

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY

Admissions Policy for Applicants with Disabilities

Statement of Principle

Newcastle University is committed to the principle of equal treatment of disabled persons and the proper application of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). An applicant who is judged academically suitable will, subject to the provisions of the Act, be neither treated less favourably nor placed at a substantial disadvantage on the grounds of disability unless this can be justified within the provisions of the DDA. The admissions procedures for applicants who declare a disability seek to ensure that applicants are treated on the basis of their aptitude, skills and ability in relation to their proposed programme of study. Academic suitability is separate from discussion centred on the applicant's other requirements.

Scope

This policy covers the admissions process for undergraduate and postgraduate applicants, full-time and part-time (including applicants of stand-alone modules), home and International. It covers all activities associated with the application process, including for example interviews and visit days as well as the processing of application forms. The procedure applies to any potential student who has disability-related access requirements arising through sensory or physical impairment, medical or mental health conditions or specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

DDA Duties

To meet these duties, reasonable adjustments should be considered in anticipation of the receipt of applications from disabled people and to meet the specific requirements of individual applicants. For example, general anticipatory duties might include being flexible in offering interview dates and times to assist a blind applicant who required assistance in travel arrangements to an interview. Specific duties could include ensuring that the blind applicant is offered all visit-related publicity and information in *their* preferred format (such as Braille) and any assistance required in navigating the campus.

The DDA also requires the University to offer auxiliary aids and services to disabled applicants when making reasonable adjustments. For example it could be necessary to provide British Sign Language/English Interpreters, notetakers or sighted guides for interview or other recruitment activities. This will require a flexible approach to meeting disabled applicants' access requirements, including the additional time required to organise appropriate support to ensure fair access to selection events such as interview and open days.

Correspondence with Applicants

Every effort should be made to encourage disabled applicants to inform the University of their access requirements. This should be reflected in all School recruitment activities and documentation. All correspondence and verbal communications with applicants relating to visits to Newcastle University (or off campus visits organised by the University) should seek to establish disabled applicants' access requirements, and an appropriate response should be made to the disclosure of this information.

Admissions Procedure for Applicants with Disabilities

Introduction

This procedure is designed to help Schools meet the DDA requirement to address the specific needs of individual disabled applicants and to support the principles outlined in the Admissions Policy for Applicants with Disabilities. The following procedure covers all applicants except those for the Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (MB BS), Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Separate procedures for these courses are attached as Annex 1.

Disability Codes

- A No disability
- B You have a social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder
- C You are blind or have a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses
- D You are deaf or have a serious hearing impairment
- E You have a long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy
- F You have a mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety Disorder
- G You have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D
- H You have a physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches
- I You have a disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above
- J You have two or more impairments and/or disabling medical conditions

Processing of Applications

1. *Action by Undergraduate (UG) Admissions, Postgraduate (PG) Admissions and Student Wellbeing (Disability Support)*
 - For undergraduate applicants indicating a disability excluding dyslexia (code G), UG Admissions will highlight the code on the UCAS application form and advise Disability Support that an application has been received. For postgraduates, the relevant Graduate School will email Disability Support with details or Disability Support will run a list from the 'portal'.
 - Disability Support will review the application to determine whether it may be helpful to seek additional information from the applicant. **It will be made clear to the applicant that the information will not be used in any way in the academic decision making process.**
 - Any information obtained will be emailed directly to the selector/admissions secretary, school disability contact, School Safety Officer and the UG Admissions Office/Graduate School. This is to help selectors/graduate schools in deciding whether adjustments are necessary and/or reasonable and to help them determine whether a case conference may be necessary.

- UG Admissions will then send the application form to the relevant Admissions Selector enclosing a copy of the email. Graduate Schools make decisions centrally but will ensure that the school concerned is alerted to an applicant's disability/Medical condition. Disability Support will retain electronic versions of the application form in order to respond to any enquiries from applicants or staff.

2. *Initial Consideration of Application by Selector (UG and PG)*

The Admissions Selector will determine whether, on academic grounds, the applicant should be offered a place or not. In cases where the Selector wishes to interview an applicant before making a decision, the procedure described in 3 below should be followed.

3. *Interview (UG and PG)*

- If a Selector wishes to interview a disabled applicant, he/she should ensure that the School arranges for auxiliary aids, or other forms of assistance necessary, to be available at the time of the interview. The application form (and any additional information from Disability Support) will provide information about the applicant's declared requirements. Schools should, however, always ask in any invitations to interviews or open days whether an applicant has any particular access requirements. Disability Support can give advice and guidance if required.
- The Selector should ensure that Disability Support is informed of the date of the interview should the School require any assistance or advice.

4. *Decision to Reject (UG and PG)*

- If the Selector's decision on academic grounds is to reject an application, the reject code should be recorded on the UCAS application form and returned to the UG Admissions/the relevant Graduate School.

5. *Decision to Offer (UG and PG)*

- If the Selector's decision on academic grounds is to make an offer, decisions must then be made about whether adjustments are needed in order that the programme of study is accessible for the applicant. If adjustments are needed, a decision has to be made as to whether they are 'reasonable' or 'unreasonable' within the provisions of the DDA.
- If adjustments are 'reasonable' or are not needed, a decision should be made in the usual way and the decision should be recorded on the application form which should then be returned to UG Admissions/the relevant Graduate School. Guidance on reasonable adjustments is available on the Disability Support website at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/about/policies.htm>
- If a Selector considers adjustments are 'unreasonable', or is undecided, Disability Support should be consulted and it may be agreed to convene a case conference. Guidance on case conferences is available at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/students/wellbeing/about/policies.htm>. Following a case conference, if participants have decided that reasonable adjustments can be made, the Selector should return the application form with a decision to Undergraduate Admissions/the relevant Graduate School, along with a written record of the case

conference meeting. If, after a case conference, there is no clear decision on whether reasonable adjustments can be made or if a decision has been made to reject on the grounds that adjustments are unreasonable, then this would be referred to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning who will make the final decision. If the decision is to reject an application, the PVC will write to the applicant to explain.

6. *Applications through Clearing (UG)*

- The Undergraduate Admissions Office checks the applications of all candidates who are made offers through Clearing, to see if a disability other than dyslexia has been declared.
- Undergraduate Admissions shall inform Disability Support if any disabilities are declared.
- Disability Support shall contact the applicant and liaise with the relevant School if necessary.

Support for Applicants

- Information about support available from Disability Support will be sent to all applicants holding offers who have disclosed a disability/medical condition.
- Disability Support will occasionally meet with an applicant to discuss support issues further. This information visit would be an opportunity to meet the disability team and/or academic staff and library staff and visit accommodation.

International Applicants

Disability Support asks International (including European Union) applicants to bring to Newcastle any disability related specialist equipment or resources they have relied upon previously, within reason. The University will offer appropriate generic provision.

Appendices

- A. MBBS/BDS/PGCE admissions procedures for disabled applicants
- B. Flowchart of the Admissions Procedure

APPENDIX A: Admissions Procedure for Disabled Applicants for MBBS/BDS/PGCE

Academic Screen

- All applicants will be academically screened. Disability Support will be informed of any applicant who has indicated a disability and who passes the academic screening. Information provided will include: GTTR/UCAS number, Institution Number, Name, Address, programme code and disability code and any other relevant information from the GTTR/UCAS form.
- Applicants UKCAT score will be considered during the screening process.
- All applicants who pass the academic screening process will be sent to selectors to be assessed without regard to their disability.

Interview

- The applicant will be sent an invitation letter. A copy of this and a copy of the GTTR/UCAS form will be sent to Disability Support
- Selectors interviewing applicants will only be informed of a disability if it is necessary for the candidate to have support whilst being interviewed.
- Disability Support may provide or arrange relevant support to the candidate during the interview process.

Offers made

- The offer letter will include information for the candidate about the medical assessment they may be required to undergo.
- Disability Support will be informed that an offer has been made.
- Disability Support may contact the applicant to arrange an information visit which may include meeting with relevant staff and a campus tour.
- A 'Request for Medical Assessment for Medical Student/Dental Student Applicant' form will be completed for those candidates holding an offer and indicating a disability. The completed form will be passed to the Occupational Health and Hygiene at Newcastle General Hospital to arrange an interview to establish Fitness to Practice.
- Assessment outcome will be forwarded to admissions team. Offer decision will be dependent upon applicant being considered fit to practice.
- Disability Support will be informed of decision made by Newcastle Occupational Health and Hygiene.

PGCE information on how to apply: <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ecls/postgrad/apply/pgce.htm>

MBBS Admissions policy: <https://mbbs.ncl.ac.uk/admissions>

Dental School Admissions policy:

<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/documents/ugadmissionspolicy.pdf>