

## DEPARTMENT FOR THE ECONOMY

### SECTION 75 EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY SCREENING TEMPLATE

This form should be completed when considering options for a new policy, service or programme, or changing an existing policy, service or programme.

Those policies identified as having significant implications for equality of opportunity must be subject to full EQIA.

The template will provide a record of the factors taken into account if a policy is screened out, or excluded for EQIA. It will be included in the quarterly Screening Report which is published on the Department's website.

#### Please complete the Cover Sheet Table below

<b>Policy Title (in full):</b>	The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.
<b>Policy Aim</b>	<p>To make increases to the prescribed basic and higher amounts which Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland may charge by way of of tuition fees in academic year 2018/19 to students who are ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland (and excepted others).</p> <p>The Department traditionally increases the maximum basic and higher tuition fee rates for students on higher education courses on an annual basis, in line with inflation rates used by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) which have been provided by the Treasury.</p> <p>The All Items Retail Prices Index Excluding Mortgage Interest Payments (RPI-X) is used as the basis for these inflationary uplifts. The forecasted RPI-X figure for January 2019 is 3.3%, and consequently, an increase of 3.3% has been applied to the basic and higher fee amounts for academic year 2018/19.</p>
<b>Decision (delete as appropriate)</b>	Policy screened out <b>without</b> mitigation or an alternative policy adopted.

<b>Business Area:</b>	Student Support Branch, Higher Education Division.
<b>Contact:</b>	Linda Meldrum, 02890 257424.
<b>Date of form completion:</b>	10/05/2017.

**For Equality Unit Completion:**

<b>Date received:</b>	
<b>Amendments requested?</b>	Yes/ No
<b>Date returned to Business Area:</b>	
<b>Date final version received:</b>	
<b>Date placed on S75 Screening Webpage:</b>	

# **Screening flowchart and template** *(taken from Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 – A Guide for public authorities April 2010 (Appendix 1)).*

## **Introduction**

**Part 1. Policy scoping** – asks public authorities to provide details about the policy, procedure, practice and/or decision being screened and what available evidence you have gathered to help make an assessment of the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations.

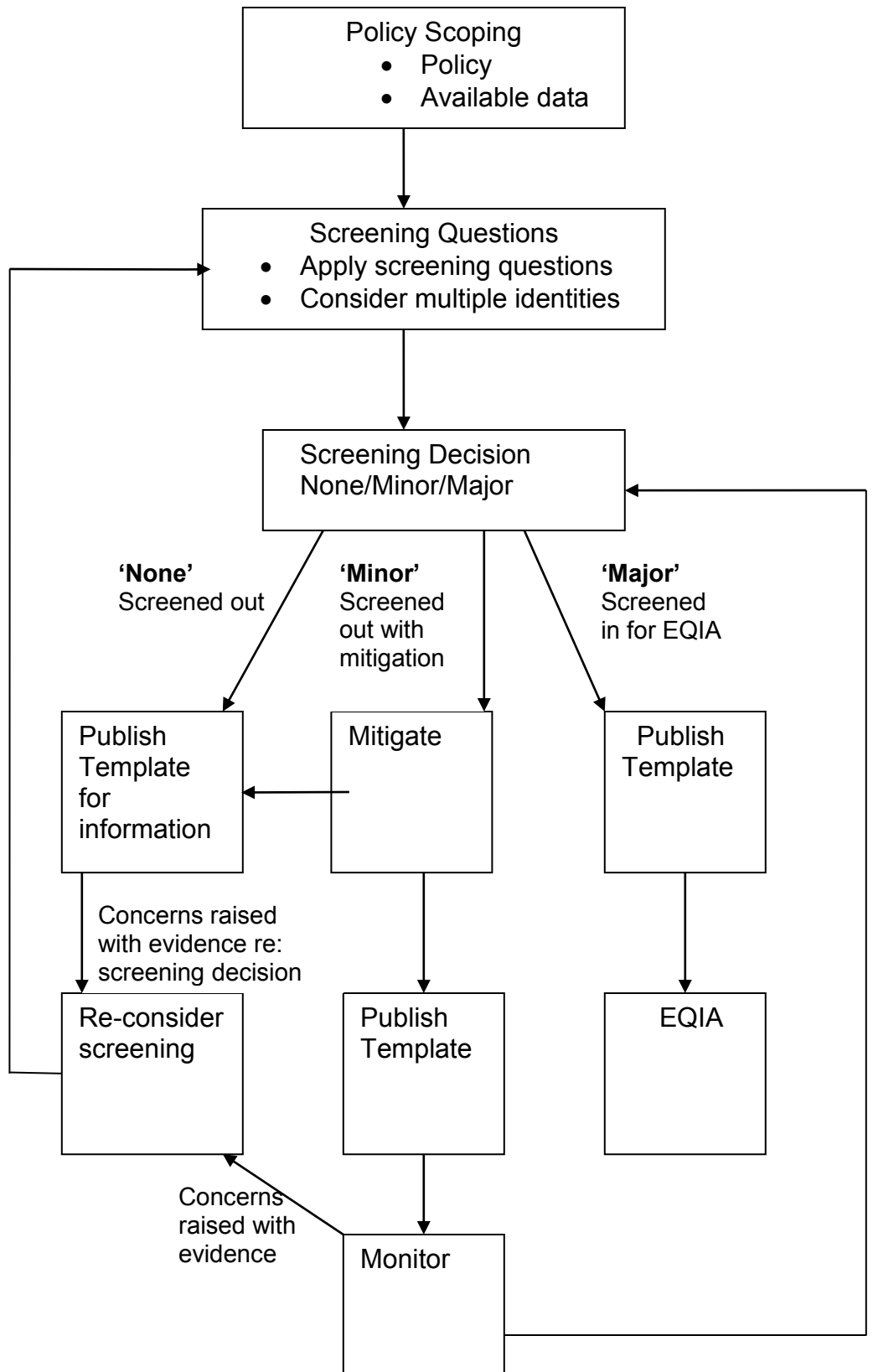
**Part 2. Screening questions** – asks about the extent of the likely impact of the policy on groups of people within each of the Section 75 categories. Details of the groups consulted and the level of assessment of the likely impact. This includes consideration of multiple identity and good relations issues.

**Part 3. Screening decision** – guides the public authority to reach a screening decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment (EQIA), or to introduce measures to mitigate the likely impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

**Part 4. Monitoring** – provides guidance to public authorities on monitoring for adverse impact and broader monitoring.

**Part 5. Approval and authorisation** – verifies the public authority's approval of a screening decision by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

A screening flowchart is provided overleaf.



## Part 1. Policy scoping

The first stage of the screening process involves scoping the policy under consideration. The purpose of policy scoping is to help prepare the background and context and set out the aims and objectives for the policy, being screened. At this stage, scoping the policy will help identify potential constraints as well as opportunities and will help the policy maker work through the screening process on a step by step basis.

Public authorities should remember that the Section 75 statutory duties apply to internal policies (relating to people who work for the authority), as well as external policies (relating to those who are, or could be, served by the authority).

### Information about the policy

Name of the policy
The Student Fees (Amounts) (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2017.
Is this an existing, revised or a new policy?
This is an amendment to existing legislation.
What is it trying to achieve? (intended aims/outcomes)
To make increases to the prescribed basic and higher amounts which Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland may charge by way of tuition fees in academic year 2018/19 to students who are ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland (and excepted others).
Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy? If so, explain how.
No.
Who initiated or wrote the policy?
Student Support Branch, Department for the Economy.

Who owns and who implements the policy?

The Department for the Economy owns and implements the policy.

### **Implementation factors**

Are there any factors which could contribute to/detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy/decision?

No.

If yes, are they:

- financial
- legislative
- other - please specify

### **Main stakeholders affected**

Who are the internal and external stakeholders (actual or potential) that the policy will impact upon?

- staff
- service users
- other public sector organisations
- voluntary / community/trade unions
- other - please specify

### **Other policies with a bearing on this policy**

- what are they?

- who owns them?

### **Available evidence**

Evidence to help inform the screening process may take many forms. Public authorities should ensure that their screening decision is informed by relevant data.

What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories.

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Details of evidence/ information</b>
Religious belief	<b>Independent review of tuition fees and student finance arrangements and public consultation.</b>
Political opinion	<b>Independent review of tuition fees and student finance arrangements and public consultation.</b>
Racial group	<b>Independent review of tuition fees and student finance arrangements and public consultation.</b>
Age	<b>Independent review of tuition fees and student finance arrangements and public consultation.</b>
Marital status	<b>Independent review of tuition fees and student finance arrangements and public consultation.</b>
Sexual orientation	<b>Independent review of tuition fees and student finance arrangements and public consultation.</b>
Men and women	<b>Independent review of tuition fees and student finance arrangements and public consultation.</b>

generally	
Disability	<b>Independent review of tuition fees and student finance arrangements and public consultation.</b>
Dependants	<b>Independent review of tuition fees and student finance arrangements and public consultation.</b>



## Needs, experiences and priorities

Taking into account the information referred to above, what are the different needs, experiences and priorities of each of the following categories, in relation to the particular policy/decision? Specify details for each of the Section 75 categories

<b>Section 75 category</b>	<b>Details of needs/experiences/priorities</b>
Religious belief	<b>None, this amendment makes operational and technical changes that neither challenge nor strengthen Equality as laid out in the above questions.</b>
Political opinion	<b>None, this amendment makes operational and technical changes that neither challenge nor strengthen Equality as laid out in the above questions.</b>
Racial group	<b>None, this amendment makes operational and technical changes that neither challenge nor strengthen Equality as laid out in the above questions.</b>
Age	<b>None, this amendment makes operational and technical changes that neither challenge nor strengthen Equality as laid out in the above questions.</b>
Marital status	<b>None, this amendment makes operational and technical changes that neither challenge nor strengthen Equality as laid out in the above questions.</b>
Sexual orientation	<b>None, this amendment makes operational and technical changes that neither challenge nor strengthen Equality as laid out in the above questions.</b>
Men and women generally	<b>None, this amendment makes operational and technical changes that neither challenge nor strengthen Equality as laid out in the above questions.</b>

Disability	<b>None, this amendment makes operational and technical changes that neither challenge nor strengthen Equality as laid out in the above questions.</b>
Dependants	<b>None, this amendment makes operational and technical changes that neither challenge nor strengthen Equality as laid out in the above questions.</b>

## Part 2. Screening questions

### Introduction

In making a decision as to whether or not there is a need to carry out an equality impact assessment, the public authority should consider its answers to the questions 1-4 which are given on pages 10-12 of this Guide.

If the public authority's conclusion is **none** in respect of all of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then the public authority may decide to screen the policy out. If a policy is 'screened out' as having no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations, a public authority should give details of the reasons for the decision taken.

If the public authority's conclusion is **major** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality of opportunity and/or good relations categories, then consideration should be given to subjecting the policy to the equality impact assessment procedure.

If the public authority's conclusion is **minor** in respect of one or more of the Section 75 equality categories and/or good relations categories, then consideration should still be given to proceeding with an equality impact assessment, or to:

- measures to mitigate the adverse impact; or
- the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

### **In favour of a 'major' impact**

- a) The policy is significant in terms of its strategic importance;
- b) Potential equality impacts are unknown, because, for example, there is insufficient data upon which to make an assessment or because they are complex, and it would be appropriate to conduct an equality impact assessment in order to better assess them;
- c) Potential equality and/or good relations impacts are likely to be adverse or are likely to be experienced disproportionately by groups of people including those who are marginalised or disadvantaged;
- d) Further assessment offers a valuable way to examine the evidence and develop recommendations in respect of a policy about which there are concerns amongst affected individuals and representative groups, for example in respect of multiple identities;
- e) The policy is likely to be challenged by way of judicial review;
- f) The policy is significant in terms of expenditure.

### **In favour of 'minor' impact**

- a) The policy is not unlawfully discriminatory and any residual potential impacts on people are judged to be negligible;
- b) The policy, or certain proposals within it, are potentially unlawfully discriminatory, but this possibility can readily and easily be eliminated by making appropriate changes to the policy or by adopting appropriate mitigating measures;
- c) Any asymmetrical equality impacts caused by the policy are intentional because they are specifically designed to promote equality of opportunity for particular groups of disadvantaged people;
- d) By amending the policy there are better opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations.

## **In favour of none**

- a) The policy has no relevance to equality of opportunity or good relations.
- b) The policy is purely technical in nature and will have no bearing in terms of its likely impact on equality of opportunity or good relations for people within the equality and good relations categories.

Taking into account the evidence presented above, consider and comment on the likely impact on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this policy, in any way, for each of the equality and good relations categories, by applying the screening questions given overleaf and indicate the level of impact on the group i.e. minor, major or none.

## Screening questions

1 What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this policy, for each of the Section 75 equality categories? minor/major/none		
Section 75 category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact? minor/major/none
Religious belief	None	None
Political opinion	None	None
Racial group	None	None
Age	None	None
Marital status	None	None
Sexual orientation	None	None
Men and women generally	None	None
Disability	None	None

Dependants	None	None
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<b>2</b> Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?		
Section 75 category	If <b>Yes</b> , provide details	If <b>No</b> , provide reasons
Religious belief		No, the operational and technical changes in this amendment neither challenge nor strengthen Section 75 categories.
Political opinion		No, the operational and technical changes in this amendment neither challenge nor strengthen Section 75 categories.
Racial group		No, the operational and technical changes in this amendment neither challenge nor strengthen Section 75 categories.
Age		No, the operational and technical changes in this amendment neither challenge nor strengthen Section 75 categories.
Marital status		No, the operational and technical changes in this amendment neither challenge nor strengthen Section 75 categories.
Sexual orientation		No, the operational and technical changes in this amendment neither challenge nor strengthen Section 75 categories.

		categories.
Men and women generally		No, the operational and technical changes in this amendment neither challenge nor strengthen Section 75 categories.
Disability		No, the operational and technical changes in this amendment neither challenge nor strengthen Section 75 categories.
Dependants		No, the operational and technical changes in this amendment neither challenge nor strengthen Section 75 categories.

3 To what extent is the policy likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group? minor/major/none		
Good relations category	Details of policy impact	Level of impact minor/major/none
Religious belief	None	None
Political opinion	None	None
Racial group	None	None

4 Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?		
Good relations category	If <b>Yes</b> , provide details	If <b>No</b> , provide reasons
Religious belief		No, the operational and technical changes in this amendment neither challenge nor strengthen Section 75 categories.
Political opinion		No, the operational and technical changes in this amendment neither challenge nor strengthen Section 75 categories.



Racial group		No, the operational and technical changes in this amendment neither challenge nor strengthen Section 75 categories.
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## **Additional considerations**

### **Multiple identity**

Generally speaking, people can fall into more than one Section 75 category. Taking this into consideration, are there any potential impacts of the policy/decision on people with multiple identities? *(For example; disabled minority ethnic people; disabled women; young Protestant men; and young lesbians, gay and bisexual people).*

No, the operational and technical changes in this amendment neither challenge nor strengthen Section 75 categories.

Provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities. Specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

N/a.

### Part 3. Screening decision

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

This is an amendment to the Student Fees (Amounts) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, which has the effect of increasing the prescribed basic and higher amounts which Higher Education Institutions in Northern Ireland may charge by way of tuition fees in academic year 2018/19 to students who are ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland (and excepted others).

The Department traditionally increases the maximum basic and higher tuition fee rates for students on higher education courses on an annual basis, in line with inflation rates used by the Department for Education (England) which have been provided by the Treasury. These increases do not challenge Section 75.

If the decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment the public authority should consider if the policy should be mitigated or an alternative policy be introduced.

The Regulations set procedural changes to existing policy only.

If the decision is to subject the policy to an equality impact assessment, please provide details of the reasons.

N/a.

All public authorities' equality schemes must state the authority's arrangements for assessing and consulting on the likely impact of

policies adopted or proposed to be adopted by the authority on the promotion of equality of opportunity. The Commission recommends screening and equality impact assessment as the tools to be utilised for such assessments. Further advice on equality impact assessment may be found in a separate Commission publication: Practical Guidance on Equality Impact Assessment.

## Mitigation

When the public authority concludes that the likely impact is 'minor' and an equality impact assessment is not to be conducted, the public authority may consider mitigation to lessen the severity of any equality impact, or the introduction of an alternative policy to better promote equality of opportunity or good relations.

Can the policy/decision be amended or changed or an alternative policy introduced to better promote equality of opportunity and/or good relations?

If so, give the **reasons** to support your decision, together with the proposed changes/amendments or alternative policy.

N/a.

## Timetabling and prioritising

Factors to be considered in timetabling and prioritising policies for equality impact assessment.

If the policy has been '**screened in**' for equality impact assessment, then please answer the following questions to determine its priority for timetabling the equality impact assessment.

On a scale of 1-3, with 1 being the lowest priority and 3 being the highest, assess the policy in terms of its priority for equality impact assessment.

Priority criterion	Rating (1-3)
Effect on equality of opportunity and good relations	N/a
Social need	N/a
Effect on people's daily lives	N/a
Relevance to a public authority's functions	N/a

Note: The Total Rating Score should be used to prioritise the policy in rank order with other policies screened in for equality impact assessment. This list of priorities will assist the public authority in timetabling. Details of the Public Authority's Equality Impact Assessment Timetable should be included in the quarterly Screening Report.

Is the policy affected by timetables established by other relevant public authorities?

No.

If yes, please provide details

## Part 4. Monitoring

Public authorities should consider the guidance contained in the Commission's Monitoring Guidance for Use by Public Authorities (July 2007).

The Commission recommends that where the policy has been amended or an alternative policy introduced, the public authority should monitor more broadly than for adverse impact (See Benefits, P.9-10, paras 2.13 – 2.20 of the Monitoring Guidance).

Effective monitoring will help the public authority identify any future adverse impact arising from the policy which may lead the public authority to conduct an equality impact assessment, as well as help with future planning and policy development.

## Part 5 - Approval and authorisation

<b>Screened by:</b>	<b>Position/Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Conor McCartan	SO	10/05/2017.
<b>Approved by:</b>		
Sian Kerr	G7	10/5/17

Note: A copy of the Screening Template, for each policy screened should be 'signed off' and approved by a senior manager responsible for the policy, made easily accessible on the public authority's website as soon as possible following completion and made available on request.