

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ARTS Equality Impact Assessment Form for Academic Programmes (EqIA)

As a public sector organisation, GSA has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to assess the impact all of its academic programmes may have on protected groups (as defined by the Act).

The purpose of this assessment is to use relevant evidence and critical thinking to identify any impact (positive, negative or neutral) the programme that is being assessed may have on the students and staff members it applies to.

The EqIA is a tool which helps mainstream equality into everything GSA does. It requires us to consider how we can mitigate or eliminate negative impact and, in turn, advance positive outcomes. Therefore, it must be undertaken during the development / review of the programme and not after it has been finalised. Ideally, EqIAs should be a team effort of relevant parties to ensure a variety of perspectives have been consulted. All finalised EqIAs must be signed off by a senior lead, the Education Committee, and either the Head of Student Support and Development or GSA's Equality Officer. Support from the Equality Officer is available at any stage of completion.

Further guidance on how to complete an EqIA can be found on GSA's website and the Equality and Diversity section on the staff intranet. If you have any additional questions, please contact equality@gsa.ac.uk.

Name of Equality Impact Assessment (E.g. Title of Programme)	Master of Research (M.Res.)
New or reviewed	Reviewed and Updated May 2024
Owner/Review Lead and role	Prof. Lynn-Sayers McHattie
School	The School of Innovation & Technology
Date of assessment	30/05/24

1. Programme Outline and Characteristics

Programme Outline (please provide a brief outline of the programme)

The Master of Research (M.Res.) was launched in January 2016, with an initial intake of three students. The scope of the M.Res. programme is the design, delivery and communication of a discrete research project. The programme is not taught - it combines supervised and directed research exploration and preparatory tailored research training - alongside a substantial component of self-directed, individual research. Throughout the delivery of the M.Res. programme the needs of individual students will be identified [through a Training Needs Analysis Form] and appropriate resources made available across Glasgow, the Altyre Campus, Highlands & Islands, and partner Institutions, as required:

- Student Access to Programme Materials: Programme materials will be made available to M.Res. students primarily through GSA's CANVAS platform;
- Research Training: Delivered in Seasonal Schools (Winter, Spring, Autumn) based on a blended approach of online and on campus synchronous (supervisor/student contact) and asynchronous (directed and independent access to on-line research/training content and materials) activity using a range of digital software including ZOOM, Skype, Padlet and Miro and other technologies, as appropriate;
- Staff Support: Supervisors (GSA and partner Institution Supervisors) and wider SIT staff provide support and pastoral care through the weekly 'Bookclub' both in-person and online. In consultation with students, supervisors and staff, we will continue to deliver and support student-led peer-to-peer activities, which encourage social interaction and develop the M.Res. Cohort;
- Reasonable Adjustment Report (RAR): The Programme Leader and Supervisors are notified of student's reasonable adjustments identified through the RAR process and in consultation with student support identify appropriate students support and arrangements, as required.

Modes of Study

Full Time/Part Time

2. Evidence used when undertaking this assessment – please make a reference to your programme-specific EDI data and any other relevant evidence

- please **ensure all data is either presented in percentages only, or that any numbers smaller than five are presented as '<5'** to allow for adequate data analysis and trend review without breaching any Data Protection Regulations

Note: *provisions for protected groups must be made regardless of current numbers, however, data is still used to inform action and measure progress*

The M.Res. cohorts are small and therefore programme data is limited and oftentimes the data threshold is too low (<5) to report on protected characteristics. Notwithstanding this, the following evidence has been used when undertaking the EIA assessment in order to provide details aligned to internal/external reports including:

- HESA Reports;
- GSA Equality Benchmarking Data.

3. a) Major changes introduced to the programme since the most recent EqIA (where applicable) – please provide an overview and make reference to how those changes have affected EDI issues (either positively or negatively)

- if the changes are substantive to the programme structure, please insert (or attach) two diagrams which illustrate:
 - i) the programme structure before amendment
 - and
 - ii) the programme structure after amendments

The proposed amendment is a new mode of delivery to the existing M.Res. programme to introduce a 'pathway' for international students in partnership with key Institutions. The amendment requires no major changes to current delivery mechanisms, rather it is a change to the mode of delivery to Low Residency (Blended). The M.Res. is a supervised programme of research rather than a taught programme; thus, the structure of the programme is necessarily weighted towards independent practice-based research activity. Research training is delivered through a Low Residency (Blended) model of Seasonal Schools (Winter, Spring and Autumn) online and on campus to ensure that a 'blended' mode of delivery both in-person and online is in place. This echoes current M.Res. practice. The changes do not have any substantive implications on the programme structure.

The Low Residency (Blended) structure of the programme provides an opportunity to accommodate a wider profile and diversity of candidates, which includes part-time and full-time modes of study, and the option to articulate the work developed by students during the M.Res. into year 2 of a PhD. The latter allows students who are unsure about enrolling directly into a PhD, to develop their research skills and interests and potential career development prospects.

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3. b) Please outline how you have advanced/are advancing the principles of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and how you have addressed any EDI-related issues within the following:

Student Recruitment	The M.Res. enhances equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusivity in student recruitment throughout the M.Res. application process. The PL and the Supervisory Cohort support students throughout the recruitment process as well as giving feedback on the contextual nature of research project(s) and M.Res. Research Proposals to positively promote diversity within the M.Res. programme and to encourage applications from under-represented groups including students who fall into the over 30 category (see section 4: Age). In addition, the PL and Supervisory Cohort support studentship funding applications, for example, to the Digital Health & Innovation Centre (DHI) through conducting a rigorous peer review process.
Programme Academic Induction	The M.Res. Winter School held annually in January incorporates the Academic Induction providing new students with a synopsis of the M.Res. Programme, dates of Seasonal Schools, the M.Res. Handbook and signposting GSA Institutional resources. The Seasonal Schools foster good relations between students who share protected characteristics and those who do not within the M.Res. Cohort.
Curriculum (contents, diversification and decolonisation)	The M.Res. is not a taught programme, in lieu of a set curriculum, research training is conducted in intensive Seasonal Schools: Winter; Spring and; Autumn. The Seasonal Schools advance equality of opportunity through the flexible programming of research training and skills development relevant to the contextual nature of students' individual research enquiries.
Learning and Teaching Approaches (activities and practices)	The M.Res. is not a taught programme, it combines tailored post graduate research training – activities and practices – delivered in seasonal schools: winter, spring and autumn that accommodate equality of opportunity for all M.Res. students: Winter School in January introduces the research training programme, induction, learning resources including CANVAS, contextually located research and its relations to practice and the signposting of institutional resources;

	<p>Spring School is held in March/April and focuses on theory, methodological orientation and appropriate methods that underpin research inquiries;</p> <p>Autumn School usually held in September hosts Mock Vivas and supports candidates goal setting and milestones in preparation for undertaking the <i>Viva Voce</i>.</p>
<p>Assessment and Feedback Methods</p>	<p>Assessment M.Res. Assessment is by <i>Viva Voce</i> [usually in January] comprising an Internal and External Examiner with a Convener. Following student feedback on the <i>Viva Voce</i> experience and examination process – particularly through the lens of neurodiversity - we have developed the use of Topic Guides provided during the Mock and final Viva examinations. We have received positive student feedback on this enhancement, which allows students to prepare for the <i>Viva Voce</i> within a supportive environment in line with embedding and enhancing EDI principles.</p> <p>Feedback Following all Seasonal Schools, the students are provided with the opportunity to give qualitative feedback and an evaluation of their experience. Time is allocated during each Seasonal School to brief students regarding feedback mechanisms, whereby we explain how their feedback will be incorporated in the design and delivery of research training in the following year’s programme. The collection of student feedback is facilitated by the M.Res. Student Rep. who collates the responses, and in doing so, allows for students to feel confident in providing critical feedback that is anonymised thus ensuring that a diverse student voice is embedded into future programme development.</p>
<p>Learning Resources</p>	<p>During the M.Res. programme induction (Winter School), students receive all appropriate resources via CANVAS in conjunction with the bespoke Seasonal School PADLET. In addition, students complete a Training Needs Analysis form, which forms the basis of specific student-focused research training requirements.</p>
<p>Support for Students (e.g. implementing the Student Pastoral Tutor Scheme; signposting to</p>	<p>The weekly M.Res. ‘Bookclub’ sessions, facilitated by Dr Marianne McAra are complementary to Seasonal Schools and supervision and provide pastoral support, which enhance the student experience, create a forum for ‘student voice’ and peer-to-peer interactions. Student wellbeing and signposting to</p>

Student Support services, etc)	Student Support Services are incorporated within the Bookclub sessions as well as during the Induction.
Staff Development	A Supervisors Forum has been set up for supervisors to support each other and to share advice, best practice and champion EDI for all students in the M.Res. cohort and future applicants. Embedding EDI principles and considerations into the role of Supervisors supports mainstreaming not only by setting out the expectations of the institution but also ensuring that staff understand their EDI responsibilities in relation to their supervisory role.
Any other relevant areas	There are currently no further applicable areas to report on.

4. How have you ensured the programme being assessed is advancing positive impact on the protected characteristics? – please address each protected characteristic individually	
Age	It is worthy of note and advancing positive impact that the M.Res. programme is attracting students who fall into the over 30 category. The majority of students on the programme fall in the over 30 category, which is commensurate with national data, on postgraduate students (Source: HESA https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he and aligns with GSA Equality Benchmark data (2021-22) on postgraduate students age range in the 22-24 (50.7%) and 25-39 (39.5%) and the highest (7.1%) category of students over 40.
Disability	Of the current students on the programme there is no declared disability. GSA Equality Benchmark data (2021-22) on postgraduate students indicates that 83% of post graduate students are not known to be disabled. Whilst more can be done to advance positive impact it is important to note that the data on disability is self-declared and captured at application and enrolment stages, and therefore does not account for students who disclose a disability throughout the M.Res. programme including the range of visible, non-visible and mental health conditions that can have a negative effect on everyday life and in so doing impact M.Res. study.
Gender reassignment (covers Trans identities)	The data threshold is too low <5 to report on this category.

Marriage and Civil Partnership (only applicable to staff)	N/A
Pregnancy and Maternity	The data threshold is too low <5 to report on this category.
Race	Programme level data reveals that the majority of students are white - this reflects GSA Equality Benchmark data (2021-22) on postgraduate students - that are represented as 76.7% white. We have focused on and have been relatively successful in attracting and recruiting students from minority ethnic backgrounds and continue to work towards increasing the ethnic diversity of the cohort.
Religion or Belief	The current students on the programme state that they hold no religious beliefs, which aligns with the GSA Equality Monitoring Report (2021-22) whereby the percentage of students disclosing 'No Religion' increased from 65.5% in 17/18 to 68.5% in 21/21. This is consistent regardless of domicile. The flexible nature of the M.Res. accommodates religious holidays for students towards advancing positive impact.
Sex	All the students on the M.Res. programme when it launched in 2016 were female and the majority of the cohort continue to identify as female, which promotes positive impact and gender equality particularly in undertaking PGR study. This is in line with GSA Equality Benchmark data (2021-22) that indicates there are more female (66%) than male (32%) post graduate students. A key action arising from the initial EIA (2016) was to diversify the gender balance within M.Res. recruitment and cohorts, which we continue to do so. In 2021/22, 30.6% of all GSA students identified as 'Male', 68.0% identified as 'Female', and 1.4% identified as 'Other'. These numbers are consistent with previous years and regardless of whether the students are undergraduates or postgraduates. It is interesting to note, GSA Equality Benchmark data 21/22 marks the lowest percentage of male students and highest percentage of female students at GSA over the past five years (30% and 68% respectively).
Sexual orientation	The data threshold is too low <5 to report on this category.
Any other groups (e.g. Care Experienced; Carers; Military Veterans; Low Socioeconomic Status)	The flexible nature of the M.Res. and the mode of delivery of research training in Seasonal Schools has a positive impact attracting students who are carers, individuals with caring responsibilities or have wider caring responsibilities.

(SES); Asylum Seekers; British Sign Language Users, etc)	
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5. Have you identified any negative impact on the protected groups? How have you mitigated it? – please address each protected characteristic individually, providing details of any undertaken actions

Age	No negative impact identified
Disability	No negative impact identified
Gender reassignment (covers Trans identities)	No negative impact identified
Marriage and Civil Partnership (only applicable to staff)	N/A
Pregnancy and Maternity	No negative impact identified
Race	No negative impact identified
Religion or Belief	No negative impact identified
Sex	No negative impact identified
Sexual orientation	No negative impact identified
Any other groups (e.g. Care Experienced; Carers; Military Veterans; Low Socioeconomic Status (SES); Asylum Seekers; British Sign Language Users, etc)	No negative impact identified

6. How does the outcome of this assessment and the actions undertaken support GSA's [2021 - 2025 Equality Outcomes](#)

Although, as indicated above due to small Cohorts programme data for the M.Res. is currently limited, however, there is emerging evidence that the opportunity offered by the flexible M.Res. mode of Post Graduate Research, as opposed to through a taught programme, has the potential for positive impact across a range of protected characteristic groups, particularly for those students who will benefit from a more self-directed experience, for example, students over the age of 30 and those with caring responsibilities, therefore advancing equality for these groups whereby equalities of opportunity, respect for self and others within a supportive M.Res. Cohort is understood and practiced.

The M.Res. supports an inclusive and accessible environment in which the diverse needs of students are systematically anticipated and provided for through:

- Student access to appropriate materials and information in a timely manner pre-arrival/arrival, including Induction, programme specification, aims and objectives and the ILOs of the programme. This ensures that all students can access appropriate materials and information via CANVAS and PADLET in a timely manner. It is anticipated that this will result in a positive impact across all protected characteristic groups, for example disabled students, those with caring responsibilities and particularly for students who are new to GSA, or have been out of education (age) and are unfamiliar with virtual learning environments;

- The programme's small cohort of students are required to work independently. However, students have access to seasonal schools. Seasonal schools are focused on research training and skills acquisition and provide opportunities for shared learning, collaboration and engagement with a range of diverse perspectives in a flexible research environment. This approach fosters positive relations for all protected characteristic in a safe, inclusive and accessible environment that promotes peer-to-peer relations;
- Research Methods Training: The programme is self-directed, and as such, each student identifies their Research Training needs and their own development trajectory, in collaboration with their supervisory team and is responsible for locating the opportunities to resolve these needs. This is underpinned by the ethos of the programme, which is to support the development of distributed models of research training, in order to develop a unique project space for research inquiry, which is both geographically and contextually located. This encourages independent learning and collaboration and prepares graduates for impact-rich academic interactions in the future. In addition to developing and refining their own research skills students learn how to reach out to the external and academic community to drive their own future learning in their chosen career.
- The opportunity to undertake a diverse range of training opportunities that students may draw upon to fulfill training needs. This range of opportunities and modes of delivery (CANVAS; distributed; different times of year; different locations) has the potential to result in positive equality impact across all protected characteristic groups who can access provision, which is appropriate, to their academic and individual research context and needs. The emergent range and flexibility of research training opportunities provide an opportunity to deliver flexible research environments that have the potential to deliver positive impact across all protected characteristic groups, for example disabled students, those with caring responsibilities and students with varied educational and cultural experiences.

Future M.Res. Enhancements and areas of focus include:

- Increasing recruitment of students from currently under-represented groups including increased number of people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds contributing to the research culture at GSA and engaging with diverse local communities.

7. How does the outcome of this assessment and the actions undertaken support the three main duties GSA has under the Equality Act 2010 [Equality Act 2010](#) to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- advance equality of opportunity;
- foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not?

Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation

- Improved monitoring of equality impact across the programme;
- A commitment to addressing any negative impact identified, for example, different experiences for students from protected characteristic groups compared with others;

- Mitigate against any potential or future negative impact;
- Disseminate, share and celebrate any positive impact and practice which supports equality of experience.

Advancing equality of opportunity

- Through contributing to an environment in which students feel free to express and explore their own professional and personal identity through their research inquiry and supporting a research culture where staff are confident in and aware of their supervisory responsibilities in relation to advancing equalities, diversity and championing inclusivity;
- Embedding considerations of equality into guidance for all staff; engaging staff and students in mainstreaming equality consideration in the development and delivery of the programme, developing their confidence to engage with issues of equality and diversity in research and practice and working with others.

Fostering good relations

- Maintaining and developing the programme ethos in collaboration with students to create an environment in SIT where students and supervisors can exchange and develop ideas, opinions and knowledge in order to advance equality in our practice and foster good relations.

8. Action plan for positive impact on protected groups – please provide details on any outstanding actions for advancing EDI within your programme, which resulted from the above analysis

- please name an action owner and a timescale for completion
- please keep any completed actions from older versions of the EqIA and provide updates on any actions that have not yet been completed

Action	Equality Impact / Protected Group	Person Responsible	Time frame	Updates/ Completion
Student Recruitment: Annually review marketing and promotional literature and application process	Positively promote diversity within the M.Res. programme to encourage applications from under-represented groups	PL	September 2024	

<p>Next review date – please consider any outstanding actions outlined above;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the whole EqIA form would need to be revised at Periodic Reviews, when there is a major change introduced to the programme, or at intervals of no more than three years (whichever comes first) - nevertheless, EqIAs must also be considered as part of the Programme Monitoring Annual Review (PMAR) process to ensure they are still relevant and the action plan is updated yearly 	<p>Reviewed Annually: next review October 2024 as part of the PMAR process and reported to the SIT Board of Studies and GSA Education Committee.</p>
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<p>Signed off by Owner/Review Lead: Prof. Lynn-Sayers McHattie Programme Leader</p>	<p>19/12/23</p>
<p>Signed off by Senior Lead Prof Gordon Hush, Head of School</p>	<p>11/06/24</p>
<p>Signed off by Equality Lead – Svetoslava Sergieva, Equality Officer</p>	<p>11/01/24</p>
<p>Signed off by Education Committee</p>	<p>11/09/24</p>