



University of  
**Salford**  
MANCHESTER

# **Meeting the Needs of Disabled Students Policy**

**Version Number 3.0**

**Effective from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017**

**Author: Disability & Learner Support Manager**

**Student Experience & Support**

<b>Document Control Information</b>			
<b>Revision History incl. Authorisation: (most recent first)</b>			
<b>Author</b>	<b>Summary of changes</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Authorised &amp; Date</b>
D Parrington	<i>General revision</i>	V3.0	SELTEC 17/05/2017
R. Challinor	<i>Missing app 6 added</i>	V2.1	N/A
R. Challinor	<i>Revision</i>	V2.0	Student Life Executive: 01/10/2013
R. Challinor	<i>New policy</i>	V1.0	
<b>Policy Management and Responsibilities:</b>			
Owner:	This Policy is issued by the Director of Student Experience & Support and has delegated responsibility for the authorship, implementation and communication of the Policy to the Disability and Learner Support Manager.		
Others with responsibilities (please specify):	All subjects of the Policy will be responsible for engaging with and adhering to this policy.		
<b>Author to complete formal assessment with the following advisory teams:</b>			
Equality Analysis (E&D, HR) <a href="#">Equality Assessment form</a>	1. Equality and Diversity (GL) have reviewed the EIA and have confirmed that no changes to the Policy are required. 08-05-17		
Legal implications (LPG)	2. In consultation with Jayne Hughes any reference regarding funding in relationship to support for disabled students at collaborative partner establishments has been removed. 05-05-17. Incorporated specific reference to Partners. 09-05-17		
School Operations (SOMs)	3. Feedback received from Alaric Boote to confirm no concerns in relation to the content of the Policy.		
Student facing procedures (QEO)	4. Consultation with Annette Cook regarding minor amendments 05-05-17		
Data Protection (Governance)	5. Matt Stephenson amended and verified wording of Data Protection statements 08-05-17		
Safety/Fire Safety Office	6. Safety/Fire Safety Officer has approved the content of the Policy. 05-05-17		
UKVI Compliance (Student Admin)	7. UKVI confirmed no identified issues re compliance 05-05-17		
<b>Consultation:</b>			
Staff Trades Unions via HR Students via USSU Relevant external bodies (specify)	1. Copy forwarded to the SU for consideration. Minor proofreading comments reflected in the final version 08-05-17		
<b>Review:</b>			
Review due:	1 year by August 2018		
Document location:	<a href="#">University of Salford Policy pages</a> <a href="http://www.salford.ac.uk/policies">http://www.salford.ac.uk/policies</a>		
<b>The owner and author are responsible for publicising this policy document.</b>			

## **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to ensure the University meets its legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 and outline the University's policy on meeting the needs of disabled students and the mechanisms and supportive procedures in place to assist this.

The University prides itself on the diversity of its student body and on the wide range of educational opportunities that it provides. The University is committed to, and strives for, equality of opportunity for all its students. An important element of this is ensuring that the University anticipates the need of disabled students where possible and makes reasonable adjustment where required. The University is committed to the following aims:

1. To remove barriers to study for disabled students,
2. To anticipate the needs of disabled students,
3. To make provision for reasonable adjustments which could not be anticipated,
4. To ensure that policies and procedures do not discriminate,
5. To promote positive equality for disabled students.

## **2.0 Scope**

This policy applies to all prospective and registered students and encompasses both home and international students. The University also has responsibility for disabled students who have disclosed a disability, and are registered as University of Salford students yet undertaking studies at collaborative partner institutions.

This policy is informed by the following legislation and University strategy (see the Related Documentation section):

1. Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001
2. Equality Act 2010
3. Inclusion and Diversity Strategy 2016-21
4. BS8300 Design of Buildings and Approaches to Meet the Needs of Disabled People.

This policy details the types of support or adjustments offered by the University. The policy specifically details the support, which may be offered by Disability & Learner Support and also encompasses the role and responsibilities of the Schools and other professional and business support services, in meeting the needs of disabled students. The policy defines who may be eligible to access the support or adjustments and the types of support.

## **Service Users**

Disability & Learner Support offers services for prospective students, and all registered students with a disability or mental health need, irrespective of attendance mode. These include home students, international and EU students, part time and distance learners and disabled staff undertaking programmes of study.

## **3.0 Policy Statements**

### **3.1 Positive Culture for Disclosure**

The University of Salford promotes a positive culture for disclosure of disability and strives to provide an environment where students feel confident to disclose secure in the knowledge of the University's commitment to meeting all students' needs.

### **3.2 Social Model of Disability**

The University supports the social model of disability and endeavours to remove environmental, attitudinal and organisational barriers, which may impact upon individual students and present barriers to access and learning.

### **3.3 Positive Regard**

The University is committed to the removal of barriers to access and learning to enable all students, irrespective of disability, to integrate within the higher education community and to participate and succeed. It is the intention that disabled students academically, compared with other students will not be at an advantage nor a disadvantage. Although some adjustments implemented to mitigate barriers may appear to give an advantage, e.g. having extra time in an examination, these adjustments serve only to make up for additional time or effort it may take for a disabled person to undertake the task due to presenting barriers. This is deemed as a lawful adjustment under the Equality Act 2010. Disability is the only protected characteristic where positive regard may be permitted in order to level the playing field.

### **3.4 Health and Safety**

Whilst every endeavour will be taken to ensure anticipatory duty and reasonable adjustments are implemented, and that disabled students have parity of opportunity, health and safety supersedes the consideration of a persons' rights to participate on trips or residential and must be paramount in considering the viability of trips/residential. Risk assessments are conducted to ensure each case is considered on a case by case basis.

### **3.5 Anticipatory Duty and the University Inclusive and Accessible Teaching and Learning Framework**

Under the Equality Act (2010), the University must anticipate the needs of disabled people and not just await the request for support. Historical data on reasonable adjustments enables the University to anticipate a range of more commonly required adjustments. The anticipatory duty encompasses all aspects of the University business including the physical environment, teaching and learning and wider university services.

The University therefore incorporates general reasonable adjustments that disabled people may require to fully access buildings. These include, but are not limited to; hearing loops in lecture theatres and reception desks, automatic doors, accessible toilet facilities, parking and Braille signage.

Many of the recommendations previously made in Student Support Plans (SSP) were simply inclusive teaching approaches that actually enable all learners, not just disabled students, to access their course in a manner than suits their learning style. The University launched the Inclusive and Accessible Teaching and Learning Framework University wide in September 2016. The more frequent reasonable adjustments were removed from the new Reasonable Adjustment Plans, (previously SSPs), and formulated into a Framework. All academics are required to implement the identified recommendations as standard good practice deliverables for all students. A series of work packages are available to academics. These include guidance on making resources accessible, inclusive reading lists, tutorials, field trips etc. See information contained in Related Documents.

The promotion of an Inclusive Student Experience is an integral aspect of the staff welcome and induction at the University. The University offers Continual Professional Practice to ensure

staff are aware of their responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010), and competent to conduct University business in accordance with the social model, and are considerate of organisational, procedural and attitudinal barriers that may present in their day-to-day business.

As an integral element of the authoring and reviewing of all policies the University undertakes Equality Impact Analysis to ensure, individuals with protected characteristics are not disadvantaged.

### **3.6 Declaration of Disability**

The University of Salford is keen to encourage applications from a diverse population and to provide opportunities to enable all students to engage in studying in higher education.

The University is proactive in providing opportunities for students to disclose a disability and in providing opportunities to discuss any support requirements. It is the responsibility of the student/applicant to declare a disability, of which they wish the University to be aware. Nevertheless, there are some circumstances in which the nature of a disability is obvious. The fact that the student had not told us about a disability would not absolve the University from the need to make reasonable adjustments that we were aware of or should have been able to anticipate.

Opportunities for disclosure are offered throughout the student journey. This includes, but is not limited to opportunities to disclose at the following points:

- Applicant/Open Days
- Upon confirmation of a place
- Registration
- Assessment and examinations
- Field trips/residentials
- Placements
- Graduation

In disclosing a disability to any member of University or collaborative partner institution staff, the law deems that the disability has been disclosed to the University. The University must cater professionally and promptly for disabilities that are declared to us.

Once a student has disclosed, the University must make reasonable adjustments to meet the student's needs. If a student declares a disability to any member of University staff, the member of staff must do one of the following:

- A. Refer the student to a Disability and Learner Support to make an appointment to meet with a Disability Adviser; or
- B. Ask the student to sign the Student Non-Disclosure Form (see Related Documentation). On signing, the form the student is affirming that they have declared the disability to an individual, but do not want the information passed on, and that they understand that this means the University will be unable to offer support to the student, (the School Office or service provider where disclosure occurred must retain the form).

### 3.7 Data Protection Act – Sharing of Sensitive Data

Disability related information is personal to the student and is therefore subject to the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA). All information provided by the student in support of their disability is treated in accordance with the DPA.

Disability related information is classified by the DPA as sensitive data and consequently students must give their explicit consent for the University to process and to share the information. The student must understand what information is processed, who the information is to be shared with and for what purpose. Irrespective of consent, information and is to only be shared on a need to know basis.

Students are asked to sign a consent form to enable information sharing relevant to the student's support with appropriate staff within the University, as well as with relevant and necessary external agencies.

### 3.8 Identification of Requirements and Evidence

At the meeting with the Disability Adviser, the student has an opportunity to discuss their chosen programme, aspects of their studies where barriers may be present and how the Inclusive and Accessible Teaching and Learning Framework may meet their needs. Further institutional adjustments may also be considered.

As reasonable adjustments could result in an advantage, the recommendation of adjustments is an evidenced based decision process. On requesting reasonable adjustments, the student is required to provide relevant documentation and medical evidence to substantiate their disability. This can include:

#### A. Educational Psychologist Report

Specific Learning Difficulties is an umbrella term used to describe difficulties with learning in a particular area. The umbrella term may encompass Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dysgraphia and Dyscalculia.

In higher education to be eligible to receive reasonable adjustments, the report must be in receipt of a post 16, which complies with *the SpLD Working Group 2005/DfES Guidelines*.

#### B. Medical Evidence

Medical evidence should be current and substantiate that the person has a disability, which has a **substantial** and **long-term adverse** effect on their ability to carry out **normal day-to-day** activities including the ability to undertake study.

### 3.9 Reasonable Adjustment Plan Process

The Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) is a university owned document issued for all disabled students who request reasonable adjustments, irrespective of status or eligibility for external funding. The RAP conveys reasonable adjustments to ensure the disabled student can access all aspects of study. The RAP may include reasonable adjustments to mitigate barriers in relation to the following aspects of accessing study in higher education:

- the campus
- teaching and learning environments
- resources
- placement
- field trips

- assessments including examinations and assignments
- timetabling
- library support
- emergency evacuation.

The RAP is cascaded within the University the student's consent to the School, library, estates and examinations team as applicable or to a collaborative partner institution. The School, University departments and collaborative partner institutions are responsible for implementing the reasonable adjustments.

A Student Support Plan was the proceeding vehicle through which Adjustments were conveyed. Whilst from September 2016 RAPs have replaced the SSPs, both the RAPs and SSP will exist whilst students are registered to whom a SSP was issued. Unlike the SSP, the RAPs do not incorporate any reasonable adjustments, which are implemented as an integral aspect of the Inclusive and Accessible Teaching and Learning Framework.

The RAP may co-exist with a Needs Assessment Report (NAR) which is an external government document funded through Disabled Student Allowance. A Needs Assessment Report is only available to home students.

The NAR outlines support strategies and makes provision for support funded through DSA under the following categories; travel, equipment, human support and consumables. This document is not cascaded on to third parties within the University and held by Disability & Learner Support who facilitate the identification of support requirements for disabled students.

Where a student is not eligible for DSA, or where support strategies are identified through the NAR, which the University has the responsibility for funding; the Recommended Support Strategy Appeals Procedure should be implemented (See Related Documentation section).

The University will identify the appropriate reasonable adjustments and write to the student to inform the student of the adjustments to be implemented. The student will be required to acknowledge that the recommended support strategies to be implemented and funded by the University offers the necessary required adjustments. Where the student does not feel that the adjustments offer adequate support, but where the Disability Adviser feels the adjustments are reasonable, the student will be informed of and supported to proceed to make an appeal through the Recommended Support Strategy Appeals Procedure.

### **3.10 Recommended Support Strategy Appeals Procedure**

The Appeals Procedure exists to ensure that where human support is requested (which is funded by the University, that due consideration is given in a timely manner. Where the student feels, the adjustments are insufficient to meet their requirements the student will have the right to lodge an Appeal through this Procedure. To ensure the student is not disadvantaged during the Appeals process, the requested support will be temporarily implemented by the University and funded by Student Finance, until the appeal is concluded.

### **3.11 Temporary Injury Reasonable Adjustment Plan (TI-RAP):**

Most circumstances of this type such as accidents resulting in temporary injuries are of a short-term nature and would not be covered by the Equality Act (2010). Nevertheless, it is preferable for arrangements to be made, in the same way as for disabled students, so that the student can, for example, sit an examination or continue to study on a fair basis. Wherever feasible, prior planning should be used to avoid the need for consideration of personal mitigating circumstances through the Personal Mitigating Circumstances Procedure.

### **3.12 Time Limited Reasonable Adjustment Plan (TL-RAP):**

Where a student has an impacting condition that is under medical investigation, a support plan may be drafted with a time limit to cover reasonable adjustments so that the student may continue with their studies. This may be appropriate when no diagnosis is yet reached but it is significantly affecting a student's day-to-day life and is under regular review, but appears that it may be long lasting. Medical evidence would have to be provided to confirm this. A time limited, RAP goes beyond the reach of a TL-RAP but is not a full RAP.

### **3.13 Distribution of Reasonable Adjustment Plans**

Once the student has agreed to the recommended reasonable adjustments, Disability & Learner Support is charged with forwarding the RAP to Schools/relevant Units/ (Library and Exams and Timetabling) within three working days.

#### **a. Schools**

The Schools/Units are then responsible for further (relevant) distribution within their area to ensure the recommended adjustments are implemented:

- Provide the opportunity for relevant staff to comment on the reasonableness of recommendations.
- The School has three weeks in which to establish that it agrees that the adjustments proposed are reasonable given the discipline area and professional requirements, which underpin the programme.

After the three weeks, if no feedback is received, Disability & Learner support will assume all support will begin. There are four grounds on which adjustments might be considered unreasonable:

1. They might give the student an unfair advantage academically over others;
2. They would create significant difficulties for others;
3. They would require a disproportionate share of resources;
4. The adjustment would be in contravention of an intended learning outcome or professional standard.

The School or service is required to implement support (once agreed) within a week. Other arrangements would only need to be put in place for when they become applicable, e.g. specific examination arrangements would only be needed at examination time. This process should be repeated for each new module or academic year if the teaching and support staff have not previously supported the student and therefore would not be aware of the students need. Disability & Learner Support provides Schools with guidance on how to implement the RAPs.

#### **b. Other Relevant Units**

Whilst all services within the University has a responsibility towards ensuring anticipatory duty the library, Timetabling, and Examinations have specific responsibilities. Where pertinent to the individual student copies of the student's Reasonable Adjustment Plan is circulated to the Library and Examinations/Timetabling.

#### **c. Accommodation**

Both private and university accommodation must adhere to Equality Act 2010 and be fully accessible. Disability & Learner Support can make recommendations to accommodation for bespoke furniture, such as height adjustable beds and types of mattresses, ergonomic chairs and bathroom requirements.

Community Living Village (CLV), Disability and Learner Support have agreed a list of anticipatory and reasonable adjustments to ensure where a student presents timely adjustments can be implemented.

There is an Information Sharing Agreement between CLV, which makes provision for the sharing of information between CLV and Disability, and Learner Support where the student has given explicit consent to share.

### **3.14 Procedure for non-implementation of Reasonable Adjustment Plan**

Non-implementation may not always be as a result of deliberate non-compliance, however there may be occasions when a student complains to Disability & Learner Support that either their tutors or University department are not aware of the existence of their Reasonable Adjustment Plan or that recommendation(s) within the plan are not being implemented.

Within three days of the receipt of the complaint from a student, Advisers should follow the Non Implementation guidance available within Disability and Learner Support. Upon receipt of a non-implementation email, the School/Department should act in accordance with the nature of the complaint. Outstanding recommendations, which have not been implemented, the School Operations Manager and Programme Leader or Department Managers/Heads of Service should ensure that these issues are addressed.

If after an initial non-implementation email has been sent and the student continues to report they are not receiving support the Non-Implementation guidance must be followed in order to escalate the case.

### **3.15 Reasonable Adjustment Recommendations**

The RAP no longer includes the more frequent recommendation, which are deemed as good practice. The RAPs make recommendations for any reasonable adjustments, which cannot be anticipated through the implementation of the Inclusive and Accessible Teaching Framework.

In addition the RAP makes recommendations for the following aspects:

#### **Placements**

Where Reasonable Adjustment Plan details reasonable adjustments for placement, the programme leader/placement co-ordinator should ensure that a conversation is held with the student regarding the management of their support on placement, and to make the placement aware of any pertinent recommendations applicable to the placement. Individual placements will have their own protocols for supporting disabled staff and as many are public bodies, they will have the same legal duties as a University. Students should be strongly encouraged to discuss their needs with their placement educators or supervisors. It will be the placement staff's responsibility to implement support recommended in the Placement Reasonable Adjustment Plan.

#### **Flexible Submission Dates**

Reasonable Adjustment Plans may include provision for flexibility with regard to submission dates, usually consisting of a one-week extension. Such an arrangement will involve a change

in the assessment due date for that student and no further action will be needed in terms of late penalties or the submission of a PMC form.

Extended submission dates are intended to give students scope to manage their circumstances; wherever possible work should be handed in promptly and students should be encouraged to do this. Inconvenience or difficulties are not valid reasons for refusing flexibility.

An extended submission date should never be later than the point at which feedback on the assignment has been offered to other students, as this would give the student with the late submission date an unfair advantage.

As group work presents additional challenges in application, group work is excluded from extended deadlines.

### **3.16 Funding of Recommended Support Strategies**

Home students may be eligible to apply for government funding such as Disabled Students' Allowance where support is required which is not met under anticipatory or institutional adjustments.

#### **International and EU Students**

International students and EU students do not meet the criteria for externally government funded Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA); however, the University still has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for all disabled students including international and EU students. The University will make recommendations through the issue of a Reasonable Adjustment Plan for provision based upon their individual requirements, and implemented and funded in accordance with the assessment protocol for home students.

#### **Part time and Distance Learners**

The University will make recommendations for provision based upon their individual requirements in accordance with the assessment protocol for home students.

#### **Disabled Staff Undertaking Programmes of Study**

Where a member of staff undertakes a programme of study at the University of Salford, the member of staff is offered the same opportunity to be assessed as any student, irrespective of employment status.

#### **Supporting Students waiting for Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) Approval**

Interim support is available to students when support arrangements are likely to take a period of time to put in place, which may cause the student to be disadvantaged whilst they wait for the formal approval of support. The University meets the cost of such support and claims this back from the student's Disabled Students' Allowance once approved. Interim support arrangements with cost implications can only be made when a DSA application has been submitted. This ensures every endeavour has been taken to ensure a recharge of support costs can be secured, where costs can be met by external funding agencies. The Disability Adviser will assess the need for interim support internally.

Interim support that can be considered includes taxi arrangements, non-medical helper support and equipment loans.

Students are also encouraged to access Skills for Learning Support and IT training through the library including Inspiration Mind Mapping Software to help develop strategies whilst the student awaits DSA funding approval. See Related Documentation section.

### **Final Year Students Support**

When Disability & Learner Support has been made aware of a student's disability or specific learning difficulty in their final year at University, and there is not enough time to apply and receive funding through DSA, the University will make adjustments that would be reasonable and appropriate given the remaining period of study. At an institutional level, this would include a full Reasonable Adjustment Plan unless the student has less than one month of teaching time remaining. Where one month or less remains, a memo would be appropriate detailing exam arrangements, extensions, or other reasonable adjustments. The interim support procedure can be followed for urgent non-medical helper support, such as study coach and students will be required to apply for DSA to access interim support, if eligible. The student would not have time to go through a full DSA assessment so the Disability Adviser assesses the needs. Funding bodies provide a fast track service to consider the recommendations for NMH support. The University is usually able to claim back interim support for final year students. See Related Documentation.

### **4.0 Policy Enforcement and Sanctions**

The Disability and Learner Support Manager will be responsible for ensuring this policy is enforced and for ensuring, the policy is up to date and reviewed at the appropriate times.

There is an institutional and individual legal duty to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010, when teaching and supporting disabled students. Failure to follow policy and procedures relating to disability legislation endangers the reputation of the University and can result in litigation against both individuals and the Institution.

Students who feel that their disability support has not been implemented or has been delayed can follow the Recommended Support Strategy Appeals Procedure, PMC Procedure, Academic Appeals Procedure or Complaints Procedure to lodge their concerns. Students can seek independent advice and representation from the Students' Union, located in University House.

It is vital that students receive appropriate support as described in their RAP/SSPs as this outlines the university's legal obligations to ensure it meets with disability and equality legislation.

### **5.0 Related Documentation**

#### **5.1 University Policy**

The following documents can be found on the University Policy & Procedure pages [University of Salford Policies pages](http://www.salford.ac.uk/policies) <http://www.salford.ac.uk/policies> or directly via the URL listed below:

- Inclusion & Diversity Strategy (Equality & Diversity theme)
- Personal Mitigating Circumstances Procedure (Academic Governance theme)
- Student Complaints Procedure
- Academic Appeals Procedure
- Recommended Support Strategy Appeals Procedure

## **5.2 University Guidance and forms**

- Inclusive and Accessible Teaching and Learning Framework (Blackboard)  
[http://blackboard.salford.ac.uk/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course\\_id=78828\\_1&content\\_id=2027169\\_1&mode=reset](http://blackboard.salford.ac.uk/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id=78828_1&content_id=2027169_1&mode=reset)
- Student Disability Non-Disclosure Form: Available from the AskUs team on request.

## **6.0 Appendices: No Appendices**