

## CCEA Equality Screening Exercise

- 1) Option 4.4 .The candidate chooses a unit greater than a minimum assessment value and awarded based on this unit.
- 2) COVID-19 Allowance Scheme (Recognition of Differential Lost Teaching & Learning)

### Table of Contents

		Page
1	Background and Introduction	2
		2
		2
2	Screening Exercise	3
2.1	Equality Panel Screening Questionnaire	3
		4
2.2	Screening Panel Meeting	4
3	Outcomes	5
4	Approvals	5
	Appendix 1 Minutes of the Screening Panel Meeting	

## 1 Background and Introduction

Option 4.4 The candidate chooses a unit greater than a minimum assessment value and awarded based on this unit and the COVID-19 Allowance Scheme (Recognition of Differential Lost Teaching & Learning' were outlined by the Chair.

The Chair then advised that the first questionnaire which would be considered was Option 4.4: **A) The candidate chooses a unit greater than a minimum assessment value and awarded based on this unit.**

Both documents were provided to the panel members to inform their screening of the impact.

## 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
- 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

### **Option 4.4 The candidate chooses a unit greater than a minimum assessment value and awarded based on this unit**

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

In answer to question 1:

- One minor and ten no impact were received for Religious Belief, Political Opinion, Racial Group, Age, Marital Status, Sexual Orientation and Dependants
- Two minor and nine no impact were received for Men and Woman generally.
- Six minor and five no impact were received for Disability.

In answer to question 2, 1 yes response was received for Religious Belief and Political Opinion – ‘opportunities for collaboration between schools from different sectors’.

In answer to Section 4: Other Considerations

- Two comments which were received under the area of other considerations:

‘This is a fair and equitable pathway in my opinion. The acceptability from FE is the greatest challenge however. As not all NI students attend FE in NI this could limit chances against students in other jurisdictions.’

The different weightings of the units that may be taken within a qualification and/or the outcomes associated with each may mean that one unit is more accessible than another, meaning therefore that it is relatively easier to access a higher grade in one route through the qualification than another.’

### **COVID-19 Allowance Scheme (Recognition of Differential Lost Teaching & Learning)**

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

In answer to question 1:

- Two minor and nine no impact were received for Religious Belief.
- One minor and ten no impact were received for Political Opinion, Racial Group and Men and Woman Generally.
- One major, two minor and eight no impact were received for Age.
- Eleven no impacts were received for Marital Status, Sexual Orientation

and Dependants

- One major, four minor and six no impact were received for Disability.

In answer to question 2, one yes response was received for Religious Belief and Political Opinion – ‘opportunities for collaboration between schools from different sectors’. There was one commentary on Disability :

‘Opportunities exist to explore in greater detail the effects of Covid 19 on those suffering with disabilities, in particular mental health issues.’

No comments were put forward by the panel in relation to Question 3 and 4.

In answer to Section 4: Other Considerations

Several points were put forward by the panel and these were closed out by the chair.

### **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**

### **Option 4.4 The candidate chooses a unit greater than a minimum assessment value and awarded based on this unit**

Major Impact 0  
Minor impact 9  
No impact 0

### **COVID-19 Allowance Scheme (Recognition of Differential Lost Teaching & Learning)**

Major Impact 0  
Minor impact 4  
No impact 5

## **4. Approvals**

	Name	Job Title	Date
Screened by	Sharon King	Business Unit Manager Regulation	
Approved by	Kelly McBride	Head of Resources	

## Minutes of the Equality Screening Exercise in Relation to:

- 1 Option 4.4 .The candidate chooses a unit greater than a minimum assessment value and awarded based on this unit.**
- 2 COVID-19 Allowance Scheme (Recognition of Differential Lost Teaching & Learning)**

**Date:** 9 December 2020

**In attendance:** Sharon King (Chair), Kelly McBride, Liam Dempsey, Treasa Hawksford, , Michael McAuley, Lorraine Neill, Deborah Stinson, David Wilson, Lisa McMahan, John Trueman, Noeleen McGreer, Rosemary Bryans.

### **Apologies:**

N/A

The Chair welcomed the panel and thanked them for the timely turnaround in forwarding the completed questionnaires for the meeting and for their contribution. The Chair introduced the meeting; the panel would be discussing the outcomes following screening on 'Option 4.4 The candidate chooses a unit greater than a minimum assessment value and awarded based on this unit and the COVID-19 Allowance Scheme (Recognition of Differential Lost Teaching & Learning.'

The Chair advised that there was a total of 11 questionnaire responses and where there was no impact in a equality category that it would be recorded as such and that discussion would be based around the comments in relation to minor and major impacts.

The Chair then advised that the first questionnaire which would be considered was Option 4.4:

**A) The candidate chooses a unit greater than a minimum assessment value and awarded based on this unit.**

The Chair then proceeded to go through each category as itemised in the equality screening document.

### **1 Religious Belief**

<b>Major Impact</b>	<b>Minor Impact</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>

### **Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

### **2. Political Opinion**

<b>Major Impact</b>	<b>Minor Impact</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>

**Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

**3 Racial Group**

Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
0	1	10	11

**Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

**4 Age**

Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
0	1	10	11

**Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

**5 Marital Status**

Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
0	1	10	11

**Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

**6 Sexual Orientation:**

Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
0	1	10	11

**Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

## **7. Men and Women Generally:**

<b>Major Impact</b>	<b>Minor Impact</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Responses</b>
	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>

The Chair read the one comment received from a panel member - 'This would seem to be the fairest and most acceptable pathway for centres. However the option to take AS units being removed creates inequality for some students.'

### **Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

## **8. Disability**

<b>Major Impact</b>	<b>Minor Impact</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>

The Chair read the comments received from the panel members who had assessed under this category as having minor impact:

'People with learning difficulties may need to be supported with this decision. So in reality this is likely to be a school's choice. Saying that this is still a good option for this group.

As above for men and women but with the added complication of lost learning for this group. Potentially more lost learning than those outside of this category.

Students with a learning difficulty may experience increased pressure to have the outcome of their qualification based on one assessment whereas normally they have the opportunity to show performance over numerous assessments.

Some suffering from mental disabilities may have been more severely affected by isolation than others.

Concern that learners in this category may not be best placed to make the decision on unit choice. This may also be taken for them, in which case, is it actually their choice?'

### **Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as minor.

However Chair recorded that communications by the AO to centres on the importance of supporting candidates will serve to mitigate this further.

Agreed by panel.

## **9. Dependants**



Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
0	1	10	11

**Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

**Sect 2: Are there Opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the section 75 categories?**

The Chair advised that the only feedback received was in relation to religious belief and political opinion where a panel member felt there was opportunity 'for collaboration between different schools in relation to these two areas and this was reiterated in sect 4 which asks specifically if there are opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity between people of different religious, political and racial groups.

**Sect 4: Other considerations**

The Chair read out the two comments which were received under the area of other considerations:

'This is a fair and equitable pathway in my opinion. The acceptability from FE is the greatest challenge however. As not all NI students attend FE in NI this could limit chances against students in other jurisdictions.

The different weightings of the units that may be taken within a qualification and/or the outcomes associated with each may mean that one unit is more accessible than another, meaning therefore that it is relatively easier to access a higher grade in one route through the qualification than another.'

The Chair asked for comments from the panel but there were no further comments or discussion from the panel.

**B) COVID-19 Allowance Scheme (Recognition of Differential Lost Teaching & Learning)**

**1 Religious Belief**

Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
0	2	9	11

The Chair read the comments received from the panel members who had assessed under this category as having minor impact:

'Differing procedures in churches may have had and continue to have an impact on infection levels and the need to isolate.

Given the separation in NI of the school system i.e. Catholic controlled and state controlled and the different approaches taken by schools, as stated in the proposal,

to requiring self-isolation and to the continuity of learning during isolation, students of different religious belief may experience a different level of support. The proposed tariff will not compensate for this as it solely looks at the number of days and does not identify the varying levels of support made available to students.'

**Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

**2. Political Opinion**

Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
0	1	10	11

**Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

**3 Racial Group**

Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
0	1	10	11

**Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

**4 Age**

Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
1	2	8	11

The Chair read the comments received from the panel members who had assessed under this category as having minor and major impact:

**Minor**

'Older adults are more likely to lack the technical skills to fully access remote learning and therefore be disproportionately affected by self- isolation. They would however only get the same allowance as every other learner.

Studies have shown older children are more susceptible to contract Covid-19. May therefore be deemed to advantage them.'

**Major**

'In terms of exam classes, these are students more apt to socialise and therefore become a close contact. In addition the disease is more likely to spread among

teenagers than primary school children. For adults studying at FE they possibly have a job which increase their risk of infection if they are in contact with others.

Discussion took place in relation to this category and in particular the response that recorded major impact.

The Chair advised that normal SPC processes would allow for severity of illness in tariffs and criteria and there is a degree of flexibility. On that basis, because the Covid process operates in the same way, they recommended that the impact be reduced from major to minor.'

**Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as minor.

Agreed by the panel.

**5 Marital Status**

Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
0	0	11	11

**Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as none.

Agreed by the panel.

**6 Sexual Orientation:**

Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
0	0	11	11

**Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as none.

Agreed by the panel.

**7. Men and Women Generally:**

Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
	1	10	11

**Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as none.

Agreed by the panel.

**8. Disability**

Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
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1	4	6	11
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The Chair read the comments received from the panel members who had assessed under this category as having minor and major impact:

### **Minor**

'Pupils with learning disabilities are more likely to lack the technical skills to fully access remote learning and therefore be disproportionately affected by self-isolation. They would however only get the same allowance as every other learner. They may also be more dependent on teacher led learning and again be affected more heavily from independent learning at home during self- isolation.

Some suffering from mental disabilities may have been more severely affected by isolation than others.

Understanding process.

Students with a disability, particularly a learning difficulty, may experience a disadvantage, as the proposed tariff does not take account of the level of support provided for home learning.'

### **Major**

'This cohort are likely to need this measure and the concern here is that some of their absence may not be marked under the Covid code.'

A panel member put forward that CCEA are limited in what they can do, but that there should be strong comms to teachers and as such it was recommended that major impact be downgraded to minor.

### **Recommendation:**

The Chair recorded concern about this and stated that the AO should provide guidance to centres about how it communicated this provision to learners and their carers so as they could understand the availability of this.

If this was in place, it was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as none.

Agreed by the panel.

### **9. Dependants**

Major Impact	Minor Impact	None	Responses
0	0	11	11

### **Recommendation:**

It was put forward by the Chair that the impact should be recorded as none.

Agreed by the panel.

**Sect 2: Are there Opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the section 75 categories.**

The Chair advised that similar feedback was received (as in screening of option 4.4) in relation to religious belief and political opinion where a panel member felt there was opportunity 'for collaboration between different schools' in relation to these two areas. In addition, there was commentary in relation to Disability:

'Opportunities exist to explore in greater detail the effects of Covid 19 on those suffering with disabilities, in particular mental health issues.'

These comments were noted.

**Sect 3&4:** No comments were put forward by the panel.

**Additional considerations (Section 75)**

The following comments were put forward:

'People falling into more than one category may have raised attendance levels for perfectly genuine reasons. However if their absence is not captured under the Covid SIMS code they may not benefit.

For example an older adult with caring responsibilities would have the potential impact of extra isolation time for both themselves and their dependent.'

The Chair advised that once again the responsibility was with the centres to capture absence and reasons for absence to ensure comms were articulated clearly.

**Other Considerations**

The following comments were put forward:

'Candidates that may have missed a number of days far in excess of those represented in the bands.

Another equality issue that I would have a concern about is social disadvantage in relation to self-isolation. Different learners come from different socio-economic backgrounds. Those from lower socio-economic backgrounds may not have access to all that others do. These may include access to fast broadband speeds; access to computers/laptops; tablets etc. These could further disadvantage learners in this group, the longer they have to self-isolate and learn remotely.

In more than one socio-economic groups there may also be a lack of support from parents/guardians at home. This disadvantage affects all learners, who are self-isolating, unequally. This could be due to single-parent homes; parents on shift work etc. This may be particularly heightened during this pandemic and people losing jobs. The tariff is one way of attempting to address the issue, but the amount of days out certainly does not tell the whole story. This may be extremely difficult to mitigate for.'

A panel member advised that under current proposals there were bans covering days missed up to 57 days but if there were 90 days or more missed the Centre would need to consider whether the candidate should enter the exam.

The Chair agreed that at a point a centre should consider whether it becomes untenable for a candidate to sit an exam.

The Chair referred to the comment in relation to lack of support from parents/guardians and whilst acknowledging the comment put forward that the Awarding Organisation cannot mitigate for that and that it was with the Centre to do all it could to support.

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

RL Bryans

09/12/20