

STEM Bursary Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

September 2018

STEM Bursary Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA)

Policy Background

The Deputy First Minister announced on 8 October 2017 that the Scottish Government would introduce a bursary of £20,000 to attract graduate career changers to teaching. Funding has been made available for 100 bursaries in four key STEM subjects – Maths, Physics, Computing Science and Technical Education to enable career changers to undertake the one year Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) course. These are the secondary school subjects currently with the greatest demand for teachers. Applicants will be expected to have a relevant degree at a level of 2.1 or above with suitable subject content. Normal minimum entry requirements for teacher education courses set by the universities will also apply.

The bursary scheme also fits neatly with the Scottish Government's STEM strategy.

In his announcement on 8 October Mr Swinney stated:

“We need to recruit more teachers in these subjects. And to do that, we need to reach beyond recent graduates and attract people who have the appropriate subject degree but are working in business or industry.

“These ‘career-changers’ still need to go through initial teacher education before they can become teachers – we will never compromise on quality - but we can make it easier for them to make that career change.

“And because we understand that they have to balance family and financial responsibilities that new graduates may not face, we understand that the prospect of giving up a salary for a year while they do their teacher training is a real barrier for them.”

Skills Development Scotland (SDS) will administer the bursary scheme. The elements announced by Mr Swinney have formed the basis of the criteria for eligibility for the bursary scheme.

EQIA Development Process

There has been no separate process for the EQIA but we have ensured that equality issues have been identified throughout the development process and we have been mindful of the definition of protected characteristics contained in the Equality Act 2010 and guidance provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Data

The Teacher Census (Summary Statistics for Schools in Scotland, 12 December 2017) was used for any key data required in considering protected characteristics of age and gender – especially gender as 63% of the existing secondary school teacher workforce is female.

Protected Characteristics

Age

The key purpose of the bursary scheme, to enable career changers to move from salaried positions into teacher education, is seen as the core of the scheme. In our discussions to develop a definition of career changer for the bursary criteria we were mindful to avoid either direct or indirect discrimination in relation to age. Whilst we are keen to encourage wider work experience into the profession we considered that three years' employment was the fairest minimal requirement that we might deem as reasonable to define as a career changer with experience gained in any STEM related industry. Any longer might make younger candidates outwith scope. In addition we built in flexibility of defining the years as three out of the last five years to enable those who may have had career breaks for whatever reason to come within scope.

Race

We are not aware of any evidence that indicates the Stem Bursary criteria could impact positively or negatively on this protected characteristic. The criteria for the bursary scheme has been developed in line with the SAAS residency criteria for funding. In addition an exemption for the requirement to evidence employment has been built into the scheme for those with refugee status.

Disability

We are not aware of any evidence that indicates the Stem Bursary criteria could impact positively or negatively on this protected characteristic. Students will apply for PGDE courses in the normal way through existing university processes.

Gender

There is currently a gender imbalance in the teaching profession and marked differences in the characteristics of the primary and secondary (Teachers in Scotland 12 December 2017 publication):

	% Female	% Male
Teachers - primary	90%	10%
Teachers - secondary	63%	37%

Stem bursaries only apply to four secondary subjects which are the hardest to fill and will apply equally to any eligible individual regardless of gender. In addition in recognition that teaching is a highly female dominated profession and that 33% of secondary female teachers are under the age of 34 we built in an additional flexibility into the career changer definition (three years employment from the last five) to allow for periods of career breaks such as caring and family responsibilities. We are not aware of any evidence that indicates the Stem Bursary criteria could impact

positively or negatively on this protected characteristic as the criteria applies to all individuals.

It is however possible that the requirement to have been in employment for three out of the past five years may have a disproportionate adverse impact on women, given that more women than men are likely to take time out of work for childcare related reasons. To the extent that the policy might be considered indirectly discriminatory, we consider that it can be objectively justified. It is expressly aimed at career changers, with the stated objective of encouraging people into the teaching profession for certain key subjects. The purpose of the bursary is to ease the transition from giving up paid employment to undertake a year of teacher training. The policy does allow scope for career breaks for two out of the last five years, which is considered to be proportionate. There is no reasonable alternative for achieving the same policy aims.

Gender Assignment

We are not aware of any evidence that indicates the Stem Bursary criteria could impact positively or negatively on this protected characteristic.

Sexual Orientation

We are not aware of any evidence that indicates the Stem Bursary criteria could impact positively or negatively on this protected characteristic.

Religion or belief

We are not aware of any evidence that indicates the Stem Bursary criteria could impact positively or negatively on this protected characteristic.



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

© Crown copyright 2018

OGL

This publication is licensed under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0 except where otherwise stated. To view this licence, visit nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3 or write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.

This publication is available at www.gov.scot

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at
The Scottish Government
St Andrew's House
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

ISBN: 978-1-78781-222-2 (web only)

Published by The Scottish Government, September 2018

Produced for The Scottish Government by APS Group Scotland, 21 Tennant Street, Edinburgh EH6 5NA
PPDAS468246 (09/18)

W W W . G O V . S C O T