

Lists of Possible Reasonable Adjustments to the Application Process and Teaching and Learning Provision for Disabled Applicants

This guide is to support the consideration of disabled applications to the University. This guidance is written with reference to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the subsequent, amended, 2006 duty to anticipate applications from disabled people. The DDA Code of Practice states that the duty to make reasonable adjustments is an anticipatory duty which requires the University to pre-empt a disabled person applying to a course or trying to use a service. It requires pre-emptive and proactive measures to be in place, as far as possible, to ensure accessibility for all. In addition, from October 2003 new legislation was introduced which meant that institutions are required to provide auxiliary aids and services where these would help to prevent substantial disadvantage.

It is important to take into consideration that not all requested adjustments are reasonable. However, there is clear legislative guidance on how to decide if an adjustment is reasonable.

If the required adjustments are complicated or contentious a case conference should be arranged. This would bring together staff from the school, the faculty and advisers from Disability Support as well as other relevant services, internal or external to the University, to discuss how best to proceed. Guidance is available on our website relating to the case conference approach.

General Advice for Working with Disabled Applicants/Students

- Talk to the applicant about what they require. Disability Support also will be able to offer advice and assistance.
- Provide a named contact for assistance.
- PEEP (personal emergency egress plan) may need to be developed.
- Awareness training (general or specific) for frontline staff.
- Recommend to all disabled applicants/enquirers, that they contact the DSS at the earliest opportunity. Disability Support can then liaise with both the applicant and the School.

Guidance is available on arranging a year abroad for disabled students and fieldwork for disabled students – ask Disability Support for further advice.

Disabled Students' Allowances

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) are DIUS grants available to fund individual disabled UK students.

The allowance has three main components:

- Specialist equipment including IT equipment, ergonomic furniture and digital recorders.
- Non-medical personal helper allowance for support such as a BSL/English Interpreter, note-taker, sighted guide or educational personal assistant.

- General consumables allowance for small items such as photocopying, taxi travel and non core text books.

NHS funded applicants can apply to the NHS for similar funds. Research councils also facilitate DSA for disabled postgraduate students in receipt of research council awards.

International students are not eligible for DSA; however there is a contingency fund available for meeting the requirements of disabled international students.

DSA and similar funds are available to eligible students upon registration at University or at any time during their studies. There are no such equivalent funds for applicants.

Hardware Loans Scheme

Where equipment is required in order to remove a barrier to a disabled applicant, the Hardware Loans Scheme can be used. It provides an extensive range of accessible hardware that can be borrowed by any member of staff or student on campus for a varying length of time, depending on requirement.

General adjustments for people with specific disabilities

The following is a list of potentially reasonable adjustments for applicants/students with specific disabilities. **These lists are not exhaustive.** Some applicants will not require all/any of these adaptations and/or may require additional support. They are meant to be a guide as to the sort of things that may be useful and are generally deemed “reasonable”.

(1) Applicants with Specific Learning Difficulties (e.g. Dyslexia)

Adjustments to application process

- Clear, concise guidance, instructions and signage.

Adjustments to teaching and learning

- Allow recording of lectures and provide lecture notes/outlines, overheads and handouts in advance. This may be in paper format or on Blackboard.
- Use of a PC/scribe/extra time/ coloured paper in examinations.
- Clearly explained marking: separating comments on content from comments on spelling and grammar, for example.

Additional support

- Study skills tuition can be arranged by Disability Support, as appropriate.
- Specialist software e.g. the mind mapping software Inspirations is provided on cluster computers.

(2) Blind and Partially Sighted Applicants

Adjustments to application process

- Course information and application form available (or can be made available) in an alternative format (e.g. Braille, large print, electronic or audio cassette).
- Documentation for any visits should be made available in advance.

- Mobility assistance to navigate between rooms and buildings i.e. staff available to be a sighted guide.
- Applicants may bring recording/braille equipment to take notes, if not they may need assistance from a note-taker or summary information from the school.

Adjustments to Teaching and Learning

- Students may use a variety of forms of magnification or require visual information in an alternative format e.g. Braille, large print, tactile diagrams.
- Teaching and learning materials available in advance as reading/skimming alternative material is more time consuming and requires high levels of concentration and memory.
- Guidance may be required on reading lists as to which sections/chapters are most relevant and useful.
- Regular contact with personal tutor, module leaders and degree programme director as often the whole learning environment is not fully accessible.
- Named contact in the school office to coordinate learning materials in alternative formats. Also to communicate changes (such as lecture room changes) to the student.
- Timetabling to a small number of classrooms to aid orientation.

Please note that braille substantial amounts of text can take time and so it is best to start the process as soon as feasibly possible. Disability Support can offer advice on this process, should you require it.

Additional support

- Close liaison with external support services (Disability Support can coordinate).
- Magnification/screen reading software provided in cluster rooms and on personal computers.
- A personal emergency egress plan (PEEP).
- Common areas, such as hallways, classrooms, kept free from obstructions.
- Assistance in the library, as appropriate.
- Guidance is provided on how to provide information in alternative formats, being a sighted guide and how to develop a PEEP.

(3) D/deaf and hard of hearing applicants

Adjustments to application process

- Communication support made available for interview/open day, such as provision of a British Sign Language (BSL)/English Interpreter, lip-speaker or note-taker.
- Staff to be aware of how to communicate effectively with deaf people and understand how to work with communicators.
- Visitors who cannot hear the fire alarm should be provided with a fire alarm pager and/or guidance on what to do in event of a fire.
- Documentation for any visits should be made available in advance.

Adjustments to teaching and learning

- Teaching and learning materials to be made available in advance, wherever possible.
- Staff to be aware of how to communicate effectively with deaf people and understand how to work with communicators.
- Staff should be confident in using amplification equipment.
- Timetabled into rooms with hearing loops.
- Aural information, e.g. videos and tapes be provided in an alternative format i.e. written text.
- Take into account the guidance on marking the work of Deaf students.

Additional support

- Students who cannot hear the fire alarm will require a personal emergency egress plan (PEEP) and may be provided with a fire alarm pager and/or guidance on what to do in event of a fire.
- Information is available on organising communication support and clear communication skills. Please contact Disability Support for advice on any disability related, staff training needs.

(4) Applicants with mobility impairments

Adjustments to application process

- All facilities used need to be fully accessible to the applicant and their family and easy to egress (in case of emergencies).
- If facilities regularly used by the School are not accessible, consideration is required on how provision can be made in an alternative manner.
- Consult with the school safety officer regarding egress arrangements from rooms to be used by the applicant and their family (members of family attending open days etc may be disabled).

Adjustments to teaching and learning

- For wheelchair users /people with mobility difficulties, the main issues are access and egress to the learning environment. If these are not suitable, can alternatives be provided? (e.g. alternative timetabling of teaching).
- For applicants with dexterity difficulties learning materials in advance may be required.
- Support workers may be used for note-taking or practical tasks under the instruction of the disabled student. These support workers may also be required to assist during presentations.
- Fieldwork and study abroad may pose particular difficulties and may need to be planned in advance/alternatives or concessions considered. Disability Support can offer advice on this subject.

Additional support

- Voice recognition software and adapted workstations may be provided.
- Named contact in the school office to communicate changes (such as lecture room changes) to the student.

- Close liaison with external support services if personal care support is required (Disability Support can co-ordinate)

(5) Applicants with autistic spectrum disorder and Asperger's syndrome

Adjustments to application process

- Parental involvement may be necessary to initially assess adjustments which may be required – this should be directed by the student.
- Applicants with these disabilities can require very specific and literal information. This should be taken into account in all course information, correspondence and discussions.

Adjustments to teaching and learning

- Changes to routines may be problematic. It is important to ensure reasons for any changes to routines are discussed in advance (such as lecture room layout or changes, fieldwork, examination periods).
- Staff should be aware that they should use literal language and be very explicit and precise, especially on examination papers.
- Social interaction may be difficult, therefore group work may be problematic. Alternatives may need to be considered but this should be discussed with the student.

Additional support

- Close liaison with external support services (Disability Support can co-ordinate)
- Guidance is available on working with students with autism and Aspergers syndrome.

(6) Applicants with Mental Health Difficulties

Adjustments to application process

- Named contacts to liaise with, in relation to arrangements for visits.
- Staff aware of support available in the University in order to let applicants know what help is available, at an early stage.

Adjustments to teaching and learning

- Positive attitudes and flexibility of staff significantly contribute to the experience of students with mental health difficulties.
- Assessments may be stressful. Creative solutions and flexibility may be required to enable the student to demonstrate their full potential.
- Presentations and group activities may be particularly difficult and should be discussed with the student.

Additional support

- Close liaison with external support services (Disability Support or an external support service may co-ordinate)
- Guidance is available on support available for students with mental health difficulties and what to do in a mental health related emergency. You can contact Disability Support and discuss issues further with our Disability Adviser (Mental Health)

(7) Applicants with medical conditions e.g. irritable bowel syndrome, chronic fatigue/ME, cancer, diabetes, epilepsy:

Adjustments to the application process

- Depending upon the condition it may be that early mornings or late afternoons are problematic.
- Certain physical environments may trigger conditions e.g. lighting, dust or dampness. Visits should be organised accordingly, after discussion with the student.

Adjustments to teaching and learning

- Students may become fatigued or their concentration affected by their condition. Sympathetic timetabling, or staff liaising with support workers may be required.
- Memory may be affected by a condition or by medication. Consideration may be required for alternative assessments to timed examinations.
- Field trips, a year abroad and work placements involve a change in environment, thus there will need to be consideration of the impact of the different environment with the student. Adjustments or alternatives may need to be discussed/offered.
- Examinations and assessments may cause additional stress and strain to those who are easily fatigued. Adjustments or alternatives may need to be made.

Please note: These suggested adjustments are only intended as a brief guide and further discussion is welcomed, with Disability Support, in relation to additional advice and guidance on any of the issues raised.