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# The Agile Initiative: Equality Impact Assessment Template

## About this document

This Equality Impact Assessment template was designed for internal use at the [Agile Initiative](https://www.agile-initiative.ox.ac.uk/), a NERC-funded programme revolutionising how research responds to the urgent needs of policymakers on critical environmental issues through rapid research projects called Sprints. We welcome the adaptation of this document for the purposes of external research projects. If you are curious about applying the Equality Impact Assessment in another area of work, please see this [guidance](https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/equality-analysis) from the Equality and Diversity Unit at the University of Oxford.

If you would like to offer feedback on your use of this document, we would love to hear from you. Please get in touch: [agile@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:agile@oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk)

## Guidance

**Before completing this document, watch** [**the recording**](https://youtu.be/_72DqaZLpwM?si=82eNJlSG1DW1PyVF) **of Agile’s Equality Impact Assessment Workshop and read Agile’s** [**Diversity and Inclusion Plan.**](https://www.agile-initiative.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Agile-Initiative-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Plan_March-2024_v2.pdf)

The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) evaluates the potential or unintended positive and negative impacts of Sprint research on different groups. This includes members of the Sprint team and your stakeholders. It is important to ensure that Sprint research does not directly or indirectly discriminate against any groups based on their protected characteristics. While not a legal requirement in England, the completion of an EIA aims to enhance diversity and inclusion in Sprint research and fulfil the University’s Public Sector Equality Duty. Completing an EIA ensures that research processes are fair and do not present barriers to participation in the development or use of knowledge with Agile.

For definitions of the Equality Act’s protected characteristics, see the [Glossary](#_Glossary). Where possible, please also consider parenting/caring responsibilities, people who work part-time, and socio-economic status, which are defined in the Glossary as well. Consideration of these characteristics align Agile’s EIA process with current best practices in [equality analysis from Oxford’s Equality and Diversity Unit](https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/equality-analysis).

### When to conduct an EIA:

* An EIA must be conducted during the co-creation phase (design and development) of an Agile Sprint, and submitted as part of the full proposal.
* An EIA must be regularly reviewed and updated during the Sprint to ensure continuous monitoring and evaluation of equality impacts.

### Scope of the EIA:

* The EIA is grounded in the principles of the [Equality Act, 2010.](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents)
* The EIA covers activities carried out during the lifespan of the Sprint, through research planning, design, implementation and impact, stakeholder engagement, knowledge dissemination, and team and career development.

### Process:

1. **Identify impacts**: Use the Agile EIA to identify potential positive and negative impacts on different groups based on their protected and other characteristics. Consider the members of your team and your stakeholders.
2. **Prioritise inclusion**: Encourage the integration of diversity and inclusion priorities throughout the Sprint.
3. **Action planning**: Develop actions to mitigate any negative impacts and promote positive impacts identified during the assessment.
4. **Documentation**: Document the findings and actions taken.
5. **Review**: Regularly review the EIA to adapt to project or external environment changes. The EIA should be reviewed briefly at the 3-month, and 9-month points and at any point there are major changes proposed to the Sprint during its life cycle. Progress will be reviewed more formally during check-in meetings at the 6- and 12-month points of the Sprint.

The EIA process should be integral to Sprint planning and monitoring to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion are embedded in the project and proactively managed.

## Equality Impact Assessment:

### Introduction

**Sprint name:**

**Brief description of the Sprint / link to website:**

**Sprint lead:**

**EIA version number:**

*For example, Sprint Name EIA\_V1.0 for the first version, 1.1 for small changes to the first version, 2.0 for major changes and updates, etc. Please match this to the file name.*

**Completion date (DD/MM/YYYY):**

**Next review date (DD/MM/YYYY):**

**Reason for Equality Impact Assessment:**

*Please select the reason and delete the other options as applicable:*

* New Sprint (co-creation/design phase)
* Proposed change to an ongoing Sprint
* Undertaking a review of an ongoing Sprint (e.g., at the 3-, 6-, 9-month meetings)
* Other (please state below)

**Description of the current phase of Sprint at the time of assessment.**

*Briefly describe the stage and progress of your Sprint.*

### Consideration of equality, diversity and inclusion

1. **In what way is equality important in the context of this Sprint? Provide high level considerations related to the Sprint such as academic discipline, methodology, stakeholders, knowledge dissemination, as well as team recruitment and development.**

*For example, do you and your Sprint team think that your Sprint topic is gender neutral? Culturally neutral? Ability neutral? Is that assessment based on individual/institutional/societal norms and attitudes? Are there any assumptions that need challenging or other perspectives and options that need to be considered?[[1]](#footnote-2) Please reference protected characteristics and other characteristics of the groups (**team members and stakeholders) participating in or affected by the Sprint research.*

1. **What data or evidence have you identified that demonstrates the potential impact for groups participating in or affected by the Sprint research? Please do not share any private, sensitive, or personal data.**

*For example, you may discuss impact on groups based on their protected characteristics by referring to national workforce statistics, demographic information, needs assessment consultations, university staff surveys, etc.*

1. **Are there missing pieces of data or evidence that hinder understanding about the potential impact of the Sprint research on different groups?**

*If yes, what is the missing information, and what is your plan for gathering more data or evidence?*

1. **During the lifespan of your Sprint, could the project affect people with different characteristics in different ways? Consider your stakeholders and the members of your Sprint team.** 
   1. **Describe below whether the Sprint is likely to have potential positive or negative impact (or both) for groups based on their protected characteristics and other characteristics (please refer to the** [**Glossary**](#_Glossary)**).**

*You are encouraged to consider how some groups may experience impact based on a combination of characteristics e.g., retired farmers in rural Ireland may be impacted differently based on their age, socio-economic status, and geographical location. Early career researchers in the environmental sciences may experience different degrees of positive or negative impact based on their sex, race, and parenting responsibilities.*

* 1. **Identify what practical actions, changes or mitigations will enhance or mitigate the positive or negative impact described in the question above.**

*For example, research findings will be shared with retired farmers in-person at community libraries where audio induction loop systems are available; members of the Sprint team will participate in inclusive leadership training.*

1. **Can you foresee any potential negative impact from the implementation of the anticipated findings, results or recommendations of the completed Sprint research? Please provide detail based on protected characteristics and other characteristics. How might potential negative impacts be mitigated?**

*For example, the anticipated results may lead to a policy recommendation on household energy use that could adversely impact low-income and immigrant communities. This recommendation may also create additional burdens for women who are responsible for day-to-day care work in the household. The Sprint team will aim to mitigate these potential negative impacts by hosting a citizen’s assembly to reflect on the research question, review findings, and provide further recommendations to policy makers.*

1. **Do any of the equality considerations or impacts identified in your responses to questions 3a and 3b require that you complete a new or additional ethics review with the Central University Research Ethics Committee (**[**CUREC**](https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/apply)**)? Please answer yes or no.**

*If yes, please briefly describe how the required steps to finish the review will be completed in time to deliver your Sprint.*

### Monitoring and review

1. **Who will be responsible for implementation of the actions listed in question 4b?**

*Please ensure everyone on your Sprint team has read your EIA and that the actions are delegated across the team.*

1. **How will the actions and potential impacts described above be monitored and reviewed?**

### Signature

**Name and position of the person who completed the EIA:**

**Signature of the Sprint lead:**

# Glossary

## Protected Characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010:

These are the protected characteristics per the Equality Act 2010. Visit the Equality and Human Rights Commission [guide on protected characteristics](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/equality/equality-act-2010/protected-characteristics) for more details on each protected characteristic and types of discrimination.

**Note**: Language is always changing, which can challenge or reinforce existing dynamics of power and oppression. To support a comprehensive EIA, we encourage you to think about how the protected characteristics are defined and consider which groups may be left out.

**Age**: a person or group of a particular age (for example 25-year olds) or from a range of ages (for example 12- to 18-year olds, or pensioners).

**Disability**: a person or group with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities.

**Race**: a group of people defined by their skin colour, nationality, ethnicity, or national origin. A racial group can be made up of more than one distinct racial group, such as Black British.

**Religion or belief**: consider impact on a person or group based on their religion, lack of religion, religious or philosophical belief, or lack of belief.

**Sex**: the Equality Act 2010 defines sex as binary: male or female.

**Sexual orientation**: whether a person's sexual attraction is towards their own sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes. The Equality Act 2010 protects sexual orientation based on a binary definition of male and female.

**Gender reassignment**: where a person undergoes, or proposes to undergo, a process for the purpose of reassigning their sex. When assessing impact, the Agile Initiative encourages consideration of the [Stonewall](https://www.stonewall.org.uk/list-lgbtq-terms#t) definition of gender reassignment: another way of describing a person’s transition. To undergo gender reassignment usually means to undergo some sort of medical intervention, but it can also mean changing names, pronouns, dressing differently and living in their self-identified gender.

**Pregnancy and maternity**: Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant or expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth, and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding. The Equality Act 2010 protects women based on pregnancy and maternity. When assessing impact, the Agile Initiative encourages consideration for parents and caregivers of all genders.

**Marriage or civil partnership:** marriage is a union between a man and a woman or between a same-sex couple. Same-sex couples can also have their relationships legally recognised as 'civil partnerships'. Civil partners must not be treated less favourably than married couples (except where permitted by the Equality Act).

## Other characteristics to consider

**Socio-economic status:** groups defined by their different employment, education, and economic positions.

**Caring responsibilities**: the EDU explains that an individual has caring responsibilities if they look after a dependant because of one or more of the following reasons:

• they have an illness or injury (whether physical or mental) that requires, or is likely to require, care for more than three months

• they have a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010

• they require care for a reason connected with their old age

**Parenting responsibilities**: the EDU explains that parenting responsibilities encompass the legal rights and duties associated with raising a child (under the age of 18), including decision-making about the child's welfare, education, and healthcare. Parenting responsibilities should be considered for biological parents, same-sex parents, and adoptive parents, for example.

**Part-time work**: the EDU explains that University staff work part-time if their contracted hours are less than 100% FTE (full time equivalent). Part-time staff are specifically protected under the Part-time workers (prevention of less favourable treatment) regulations 2000.

**More key terms**

**Direct discrimination**: according to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas), ‘[direct discrimination](https://www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law/direct-discrimination) is when someone is put at a disadvantage or treated less favourably because of a ‘protected characteristic.’ Less favourable treatment can be anything that puts someone with a protected characteristic at a disadvantage, compared to someone who does not have that characteristic.’

**Indirect discrimination**: according to Acas, ‘[indirect discrimination](https://www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law/indirect-discrimination) is when a working practice, policy or rule is the same for everyone but has a worse effect on someone because of a ‘protected characteristic.’

1. These questions are drawn from guidance on applying Gender-based Analysis Plus from the [Government of Canada](https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-analysis-plus/apply-to-work.html). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)