

DISABLED STUDENTS POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The University of Bath values the diversity of its student population and is committed to creating and sustaining a high quality learning experience for all. The Equality Act, 2010 imposes a legal duty on the University to make Reasonable Adjustments to overcome any disadvantage experienced by a disabled student as a result of their disability. This duty also requires the University to anticipate the needs of disabled students and to consider equality when developing and applying policies.

A student's disability related requirements are determined by external medical professionals, educational psychologists or Disabled Students Allowance needs assessors. The University's Disability Advisers, in discussion with the student and in the context of their course, make recommendations as to how these requirements should be met by the University and are documented in the student's Disability Access Plan (DAP). These recommendations can be adapted through discussions with the department and the student but it is a legal obligation that reasonable adjustments are put in place by the University to meet the student's assessed requirements.

This policy sets out the University's commitment to meeting the disability related student requirements and outlines key responsibilities of staff.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to all University of Bath students and applicants, during the application process and throughout their course.

2. POLICY

- 2.1 The University is committed to nurturing a living and working community that promotes inclusion, positive mental health and wellbeing across all our activities. The University will provide an inclusive environment in which disabled students and staff are both aware of their responsibilities and have the necessary knowledge, skills and confidence to implement them.

The University understands that the disadvantage and exclusion faced by many disabled people often has its source in environmental, social and attitudinal barriers and institutional practices. The University, wherever possible, anticipates barriers to full participation, minimise their impact and through reasonable adjustments, and modify practices if appropriate. In agreeing reasonable adjustments for a student, the University will not compromise the academic or competence standards approved for its academic courses.

To achieve this goal the University will:

- Promote an inclusive, safe and supportive environment for all students, free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation (as detailed in the University Dignity and Respect Policy).
- Anticipate the requirements of disabled students by ensuring that facilities, information, teaching, services and processes are as accessible and inclusive as possible.
- Provide disability related training and guidance to enable staff to meet the requirements of disabled students.

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- Seek to design inclusive curricula so that all students can develop a sense of belonging, purpose, and identity.
- Promote student integration into the learning community through supportive approaches to content and assessment.
- Encourage applications from prospective students who have a disability and provide them with clear information and advice.
- Encourage students to disclose any requirements as early as possible and provide accessible mechanisms in which to do so, and help students to understand that if they choose not to disclose, the extent and timing of support that can be provided may be affected.
- Treat any information relating to disclosure of a disability as sensitive information, as explained in the [University's Data Protection Guidance](#).
- Provide a professional Disability Service that delivers information, advice and support for applicants and students and guidance for staff in meeting student requirements.
- Implement University procedures flexibly and consider individual programmes of study where other adjustments are not practicable or effective.
- Implement Reasonable Adjustments across the University's activities including:
 - Teaching & learning
 - Assessments including formal examinations
 - Research activities, field trips, and residential activities
 - Practical, workshop and laboratory support
 - Computing services and assistive technology
 - Welfare, counselling and other support services
 - Library services and information access
 - Accommodation and parking
 - Students' Union activities and Faith/no Faith activities
 - Sports facilities, commercial outlets and cultural activities
 - Placement/ work experience opportunities (in partnership with employers)

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance under the Equality Act 2010 at the University. Senior Managers implement and promote the principles and behaviours embedded in University policies and procedures. The Vice-Chancellor delegates responsibility for undertaking aspects of these duties through line management and identified roles.

The following people/teams have specific responsibilities under this Policy.

3.2 Disability Service

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The Disability Service provides information and guidance for applicants, students and staff and coordinates the provision of support services for disabled students. In discussion with the student and in the context of their course, the Disability Adviser identifies Reasonable Adjustments that will meet their disability related requirements. These are documented in a Disability Access Plan (DAP) which is made available to relevant academic and professional departments and reviewed regularly. The Disability Service works collaboratively with academic and professional service colleagues to ensure successful implementation of all Reasonable Adjustments and to support student success.

3.3 Heads of Department or School

Heads of Department or School, working in collaboration with the Disability Service, Health and Safety and other relevant professional services, have responsibility for ensuring the development of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan and/or a Risk Assessment for any disabled student who requires them.

They are also responsible for ensuring students' Reasonable Adjustments are met within the Department including when organising in class tests or any examinations taking place outside of the formal University assessment periods.

3.4 Directors of Teaching

Directors of Teaching have responsibility for the strategic development of learning and teaching at Undergraduate and Postgraduate level in the department including an inclusive approach to learning and teaching which meets the needs of all learners.

3.5 Directors of Studies

Directors of Studies access students' Disability Access Plans via SAMIS to oversee the implementation within their course of reasonable adjustments and learning support requirements, including assessments (excluding formal examinations in the University assessment periods) and Vivas, as appropriate.

3.6 Doctoral Supervisors

Doctoral Supervisors access student Disability Access Plans via SAMIS in order to implement any reasonable adjustments and support students' academic progress.

3.7 Staff and Students who Teach and Support Learning

All who teach and support learning are expected to take an inclusive approach. They implement disabled students' reasonable adjustments as recommended in their Disability Access Plans, with input and oversight from other departmental staff including Unit Convenors, Directors of Studies and Heads of Department.

3.8 Personal Tutors

Personal Tutors access student Disability Access Plans via SAMIS in order to support the academic and personal development of students and to provide guidance regarding academic progression, pastoral care and signposting to support services.

3.9 Unit Convenors

Unit Convenors access student Disability Access Plans via SAMIS and pass on disabled students' support requirements to relevant teaching staff.

3.10 Placement Teams

Placement Teams access Disability Access Plans via SAMIS to provide disabled students with advice on placement providers and support the student during their placement.

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3.11 Human Resources

Human Resources ensures that line managers are aware of their responsibilities in ensuring that members of staff have the necessary knowledge/skills and demonstrate the behaviours required to discharge their responsibilities under this policy.

3.12 Centre for Learning and Teaching

The Centre for Learning and Teaching provides guidance and information for teaching staff on meeting disabled students' learning requirements as part of an inclusive approach to learning and teaching. The Centre for Learning and Teaching also provides advice to Student Services and academic departments about teaching and learning support for individual students with complex requirements.

3.13 Academic Registry

Academic Registry implements students' examination related reasonable adjustments, where possible, as recommended in their Disability Access Plans.

3.14 Accommodation and Hospitality Service

The Accommodation and Hospitality Service provide accessible accommodation and facilities for disabled students and work with the Disability Service to make reasonable adjustments for individual students.

3.15 University Library

The Library supports disabled students by providing facilities, services and assistance to use the Library and its resources effectively. This includes access to books, journals and other materials in electronic and print form, and where appropriate, providing these materials in accessible and alternative formats. Subject Librarians offer individual guidance to students and to staff, to advise on the best use of Library support and resources available.

3.16 Computing Services

Computing Services provide an Assistive Technology service, including advice and guidance, hardware and software provision to enable inclusion for all students to obtain the best from their studies. In addition, all systems provided undergo inclusion assessment to ensure delivery of accessible services in line with legal obligations.

3.17 Estates

Estates will advise on the cost and feasibility of proposed Reasonable Adjustments to the fabric and structure of the buildings to enable a final decision to be made. Once budgets have been agreed and funding allocated, Estates will carry out the works in line with its standard service level agreement. All new build and refurbishment projects will be implemented with the need to meet the requirements of the Equality Act, and will comply with planning, building regulations and any other relevant legislation. In addition, it will carry out periodic (usually every 5 years) access audits of the whole University estate. Estates will liaise with a nominated group of staff and students with mobility challenges to prioritise the approved works.

3.18 The Students' Union

The Students' Union provide advice and information on the formal University complaints processes. They provide mechanisms for the student body to feed back their views on reasonable adjustments via student representatives, groups and fora such as Disability Change Working Group. The Students' Union ensures appropriate disclosure mechanisms are in place for SU activities and that these are communicated to students. The Students' Union ensure reasonable adjustments are made for students participating in SU activities e.g. Groups or volunteering.

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4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 Disability

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability 'if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. 'Substantial' is defined by the Act as 'more than minor or trivial'.

An impairment is considered to have a long-term effect if it:

- has lasted for at least 12 months
- is likely to last for at least 12 months, or
- is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person.

4.2 Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination, harassment or victimisation because of a range of protected characteristics including disability. Disability discrimination is when a person is treated less favourably or put at a disadvantage because of their disability. Types of discrimination include:

- Direct discrimination for a disabled person is when someone is intentionally treated less favourably than others because of their disability.
- Indirect discrimination occurs when rules, regulations or arrangements apply to everyone, but put people with disabilities at an unfair disadvantage.
- Discrimination arising from a disability occurs when a person "is treated less favourably" because of practices related to their disability.

4.3 Reasonable Adjustments

[Reasonable adjustments](#) are variations or alterations made to University procedures, teaching or assessment practices to enable a disabled student to engage with their course, demonstrate their learning and participate fully in university life. Section 20 of the Equality Act imposes a duty on the University to make reasonable adjustments and remove barriers for disabled students in relation to:

- a provision, criteria or practice e.g. teaching, accommodation, social activities.
- physical features e.g. access to teaching and general facilities.
- auxiliary aids e.g. information in accessible formats, hearing loops.

4.4 What is Reasonable?

When considering what is reasonable, Universities should consider:

- Effectiveness of the adjustment in addressing the potential disadvantage.
- Practicality of the changes to be made by the University and availability of resources (for the whole University, not just individual Departments).
- Health and Safety considerations.
- Potential benefits for the disabled student.
- Impact on other staff and students in implementing an adjustment.

In defining what is "reasonable", universities are not required to reduce or change academic standards, nor is it required to compromise genuine "competence standards" (see 4.5 below).

4.5 Competence Standards

A competence standard is: 'An academic, medical or other standard applied for the purposes of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability.' (Sch 13, para 4.3) [Advance HE](#). In some subjects, these competence standards are determined by professional bodies.

The University is not required to make reasonable adjustments to competence standards themselves, but has a responsibility for ensuring that the assessment methods used to address these competence standards are not discriminatory. Not all assessment criteria, learning outcomes or competences which students might be expected to fulfil on a particular course, are genuine competence standards as defined by Act.

4.6 Anticipatory Adjustments

The Equality duty is 'anticipatory' for students. This means the University cannot wait until a disabled student wants to use its services, but must plan in advance (and on an ongoing basis) appropriate reasonable adjustments for a range of impairments, e.g. visual, mobility and hearing. Examples of anticipatory adjustments include:

- Providing accessible buildings and grounds which benefit anyone with a mobility impairment.
- Making teaching materials available to all students electronically (e.g. on Moodle) minimising the need for individual adjustments.

5. RELATED UNIVERSITY POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND GUIDANCE

5.1 The Quality Assurance Code of Practice

The Quality Assurance Code of [Practice](#) provides the key reference point for information on academic principles and processes, roles and responsibilities. The following statements provide particular guidance in dealing with disabled students.

[QA3](#) contains guidance about reasonable adjustments to modify Programmes of Study for an individual student.

[QA7](#) outlines the Doctoral Supervisory Team's responsibilities in relation to reasonable adjustments for Doctoral Students.

5.2 Recording of Lectures

The University of Bath Ordinances 22.4 (h) provides guidance on the recording by disabled students of lectures and other presentations.

5.3 Individual Mitigating Circumstances

Staff Guidance on students' fluctuating conditions and IMCs states that:

"On-going or longer-term conditions or circumstances are not IMCs, and may be handled by disability support and/or special assessment arrangements: they are likely to give rise to valid IMC claims only if they first come to light or are diagnosed, or become unexpectedly and markedly worse, at assessment time."

5.4 Staff Guidance

[Information](#) for staff about teaching and supporting disabled students, disability services, and Disability Access Plans is available from Student Services.

5.5 Other Related University Regulations and Policies

- [Dignity and Respect](#)
- [Health and Safety](#)
- [Individual Mitigating Circumstances & Assessment](#)
- [NFAAR Assessment regulations](#)
- [Records Management Policy and Procedures](#)
- [Regulation 15 Assessment of Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes](#)
- [Rule 2 \(Conduct of Examinations\)](#)
- [University Data Protection Guidance](#)
- [University Health and Wellbeing Policy](#)

6. Policy Template

Owner	Director of Student Services
Version number	1.1
Approval Date	5 June 2019
Approved By	Senate
Date of last review	

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