

Student Disability and Inclusion Policy

1. Introduction

The University of Southampton is committed to creating and sustaining a positive and supportive working environment for our staff, and an excellent teaching and learning experience for our students. We aspire that staff are equally valued and respected, and students are encouraged to thrive academically. As a provider of employment and education, we value the diversity of our staff and students. We are committed to providing a fair, equitable and mutually supportive learning and working environment for our students and staff.

This policy sets out our commitment to supporting the needs of individual disabled students through individual reasonable adjustments within the context of the Equality Act 2010. The policy makes clear the framework for our approach and details the supporting policy and guidance documentation which provide the foundation for consistent support

1.1 Scope

The contents of this policy applies to all Undergraduates, Post Graduate Taught, Post Graduate Research, Home and International students.

1.2 Related documents.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other University of Southampton documents:

- The University's broad approach to [Diversity, Equality and Inclusion](#)
- The University's Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025 [Equality Diversity and Inclusion](#)
- [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Dignity at Work and Study Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Policy](#)
- [Student Support Review Regulations](#)
- [Disability Statement](#)
- [Additional Exam Recommendations for Disabled Students](#)

2. Legislation

2.1 Equality Act 2010 - Implications for colleges and HEIs (revised August 2012)

The Equality Act 2010 consolidated and streamlined previous anti-discrimination legislation. It introduced measures that have direct implications for colleges and higher education institutions (HEIs).

Section 91 of the Act prohibits the governing body of an HEI, the board of management of a further education college or a designated institution in Scotland from discriminating against a person or student in the following ways:

- in the arrangements it makes for deciding who is offered admission as a student
- in the terms on which it offers to admit the person as a student
- by not admitting the person as a student
- in the way it provides education for the student
- in the way it affords the student access to a benefit, facility or service
- by not providing education for the student
- by not affording the student access to a benefit, facility or service
- by excluding the student
- by subjecting the student to any other detriment

This largely reflects current law. The Act also makes it unlawful for institutions to victimise or harass students or prospective students. At the University of Southampton, the responsibility for adherence to the Equality Act lies across all Faculties and Professional Services in our implementation of duties, and delivery of services to students.

Subsection 91(3), which applies only in regards to disability discrimination, requires the governing bodies of HEIs and the boards of management of further education colleges and designated institutions in Scotland to ensure that an institution does not discriminate against disabled students through either:

- the arrangements it makes for deciding upon whom to confer a qualification
- the terms on which it is prepared to confer a qualification on the person
- by not conferring a qualification on the person
- by withdrawing a qualification from the person or varying the terms on which the person holds it

Similarly, institutions must ensure that they do not victimise disabled students in any of the ways described above.

Within colleges and HEIs, student associations and unions provide a wide range of services to staff and students. They are therefore considered as service providers under the Act.

The Act continues the previous duty upon institutions to make reasonable adjustments in relation to staff, students and services. These adjustments apply where a disabled person is placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled people. These provisions do not apply to the other protected characteristics and are unique to disability. Section 20 defines what is meant by the duty to make reasonable adjustments. The three requirements of the duty are in relation to:

- provision, criteria or practice

- physical features
- auxiliary aids

2.2 Definition of Disability

Disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (Equality Act 2010).

Long term means a condition that has lasted for at least 12 months, it is likely to last at least 12 months or longer or may even last for the rest of the person's life. People who have had a disability in the past are covered, which may be particularly relevant for people with fluctuating and/or recurring impairments. There are many kinds of disability, some more widely understood and visible than others. Many people may have a disability or long-term health condition that is covered by the Equality Act 2010 without realising it.

3. 3. University Policy

3.1 Key aims and principles

In accordance with its Equality and Diversity Policy, the University is committed to facilitating access to students who have support needs by reasons of disability as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (EA 2010), or any another protected characteristic as defined by the EA 2010.

The University is committed to a positive student experience by creating an inclusive environment for learning. The University complies with its anticipatory duty under the EA2010 by considering the needs of students accessing the Student Disability and Inclusion Service at all stages of the student life cycle.

3.2 Our commitment to disabled students

It is our aim to provide all students who disclose a disability and choose to engage with support services, individual reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Equality Act 2010. However, students are not required to disclose their disability, and nor are students obliged to seek support for their disability; indeed many will be self-sufficient at managing their own needs and may never seek support.

Disclosing a disability to the University is a personal matter of which it is an individual's choice if and when they do so. Whilst the University endeavours to make its services as accessible to all students as possible, if a disability is disclosed to the University, this would allow the opportunity to implement appropriate support for an individual. To ensure support

is in place promptly, students should respond to the Disability and Inclusion Service as soon as possible.

For students this could include, where appropriate:

- alternative/additional exam arrangements (AER)
- provision of lecture notes in advance
- assistive technology
- accommodation adaptations
- consideration of alternative forms of assessment
- Assistance with accessing external resources such as the Disabled Students' Allowance.

Further information can be found at

https://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport/disability_support/index.page

3.3 Policy with respect to Prospective and Students

All students who apply to the University are encouraged to disclose any disability they may have through the application system related to their course. This is to enable students to explore the support available to them in their studies at the University of Southampton and for the University to identify any student whose needs indicate that significant adjustments are required which may require significant additional support, or physical adjustments to the environment which may necessitate a delayed start. Our website informs students how to make a declaration on their UCAS application, and if made, a notification is sent to Disability and Inclusion team are notified. Once received, a member of the team will reach out to the prospective student with a health questionnaire and offer of support.

https://www.southampton.ac.uk/edusupport/prospective_and_new_students/considering_university.page

Students who fall within this category are made an offer based on academic merit only, but with the condition to engage with support services to review their individual needs.

Support offered to speculative enquirers, prospective and applicant students is as follows:

- General enquiries about support available – via phone, web-based information, email enquiry
- Appointment with a specialist practitioner for students with complex needs

Review of individual needs of applicants for all students who disclose through application to identify those students who would benefit from pre- results appointments because of the complexity of their needs.

3.4 Policy with respect to New and Current Students

To ensure the smooth arrival for new students, the following Transition support is available through the Student Disability and Inclusion team:

- Pre-arrival Student Support Appointments to ensure that support is in place prior to the start of term
- Pre-arrival presentations and demonstrations of support available
- Enhanced Transition activities, for example bespoke campus tours , early bird 'quiet' access to big events, specialist workshops support taster sessions and disabled student networking events

All current students who disclose a disability and engage with the Disability and Inclusion Service are offered the following support:

- A one-hour individual Student Support Appointment (SSA) with a specialist practitioner*
- An individual Student Support Recommendations (SSR) document setting out details of the student's disability and its impact on their studies and daily life, setting out recommended reasonable adjustments relating to their studies, including assessments as set out in the section Additional Exam Recommendations. The SSR is shared with relevant stakeholders on a need to know basis, in order that all areas can implement their responsibilities under the Equality Act.
- Specific support offered through the University as may be recommended in the SSR
- Advice, guidance and support in applying for [Disabled Student Allowances](#) (DSA)
- Ongoing access to support offered by the Disability and Inclusion Service
- Review appointments (as appropriate) with a specialist support practitioner
- All AERs are logged onto the Banner student record system

Students are provided with a template to help them prepare for any appointments [Appt sheet](#). *(It is intended these will be held on a SharePoint site for staff and Students in the near future).*

* Occasionally, a student's needs and individual preference dictate that a full SSR is not deemed essential in which case a 30-minute appointment will be offered and any required AERs documented on the students Banner record accordingly.

The process relating to SSRs is set out in the following document which is reviewed annually:

[Student Support Recommendations process](#)

It is the responsibility of all Faculties and Professional Services supporting the student to implement the recommendations from the SSR. If a recommendation is not feasible then an alternative solution should be found that meets the student's needs.

3.4.1. Access to External Support

If students require equipment for their own use, those eligible may be able to obtain funding by applying for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). This allowance, which is not means tested, may also pay for non-medical helpers and any one-to-one study skills and mentoring that may be needed. University of Southampton students who are eligible for the Disabled Student Allowance are encouraged to apply as early as possible and can be supported in the application process by the Disability and Inclusion service.

International students who are unable/ineligible to obtain DSA funding should seek a Student Support appointment with the Disability Support and Inclusion Service in the usual way. An equivalence of support which is funded by the University of Southampton may be provided to the students in the form of:

A funded needs assessment by an approved provider (administered by the Student Disability and Inclusion Team)

Funded support as recommended through the Needs Assessment Report

Any student who is ineligible for DSA funding may be provided with equipment from the University on a loan basis. The equipment remains the property of the University and must be returned at the end of the course.

3.4.2 Medical evidence:

Support is available for students with and without medical evidence: [Access support](#). However, for full SSRs with Additional Exam Recommendations AERs), medical evidence is essential. The Student Disability and Inclusion team can advise all students regarding the type/nature of evidence required in order to access internal and external support.

The University has a detailed exam's policy regarding the additional exam arrangements (AERs) and support available for Disabled and Dyslexic students. – further information on AERs is set out in the [Exam Policy](#) for Disabled and Dyslexic Students..)

Any medical evidence is assessed as part of the SSR process. As best practice, the Student Disability and Inclusion team regularly peer reviews available medical evidence to ensure consistency of approach within the team. In addition, where new types of medical evidence emerge, or previous forms are withdrawn, these are peer reviewed to develop/adapt suitable support processes,

Students without sufficient medical evidence are still able to access a variety of wellbeing and disability support services, including an individual SSA with a member of the Student Disability and Inclusion team to discuss their ongoing needs.

3.4.3 Ongoing support

The University understands that students may declare a disability or condition but also indicate that they have no specific requirements; in these circumstances, the student is asked to confirm this in writing.

The University also understands that situations do change. If this happens, the student should get in touch with the Disability and Inclusion Service as soon as possible for advice and guidance. If a condition is temporary or may be fluctuating, the Disability and Inclusion Service may request up to date medical evidence to ensure any recommended adjustments continue to be appropriate and sufficient.

Whether a condition is short-term or long-term, it is the students' responsibility to inform the Disability and Inclusion Service if their needs change during the course of their studies.

4. Confidentiality

In order to provide effective disability support, disclosure of student support arrangements is made to key staff on a need to know basis by way of appropriate reports (e.g. SSRs), held on the students Banner record. A students Banner record may have a disability code via their disclosure at UCAS application stage, or alternatively held in the DSA section of Banner once their DSA allowance is in place, if no medical evidence or declaration has previously been recorded.

All personal information disclosed by students in their application or registration forms is treated as confidential to the University. Sensitive information disclosed by the student on their application becomes part of the electronic student record and is processed in accordance with our data policy: <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/studentadmin/student-admin/privacy-notice.page>

5. Useful links

[Student Services](#) Help pages

[Disabled Students Allowance](#) - Help if you're a student with a learning difficulty, health problem or disability.

[Dyslexia Association](#) - The British Dyslexia Association (BDA) has been the voice of dyslexic people since 1972.

Dyspraxia Foundation - Offering help and advice to people with dyspraxia, parents, carers, and families about or on the subject of dyspraxia.

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