

CCEA Equality Screening Exercise

CCEA Advice to the Department of Education on 2022 Awarding

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1 Background and Introduction

CCEA has been commissioned by DE to look at how best to adapt qualifications during 2021/22 given the context of the disruption that these cohorts have faced and the unknown Covid 19 context for the new academic year. The principles that underpin this approach are:

- Fairness – Ensure that students receive fair results that enable judgements to be made about progression to further or higher education, employment or other avenues;
- Reducing burden – Balance the inherent delivery risks with the opportunities afforded by other arrangements, particularly in consideration of the burden on resources;
- Limiting impact – Limit the impact, as far as possible, to the 2021/22 cohorts, to avoid knock-on effects on future examinations and qualifications arrangements;
- Minimising uncertainty- Minimise uncertainty for students and school leaders, maintaining their confidence in the system.
- Realising potential- Enabling students to progress their education, as far as possible, and recognising the importance of knowledge, understanding and skills; and
- Providing flexibility-Ensuring solutions can reasonably withstand changes in health restrictions and delivery conditions.

The key to the unit omission approach is to maintain an appropriate balance between:

- Maintaining the validity of the qualification; and
- Making adaptations to assessments to minimise the impact on students during the Covid 19 pandemic in line with the principles.

All panel members received the CCEA Advice to the Department of Education on 2022 Awarding for the screening exercise.

2 Screening exercise

A screening exercise was carried out with the following included:

- Setting up an equality panel to represent a range of expertise;
- Gathering panel views through an Equality Screening Questionnaire;
- Screening panel meeting to review feedback and agree impacts; and
- Reporting

2.1 Equality panel screening questionnaire

The screening panel were asked to consider and comment on the likely impact, in any way, on equality of opportunity and good relations for those affected by this new and temporary process, including an indication of the level of impact on the group, i.e. minor, major, or none. Comments were invited for each question for the nine Section 75 categories.

1. What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this temporary process, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?
minor/major/none
2. Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?
3. To what extent is the temporary process likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?
minor/major/none
4. Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

Additional questions

5. Are there any potential impacts of the process on people with multiple identities?
6. Are there other potential equality impacts relevant to the outcomes outlined that have not been covered?

2.2 Panel questionnaire returns

11 returns were received from panel members. The summary of the findings to each question are found below.

Question 1 – What is the likely impact on equality of opportunity for those affected by this temporary process, for each of the Section 75 equality categories?

One comment populated all the categories 'As the proposed advice affects all candidates irrespective of gender, there will be no impact on equality of opportunity'.

For Religious Belief, Political Opinion, Racial Group, Marital Status, Sexual Orientation, Men and Women generally and Dependants 10 no impact and 1 minor impact were recorded. No comment was received from the panel in relation to the minor. For Age 9 no impact and 2 minor were recorded. For Disability 1 major/minor, 2 minor and 8 no impact were recorded. It was agreed that the awarding organisation would arrange further consultation with disability groups.

After discussion the response to all nine categories under Question 1 the impact was recorded as minor.

Question 2 - Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equalities categories?

There was 1 yes and 10 No for Age. All other categories had 11 No.

Question 3 - To what extent is the temporary process likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

All 3 categories had 10 No and 1 minor.

Question 4 - Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

All 3 areas were recorded as No.

There were no additional considerations and no other considerations.

2.3 Screening panel meeting

The panel was invited to attend a MST meeting to allow for discussion on the responses and decide on the level of impact for each of the section 75 groups.

Where there was no impact in an equality category that it would be recorded as such and discussion was mainly based around the comments in relation to minor and major impacts. The consultation was in relation to additional bias that may have been introduced into the system by the proposals or additional bias exacerbated by the current conditions could be factored into discussion.

Discussion at the meeting considered the impacts recorded through the questionnaire and concluded that no major impacts on section 75 groups would be

as a result of new bias being introduced.

3. Outcomes

Minor impacts were recorded in all 9 areas.

4. Approvals

	Name	Job Title	Date
Screened by	Name L	Business Unit Manager Regulation	18 May 2021
Approved by	Name A	Head of Resources	28/5/21

Minutes of the Equality Screening Exercise in Relation to Summer 2022 Advice

Date: 18 May 2021

In attendance: Name L (Chair), Name D, Name H, Name I, Name M, Name R, Name P, Name Q, Name N, Name F, Name K, Name B.

Apologies:

Name A.

Name B welcomed the panel and thanked them for the timely turnaround in forwarding the completed questionnaires for the meeting and for their contribution. She then introduced the Chair.

The Chair opened by advising that the meeting was to discuss whether Advice to the Department of Education on 2022 Awarding could introduce new and/or additional bias to the system of awarding to the normal trends.

'CCEA has been commissioned by DE to look at how best to adapt qualifications during 2021/22 given the context of the disruption that these cohorts have faced and the unknown Covid 19 context for the new academic year. The principles that underpin this approach are fairness, reducing burden, limiting impact, minimising uncertainty, realising potential and providing flexibility. Key to the unit omission approach is to maintain the validity of the qualification and the balance between making adaptations to assess and minimise the impact on students during the Covid 19 pandemic in line with the principles.'

The Chair then proceeded to look at the results of the questionnaire.

In relation to **Question 1**, for Religious Belief, Political Opinion, Racial Group, Marital Status, Sexual Orientation, Men and Women generally and Dependants there were 10 none and 1 minor impact recorded. There was no comment from the panel in relation to the minor. The common statement in all the categories was – As the proposed advice affects all candidates irrespective of section 75 category there will no impact on equality of opportunity.

For Age there was an additional minor and 9 no impact. The additional comment is 'Omissions will have an effect on those candidates who might ordinarily have hoped to complete all assessment units in one year. eg. for GCSE English and GCSE Mathematics.'

Name H asked if 2 units could still be done in a year.

Name I advised that yes, there is no age restriction.

The Chair then recommended that on the basis of the clarity given that the impact be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

For Disability there were 1 minor/major, 2 minor and 8 none.

Name F asked if there had been any consultation with the different disability groups.

Name P advised that throughout development section 75 had been considered and there would have been assurance that specifications were compliant.

Name F made reference to research in the Guardian that morning showing bias and advised that it would be good to say that CCEA have done all they could.

Naem I advised that there is no mandatory omission and that schools have the option to take unit and that effort had been made to ensure there is no disadvantage.

Name F commented that by pushing the decision back to the school the onus was on CCEA to give advice for the most suitable for particular groups.

Name I said that all information is made available and that he trusted that they would make the right decision.

Name M advised that everything had been considered to ensure they are not disadvantaged, if they take all units the higher scoring unit will be used.

Name M proposed to take the issue forward with groups to protect CCEA and give reassurance.

The Chair then proposed that following discussion the impact be recorded as minor. Agree by the panel.

Recommendation:

In response to all nine categories under Question 1, the Chair recommended that as no-one had anything further to add that the impact be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel

Question 2:

There was only one comment in relation to age 'Clear communication re changes for those not in the school system e.g. mature students.'

The above was noted.

Question 3 To what extent is the temporary process likely to impact on good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

There were 10 none and one minor impact and the same comment as before 'As the proposed advice affects all candidates irrespective of political opinion, religious belief and racial group there will no impact on good relations between persons in these categories.'

Question 4: Are there opportunities to better promote good relations between people of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group?

The same comment as before in question 3 which has been closed out.

There were no additional considerations or other considerations.

Summary

The Chair advised that under the area of additional considerations or other considerations there were no issues.

The Chair closed the meeting by thanking the panel for their time and contribution.

The meeting closed.

20/05/21