Equality Impact Assessment (EIA).

As part of the University's commitments in relation to the Equality Act 2010, we are legally bound to show "due regard" to the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) when making decisions and setting policies. This duty focuses on the need to pay due regard to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups, and
- Foster good relations between different groups.

It is therefore essential that consideration is given to the 9 protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010 in regards to any change, with positive and negative impact identified. Change in this context refers to, but is not limited to the following: strategy development; projects and plans; initiatives, policy and procedure creation or amendment; restructure. Evidence of consideration should be logged accordingly, to be referred to in response to any potential legal challenge, whereby the university would be expected to justify their actions and decisions.

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process designed to ensure that policies, practices and initiatives are fair, meet the needs of our staff and students and that they do not unlawfully discriminate against any protected characteristic.

An EIA should form part of any decision-making process and not be seen as an add-on at the final stage. Assessing impact early avoids wasted time and resource, as changes and mitigations can be applied at the outset of the journey, using reliable data and/or engagement with key groups to inform and guide the change. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) are clear that engagement should be proportionate and relevant to the size of the organisation and the significance of decision.

It is imperative that the EIA is completed by the lead colleague responsible for the change in the university, to draw on their specialist knowledge and take ownership from the moment of conception, to the final decision and in regards to future monitoring. Further development will be required to record and measure original expectation, alongside possible further equality action.

The form on page 2 will enable you to reflect on the proposed change and assess the potential positive and negative impact from an equalities perspective on our university community.

Title of EIA:	Virtual Internships
Lead colleague and contact details:	Clare Warwick

Step 1: Identify the proposed change e.g. strategy development; projects and plans; initiatives, policy and procedure creation or amendment; restructure

UoC starting Virtual Internships

Virtual Internships (VI) is an industry-leading platform that offers students the unique opportunity to complete internships with innovative companies from around the world. We are proposing to run a pilot project where eight students will be given the opportunity to complete a 120 hour virtual internships. Students will apply for the opportunity, those who are shortlisted by VI are guaranteed an internship at a company that matches their careers goals and aspirations.

The pilot will start in 2024 with the anticipation to apply for ongoing funding if the project is successful. The opportunity will be advertised across the university and open to applications from any cohort however communications will be targeted towards Undergraduate full-time courses which form part of the Careers and Employability prioritisation plan and those courses which do not have placements embedded into the course. Such as courses from IBIL, IOSE and IOEAS.

The aim of the project is to increase opportunities for our student to develop their work ready skills and give them an opportunity that would not normally be accessible. For the university the aim of the project is to improve progression from full-time higher education and to meet the universities student value proposition. This project intentions are to help aid recruitment and student progression.

Step 2: Please reference sources of data/information, consultation, or individuals/groups you have identified to explore equalities impact

When the Careers and Employability team explored the options for launching the VI offer, we undertook research to develop the project. We looked at data, consulted with academic staff, met with other organisations who have been running VI and throughout the expression of interest process we will also be consulting with the students. Below is an overview of some of our findings:

- OFS stats show that students who have a social or communicative impairment are 75% less likely to progress onto professional employment or training after graduation.
- OFS stats also state that Asian or Asian British- Bangladesh students are 68% less likely to progress onto professional employment or training after graduation. On the APP it sates that overall, students from ethnic minority groups outperform White students in progressing to highly

skilled employment and further study however we have awareness that nationally the picture is very different and as a university the number of students from ethnic minority groups is lower than the national average due to the less diverse population of the North West.

- The second cohort with low progression is (at 55% least likely to progress) Black and Black British- other.
- OFS also states that students who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or other sexual orientation have lower progression outcomes than heterosexuals.

The Access and Participation Plan shows that;

- progression outcomes are significantly poorer for students with Mental Health and Multiple disabilities.
- we have not made consistent progress in closing gaps for students with low household income or socioeconomic status in relation to Progression.
- our offer to and support for Care Leavers does not fully meet their needs to mitigate the considerable factors of disadvantage they face when completing a degree. Attainment is extremely low that conclusions can not be drawn on progression.
- Students' age has a positive impact on their progression after higher education and they preform better than their younger peers.

Due to this we looked into the eligibility criteria for the Cumbrian Bursary. Cumbrian Bursaries are available to students who have a household income of £25,000 or less (assessed by Student Finance England, Student Finance Wales, Student Finance Northern Ireland or Student Awards Agency Scotland). The bursary also has the following prioritisation criteria:

- household income
- have declared Care Leaver status
- have declared a disability
- from an area where not many people go into Higher Education

The Careers Team also consulted with the Disability Team and the Wellbeing Team to establish if there are any factors which could prevent students from accessing the Virtual Internship opportunities. Actions from these meetings are discussed in the table below.
Based on these findings communications will be targeted towards Undergraduate full-time courses which form part of the Careers and Employability prioritisation plan and those courses which do not have placements embedded into the course. Such as courses from IBIL, IOSE and IOEAS.

Positive Action Scheme: This opportunity is open to all undergraduate University of Cumbria students but individuals from a group that is under-represented in achieving positive graduate outcomes, will be encouraged to apply. This includes, but is not limited to Black, Asian and ethnically diverse candidates, 18-21 year olds, disabled students, those who are a recipient of a Cumbrian Bursary recipients (household income under £25,000, have

declared Care Leaver status, have declared a disability, from an area where not many people go into Higher Education), sexual orientation, trans and non-binary people, gender identity and gender expression.

We are particularly seeking applications from students who do not have work-related activity embedded on their course. However, each application will be assessed on its own merit.

Access & Participation Plan
https://unicumbriaac.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/IT/SharedDocuments/Project_Documents/Student_Case_Mgt/Implementation/Existing%20Processes/APP%20WP%20Stu%20Dev/Access-and-Participation-Plan-202021-to-202425.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=xeZUwW

OFS Data

https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/data-and-analysis/associations-between-characteristics-of-students/progressing-from-full-time-higher-education/

	Acknowledge Potential Positive, Negative or Neutral Impact on Groups (please include relevant data if possible)	Action required	Person responsible	Target date	Progress to date
Age (consider older people, younger people, early-career researchers etc.)	Positive impact: Mature students or students with caring responsibilities will be able to undertake the internships. Virtual Internships work 1 to 1 with the students to	• Refer any students to skills team if required. • Continue to offer appointments with the Careers team via My Career Enriched (MCE)	Careers Team Careers Team	Ongoing Ongoing	Careers team briefed Students have a range of online and face to face appointments that they can book with a member of the Careers Team.

identify their needs and match them with opportunities. Due to the opportunities being delivered online, they are more accessible to all ages. Progression rates for this group are high, higher than the younger student population (referrer to Access & Participation plan). Negative: Some students may not feel confident with their IT skills to complete a virtual internship. APP shows that 18-21 are disadvantaged when entering the work place	• Create resource pack for applicants, including links to digital skill enhancement (LinkedIn learning, MCE pathways etc.)	Clare Warwick	March 2024	List of resources required developed.
	• Deliver online/ in-person workshops to help students with the application process	Clare Warwick	Jan 2024	Dates to be agreed
	• VI ensure that every organisation that signs up to host a student on a placement has the correct EDI policy in place.	VI	Complete	EDI Policies checked by VI
	• Students also get allocated a placement based on their needs by completing an Essential Information form and are given a dedicated Intern Experience Manager from VI	VI	March 2024	Essential Information Form is given to all students that undertake a VI so it is already in place

		• VI also have a reporting process as laid out in their policies (see attached policies)	VI	Complete	Refer to EDI Policy attached
Disability (including mental health and non-visible disability)	**Positive:** Accessible for students who have physical/ sensory disabilities/ SpLD. Students will be prioritised to apply for the VI opportunity from the expression of interest form if they are from an under-represented group that has low progression outcomes (see data in proposal attached) Student can request reasonable adjustments before they are allocated a placement. **Negative:** the application process and the date of the internships might put	• Virtual Internships also consider their partners commitment to E&D by assessing they have the correct policies in place • VI EDI & Safeguarding Policies made available to students (resource pack in step 4) • DSA Funding & Cumbrian Bursary recipient added to Eligibility Criteria (justification & background research in proposal attached) • Virtual Internships team to make sure that the placement host is right for the	VI VI Clare Warwick VI	Complete Complete November 2023 March 2024	Refer to EDI Policy attached Refer to EDI Policy attached Information sent to VI to add into application process Essential Information Form is given to all students that undertake a VI so it is already in place

	additional pressure on students who have a mental health disability.	student. Students fill out an Essential Information Form prior to their placement.			
	Different cultures may view disabilities in a different way, for example: attitudes toward a disability may include religious acceptance. Also, people may believe that a disability is caused by factors such as the influence of 'past lives', mystical intervention or the past actions of a parent.	• Resources for students with disabilities (including mental health and non-visible disabilities) made available (see step 4)	Clare Warwick	Complete	List of resources required developed.
	Automatic deselection: Students may lack confidence in their own abilities and/ or suffer from anxiety disorder. Have a negative view of how others see them and struggle to focus on the positives. Similar students who have SPLD may need additional support to complete the application process so	• Workshops to include session on confidence building and selling yourself positively (as recommended by the Health & Wellbeing team)	Clare Warwick	Jan 2024	Dates to be agreed

	that they are not automatically rejected from the application process.				
Gender reassignment (including Trans and non-binary people, gender identity and gender expression)	Negative: Other countries have different laws and cultures to the UK.

Despite some legal and social advances in the past two decades, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) people continue to face widespread discrimination and violence in many countries.

In many countries, it is especially difficult to tackle LGBTI exclusion, discrimination, and violence. First and foremost, there is a deeply entrenched stigma against LGBTI people. Lack of an enabling legal framework, which often is a result of such | • Gender reassignment in resources added to resource pack (see step 4).
• Virtual Internships team to make sure that the placement host is right for the student. Students fill out an Essential Information Form prior to their placement.
• Virtual Internships also consider their partners commitment to E&D by viewing their policies
• Virtual Internships will not open the opportunity to host our students to businesses based in countries where they class Gender | Clare Warwick

VI

VI

VI | Complete

March 2024

Complete

Ongoing | List of resources required developed.

Essential Information Form is given to all students that undertake a VI so it is already in place.

Refer to EDI Policy attached

VI internships are committed to not hosting our students in countries where they class Gender reassignment as illegal. |

	stigma, is another important reason. At this time, 67 countries continue to criminalize homosexuality.	reassignment as illegal. • VI Policies made available to applicants (see step 4).			Please refer to policies attached
			Clare Warwick	Complete	
		• Positive Action: Students including Trans and non-binary people, gender identity and gender expression will be encouraged to apply. The positive action scheme information will be included on the application form (see step 2)	Clare Warwick	November 2023	Positive action scheme statement sent to VI to be added onto application form.
		• Information about VI will be shared with appropriate societies and networks within the University	Clare Warwick	December 2024	
Marriage and civil partnership	Negative: Discrimination based on marital status. In many countries woman who are unmarried are	• Virtual Internships team to make sure that the placement host is right for the student. Students	VI	March 2024	Essential Information Form is given to all students that undertake a VI so it is already in place.

	prone to sexual harassment and workplace bullying or violence. For example, India has been in the spotlight for such issues and the increased culture for violence towards women. In western societies women who are married could be assumed to have less commitment and require adjustments/ time off for dependents.	fill out an Essential Information Form prior to their placement. • Virtual Internships also consider their partners commitment to E&D by viewing their policies • VI Policies made available to applicants (see step 4).	VI Clare Warwick	Complete Complete	Refer to EDI Policy attached. Please refer to policies attached
Pregnancy and maternity (including adoption)	Positive: students will have access to the internship at home and can work hours that suit their caring responsibilities Negative: Students who are on Maternity Leave may need to start the internship at a different time or request Reasonable adjustment so that they can still participate in the placement. Students	• Participants who are fully enrolled (i.e. they've accepted their offer of a place on the program after they've submitted their online application, video interview and been offered a place) would count as one of the places utilised by the university (i.e. this key moment is	Clare Warwick	March 2024 (all actions / information)	All the information outlined in the actions in the contact that is signed by the University of Cumbria and VI. The Careers Team will be briefed on what to do if a student discloses, they are pregnant and it will interfere with their placement.

	may be discriminated against due to pregnancy.	at least 6 weeks prior to the internship start date) • Should a participant drop out after acceptance of joining the program but prior to a confirmation of an internship placement (i.e. during the 6 week placement period) then we work on good faith efforts to have a replacement participant for that place • If a participant drops out after a placement has been accepted, then it will constitute one license used. • If students let VI know within reasonable time (ideally before the placement period			

		begins) then this is something VI could accommodate. VI would hold that one place for that student for when they are ready to participate - but it must be within the contract term (10th October 2024). There is no option to Intercalate as outlined by VI (refer to Agreement between VI and the University, available on request)			
Race	Positive: Students might be placed in ethnically diverse organisations. Negative: Discrimination based on the students race.	• Positive Action: Students from a ethnically diverse background will be encouraged to apply. The positive action scheme information will be included on the application form (see step 2)	Clare Warwick Clare Warwick	November 2023	Positive action scheme statement sent to VI to be added onto application form. VI completing a marketing plan

		• The careers service will target marketing towards courses with a diverse range of students e.g. London based courses. • Information about VI will be shared with appropriate societies and networks within the University	Clare Warwick	November 2023-Feb 2024 December 2024	
Religion and belief (including those without religion or belief)	Negative: Discrimination based on religious belief. Positive: Potentially working for organisations that share their religious beliefs. Student could request this via the Essential Information Form.	• Students will be given information on how to rise concerns with the University and VI • Students can request placements that meet their needs via the Essential Information Form.	Clare Warwick VI	Jan 2024 March 2024	Resources created for university students complete. Awaiting input from VI Essential Information Form is given to all students that undertake a VI so it is already in place.
Sex	Negative: Discrimination based on sex. Positive: gender is not a factor in the selection	• Selection process open to all • Virtual Internships team to make sure that the placement host is right for the	Clare Warwick VI	Complete March 2024	Done Essential Information Form is given to all students that undertake a VI so it is already in place.

		student. Students fill out an Essential Information Form prior to their placement.			
	process, open to all. Internships will be available in all sectors.	• Virtual Internships also consider their partners commitment to E&D by viewing their policies	VI	Complete	Refer to EDI Policy attached.
		• VI Policies made available to applicants (see step 4).	Clare Warwick	Complete	Please refer to policies attached
Sexual orientation	Negative: Discrimination based sexual orientation, especially in countries where the laws are different. May be placed with host companies who are located in countries where it is illegal to be homosexual.	• VI will not place students with host companies that are based in countries where homosexuality is illegal.	VI	Ongoing	VI internships are committed to not hosting our students in countries where they class homosexuality as illegal.
		• Positive Action: Students from a LGBTQ+ background will be encouraged to apply. The positive action scheme information will be included on the application form (see step 2)	Clare Warwick	Nov 2023	Positive action scheme statement sent to VI to be added onto application form.

			Clare Warwick	December 2024	
		• Information about VI will be shared with appropriate societies and networks within the University	Clare Warwick	December 2024	
		• Virtual Internships team to make sure that the placement host is right for the student. Students fill out an Essential Information Form prior to their placement. •	VI	March 2024	Essential Information Form is given to all students that undertake a VI so it is already in place.
Other **International**	Positive: Potential to have placements in countries they are familiar with and/or be able to undertake an internship for a company that operates in their native language. Negative: Interview process may not be familiar to international students and they may need some additional support when applying.	• Mock interviews available via MCE • Workshops available on Interview skills and how to complete the video interview. • International student resources in resource pack (see step 4)	Clare Warwick Clare Warwick Clare Warwick	Complete Jan 2024 Complete	Mock interview available to all students via MCE Dates to be agreed List of resources required developed.

Step 4: Next steps. Please consider:
- Is further monitoring/engagement required?
- How will you measure mitigation in regards to potential negative impact?
- How will you measure maximizing potential positive impact?
- When will you review this EIA?

Actions cited in the document will be monitored an students will have ongoing contact with Student Support throughout their placement. Students will also have 1 to 1 support from Virtual Internships. In addition to this any student who is successful will also have access to the Resource Pack set out below:

Virtual Internships Policies, safeguarding & EDI
- https://www.virtualinternships.com/policies/equality-and-diversity/
- https://www.virtualinternships.com/policies/safeguarding/

Support from Careers Service
- Access one to one support from the Careers Service via My Career Enriched, your careers portal: https://mycareerenriched.cumbria.ac.uk/
You can also access online and in person workshops (work ready sessions, cv writing, video interviews and requesting reasonable adjustments, how to promote yourself positively, digital skills) https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Learning/Skills-Cumbria/Digital-Skills/
- How to raise concerns with the university: https://uoc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/index.php/pid322219?

Support from Virtual Internships (awaiting their information)
5.   Include information on the support students will receive through Virtual Internships. Each student will be allocated an Intern Experience Manager who will be there to support the student throughout their placement.
6.   How to raise concerns about the placement with Virtual Internships & the university.

Disability/ Health & wellbeing support
- Support from the Universities Disability Team: https://uoc-advocate.symplicity.com/care_report/index.php/pid322219?
- Self-refer to the Health and Wellbeing Team: https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Health-and-Wellbeing/

Links to self-help external and internal resources on the following key areas.
- Time Management: https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Learning/Skills-Cumbria/Learn-Well-at-Cumbria/Time-Management/
- Live well learn well: https://live-well-learn-well.com/
- Mental Health & Wellbeing https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Health-and-Wellbeing/
- Self-help Materials: https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Health-and-Wellbeing/Self-help-materials/
- Together All: https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/Health-and-Wellbeing/Big-White-Wall/
- Looking After Yourself & Anxiety: https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Anxiety
- Looking After Yourself & Perfectionism: https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Perfectionism
- Looking After Yourself & Self Esteem: https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Self-Esteem

- Social Anxiety: https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Social-Anxiety
- Worry and Rumination: https://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au/Resources/Looking-After-Yourself/Worry-and-Rumination

Gender reassignment
- https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/careers/Equality-Diversity-and-Inclusion/
- https://www.cumbria.ac.uk/about/equality-diversity-and-inclusion/useful-links-guidance-and-signposting/

International Students
- https://my.cumbria.ac.uk/Student-Life/careers/International-Students/

Step 5: Final review. Please confirm the lead colleague has reviewed this EIA and is satisfied it can be considered for final consultation/sign-off.			
Name:	Clare Warwick	Date:	9/11/23

Step 6: Institutional approval confirming that this EIA is satisfactory in terms of analysis, consultation and mitigation, acknowledging that future monitoring and review will be undertaken to assess actual impact.	
Chair of Committee/Director of Institute/Head of Service:	EDIW Monitoring Group
Date:	23/11/23