

Edinburgh Napier University

Suspended Study Regulations  
Equality Impact Assessment  
July 2014

**Please complete and return by email to Mohammed Hameed, Diversity Partner**  
[m.hameed@napier.ac.uk](mailto:m.hameed@napier.ac.uk)

Faculty/Service Area <b>Student &amp; Academic Services</b>	Date of Assessment <b>24/7/2014</b>	Name of the proposal to be assessed <b>Suspended Study Regulations (within Section A of the Academic Regulations)</b>	Person responsible for the assessment <b>Caroline Turnbull (Convenor of Regulations Committee)</b>
Who was present at the EIA? <b>Caroline Turnbull/ William Goodall/ Anne Ireson/ Janis MacCallum/ Louise McCarte/ Elise Russell/ Katrina Swanton/ Neil Urquhart</b>	Is this a <b>new</b> or <b>existing</b> proposal? <b>New (but extension of an existing document)</b>		When will this proposal be reviewed? <b>Academic Regulations are reviewed on an annual basis by Regulations Committee</b>
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the proposal		<p><b>The University has a long established procedure in place for students suspending their studies, however in 2013/14 Regulations Committee agreed that the academic regulations underpinning the procedures should be reviewed by a working group to make the regulations around suspended study easier to engage with, less ambiguous and to ensure that they are consistently applied across the Institution.</b></p> <p><b>Suspension of studies is a request made by the student with a presumption that their request will ordinarily be supported (regardless of the reason) subject to discussion with a member of academic staff to ensure students are aware of any impacts on their studies, directly arising from any decision to suspend.</b></p>	
2. Who is intended to benefit from the proposal and in what way?		<p><b>Both staff and students are expected to benefit from having clearer, more detailed regulations around suspended study which can be applied fairly and consistently across the Institution.</b></p> <p><b>In addition, family members of students may also benefit from the regulations to facilitate suspended study.</b></p>	

3. What outcomes are wanted from this proposal?	<p>The suspended study regulations are intended to support our students in ultimately achieving a successful student outcome, recognising that some students may require a flexible and adaptive route through their studies.</p> <p>This proposal seeks to ensure that the University continues to have fair and robust regulations which staff and students can apply with confidence.</p>		
4. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?	<p><b>Contribute:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective communication to staff and students around the suspended study regulations at events such as 'Share it with Students' and via communication routes from Assistant Deans to Programme leaders.</li> <li>• The development of effective guidance notes around the suspended study procedures to ensure that staff and students are confident that the student is making a fully informed choice when choosing to suspend study.</li> </ul> <p><b>Detract:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the supporting guidance notes are not available or not accessible in a format which is useful to staff or students</li> <li>• If there is a lack of evidence to be able to evaluate whether any aspects of the procedure are not being applied consistently</li> </ul>		
5. Is it likely that the proposal <b>could</b> have a positive or negative impact on minority ethnic groups, international students and those studying at Edinburgh Napier's partner institutions overseas? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Y		It is expected that the clearer presentation of the regulations will allow them to be better understood by students within this group. It is also explicit that if international students are studying here under Tier 4 visa restrictions, then the suspended study regulations would NOT apply to them and that they would need to seek further advice.
6. Is it likely that the proposal <b>could</b> have a positive or negative impact due to gender (including pregnancy and maternity)? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?		N	<p>The regulations have been written to be equally applied to any student and there is unlikely to be a positive or negative impact for this group.</p> <p>The University is currently developing its pregnancy/maternity policies but these have not yet been approved – however the time-frames for suspended study specified within the procedure would be compatible with periods related to pregnancy/maternity leave.</p>

7. Is it likely that the proposal <b>could</b> have a positive or negative impact due to disability? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?		N	<b>The regulations have been written to be equally applied to any student and there is unlikely to be a positive or negative impact for this group.</b>  <b>Attention should be made to ensure that supporting guidance notes are available in alternative formats on request, to ensure that all students can make a fully informed decision as to whether to suspend studies.</b>
8. Is it likely that the proposal <b>could</b> have a positive or negative impact on people due to sexual orientation? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?		N	<b>The regulations have been written to be equally applied to any student and there is unlikely to be a positive or negative impact for this group.</b>
9. Is it likely that the proposal <b>could</b> have a positive or negative impact on people due to their age? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?		N	<b>The regulations have been written to be equally applied to any student and there is unlikely to be a positive or negative impact for this group.</b>
10. Is it likely that the proposal <b>could</b> have a positive or negative impact on people due to their religious belief (or none)? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Y		<b>The regulations have been written to be equally applied to any student, however given that the student is making the choice to suspend study may have positive impact, for example if a student requires a break in study to observe a religious festival/pilgrimage.</b>
11. Is it likely that the proposal <b>could</b> have a positive or negative impact on people with dependants/caring responsibilities? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?	Y		<b>Having dependents/caring responsibilities is likely to be a common reason for requesting to suspend study. It is expected that the clearer presentation of the regulations will allow them to be better understood by students within this group.</b>
12. Is it likely that the proposal <b>could</b> have a positive or negative impact on people due to them being transgender or transsexual? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?		N	<b>The regulations have been written to be equally applied to any student and there is unlikely to be a positive or negative impact for this group.</b>

13. Is it likely that the proposal <b>could</b> have a positive or negative impact on people due to their marital or civil partnership status? What evidence (either presumed or otherwise) do you have for this?		<b>N</b>	<b>The regulations have been written to be equally applied to any student and there is unlikely to be a positive or negative impact for this group.</b>
Other Related Comments			<p>In discussing all of the groups above, a potential problem has been identified in that the student is expected to agree to suspend study in consultation with the programme leader. There may be a number of reasons why a student may be uncomfortable disclosing the reasons for seeking suspension with the programme leader (for reasons which <i>may</i> be related to race, gender, religion, sexual orientation etc) and may prefer to have that conversation with another trusted member of staff (such as a PDT) – and then for the trusted member of staff to provide assurance to the programme leader that the grounds for suspended study are sound and that the student’s decision is fully informed. It is suggested that a minor amendment should be made to the regulations and associated guidance notes to take account of this.</p> <p>The group also discussed the specific needs of part-time students and the fact that the periods of suspension set out within the regulations are the same regardless of mode of study. The working group had considered this and reflected on the fact that the reasons for suspending study are normally time-dependent (for example the length of time it takes for a broken bone to heal are the same regardless of whether the student is full or part time) and it would not be appropriate to apply the regulations differently just on the basis of mode of study.</p>

<p>14. Describe how this proposal will help the University to meet its Public Sector Equality Duty obligations.</p>			<p><b>The three needs of the Public Sector Equality Duty are to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.</b></li> <li>• <b>Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</b></li> <li>• <b>Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>The review has identified the following actions to be taken to ensure that we meet the obligations:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To amend the regulations to ensure that procedures enable students to consult with a trusted member of staff, rather than this being restricted to the programme leader</b></li> <li>• <b>To ensure that clear and accessible supporting guidance is produced</b></li> <li>• <b>To ensure that the regulations are effectively communicated to staff and to students</b></li> <li>• <b>Put in place measures to monitor how these regulations are applied</b></li> </ul>
---	--	--	---