Full Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

## Skills Development Scotland has a legal duty to consider the impact of any new ‘policy’ on equality groups. A ‘policy’ in this context is taken to mean any new activity, function, policy or product, essentially anything that SDS does. Assessing impact includes considering relevant evidence, including evidence received from equality groups and the likelihood of a positive or negative impact on equality groups of introducing that new product, project or policy. The final section of this form requires us to think about how negative consequences can be mitigated against or removed, and how potential positive impacts can be encouraged. Equality impact assessment helps SDS meet its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. In addition, SDS took the decision to use the impact assessment process to make progress as a Corporate Parent in relation to care experienced young people, which is a component part of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. The process might also be used to consider other groups that SDS has evidence of experiencing discrimination or underrepresentation.

For more detailed information about equality impact assessment, please see EHRC guidance here:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/assessing-impact-and-public-sector-equality-duty-guide-public-authorities>

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of EqIA** (e.g. directorate, large project or service) | SDS Collaborative PhD Programme |
| **Senior Responsible Officer (SRO):** name and job title | Patrick Watt, Head of Evaluation and Research |
| **Does your project link to any other** [**published EqIAs**](https://www.skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk/publications-statistics/publications/?page=1&topic%5b%5d=3-6&order=date-desc)**?**If so, please provide the name of the EqIA (e.g. WBL) | No |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Approved by:** | **Director of:** | **Date approved:** | **Review date:** |
| Signed: | Industry & Enterprise | 28th of March 2022 |  March 2025 |

1. **Purpose of project, policy or product**

This document outlines the EqIA for the SDS Collaborative PhD Programme. The SDS Collaborative PhD programme is a partnership initiative between Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and the [Scottish Graduate School of Social Science](https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/) (SGSSS). Within SDS the PhD Programme is managed by the Evaluation and Research team (E&R). This document has been completed in consultation with SGSSS.

The PhD programme was established in 2013 to engage the academic community in Scotland to support policy-relevant skills research aligned to the evolving skills agenda in Scotland. The focus of the Programme is to examine key questions in skills policy and delivery. The programme aims to develop a new group of researchers with an in-depth understanding of the unique Scottish skills landscape.

The SDS PhD programme currently has 19 students either in their master’s or PhD year. SDS recruits up to four students each year to carry out research on skills related topics identified by SDS.

SGSSS takes a lead in all academic aspects of the programme. SDS identifies the PhD topics and has a key role in facilitating knowledge exchange and policy impact.

* Each PhD has two academic supervisors who lead on student recruitment and are responsible for the student’s academic progress. SDS participates in student recruitment with the academic supervisors.
* Each PhD student has an SDS sponsor who offers practical support to the student including guidance on the SDS topic, access to skills policy documents and introduction to key stakeholders to assist the research process.
* The Evaluation and Research team provides a series of student engagement and networking activities, such as regular student seminars; Annual PhD Networking Event; and Three-minute thesis competition. These activities are designed to promote research findings and create policy impact.

In addition to the PhD Programme, SDS also works with SGSSS to provide three-month PhD Internship opportunities. SDS designs the internships and manages the day-to-day delivery. SGSSS promotes the SDS Internship opportunities across its network, assesses candidates’ academic eligibility and manages the overall administration and funding of the internships.

The main target audiences for the SDS Collaborative PhD Programme and PhD Internship opportunities are:

* Potential PhD candidates seeking to apply for an SDS Collaborative PhD Studentship.
* Potential PhD candidates seeking to apply for an SDS PhD Internship.
* Successful PhD candidates participating in the SDS Collaborative PhD Programme.
* Successful PhD candidates participating an SDS PhD Internship.

We work in close collaboration with SGSSS in the delivery of the collaborative PhD Programme. SGSSS is committed to facilitating the widest possible applicant pool into doctoral study; and minimising any potential barriers to participation (see SGSSS Widening access final strategy report, 2021).

**It should be noted that SDS does not employ the SDS PhD students or PhD interns. The PhD students are recruited by their host university and subject to their terms and conditions which can vary by university. Student stipends are set by the** [**ESRC**](https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/) **and SDS has no control over the finances the student receives. This also means that SDS does not have access to equality information on students at the individual level.**

1. **Evidence and Impact**
	1. **Age**

**Context:**

Higher education is dominated by younger age groups. Postgraduate and PhD students tend to have an older age range as potential candidates normally must hold an undergraduate or master’s qualification. In the UK the median age for starting a PhD is 24 to 25 for full-time students and 32 to 33 for part-time students.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence  | Activity to date  | Further activity required  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Positive impactThe SDS PhD programme and PhD internships are open to all age groups. SDS PhDs and internships are available on a part time basis which may suit older students.  Negative impactThe PhD programme has attracted younger candidates therefore the cohort is skewed to younger age groups (under 35). However, this is consistent with wider statistics on post-graduate education. For older candidates there may be an earnings loss associated with doing a PhD if they are already established in a career.  | Equality Evidence Review (2021)Higher Education Statistics Agency (2021)SGSSS Widening access final strategy report (2021)Cornell (2020)Advance HE (2020) | The SDS PhD programme has attracted students from a broad range of age groups.PhD opportunities and internships are now available on a part-time basis which may suit older candidates. | Work with SGSSS to understand if there are any barriers preventing older age groups undertaking a PhD.Include questions on equality, diversity and inclusion when collecting insights from our PhD students and PhD interns on the PhD Programme. Highlight to students and partners SDS commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. |

* 1. **Disability**

**Context:**

Under the Equality Act 2010, all universities have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to their services, so disabled students are not placed at a substantial disadvantage. Disabled students may be eligible for additional funding and support from their university or SGSSS. It should be noted that SDS is not involved in this process.

Disabled people are underrepresented in higher education and this underrepresentation increases at the postgraduate level. In the UK 15.5% of the undergraduate population disclose as disabled, but this falls to 10% at the research postgraduate level. Disabled students are more likely to study part-time at research degree level. At the research degree level, the most common disability is specific learning difficulty (32%) followed by mental health condition (23%).

Evidence for all students shows that outcomes vary according to disability with those with mental health conditions having the poorest outcomes.

Limited evidence exists on the experience of disabled PhD students. A survey of UK PhD students (Cornell, 2020) highlighted that one third have sought help for anxiety or depression caused by PhD study. Research with postgraduate students carried out for the SGSSS highlighted that a third of respondents who identified as disabled reported that it is very likely that they would be deterred from further study due to underrepresentation. This report further suggested that that there may be a particular stigma around disability in academia from physical access issues that leave disabled students feeling unwelcome. In addition, the way in which some social science methods are presented with an able-bodied researcher as standard may also be having an impact.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence  | Activity to date  | Further activity required  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Positive impactAll our PhDs and masters are fully funded, reducing financial barriers to participation. ESRC funding also provides access to Disabled Students Allowance <https://www.ukri.org/our-work/developing-people-and-skills/find-studentships-and-doctoral-training/get-a-studentship-to-fund-your-doctorate/> which covers: non-medical personal assistance; specialist equipment; extra travel costs; general expenses.PhD studentships and internships are available on a part-time basis which may suit some disabled students. We ensure that venues used for our events are accessible. The PhD Brochure has been accessibility checked. PhD interns are offered reasonable adjustments as part of their placements with SDS. Negative impactsSDS is not the host of the PhD student, so we don’t always know if the student is disabled. This depends on the student disclosing this information to us. Disabled students may be deterred from applying if they feel the proposal, host university, or SDS is not accessible.  | Advance HE (2020)Cornell (2020)Equality Evidence Review (2021) Higher Education Statistics Agency (2021)SGSSS Widening access final strategy report, 2021 | Involvement in SGSSS short life working group on widening access includes a focus on improving access for disabled students.PhD opportunities and internships are now available on a part-time basis.Post March 2020 we can offer ‘virtual’ internship placements. This may benefit disabled PhD students who may wish to work remotely. Our 2021 PhD Brochure was designed for accessibility.  | Work with SGSSS to better understand the barriers facing disabled PhD candidates and students and how to remove these. Review of all PhD Programme materials to ensure they are accessible.Review PhD proposals and internships against accessibility criteria so they are not excluding potential disabled candidates. Encourage students and interns to disclose disability to SDS so we are aware of any needs. Include questions on equality, diversity and inclusion when collecting insights from our PhD students and PhD interns on the PhD Programme. Highlight to students and partners SDS commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.   |

* 1. **Gender reassignment** (sometimes under heading of Transgender)

**Context:**

Wider evidence indicates that trans students may face bullying, harassment, and discrimination while at university. We found limited evidence in relation to the experience of postgraduate or PhD level education for trans students.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence  | Activity to date  | Further activity required  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Positive impactSDS provides training on all protected groups including gender assignment, which member of the E&R team have completed.SDS inclusion in the Stonewall Index may reassure potential students that we are a supportive organisation for trans applicants. NegativeTrans candidates might not disclosure their trans status making evidence difficult to collect.  | Limited available evidenceAdvance HE (2020)Equality Evidence review (2021) | No specific activity to date | Work with SGSSS to ensure that there are no barriers to trans students accessing or participating in the SDS PhD programme.Put mechanisms in place to allow students and university supervisor to record their preferred pronoun if they want to disclose. Include questions on equality, diversity and inclusion when collecting insights from our PhD students and PhD interns on the PhD Programme. Highlight to students and partners SDS commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion |

* 1. **Marriage and civil partnership**

**Context:**

No evidence was found in relation to this characteristic.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence  | Activity to date  | Further activity required  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not relevant  |  |  |  |

* 1. **Pregnancy and maternity**

**Context:**

Pregnancy and maternity can have a negative impact on participation in education and work through discrimination, loss of pay, loss of status and a lack of career progression.

Limited evidence is available on the impact of pregnancy and maternity on students in higher and postgraduate education. A 2009 report by the National Union of students highlighted that student parents can face several barriers including: limited childcare funding; complex student support arrangements; inaccessible teaching practices; limited time to take part in student life.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence  | Activity to date  | Further activity required  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Positive impactOur PhD students have successfully been able to return to study following maternity leave and complete their PhD.SGSSS supports childcare costs for students undertaking events/internshipsFavourable rates of maternity pay are provided by SGSSS (6 months full stipend plus 13 weeks SMP)It is possible to switch from full-time to part-time studies which supports new parents.SDS is supportive of students who need to take an interruption to their studies for maternity leave.PhD studentships and internships are available on a part-time basis which may suit those with young children.Our student cohort model means that any student returning from a period of maternity leave will be able to join a cohort of students at the same stage as them. Online events can make it easier for parents of young children to attend. Negative impactsPregnancy and maternity can impact on completion of PhD as students have to juggle study with other commitments and additional financial and time pressures.   | Advance HE (2020)Equality evidence review (2021)National Union of Students (2009)  | PhD studentships and internships are available on a part-time basis.Switch to online events to increase accessibility. We have made accommodations at face-to-face events so students can attend with their baby. | Work with SGSSS to identify if there is any further support SDS could provide to make the PhD Programme accessible to students impacted by pregnancy and maternity. Include questions on equality, diversity and inclusion when collecting insights from our PhD students and PhD interns on the PhD Programme.Highlight to students and partners SDS commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.  |

* 1. **Race**

**Context:**

Overall Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups are more likely to progress to higher education, but they are underrepresented at the postgraduate level. The proportion of BAME students enrolled in UK HE in 2018/19 drops from 25% at undergraduate level to 18% at postgraduate research level. However, it should be noted that ethnic minority groups are more likely to progress to master’s level but less likely to do a PhD than those from a white background.

Those studying for a PhD in the UK are disproportionately white. Black graduates are significantly less likely to undertake a PhD when compared to white British and British Chinese groups. Black Caribbean graduates have low rates of progression to both taught and research higher degrees.

Evidence from research carried out by SGSSS noted that the lack of pipeline for BAME students in Scotland impacts negatively on the number of BAME students progressing to a PhD.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence  | Activity to date  | Further activity required  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Positive impactBAME students have participated in the SDS PhD programme.Negative impactsBlack, Asian and minority ethnic students are underrepresented in the PhD programme. We have not yet recruited a BAME PhD intern. Lack of BAME PhD students will impact on pipeline of researchers at universities and the wider research profession.  | Advance HE (2020)Equality Evidence review (2021)IFS (2020)SGSSS Widening access final strategy report (2021)Sutton Trust (2021)UK Council for graduate education (2020) | SDS has been invited to join the SGSSS short life working group on widening access which includes improving representation of BAME students.We have included a diversity statement in all PhD student, PhD internship and supervisor recruitment materials. Use of diverse recruitment panels in the recruitment of PhD interns. We have used positive action in the recruitment for one of our PhD internships. We directly targeted and promoted the opportunity to BAME PhD students. All applicants for this opportunity were from a BAME background.  | Work with SGSSS to identify possible barriers to the recruitment of BAME PhD students.Make more use of positive action to encourage BAME students to apply to the PhD Programme and for PhD Internships. For example, looking at PhD topics which may be of interest to those from a BAME background. Work with SGSSS to develop topics that focus on race and consult with the wider academic community. Include questions on equality, diversity and inclusion when collecting insights from our PhD students and PhD interns on the PhD Programme. Highlight to students and partners SDS commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. |

* 1. **Religion or belief**

**Context:**

Limited evidence is available in relation to religion or belief. For the UK student population, the largest group is no religion at 45%, followed by Christian 25% and Muslim 8.4%. These proportions remain similar from undergraduate to postgraduate with the exception that a relatively high proportion of research postgraduate students are Muslim (9.8%) compared to other degree modes.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence  | Activity to date  | Further activity required  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Due to a lack of evidence, we are unaware of any positive or negative impacts.  | Advance HE (2020) | We have included a diversity statement in all PhD student, PhD internship and supervisor recruitment materials that applies to all protected groups including religion or belief.  | Ensure that our events do not clash with religious events or festivals.Ensure facilities for prayer are available at events and SDS offices students may attend, where possible.Include questions on equality, diversity and inclusion when collecting insights from our PhD students and PhD interns on the PhD Programme. Highlight to students and partners SDS commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. |

* 1. **Sex** (or gender)

**Context:**

Women comprise the majority of students in higher education. However at the UK level, men are more likely to progress on to postgraduate research degrees than women – 51% of research postgraduates are male. This varies by subject area with men overrepresented in STEM subjects and women in non-STEM. For example, in the UK women comprise the majority at research level for social studies (54%) and education (67%). Women are more likely to study part-time at research level.

Although women are well represented at undergraduate and PhD level, they remain underrepresented at higher levels in academia. In addition, gender may intersect with other protected groups resulting in greater inequalities, for example intersections between gender and pregnancy and maternity, or gender and race.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence  | Activity to date  | Further activity required  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Positive impactWomen and men are represented on the PhD programme. The larger number of women on the programme reflects the wider gender balance in social science PhD programmes. Negative impactMen are not equally represented on the PhD Programme and in our PhD internships. Reflecting the gender imbalance in social science subjects.  | Equality Evidence Review (2021)IFS (2020) | SDS has been invited to join the SGSSS short life working group on widening access which includes improving representation by gender. We have included a diversity statement in all PhD student, PhD internship and supervisor recruitment materials.  | Work with SGSSS to identify gender barriers to participation and progression in the PhD programme and the intersection with other protected groups. Include questions on equality, diversity and inclusion when collecting insights from our PhD students and PhD interns on the PhD Programme. Highlight to students and partners SDS commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. |

* 1. **Sexual orientation**

**Context:**

Evidence suggests that homophobic bullying decreases in higher education when compared to experiences at school. Limited evidence exists in relation to sexual orientation at the postgraduate and PhD level.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence  | Activity to date  | Further activity required  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Limited evidence in relation to sexual orientation.SDS inclusion in the Stonewall Index may reassure potential students that we are a supportive organisation for LGB+ applicants.  | Equality Evidence Review (2021) | We have included a diversity statement in all PhD student, PhD internship and supervisor recruitment materials.  | Work with SGSSS to understanding any barriers in relation to sexual orientation and participation in the PhD programme. Include questions on equality, diversity and inclusion when collecting insights from our PhD students and PhD interns on the PhD Programme. Highlight to students and partners SDS commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. |

1. Assessing impact on other groups
	1. **Care experience**

**Context:**

Care experienced people are underrepresented in higher education. They are less likely to transition directly to Higher Education from school and more likely to enter HE at a later age.

In the UK care experienced people at university are more likely to be female; disabled; from a BAME background; attend a lower status university; and have progressed to HE from alternative and vocational routes. Care experienced people are more likely to withdraw from their studies. In relation to subject choice, they are more likely to study social sciences and creative arts and less likely to do STEM subjects. They are also underrepresented in higher status universities. Further challenges include financial constraints; insecure accommodation; limited social support networks; and higher incidences of disability.

Analysis of graduate outcomes data (Harrison, 2022) indicates that following graduation care experienced people are more likely to be doing a taught master’s course than other students, but less likely to be doing a research degree.

Limited evidence is available on care experience people undertaking PhD level education.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence  | Activity to date  | Further activity required  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Positive impactSDS collaborative PhDs are all fully funded including the master’s year. This should remove some of the financial issues facing care experienced peopleSDS is a Corporate Parent which ensures we take the needs of care experience people into account.Negative impactSDS is not the host of PhD students, so we don’t always know if a student is care experienced. | Equality Evidence ReviewHarrison et al (2022) | SDS has been invited to join the SGSSS short life working group on widening access which includes improving representation of care experienced students.We have taken steps to ensure that the PhD Programme reflects the needs of care experience people and the role of SDS as a Corporate Parent. One of our PhD topics for 2022 focuses on the transitions of care experience people from school. For the above PhD topic, we are using positive action to encourage applications from care experienced candidates. The E&R team have all completed corporate parenting training provided by SDS. | Work with SGSSS to identify and address barriers to participation and progression in the PhD programme for those students who are care experienced. Include questions on equality, diversity and inclusion when collecting insights from our PhD students and PhD interns on the PhD Programme. Highlight to students and partners SDS commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. |

* 1. **Caring responsibilities**

**Context:**

Research with postgraduate students carried out by SGSSS highlighted that those students with caring responsibilities were more likely to think it would been seen negatively in their applications. However, over a third thought their caring responsibilities had positively impacted on their preparedness for a PhD.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence  | Activity to date  | Further activity required  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PositivePhD studentships and internships are available on a part-time basis which may suit those with caring responsibilities.Online events may benefit those with caring responsibilities.The SGSSS will financially support those with caring responsibilities or who are traveling more than 30 miles to attend any of our events.NegativeAs SDS is not the host of the PhD students we don’t always know the extent of their caring responsibilities.  | SGSSS Widening access final strategy report (2021) | SDS has been invited to join the SGSSS short life working group on widening access which includes considering the needs of those with caring responsibilities. | Work with SGSSS to identify and address barriers to participation and progression in the PhD programme for those students with caring responsibilities. Include questions on the needs of those with caring responsibilities in the next round of student feedback sessions.Highlight to students and partners SDS commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. |

* 1. **Socio-economic disadvantage**

**Context:**

The evidence clearly indicates that those from disadvantaged backgrounds are under-represented in higher education at the undergraduate and post graduate level. Those from lower socio-economic groups are less likely to start a PhD than those from more privileged backgrounds.

Scottish Government research on postgraduate education reports that students from the most deprived areas comprised a lower percentage of the postgraduate entrant population (12.5%) than they did in first degree study (15.6%). Whereas those from the least deprived areas had a higher representation in postgraduate study (30.7%) relative to first degree study (28.2%). They found that graduates from deprived areas are concentrated in subjects where graduates tend not to progress to postgraduate study. They are also more likely to be studying in post-92 institutions where students are less likely to progress on to research degrees.

Research carried out by SGSSs indicated that those from disadvantaged backgrounds were more likely to apply for PhDs where there is a specific topic identified. This may benefit SDS in attracting students from disadvantaged backgrounds as we have an identified topic when recruiting students.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence  | Activity to date  | Further activity required  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PositiveSDS collaborative PhDs are all fully funded including the master’s year. This should remove some of the financial issues facing those from less advantaged backgrounds. One of the benefits of working with SGSSS is that we can access all Scottish HEIs, including those that traditionally attract more disadvantaged students. We have funded several PhDs at post-92 institutions which may have increased the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.The SDS Collaborative Programme has attracted students from non-conventional backgrounds. NegativeAs SDS is not the host institution, we don’t always know the socio-economic background, or circumstances of our PhD students or PhD interns.  | Equality Evidence Review (2021) Sutton Trust (2021)IFS (2020)Commissioner for fair access in Scotland (2020)SGSSS Widening access final strategy report (2021) | SDS has been invited to join the SGSSS short life working group on widening access which includes improving access for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.Extending funding to include master’s year in recognition that having to pay for this year is a significant barrier. Application forms for 2022 have been changed by SGSSS to include information on the ‘whole student’. This means that previous work experience and lived experiences will be considered in the recruitment of the student. | Work with SGSSS to identify and address barriers to participation and progression in the PhD programme for those students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Include questions on equality, diversity and inclusion when collecting insights from our PhD students and PhD interns on the PhD Programme.Highlight to students and partners SDS commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. |

3.4 Island Communities

This section covers our commitments under the Islands (Scotland) Act 2018. This follows the same process as the rest of the form. Please see [Scottish Government Toolkit](https://eur01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.gov.scot%2Fpublications%2Fisland-communities-impact-assessments-guidance-toolkit%2F&data=04%7C01%7CEmma.Hollywood%40sds.co.uk%7C7f3eb17dc574457c0f3908da0bfe3bc6%7C33ca6d475e4f477484f1696cbb508cbe%7C0%7C0%7C637835483819269601%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=ux3RKC6Wm9l%2BWu342CTC7umDfjdRcxPiQm2Z43SEf5M%3D&reserved=0) for more information.  If you feel a more detailed analysis of impact on Island Communities of your project or policy, please contact Seonag.Campbell@sds.co.uk

**Context:**

Limited Evidence was available on PhD level study for those living in island communities. Evidence does suggest that those living in remote rural communities are less likely to hold a degree level qualification that those living in the rest of Scotland (23% compared with 31%). No data was available on post graduate level study.

| Evidence of positive or negative impact | Source of evidence  | Activity to date  | Further activity required  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Positive impactIncreasing use of on-line delivery may make undertaking a PhD easier for those living in island communities. Negative impactDistance of most HEIs from island communities may be a significant barrier to potential students.  | Scottish Government (2021) | Online provision of events and learning.Virtual internships are now possible.  | Work with SGSSS to further understand the needs and barriers to PhD study for those from island communities.  |

1. **Action Plan**

| **What is the action?** | **Which group(s) does it relate to?** | **What is the anticipated outcome?** | **What method is used to measure it?** | **Timescale** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Review the accessibility of PhD programme materials and processes. | Disability | Improved accessibility.Increased engagement and understanding with PhD Programme. | Student feedback.SDS sponsor feedback.University supervisor feedback. | October 2022 |
| Put structures in place to ensure PhD events are inclusive. Both online and face to face. | All | Improved events. | Increased satisfaction with events.  | October 2022 |
| Include our commitment to equality and diversity and supporting students from protected groups in the student induction process. | All | Students are more likely to disclosure their protected status to us. | Increase in number of students disclosing protected status. | December 2022 |
| The SDS PhD programme is clear on our commitment to ED&I in all our communications and promotional activity for the PhD Programme.  | All | Our key partners are aware of our commitment to ED&I. | Feedback from students and other partners and stakeholder. | December 2022 |
| Put mechanisms in place to allow students and university supervisor to record their preferred pronoun if they want to disclose.  | Gender identity | Increased diversity of applicants and students. | Diversity of students. | December 2022 |
| Review all PhD and internship proposals against accessibility criteria to ensure they are not creating barriers to protected groups. | All | Increased diversity of applicants and students. | Diversity of students. | April 2023 |
| Gain a better understanding of equality and diversity in relation to the PhD experience through feedback from our students. | All | Increased understanding of challenges and identification of improvement actions. | Increased satisfaction with PhD programme. | April 2023 |
| Raise awareness of PhD studentships and internships to key target groups to address pipeline issues for underrepresented students. | Race; care experience; disability; socio-economic status. | Improved diversity in programme. | Increase in number of applications and candidates from these groups. | April 2023 |
| Continue to work closely with the Scottish Graduate School for Social Science to identify actions that will increase the participation of students from protected groups. | Gender, race, disability, care experience, caring responsibilities, socio-economic status.  | Increased diversity in the PhD programme. | Diversity of our student cohort. | Ongoing |
| E&R team involved in the SDS Collaborative PhD programme keep up to date in relation to training on ED&I | All | Team are knowledgeable with any changes in relation to ED&I. | Completion of training. | Ongoing |

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