

Equality Impact Assessment – Previous Study

June 2022

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT - RESULTS

Title of Policy	Previous study - changes to period of previous study
Summary of aims and desired outcomes of Policy	<p>Relevant National Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination • We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society <p>At present, previous study from 1961-1962 or later can affect the funding SAAS can offer to a student. The desired outcome is to reduce this time period from 1961/62 to 2002/03.</p>
Directorate: Division: team	<p>Advanced Learning and Science Directorate.</p> <p>Higher Education and Science: Student Financial Support Team.</p>

Executive summary

A review of the previous study policy, to introduce a new 20 year timeline for which previous study is considered, by bringing the relevant date forward from 1961 to 2002 was carried out, of which this EQIA forms a part.

The EQIA identified that in general, positive impacts as a result of reducing the period in which previous study is considered to 20 years, would have a positive impact for all students, as it allows a new cohort of students to access financial support for education, allowing the opportunity for them to re-train and further their studies.

Background

A project team was formed in late March 2021, comprising of officials from the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS), Higher Education and Science Division (HES) and SGLD, with the aim of consolidating and updating the student support regulations to ensure greater clarity and consistency.

As well as consolidating the existing regulations, the project team will also consider current support policies which are not supported by regulations and those in which we would be potentially vulnerable to challenge – one such area is previous study.

A person's previous study may mean that the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) cannot pay their tuition fees and/or bursary for some or all of a student's course. However, generally, a student can always get a loan for living costs and living-cost grants that they are eligible for.

Currently, previous study from 1961-1962 or later can affect the funding SAAS can give.

These changes contribute to the following national outcomes:

- We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination
- We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society

The Scope of the EQIA

As the change to reduce the time period in which previous study is considered is intended as a positive change for all prospective students, it is considered a concise and focused EQIA is proportionate in these circumstances.

At present, referring to statistics from the SAAS Complaints and Appeals team, from 2018, SAAS have received 873 Previous study cases. Of the 873, 287 were in relation to students who have already qualified with a previous qualification.

Reducing the timeline in which previous study is considered to 20 years, will apply to all students regardless of the protected characteristics and is therefore seen as a positive change for all.

Key Findings

The EQIA identified that there is no information available relating to the characteristics of those with previous study prior to 2002 and therefore the impact that this policy change will have on the protected characteristics. However, reducing the timeline considered for previous study to 20 years is seen as a positive change for all as it allows a new cohort of students to access financial support for education, allowing the opportunity for them to re-train and further their studies.

Recommendations and Conclusion

In conclusion, positive impacts as a result of reducing the timeline considered for previous study to 20 years. have been identified for students in all equality groups.

As SAAS gather statistical data on student applications, we will be able to monitor the impact of this policy change on relevant groups going forward.



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Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

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