

Global Partnerships

School/ Directorate

Academic and Corporate Governance

Person Responsible

Caroline Crichton

Created

5th March, 2020

Last Review

5th March, 2020

Status

Assessed

Next Review

1st June, 2021

Screening Data

What is the name/title of the policy/activity?

Global Educational Partnerships

Describe the aim, objective and intended consequences of the policy/activity.

To expand our portfolio of global educational programmes enabling the recruitment of outstanding students and the growth of our worldwide teaching networks.

Who is responsible for the policy/activity and who implements it?

Global educational partnership activity is 1. aligned to the University's International Strategy, which is owned by the Vice Principal, International, and 2. implemented through the working practices, and under the guidance of, the Global Partnerships unit (GP).

Who is effected by this policy?

University staff working with partners and our partnership students. It also has relevance to our partners in so far as we would expect our policies to be acknowledged and, within reason, adhered to.

Is there any indication that this policy is relevant to equality and the protected characteristics or that those with any of the protected characteristics will have a different experience in relation to the intended outcomes of the policy?

Yes - especially in relation to gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, race and religion and belief.

In relation to gender, there are a number of countries of the world where women have less status than men and this can effect the regard with which a member of staff is viewed or the right of women to access higher level education or specific programmes. Similarly men may be affected by cultural views that restrict their career choices or impact on the learning environment.

The ability of individuals with disability to study and work is wholly dependent on the environment and culture within different countries and areas of countries. In addition the availability of support for those with disabilities can be limited and may prevent something as simple as access to a facility. The value of those with disabilities also impacts on the access to higher education around the world.

In relation to sexual orientation, 70 countries around the world criminalise same sex relationships and in some of those countries the punishment is the death penalty. This is a great risk to staff and students in same sex relationships. In particular it may impact on staff members on long term overseas contracts, where partners would normally accompany them or where the member of staff embarks on a same sex relationship whilst in the host country.

With regard to gender reassignment, while many countries now have legislated protection for those who reassign, the culture within a number of countries still impacts greatly on those who reassign. An example is India, where cultural

values still override the legal status of transgender people.

Where race is concerned, the political and cultural influences in a country may create an environment that is either welcoming or a risk to those from different nationalities. In relation to culture, this includes the value placed on some groups which may result in restrictions on earnings, access and opportunities.

The issues relating to religion and belief stem from the rights of minority faith groups within countries where the majority faith is a fundamental one. There is significant evidence of detriment around the world to Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and other small sects within faiths. This has to be taken into account where a member of staff or a student is practicing or believed to practice a faith which may be seen as a threat in some way to the majority within host countries.

Generally in relation to health and access to health services, this varies greatly globally and a number of health conditions have greater impact on different groups. The current Covid 19 situation has highlighted the greater risk to those from black and minority ethnic groups, as well as those with underlying health conditions and older people. These findings would reflect a greater detriment in terms of race, disability and age.

Recommend this EA for Full Analysis?

Yes

Comments

It is our contention that there is relevance to the protected characteristics of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, race and religion and belief.

These in the main relate to different political, cultural and religious values which have a different outcome for those with these protected characteristics, depending on where in the world the partnership is planned or exists.

Currently there is little evidence from those members of staff actively working internationally, however the generic understanding and evidence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, media reports and organisations such as Stonewall, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, United Nations and Amnesty International provide an indication of the levels of risk and where.

In relation to health, the current Covid 19 situation has shone a spotlight on access to health care and additional risk to individuals who are older, have underlying medical conditions, are from black and minority communities and have a role which requires face to face contact with others.

All of these factors should be taken into account when embarking on any partnership.

Rate this EA

Low

Impact Assessment Data

Is this policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Age?

- Yes

There is no evidence of detriment related to age in relation to global partnerships, although there is a general understanding or discrimination of older people in relation to employment and career progress generally. There is no evidence within the University of such detriment when engaged in global partnerships.

In relation to health risks, the recent Covid 19 pandemic has shown certain groups to be of greater risk, including those over 60 with underlying health conditions. Diabetes has presented as a factor in around one quarter of the deaths, as well as an increased risk for BAME communities.

Whilst the Covid19 situation may not last, it does add an extra dimension to the risk for staff and should be taken account of in any case by case risk assessment. That risk assessment should look at any current health risk that may

be relevant.

Is the policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Disability?

- Yes

The experience of disabled staff members and evidence from wider cultural understanding is that accessibility and acceptance may vary, according to the culture of the host country. Stigma relating to disabilities is widespread and results in low employment and health inequalities, as well as inequality in terms of access to education.

For those with a disability travelling to another country to work, these matters may reflect on how they are received and perceived. Matters of the provision of adjustments to support those with a disability is varied and can be challenging. Provision of assistive technology or accessible accommodation and dietary requirements are some examples of the challenges identified. Valuing the contribution of the individual also may vary.

Evidence for these is supported by the wide range of research carried out by the United Nations and the World Health Organisation:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b18fe3240f0b634aec30791/Disability_stigma_in_developing_countries.pdf
<https://plan-international.org/sexual-health/lgbtiq-inclusion>

In relation to health risks, the recent Covid 19 pandemic has shown certain groups to be of greater risk, including those with underlying health conditions. Diabetes has presented as a factor in around one quarter of the deaths, as well as an increased risk for BAME communities and individuals.

Whilst the Covid19 situation may not last, it does add an extra dimension to the risk for staff and current, relevant health matters should be taken account of in any case by case risk assessment.

Is the policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Gender Reassignment?

- Yes

Whilst gender reassignment and transgender people have protection in law in many countries, the reality of the culture is still challenging and in the extreme can lead to violence toward individuals because of their trans status.

Media reports include the situation in India, where trans people have legal status as a third gender. However there are wide reports of inequality in employment, value and also examples of abuse and death in areas where there are strong religious or cultural influences beyond government. This is also the case in a number of other countries as well as those where trans rights are being removed:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/05/hungary/>
<https://transequality.org/issues/international>
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jamiewareham/2019/11/18/murdered-hanged-and-lynched-331-trans-people-killed-this-year/>
<https://plan-international.org/sexual-health/lgbtiq-inclusion>

Is the policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Marriage and Civil Partnership?

- Yes

The only relevance would be in relation to the Civil Partnership element of this characteristic. This is in relation to the position of LGBT people in 70 countries of the world where same sex relationships are prohibited. This is more likely to be covered through the protected characteristic of sexual orientation:

<https://www.stonewall.org.uk/our-work/campaigns/campaigning-global-lgbt-equality>
<https://plan-international.org/sexual-health/lgbtiq-inclusion>

Is the policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Pregnancy and Maternity?

- Yes

Whilst there may be cultural values which relate to pregnancy and maternity, there has been no evidence of detriment to University staff working in any of our partner countries in relation to pregnancy or maternity.

At this time the Covid 19 pandemic is affecting almost every country of the world. Anyone who is pregnant is classed as being at risk.

Diabetes has presented as a factor in around one quarter of the deaths, as well as an increased risk for BAME communities.

Whilst the Covid19 situation may not last, it does add an extra dimension to the risk for staff and should be taken account of in any case by case risk assessment. This applies to any emerging health risk, irrespective of Covid 19.

Is the policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Race?

- Yes

The value of those from different nationalities, ethnic groups and people of different skin colour, varies greatly from country to country and includes the historical values of white British culture on those of different nationalities.

The risk to individual members of staff is likely to be related to political and cultural values at any given time. In addition to this, the cultural values that we place on others may be a factor.

The cultural understanding may give rise to assumptions on both sides and it is important that personal biases do not influence decisions.

A thorough risk assessment of the political and cultural environment should be carried out on a case by case basis and decisions taken on that, including implementing any mitigation of risk.

In relation to health risks, the recent Covid 19 pandemic has shown certain groups to be of greater risk, including those from BAME communities, who are showing a risk level double that of white communities. In addition underlying health conditions raise that risk and conditions relating to lung function and also diabetes have presented as increasing an individuals risk:

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/most-racist-countries/>

<https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/refugees-racism-and-xenophobia-what-works-to-reduce-discrimination>

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

Whilst the Covid 19 situation may not last, it does add an extra dimension to the risk for staff and should, alongside any other emerging health crisis, be taken account of in any case by case risk assessment.

Is the policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Religion and Belief?

- Yes

Where a dominant faith exists within a country or area of a country, it may be challenging for anyone of a different faith to be valued and supported. Examples of minority faith groups around the world where detriment has been experienced include Coptic Christians, Jews, Muslims, Sikhs and many other sects of main religious groups.

The right to practice a faith can also be restricted in certain countries and that may have a personal impact on anyone working internationally.

Often these matters are related to the dominance of a particular political, cultural or religious regime and it is important that risk assessments carried out in the planning for partnerships takes into account the current situation in relation to religious inclusion. Staff should be fully aware of the situation before agreeing to embark on partnership working:

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>

Is the policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Sex?

- Yes

A number of countries of the world and communities within countries place different values and responsibilities on the different sexes. The United Nations identify over 75 countries where gender inequality is part of the culture. That inequality may stem from political, religious or cultural sources but usually applies to opportunities for employment, access to education, right to protection from violence, including sexual violence.

This is relevant in terms of the safety and wellbeing of staff and also the wellbeing and opportunities for students to study in an inclusive environment. The impact of cultural acceptance can for instance result in a tutor being valued for their contribution or otherwise:

<https://news.1un.org/en/story/2020/03/105873>

Is the policy relevant to the protected characteristic of Sexual Orientation?

- Yes

Same sex relationships are prohibited in 70 countries of the world presenting challenges for LGBT staff and students:

Taking account of the findings so far, is there a possibility that the implementation of this policy would result in a different experience or a detriment for those with protected characteristics?

- Yes

All identified above

Based on your findings so far, what recommendations or changes (if any) would you make in relation to the policy and how it is implemented?

There is significant potential for detriment across all of the protected groups due to the different political, legal and cultural influences in countries with which we may wish to partner with. In addition there are different levels of support in terms of healthcare.

In forming global partnerships, it is imperative that the University undertakes a thorough assessment of the political, cultural, religious and healthcare situation in the relevant country.

Partnerships should reflect the University commitment to equality of opportunity and its values.

The groundwork to establish risk will support the University and individual members of staff to take an informed decision about engaging and travelling to the proposed partner country.

1. All current information on religious, political, cultural and health related position of the country with which a partnership is planned, gathered and assessed before determining any commitment.
2. Emphasis on University values and commitment to equality of opportunity in any partnership contract or agreement.
3. Staff participating in the partnership and visiting or working in the host country to be fully briefed on any risks or concerns.
4. Implementation of reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities, including assistive technology, accommodation, accessible premises from which to work.
5. Access to medical provision for staff working internationally.
6. Support mechanism for staff in country, including keeping in touch regularly and emergency contact.
7. Legal support available for staff in country.
8. Emergency exit plan drawn up and accessible to individuals.
9. A check list developed to include the above when planning global partnerships.

Where you have recommended actions/changes to the policy, what are the timescales for completion of these

31-12-2020

What monitoring arrangements do you have in place to identify changes in any impact or relevance?

The monitoring should be continuous gathering of information on the current situation in relation to the protected groups in any partnership. In addition, keeping in touch should also provide an opportunity to gather concerns, satisfaction from any member of staff in relation to not only their employment but also the environment in which they are living and working.

Where information comes through regularly of issues concerning a partnership or changing political or cultural matters, a re-assessment of the partnership should be made to determine any increasing risk to individuals.

Comments

In relation to global partnerships, the impact of political, social, cultural, religious and health matters in relation to several of the protected groups must be taken into consideration when embarking on a partnership. These influences vary greatly across the world and are constantly changing and so need to be continually reviewed.

The impact and concerns in particular in relation to gender and the value of women, disability and the needs of those with disabilities to overcome environmental and social barriers, race and religion and the tensions between different racial and faith groups are widespread. The current Covid 19 pandemic has raised the added concern regarding vulnerability to different viruses or medical conditions, affecting older people, people with underlying health conditions and those from different ethnic groups.

The University should be fully apprised of any political, social, cultural or religious tensions that could result in

risk to individual members of staff and students, as well as the reputation of the University and its values.

A template for how to progress a plan for partnership should be developed to ensure that the necessary decisions are taken on an informed basis.

The ongoing monitoring of the international stage in relation to the protected characteristics and also gathering information from those working internationally should be used to continually review partnership agreements.

Early emphasis on the University values and commitment to all of its staff and the protected characteristics should be clear in discussions and documents.

Organisation Sign-off Data

Having read the EIA, do you approve its findings and recommendations?

- Yes

What are your reasons for approving/not approving the EIA?

It is our contention that there is relevance to the protected characteristics of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, race and religion and belief. These in the main relate to different political, cultural and religious values which have a different outcome for those with these protected characteristics, depending on where in the world the partnership is planned or exists. Currently there is little evidence from those members of staff actively working internationally, however the generic understanding and evidence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, media reports and organisations such as Stonewall, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, United Nations and Amnesty International provide an indication of the levels of risk and where. In relation to health, the current Covid 19 situation has shone a spotlight on access to health care and additional risk to individuals who are older, have underlying medical conditions, are from black and minority communities and have a role which requires face to face contact with others. All of these factors should be taken into account when embarking on any partnership.

If you have approved the EIA, do you agree with the monitoring arrangements in place?

- Yes

Where you have not approved the monitoring process, what other steps do you require to be taken?

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Comments

It is our contention that there is relevance to the protected characteristics of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, race and religion and belief. These in the main relate to different political, cultural and religious values which have a different outcome for those with these protected characteristics, depending on where in the world the partnership is planned or exists. Currently there is little evidence from those members of staff actively working internationally, however the generic understanding and evidence from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, media reports and organisations such as Stonewall, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, United Nations and Amnesty International provide an indication of the levels of risk and where. In relation to health, the current Covid 19 situation has shone a spotlight on access to health care and additional risk to individuals who are older, have underlying medical conditions, are from black and minority communities and have a role which requires face to face contact with others. All of these factors should be taken into account when embarking on any partnership.

Next Review Date

2021-06-01

Outstanding Actions

No outstanding actions