

SQA Equality Impact Assessment

Please read the [Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance on assessing impact](#).

Your policy

1 What is the name of your policy, procedure, proposal, project, or decision*?

*Referred to as 'policy' hereafter.

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Policy name | Learning and Development ('L&D' Policy) |
| Completed by | Raymond Holloway |
| Head of service | Elaine Gourlay |
| Date | 5/11/21 |
| Signature | Raymond Holloway |
| Next scheduled review date | 5/5/22 |

2 Main purpose of policy

The L&D Policy has two aims:

Confirm how all colleagues can access learning and development while employed by SQA.

Confirm how learning and development will be financially supported by SQA.

3 Information and evidence used to evaluate impact

What information, and evidence, is being used to evaluate the impact of this policy on people who share protected characteristics?

Access to learning and development

There are approx. 23% more employees working with SQA and four new Directorates since the last update to this policy in 2010. For this reason, the policy has been updated with an explanation of how to access informal and formal learning solutions to better meet the needs of a flexible working culture. We have also increased our use of SQA Academy to host on demand learning that reflects the new skillsets and capabilities of employees, and widened the scope of learning and development solutions that will be financially supported to meet the needs of a larger workforce

Currently there are 130 part time employees with 111 being female. For this reason, the new policy will confirm that development interventions will be offered across the working week to ensure part time employees have the same access as full-time employees and as these employees are predominantly female, the additional provision will ensure females are not disproportionately impacted by access to development.

Financial Support

Recent feedback from users of the current policy stated they felt there was a lack of clarity on eligibility for financial support which meant some colleagues received financial support on a first come first served basis and other colleagues missed the opportunity. For this reason, the new policy clearly confirms the types of learning where financial support is available, and that funding required to enable the use of education around any adaptations made for disabilities will be separate from the core budget so that it can be available when required.

Feedback was received from four employees that a criterion of when financial support for accredited qualifications is available and what qualifications are covered, would be helpful in ensuring transparency around financial decisions based on development need. For this reason, the new version has a criterion that demonstrates what qualifications are covered by financial support from SQA, the request and decision-making process and when the support should be requested to ensure clarity and transparency.

Since the original policy was created there is now a 1-year apprenticeship programme in place. For this reason, the requirement to have been employed by SQA for 12 months before gaining access to financial support has been removed.

There are also currently 80 disabled employees compared with 9 in 2011. For this reason, the policy now includes explicit provision for access to learning to use adaptive equipment. To date one person has requested access to learning how to use adaptive equipment. The request is raised by HR as they are responsible for identifying the equipment is required under the reasonable adjustments' responsibility and OD and Change Management are responsible for providing education to use the identified adaptation.

Are there any gaps in equality information that you will need to fill now/later?

This policy is in draft and there is a short review timescale to review this document once the policy is live and in operation. The policy itself must go through the HR defined process which includes consultation with trade unions and staff networks. This process will help identify any potential areas which could be altered to help better meet our equality duty. These same groups will also be consulted on the best way to inform/educate staff on the new policy.

Are there any people affected by the policy you should consult now? (Include details of findings from consultation if this has already taken place).

We are consulting with SQA employee networks, Trade Unions, and a cross section of policy users from across the organisation – see above. The policy will be reviewed annually on a schedule commencing once this EQIA is published and every 12 months after that date.

Who do you need to get views from, internally and externally? How will you ensure you include 'harder to reach' groups?

As the policy only applies to those already within SQA, we are not seeking feedback from any external agencies. We are consulting with SQA employee networks, Trade Unions, HR policy working group and a cross section of policy users from across the organisation.

Internal Evidence Sources• lessons learned from existing processes

- feedback from employees
- previous complaints
- feedback from SQA's Union representatives

General Equality Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality; foster good relations

Public Sector Equality Duty

SQA is required to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

| Protected characteristic | Impact (positive/negative/neutral) | Please provide more information |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Age | Neutral | <p>As we do not collect equality monitoring data, we cannot assess the impact of the provision on the protected characteristic.</p> <p>However, we have removed the requirement to have been employed by SQA for 12 months before gaining access to financial support as this may negatively impact on younger employees who are more likely to join the organisation as participants on the one year apprenticeship programme.</p> <p>We will continue to review once more data becomes available.</p> |
| Disability | Neutral | <p>As we do not collect equality monitoring data, we cannot assess the impact of the provision on the protected characteristic. However, there is explicit provision in the policy for access to learning to use adaptive equipment. We will continue to review once more data becomes available.</p> |
| Marriage or civil partnership | Neutral | <p>As we do not collect equality monitoring data, we cannot assess the impact of the provision on the protected characteristic.</p> |
| Race | Neutral | <p>As we do not collect equality monitoring data, we cannot assess the impact of the provision on the protected characteristic.</p> |
| Religion, belief or non-belief | Neutral | <p>As we do not collect equality monitoring data, we cannot assess</p> |

| | | |
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| | | the impact of the provision on the protected characteristic. |
| Sexual orientation | Neutral | As we do not collect equality monitoring data, we cannot assess the impact of the provision on the protected characteristic. |
| Gender re-assignment (gender identity and transgender) | Neutral | As we do not collect equality monitoring data we cannot assess the impact of the provision on the protected characteristic. |
| Pregnancy/maternity | Neutral | As we do not collect equality monitoring data, we cannot assess the impact of the provision on the protected characteristic. However, the policy has increased provision for induction for those returning from maternity leave, to effectively welcome them back into the workforce. We will continue to review once more data becomes available. |
| Sex | Neutral | As we do not collect equality monitoring data, we cannot assess the impact of the provision on the protected characteristic. However, the new policy will confirm that development interventions will be offered across the working week to ensure part time employees have the same access as full-time employees and as these employees are predominantly female, the additional provision will ensure females are not disproportionately impacted by access to development. We will continue to review once more data becomes available. |

General Equality Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality; foster good relations

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|----------------------------------|---------|--|
| | | |
| Care experience (where relevant) | Neutral | As we do not collect equality monitoring data, we cannot assess the impact of the provision on the protected characteristic. |

This section provides the opportunity to capture how the policy will contribute towards the three aims of the general equality duty, and to consider if there is anything more we need to do to meet our responsibilities.

5 How might this policy impact on people who share protected characteristics?

Please consider positive or negative impacts. (At the beginning of the process, you may want to record perceived impact. Ongoing monitoring of the policy will allow you to measure the actual impact of the policy.)

General Equality Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality; foster good relations

6 What arrangements could be implemented to reduce or mitigate any potential adverse or negative impacts identified above?

As we do not collect equality monitoring data, we cannot assess the impact of the provision on the protected characteristic therefore no negative impacts have been noted.

7 If you are proceeding with a decision that may have a negative impact despite the mitigatory arrangements identified in Step 5, are you satisfied that this is objectively justified, ie a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim? Please provide explanatory details.

8 Could this policy be revised or changed to better meet the general equality duty?

The policy is currently in draft format. The consultation with various groups prior to launch of the policy may highlight areas which need revision to better meet the aims of our equality duty. There is also a short review period after anticipated launch where changes may also be identified

9 Has there been consultation/is consultation planned with people who will be affected by this policy/procedure/project/decision? Please detail below how this has affected your decision making.

The draft policy will be shared with the SQA employee networks and has also been shared with a cross section of employee representatives.

10 How will this policy be monitored and evaluated?

The impact of the policy will be evaluated through an increase in positive scores from the learning and development questions on the annual people survey.

Once we have access to equality monitoring data and provision of learning solutions, we can monitor access to development through comparing those reports with development record reports from My Review to demonstrate an increase in development has been accessed across different grades, business areas and protected characteristics.

Action plan

| Action: | Owners: | Dates: |
|---|-----------------------|--|
| We will review impact of policy across all groups on a 3-month basis to align with Smarter Working programme and Return Office initiatives. Then on a 12-month basis from date of initial EQIA being published. | OD and Change Manager | TBC once return to office and Smarter Working programme are implemented. |
| Once the % of the organisation has who indicated they would like to continue working from home after a return to the office is confirmed we will review the learning provision and access to learning as hybrid working may require provision and access to learning and development to be widened. | OD and Change Manager | Tbc once return to office and Smarter Working programme are implemented. |
| Although equality monitoring data will not be used in the decision-making process to approve development request, we will explore how to collect equality monitoring data using Business World and where we can use this data within further EQIA. | OD and Change Manager | February 2022 |

Approval and publication

Completed equality impact assessments will be published on SQA's website. As such, they must:

be discussed and approved

be sent electronically to equality@sqa.org.uk

have actions identified, recorded and monitored as part of SQA's equality action plan

Summary of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) of the Equality Act 2010

Components

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have **due regard** to the need to:

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act (**Fairness**)
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (**Opportunity**)
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (**Respect**)

Due regard

Regarding (b) **Opportunity**, having due regard specifically involves taking steps to:

- a) Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic*
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of the persons who do not share it
- c) Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low

Regarding (c) **Respect**, having due regard specifically involves taking steps to:

- a) Tackle prejudice
- b) Promote understanding

*Due regard comprises two linked elements: proportionality and relevance. The weight that public authorities give to equality should be proportionate to how relevant a particular function is to equality. In short, the more relevant a policy, procedure or practice is to equality and people, then the greater the regard that should be paid.

Protected characteristics

The protected characteristics are:

Age
Marriage and Civil Partnership**
Religion or Belief
Disability
Pregnancy and Maternity
Sex

General Equality Duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality; foster good relations

Gender Re-assignment

Race

Sexual Orientation

**Although marriage and civil partnership applies to section a) in employment only, this will be considered for all stakeholders.