding rigorous academic standards, the policy must be robust to reflect the current social context with which much of GSA's research output is concerned: creative research and practice is increasingly socially engaged across the discipline domains, our research should therefore seek to promote and celebrate the diversity in society. Any exclusions need to be justified carefully with reference to the research project proposal itself which provides the context for ethical consideration.

The equality impact assessment process reviewed the policy in detail and also considered
- i)   the research environment in which the policy operates, drawing on the REF2014 EIA;
- ii)   sector wide consideration of equality in the research environment, such as from funders (http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/skills/equalitystatement-pdf/ for example);
- iii)   equality impact assessment of research ethics policies from other UK HEI of which one, from the University of Bradford was located;
- iv)   Further consultation was undertaken by means of an ARMA (Association of Research Managers and Administrators) specialist group (research ethics) mailing list.

3.Outline any positive or negative impacts you have identified:

Positive impact
- The policy covers all research staff and PGR students across the institution. We use the term 'researcher' throughout out the policy to maintain neutrality across all protected characteristics and stage of career or mode of research enquiry. The policy is intended to be as inclusive as possible;
- Use of gender pronouns is avoided – using the term 'researcher' maintains gender neutral language throughout;
- We also make specific reference to pedagogic research - the possible inequalities in power relationships we felt to be significant and therefore we carved a specific sub clause out in the policy to take account of this;
- Whilst the GSA Research Ethics Sub Committee is committed to meeting once per year in person, the procedure for assessing research ethics applications is free from the constraints of timetabled meetings to ensure a timely and open service for all researchers, thus not disadvantaging part time staff or students;
- The Code of Practice is intended to ensure that research is free from harm, is balanced and that both researcher and research participants are protected. Specific reference to balance is made is 3.5 with the additional stipulation that no portion of society should be unreasonably burdened for example, continually working with children from a particular school;
- The Code of Practice requires researchers to make provision for participant's abilities e.g. take consent orally if a potential participant is visually or physically impaired, take account of differences in language skills etc. This is actively monitored by the Research Developer.

No evidence of negative equality impact was identified however the potential to support and extend positive impact was identified in the following areas:
- Ensure that issues of equality arising within an active research context are are monitored and reported for consideration by the GSA Research Ethics Sub- Committe
- Compliance with the policy requires the ability to understand the concepts and actions required on the part of researcher and supervisors, further support and development with regard to equality may support this ;
- The GSA Research Ethics Sub Committee is comprised of senior members of staff with significant research experience. The EIA for REF2014 Code of Practice indicated that female members of staff faced a greater barrier to achieving research seniority, potentially excluding them from being a member of the sub committee. Consideration of mechanisms to achieve a more diverse membership of the Research Ethics Sub Committee would support Its activities.

4.Actions you have taken or planned as a result of your findings:

Action	Equality Impact	Person responsible	Time frame
(A) Implement research ethics training for staff which will be i) on VLE; ii) face to face delivery	Mainstream relevance and application of equality in consideration of ethics will contribute to delivery of the PSED	**Head of Research and Enterprise**	50% upskilled by end of academic year 2018, 100% by 2019
(B) Ensure Research Ethics Sub Committee is balanced for i) gender; ii) career stage	Advancing equality for women in research.	Head of Research and Enterprise	End of Semester 2 academic year 2017 – 18

(C) Monitor equality related concerns arising under the policy and report as part of a standing agenda item with GSA Research Ethics Sub Committee	Evidence base for development of policy and Practice in relation to equality related areas in the research environment.	Head of Research and Enterprise	End of Semester 2 in academic year 2017 - 18

---

5. Where/when will progress and the outcomes of your actions be reported and reviewed:

All actions will be reported to i) GSA Research Ethics Sub Committee and ii) GSA Research and Enterprise Committee.

6. How will your actions and intended outcomes contribute to the delivery of GSA's equality outcomes:

The actions herein are intended to contribute towards equality outcome 5 from the 2017 – 21 plan, *an increased number of people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds contributing to learning, teaching and research at GSA and engaging with diverse local communities.*

And to a lesser extent equality outcome 2 by virtue of our policy impacting upon the PGR student community: *An inclusive and accessible environment in which the diverse needs of students are systematically anticipated and provided for.*
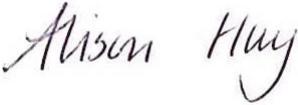
The outcome of your assessment:

No action (no potential for negative or positive impact) ☐

Action to remove barriers/mitigate negative impact ☐

Action to promote positive impact X

Sign-off, authorisation and publishing

Review Lead

Name	Dr Alison Hay
Position	Research Developer
Signature	*Alison Hay*
Date	7th August 2017

Executive Lead

Name	**Colin Kirkpatrick**
Position	**Head of Research and Enterprise**
Signature	*C Kirkpatrick*
Date	**8/8/17**

Equality Lead (Head of Student Support and Development)

Signature	**Jill Hammond**
Date	**8th August 2017**