# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Impact Assessment

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| **Title of Policy, Procedure, or Function:** Pre-election period policy | |
| **School/Directorate:** Directorate of External Relations | |
| **Author/Position:** Phil Bale / Public Affairs Advisor | **Date created:** 08/02/2023 |

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| **1. Aims and purpose of Policy, Procedure, or Function:**  The purpose of this policy is to set out arrangements during a ‘pre-election period’. | | |
| **2. Stakeholders:**  (See initial impact assessment)  **Lead directorate:** External Relations  **Lead sub-section:** PASE (Public Affairs, Stakeholder Engagement and Events)  **Affected groups:** all staff, students and visitors to University campuses, during a pre-election period. | | |
| **3. Additional Consultation/Involvement** | | |
| Organisation/person consulted or involved | Date, method, and by whom | Location of consultation records |
| Janine Chalmers / Head of Organisational Development (to discuss EIA process) | July 2022  Via Teams | P Bale |
| Keith Campbell, Estates | September 2022  Via email | J Fernandes |
| President/CEX, AUSA | Various dates in person and via email between Sept 2022 – Feb 2023 | J Fernandes |
| Jennie Pearson, Room Bookings | September 2022 - Feb 2023  Via email | J Fernandes |
| PASE | Various dates between Sept 2022 - Feb 2023  Via email | P Bale/A Michael |
| SMT | September 2022  Via meeting | J Fernandes |
| Development and alumni (for awareness) | September 2022  Via email | J Fernandes |
| a) Brief summary of results of consultation indicating how this has affected the Policy, Procedure, or Function | | |
| This is a new policy and was developed to ensure compliance with its own responsibilities under electoral and charity law (whereby charities must not support or oppose a single political party or election candidate).  The policy was reviewed by SMT and representatives from AUSA, Estates, Room Bookings and PASE were also consulted. Policy was also sent to Development and Alumni for awareness.  During the consultation, clarification was sought from Jennie Pearson/Room Bookings on whether a process needed to be outlined in the policy for the Central Timetabling Team to follow during this short period in case it is different to the Events and Speakers policy, which is currently followed. The policy includes clear guidance that the Events and Speakers policy would still apply during this period and should be consulted. Additional wording has not been added to this policy to ensure guidance is located within a single policy.  The policy has not been materially amended because of the consultation feedback, but further clarification has been added to ensure responsibility for communicating the pre-election period to internal stakeholders will rest with the Head of Public Affairs. | | |
| **4. Monitoring** | | |
| a) Detail method of monitoring of the Policy, Procedure or Function and by whom | | |
| The University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer has ultimate responsibility during the pre-election period for:   * communicating the applicable pre-election period dates, ahead of the start of any pre-election or pre-referendum period. The Head of Public Affairs will, on behalf of the University Secretary and Chief Operating Officer, ensure that these dates are communicated internally to relevant teams, including room bookings, security and communications. SMT, UMG and AUSA will also be reminded about the policy and pre-election period dates prior to a forthcoming election or referendum. * agreeing to the provision of University accommodation for a speaker or event and/or granting permission for the University to be associated with an event, although the individual may delegate authorisation of politically sensitive events during the pre-election period to the Director of External Relations. In the absence of the University Secretary responsibility rests with the Senior Vice-Principal. * maintaining a record of campaigning activities and the decision-making process for approval of any high profile or possibly controversial issues, which can be referenced in any future correspondence with the Electoral Commission or OSCR. * ensuring that all aspects of the University’s [Events and Speakers Policy](https://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/documents/policy-zone-buildings-and-campus/Event_and_Speaker_Policy-August_2016.pdf) are followed for events which are not directly related to the University’s normal academic or administrative business. | | |
| b) Detail how monitoring results will be utilised to develop the Policy, Procedure, or Function | | |
| Policy will be reviewed every three years by the Head of Public Affairs. | | |
| c) Timescale of monitoring including proposed dates  Monitoring will only come into force during a pre-election or pre-referendum period. During elections to the UK Parliament or to the Scottish Parliament, the pre-election period usually starts 25 working days before polling day.  For UK and devolved government departments the pre-election period for local elections is not fixed to any particular date. There is a general convention that extra care should be taken in the three weeks preceding these elections. (UK Parliament, 2022) | | |

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| 5. Impact assessment | | | | |
| Select what impact there will be on each group: | | | | |
| Characteristic | Positive Impact | No Impact | Negative Impact | Not Applicable |
| Race | X |  |  |  |
| Disability (impact may differ according to physical, cognitive, and mental health conditions and impairments): | X |  |  |  |
| British Sign Language (BSL) | X |  |  |  |
| Neurodivergent | X |  |  |  |
| Gender | X |  |  |  |
| Age | X |  |  |  |
| Sexual Orientation | X |  |  |  |
| Religion, Belief or No Belief | X |  |  |  |
| Gender Reassignment | X |  |  |  |
| Non-Binary | X |  |  |  |
| Marriage and Civil Partnership | X |  |  |  |
| Pregnancy and Maternity | X |  |  |  |
| Parents and Carers | X |  |  |  |
| Care Experienced or Estranged | X |  |  |  |
| Socio-Economic Group | X |  |  |  |

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| a) For each negative impact identified above, please state your mitigating actions below with timescales. |
| N/A |
| b) How does this Policy, Procedure, or Function contribute to eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and advancing equality of opportunity? |
| The new policy aims to set out the arrangements which would be put in place during the short period of added sensitivity immediately prior to an election or referendum.  The policy clarifies that the University will not support single political party or candidate events on campus during a pre-election period. This includes staff or students standing for election. The University will continue to support ‘hustings’ and other platforms for respectful debate whilst ensuring compliance with its own responsibilities under electoral and charity law (whereby charities must not support or oppose a single political party or election candidate).  The policy is expected to have a positive impact on reducing the potential for discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the University community by preventing a single political party or candidate from holding events on campus during an election period, some of which may promote positions which go unchallenged and are viewed as offensive and detrimental to one or more protected groups. |
| c) How is the Policy, Procedure, or Function likely to promote good relations between people with different protected characteristics? |
| During a pre-election period, the University needs to be mindful of its statutory and wider responsibilities whilst maintaining a culture which permits freedom of thought and expression. As a charitable body, the University must not support or oppose a single political party or candidate.  A key principle is to ensure fairness during a pre-election period, as well as to ensure people with different protected characteristics are not targeted or disadvantaged as a result of debates or events which might otherwise be held on campus by a single political party or election candidate. |

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| **7. Publication** |
| a) Provide details of arrangements to publish assessment:  This Equality Impact Assessment will be published, once approved by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee on the University’s Equality and Diversity webpages. |

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| **8. Review Date:** Every three years – next review by the Head of Public Affairs due in 2026 |

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| Author (Name and Position): Phil Bale, Public Affairs Advisor |
| Authors signature: P BALE |

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| Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Team member (name): |
| Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Team member signature: |

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| **9. Date of submission to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee:**  24/02/2023 |
| **Approval** Yes No |