

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Policy, practice, process or service title:	REF2029 SRUC Code of Practice
Policy, practice, process or service lead/ owner:	Head of Research
Others involved in EqIA assessment group	Research Operations Lead; Deputy Head of School - Engagement and Knowledge Exchange; Professor; HR rep
Policy, practice, process or service implementation date:	15/05/2026

1 Framing the policy, practice, process or service

1.1 Briefly describe the outcomes, aims and purpose of the policy, practice, process or service:

Focus on the parts of the policy, practice, process or service where equality impacts are most likely.

The REF 2029 Code of Practice set out how SRUC will prepare its Research Excellence Framework 2029 submission. The purpose of the Code of Practice is to ensure that decisions about staff eligibility, research independence, and output selection are fair, transparent, consistent and compliant with the Equality Act 2010.

The Code aims to remove bias from decision-making, support equality and inclusion, and ensure that REF 2029 processes are not used to assess individual staff performance.



1.2 Is the policy, practice, process or service new or being changed, reviewed or stopped?

The policy is new, replacing the REF 2021 Code of Practice.

1.3 Who is affected by this policy, practice, process or service?

Be clear on who the 'customer' is e.g. employees, students, general public.

The policy affects SRUC staff involved in research activities, including academic, research-only, and professional services staff who contribute to research outputs.

It also affects staff involved in REF decision-making, including reviewers and committee members.

1.4 Are there any other SRUC policies that may be affected by this policy, practice, process or service?

List here any other policies that may be affected by changes you make to this policy, practice, process or service, so that any equality impacts found here can be shared with those policy, practice, process or service leads. You may need to consider where there might be cumulative impacts across several policies, practices, processes or services.

This policy aligns with and is supported by existing SRUC policies and procedures, including Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, SRUC Data Handling and Privacy Policy, Grievance Policy and Responsible research assessment principles.

2 Evidence relevant to the policy, practice, process or service including consultation

The information you gather in this section will:

- help you to understand the importance of your policy, practice, process or service for different equality groups,

- inform the depth of equality impact assessment you need to do (this should be proportional to the potential impact on equality groups), and
- provide justification and an audit trail behind your decisions, including where it is agreed an equality impact assessment is not required.

2.1 Evidence: Set out in the table what you know about the experiences of people in terms of each equality group. Consider the diversity within each group (e.g. experiences of people from different religions or faiths) as well as the differences between groups. There may also be cumulative barriers experienced by people when you look at more than one group together (e.g. experiences of women of different minority ethnic groups, so the intersectional impact of sex and race).

You can add more rows to present the evidence if required.

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (e.g. web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy, practice, process or service? Lack of evidence may suggest a gap in knowledge/ need for consultation (step 3).
Age	REF2029 Code of Practice	The Code of Practice applies the same criteria regardless of age. Decisions on inclusion in the volume measure are based on employment contract type and evidence of their research independence and responsibility for research, not age or career stage. Decisions are also confidential – staff are not informed if they are included, nor are their names listed as part of the submission. After scoring, decisions on inclusion in the submission are made primarily on quality. If the quality rating is the same for 2 outputs then the decision on which output to use will consider representativeness of research at SRUC
Disability	REF2029 Code of Practice, Human Resources Intranet Hub: Maximising	The Code of Practice recognises that disability may affect research activities. Decisions are based in contractual responsibilities rather than output volume, and staff are supported through existing SRUC reasonable adjustment processes.

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (e.g. web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy, practice, process or service? Lack of evidence may suggest a gap in knowledge/ need for consultation (step 3).
	Attendance/Support and reasonable adjustments guide	
Race	REF2029 Code of Practice, SRUC My Compliance Library – Diversity and SRUC Unconscious Bias mandatory courses	The Code of Practice requires fair, impartial decision making and prohibit discrimination on the basis of race. Equality and unconscious bias training is mandatory for decision makers.
Sex	REF2029 Code of Practice, Athena Swan Action Plan	The Code of Practice ensures that part-time working, caring responsibilities, and contract type do not disadvantage staff. Decisions are not based on output volume or individual circumstances. They are also confidential – staff are not informed if they are included, nor are their names listed as part of the submission.
Gender Reassignment	SRUC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy; Athena Swan Action Plan; Dignity at Work Policy	No specific negative impacts are identified. The Code of Practice operates within SRUC’s commitment to dignity, respect and inclusion for all staff.
Sexual orientation	SRUC Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy; Dignity at Work Policy	The Code of Practice applies equally to all staff regardless of sexual orientation and is supported by SRUC’s inclusive culture and policies.

Equality characteristics	Evidence source (e.g. web link, report, survey, complaint)	What does the evidence tell you about the experiences of this group in relation to the policy, practice, process or service? Lack of evidence may suggest a gap in knowledge/ need for consultation (step 3).
Religion or Belief	REF 2029 Code of Practice; Dignity at Work Policy	REF processes are administrative and do not disadvantage staff on the basis of religion or belief.
Pregnancy or maternity	REF 2029 Code of Practice; Maternity Leave Policy	The Code of Practice states that REF processes will not disadvantage staff who are on maternity leave or other extended leave, and that communication will reach staff who are absent via their line managers, as is the standard HR practice.
Marriage or civil partnership	Dignity at Work Policy	No impact identified. Marriage or civil partnership status is not relevant to REF 2029 decision making.

2.2 Consultation and stakeholder involvement: Speaking to people who will be affected by your policy, practice, process or service can help clarify the impact it will have on different equality groups. Describe below what you learned from the consultation/ involvement. Consultation can take time so make sure that you build this into your policy, practice, process or service review/ development timeline.

Note who you consulted with, when you consulted with them, and what they told you about the impact of your proposed policy, practice, process or service.

The REF Code of Practice has been included in REF-related presentations and blogs to staff at various meetings and via the Research Q&A sessions over the REF2029 preparation phase. Many staff will also be familiar with it from previous Research Assessment exercises. In the previous REF(REF2021), no negative impacts on any protected groups were identified. Staff consultation has taken place via representative groups and committees (e.g., Research Committee, ALT). Staff have also been encouraged to respond with any feedback via the REF2029 mailbox. The REF2029 Code of Practice and associated EquIA will be uploaded to the SRUC Intranet site

after submission to the REF team and staff will be notified of these and encouraged to send any comments or feedback to the REF2029 mailbox.

2.3 Record here if you need to undertake a full equality impact assessment based on your evidence above.

Outcome of Step 2 following initial evidence gathering and relevance to equality characteristics	Yes/ No (Y or N)	Next steps
There is no relevance to equality	Yes – there is no negative impact on equality and in fact there may be a positive impact in terms of output scoring, as all potential outputs are scored – staff do not select those to be scored.	Proceed to sign off (step 5) to agree with decision makers that no EqIA is required based on current evidence
There is relevance to some or all of the equality groups		Proceed to Step 3: complete full EqIA
It is unclear if there is relevance to some or all of the equality groups		Proceed to Step 3: complete full EqIA

3 Impact on equality groups and changes to policy, practice, process or service

You must consider the three aims of the general duty for each protected characteristic. The following questions will help:

- **Is there potential for discrimination, victimisation, harassment or other unlawful conduct that is prohibited under the Equality Act 2010? How will this be mitigated?**

- **Is there potential to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who do not?**
How can this be achieved?
- **Is there potential for developing good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not?** How can this be achieved?

3.1 Does the policy, practice, process or service have any impacts (whether intended or unintended, positive or negative) on any of the equality characteristics? In the tables below, record the impact of the policy, practice, process or service, as it is planned or as it operates, might have on each equality characteristic and describe what changes in policy, practice, process or service or actions will be required to mitigate that impact or to take advantage of a positive impact.

Equality group	Public sector equality duty	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. E.g. to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
		Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	
Age	Potential for discrimination				
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity				
	Potential to foster good relations				
Disability	Potential for discrimination				
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity				
	Potential to foster good relations				
Race	Potential for discrimination				
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity				

Equality group	Public sector equality duty	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. E.g. to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
		Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	
	Potential to foster good relations				
Sex	Potential for discrimination				
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity				
	Potential to foster good relations				
Gender Reassignment	Potential for discrimination				
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity				
	Potential to foster good relations				
Sexual orientation	Potential for discrimination				
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity				
	Potential to foster good relations				
Religion or Belief	Potential for discrimination				
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity				
	Potential to foster good relations				
Pregnancy or maternity	Potential for discrimination				
	Potential to advance equality of opportunity				
	Potential to foster good relations				
	Potential for discrimination				

Equality group	Public sector equality duty	Place 'X' in the relevant box(es)			Describe the changes or actions (if any) you plan to take. E.g. to mitigate any impact, maximise the positive impact, or record your justification to not make changes despite the potential for adverse impact.
		Positive impact	Negative impact	No impact	
Marriage or civil partnership (in employment only)	Potential to advance equality of opportunity				
	Potential to foster good relations				

3.2 Think about and describe below how your assessment impacts on your policy, practice, process or service review or development timeline including but not limited to:

- Procurement criteria: do you need to include specific equality criteria as part of the technical specification ?
- Communication plan/ products: do you need to communicate with people affected by this policy, practice, process or service in a specific format (e.g. audio, subtitled video, different languages)?
- Cost: do you propose any actions because of this assessment which will incur additional cost?
- Resources: do the actions you propose require additional or specialist resource to deliver them?

3.3 Record the outcome of this assessment below having considered the potential or actual impacts of your policy, practice, process or service on equality groups. Choose from one of the following (mark with an X or delete as appropriate):

Note: You must take action to remove barriers or take advantage of positive opportunities BEFORE the policy, practice, process or service goes live.

Please select (X)	Implications for the policy, practice, process or service
	No major change: Your assessment demonstrates that the policy, practice, process or service is robust. The evidence shows no potential for unlawful discrimination and that you have taken all opportunities to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, subject to continuing monitoring and review.
	Adjust the policy, practice, process or service: You need to take steps to remove any barriers, to better advance equality of to foster good relations. You have set actions to address this and have clear ways of monitoring the impact of the policy, practice, process or service when implemented.
	Continue the policy, practice, process or service: The policy, practice, process or service will continue despite the potential for adverse impact. You have justified this with this assessment and shown how this decision is compatible with our obligations under the public sector equality duty. When you believe any discrimination can be objectively justified you must record in this assessment what this is and how the decision was reached.
	Stop and remove the policy, practice, process or service: The policy, practice, process or service will not be implemented due to adverse effects that are not justified and cannot be mitigated.

4 Monitoring the policy, practice, process or service impact and further actions

It is important to continue to monitor the impact of your policy, practice, process or service on equality groups to ensure that your actual or likely impacts are those you recorded. Your monitoring information will also inform a future review of the policy, practice, process or service.

4.1 Record in the table below how you intend to monitor the impact of this policy, practice, process or service on equality groups. In the table below you should:

- list the relevant measures,
- Identify who or which team is responsible for implementing or monitoring any changes
- Where the measure will be reported to (e.g. committee, ELT, Board) and how often.

Measure	Lead department/ individual	Reporting (where/ frequency)

4.2 Record further actions or changes required after the policy, practice, process or service is implemented in the table below. Make it clear if there are no outstanding actions.

Action	Lead department/ individual	Action target date

5 Sign off and future review

Equality impact assessments must be signed off by the relevant Head of Service/ Department, even where an EqIA is not required. Also note here when you plan to review the policy, practice, process or service and accompanying EqIA which should be no later than 5 years from policy, practice, process or service implementation.

5.1 Senior Responsible Owner/ Committee sign off.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'E. Wall'.

Prof. Eileen Wall

Job/ Committee title: Head of Research

Date: 15/05/2026

5.2 Equality impact assessment review date.

Date: 15/05/2026

Important: You must send the final version of this equality impact assessment to:

- the Equality Diversity & Inclusion Lead.
- the Communications team for publication on SRUC's equality page on the external website.



Document control		
Document control:	V0.1	
Date policy, practice, process or service live from:	[DATE]	
Review/ Approval Group:	[project board if relevant or delete]	
Last reviewed:	Date	
Review cycle:	[No more than three years]	
Document change log		
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V0.1		