

**UNIVERSITY of
STIRLING**



Learning Support Policy and Procedure

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Commitment to Accessibility and Inclusion for Disabled Students

1. The University of Stirling is committed to providing responsive, student-focused support that empowers students to thrive, succeed and achieve their potential. Embedding a culture of accessibility and inclusion facilitates both the University meeting its [duties](#) under the Equality Act 2010, and advancing equality of opportunity for all current and prospective undergraduate, postgraduate and research students.
2. The University recognises that these outcomes can only be achieved through an approach of shared ownership where everyone in the University community is responsible for creating an inclusive and accessible learning and teaching environment. Such an environment can be achieved through the embedding of equality, accessibility and inclusion principles within all areas of strategic and operational practice, and proactive consideration of diversity and differential impacts in the design of strategies, policies, regulations, procedures and the curriculum itself.
3. Encouraging independent student learning is key within the University's overall commitment to inclusion and student-centred provision. The importance of this in developing rounded, resilient, employable graduates or researchers is fundamental and it is vital that students understand the need to take responsibility for their own learning and associated support.

Details of the University's duties under the Equality Act are provided in [Appendix 1](#)

Mainstream Culture of Accessibility and Inclusion for Disabled Students

4. In line with its commitment to student success, the University of Stirling seeks to adopt and develop a culture of accessibility and inclusion, and therefore to mainstream inclusive approaches to learning, teaching, research and student support, across the institution. The University endeavours to:
 - Ensure through the inclusion of an equality impact assessment within programme design processes that programme delivery, learning outcomes and assessment, feedback, and supervision of postgraduate research students is fair, accessible and inclusive, and that the methods used do not unfairly disadvantage students because of disability. As part of this, academic staff adopt an anticipatory approach and aim to identify potential reasonable alternatives in advance of module delivery or supervision
 - Provide information that enables students to make informed decisions regarding their studies. This includes information on any compulsory elements
 - Routinely provide all deadlines, course structures/outlines and materials electronically in advance via Canvas
 - Provide materials for all students 24 hours in advance of taught classes or supervision meetings where reasonably possible, and take appropriate steps to support participation for all students, including those with a disability who may be disadvantaged by not having had the materials in advance

- Make [Listen Again](#) recordings available promptly, for all lectures where recording is possible within the lecture venue. Recordings are provided of lectures only as it would not be appropriate for recordings to be made of non-lecture based teaching such as tutorials, seminars, practical classes etc. In addition, recordings will not normally be made of lectures delivered by guest speakers or visiting members of staff
- Permit students to make audio-recording of all lectures, tutorials, seminars, practical sessions and workshops delivered as part of the University's taught programmes of study, provided that:
 - the recording is done in an unobtrusive manner which does not inconvenience the lecturer or fellow students;
 - the recording is used only for the purposes of private study by students of this University (it is a disciplinary offence to use the material for any other purpose);
 - students accept that all Intellectual Property Rights in the recording remain with the University and/or the lecturer/presenter/speaker.
- Advise students in Programme documentation that their contributions in lectures, tutorials, seminars, practical sessions and workshops may be recorded under the conditions set out above
- Provide core and key reading lists to all students via relevant module information
- Provide core and key reading lists to library staff in advance of the start of semester for identified print-disabled students in accordance with designated dates as advised by the Accessibility and Inclusion team
- Provide notification to students of any change to timetables and/or rooms as soon as possible via Canvas, email or other means as appropriate to ensure clarity and promptness of communication
- As far as is practicable, work consistently in using the specified institutional font (Calibri), font size (point 12) and paper colour (buff), where printed materials are provided/used. Students who require changes to the standard paper colour are encouraged during the needs assessment process to apply for funding for assistive technology, coloured overlays or tinted lenses. Those ineligible for funding are provided with assistive technology or a set of overlays by Accessibility and Inclusion staff
- Encourage and support students to use assistive technology for changes to colours / fonts / sizes and for listening to and proof reading text to replace readers/scribes where possible in class tests and exams
- Encourage and develop the provision and utilisation of assistive technology and accessible formats throughout the campus and network environment
- As far as is practicable, provide accessible electronic materials in a format such as MS Word to allow documents to be manipulated by students, to meet their own colour/font/size requirements

Procedure for Staff in Responding to Disclosure of Disability

5. Details of when an individual is considered to be disabled are set out in Appendix 1.
6. Students have the right to make their own choice as to whether or not to disclose details of a disability to the University. However, the University strongly encourages students to disclose a disability in order that any support requirements can be discussed as early as possible. Where a

student does disclose a disability, the University has a responsibility to take reasonable steps to support the student. If a student chooses not to disclose and the institution could not reasonably be expected to have known about a disability, the University would not be discriminating against the student by not making reasonable adjustments.

7. The Equality Act 2010 assumes that disclosure of a disability by a student to any member of staff constitutes disclosure to the institution. All disclosures of disability from applicants or students to any member of staff should be referred to the Accessibility and Inclusion (A and I) team within Student Support Services (SSS).
8. It is the responsibility of any member of staff who receives a disclosure of a disability to respond by advising that the University has a commitment to supporting students and making adjustments that are reasonable and appropriate. The student should also be advised that as the University now has an awareness of their disability, the A and I team will be advised of this.
9. If a student does not wish to access support or adjustment, the University will respect this decision and the student will be advised by the A and I team that they can change their mind at any time. A record will be retained by the A and I team of the student's decision.
10. No individual adjustments or other forms of support in respect to disability should be agreed or made, other than those determined through the needs assessment / support process that is progressed by A and I staff. All adjustments will be available for staff to view on the student's Agreed Record of University Access Adjustments (ARUAA)

Consideration of Reasonable Adjustments

11. The Accessibility and Inclusion (A and I) team coordinates and manages the discussion and agreement of support for students with a disability, and any reasonable adjustments. No individual arrangements or other forms of support for students should be arranged other than through A and I.
12. A and I staff explain to the student sources of funding and of support, and discuss the extent to which the University's current arrangements and mainstreamed approach might meet their learning and other needs. In the event that it appears an adjustment to those arrangements may be necessary, the student is seen by an Adviser in A and I, who undertakes an appropriate needs assessment. Any reports and records are retained confidentially in the A and I.
13. A thorough needs assessment is the starting point to the process of determining any adjustments that may be required. Needs assessments are carried out by trained Needs Assessors within the A and I team.
14. Following a needs assessment, when support provision/adjustments have been agreed, the details will be recorded by the A and I Team within an 'Agreed Record of University Access Adjustments' (ARUAA).

Agreed Record of University Access Adjustments (ARUAA) and Common Reasonable Adjustments

15. An ARUAA is defined within the University's 'Definition of Terms' as 'used when students are identified as requiring additional support requirements, details of agreed reasonable

adjustments are made in the student's ARUAA. Examples include alternative assessment methods.'

16. The ARUAA is a document used to record and organise reasonable adjustments for students. It provides information for academic and professional services staff to help support students effectively, as it is recognised that, sometimes, students will require specific adjustments to remove barriers and equalise their access to education, learning and research, and whilst interacting with staff. Whilst ARUAA's are most often created for students who have disclosed a disability, and to facilitate the University meeting its legislative duties under the Equality Act 2010, they can also be used for a range of other reasons and circumstances where although no disability is present, an adjustment of some form is deemed appropriate by a senior manager. This might include the preparation of an ARUAA as an alternative to student disciplinary action.
17. ARUAA's can be established for students across all types, levels and modes of study and research and therefore for undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research students.
18. The ARUAA document records agreed adjustments required to help a student overcome/manage the effects of their disability/circumstances in order to achieve their academic potential both on campus (e.g. relating to class tests, examinations, coursework, attendance, the learning environment, research, meetings, viva, supervision and access to technology), and whilst operating out of the University (e.g. on placement or participating in field work or conferences).
19. The ARUAA sets out the specific adjustments that have been agreed, including details of accommodation-related adjustments, ensuring that the document is holistic and not only focused on academic adjustments.
20. An Access Action Plan is created as part of each ARUAA to set out the responsibilities and commitments of the: student; Accessibility and Inclusion team; and University as a whole, in respect to implementing the agreed support provisions. This plan also notes: confirmation that discussion has taken place to explain to the student the process for requesting extensions and/or securing absence on the grounds of disability; confirmation that the student has been advised on the options available regarding colour/size and font for printed text, as appropriate; and that guidance has been provided to the student as to the face to face, online and electronic support and training available.
21. The ARUAA includes the signatures of both the student and the assessor, to confirm that the joint determination of the ARUAA and agreement of both in terms of its provisions.
22. The student may decide at any time to disengage from an ARUAA. Where the University is advised by a student that they no longer wish to have the ARUAA maintained, adjustments and support agreed through the ARUAA process will cease to be in place/operation.
23. In exceptional circumstances, where the needs assessment process identifies that the adjustments sought by the student may require more detailed consideration to determine reasonableness, the Education and Student Experience Committee's 'Reasonable Adjustments Panel' will be convened.

Common Reasonable Adjustments

24. Where appropriate to need, an ARUAA may recommend that a student may request extensions to deadlines. These requests may relate to deadlines for, for example, the submission of coursework or a thesis. Where this is the case, the student must apply for the extension each time they are required and follow the procedure set out in the Quality Handbook; requesting an extension in advance of the deadline date, stating the reason being "ARUAA". Students with ARUAs continue to be responsible for their own workload planning and endeavouring to complete coursework within deadlines. Extension requests are considered and granted at the discretion of the academic staff involved and can be granted for up to 7 days for coursework and 14 days for dissertations. For research students, duration of extensions should be discussed and reasonably agreed according to circumstances. Students are not required to provide medical evidence to secure their extension as this will have been considered during the development of the ARUAA. Staff should consider the assignment length, type, progress already made by the student and other outstanding coursework when determining the length of the extension to be provided.
25. Where a student has an ARUAA which includes a recommendation on the requesting of extensions, the student is entitled to an extension of up to 7 days in line with this recommendation and can also be granted a further extension of up to 7 days in line with the University policy on extensions, as they could be if they did not have the ARUAA recommendation. This means that a student with an ARUAA recommendation regarding extensions can be entitled to a maximum total extension of 14 days for coursework and 21 days for dissertations.
26. Students with an ARUAA must inform faculty staff if they are to be absent on disability grounds, as they would if they were self-certifying on medical grounds. Students must specify they are absent on disability grounds but will not be required to provide a doctor's letter, as the presence of an ARUAA will confirm that the institution holds sufficient medical evidence of the disability. An ARUAA does not provide students with an attendance waiver, and students should ensure they fully understand the requirements of each of their modules, and the potential impact of absence.

Responsibilities in ARUAA's

27. **Students are responsible for:**
 - Engaging effectively and constructively with the ARUAA process and the support provision provided by the University
 - Communicating with staff about the need to eat, drink or move around a room for disability-related reasons
 - Attending the venue designated where the student has requested separate exam accommodation as an adjustment and this has been arranged accordingly. In these circumstances, the student is not permitted to attend the main examination venue
 - Applying for [extensions](#) by following the procedure set out in the module/programme documentation
 - Engaging in assistive technology training and online guidance to enable them to develop skills required for independent learning

- Complying with specified attendance and engagement requirements
- Their own workload planning and endeavouring to complete coursework within deadlines
- Students who require changes to the standard paper colour are encouraged during the needs assessment process to apply for funding for assistive technology, coloured overlays or tinted lenses

28. The Accessibility and Inclusion team is responsible for:

- Encouraging and promoting the mainstream culture of accessibility and inclusion
- Managing the process of ARUAA development and review with an approach that supports: students; independent student learning; and staff involved in supporting students with ARUAAs.
- Supporting academic and professional support staff by providing training and guidance (including good practice examples) on the interpretation of and implementation of ARUAAs
- Providing training to academic and professional services staff on accessible practices, formats and supporting technologies
- Disseminating guidance, examples of good practice and other information to faculties and professional staff
- Working in partnership with colleagues in the student recruitment, admissions and accommodation teams to encourage students to disclose information on any disability and support needs at the application stage
- Providing, maintaining and delivering one-to-one and group guidance for all students which outlines self-help, peer support and institutional adjustments such as free assistive technology
- Providing students who are ineligible for funding to support the meeting of changes to standard paper colour with assistive technology or a set of overlays
- Facilitating a collaborative process involving the student and expert input from Operational Risk and Environmental Sustainability, Occupational Health and Accommodation Services as required, to prepare Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) and agree on reasonable adjustments for each student who requires such a plan, and in respect to all campus buildings, including accommodation
- Identifying and sharing a list of students who have specific formatting requirements (print-disabled) with all relevant module coordinators in advance of each semester
- Where appropriate, recommending support of a reader/scribe for a maximum of two semesters only. Students will be provided with training, guidance and necessary software/equipment to enable them to effectively use assistive technology, enabling them to become independent learners unless they have a disability which does not allow technology as a solution
- Providing students with information regarding the University's data protection/privacy policy during the needs assessment process.

29. Faculties are responsible for:

- In order to support consistency and efficiency in the student experience of ARUAAs, designating specific members of staff with responsibility for:
- Liaison with the A and I and Academic Development teams as appropriate in relation to staff training information and arrangements;

- Acting as a point of information and input in relation to inclusive curriculum design;
- Liaising with relevant faculty staff regarding extension requests;
- Undertaking administration required for class tests and ensuring that adjustments are provided for all ARUAA students in line with their ARUAA. This will include identifying rooms required, organising scribes and invigilators and providing reformatted texts;
 - Liaising with the A and I team regarding the arrangement of suitable rooms and equipment for class tests where a student requires particular technology;
 - Ensuring the Exams team receives alternative exam arrangement information within specified deadlines;
 - Ensuring the Alternative Formats Service receives core and key reading lists by agreed deadlines.
- Disseminating guidance and information to all relevant staff, including:
 - Background and context of ARUAA provision within the University;
 - Responsibilities of faculty staff;
 - Relevant policy, procedure and good practice;
 - Training available within the University;
 - How to access support and guidance from the Accessibility and Inclusion team;
 - Interpretation of ARUAA's.
- Disseminating guidance to students as prepared by the A and I team via Canvas.
- Ensuring that through the inclusion of equality impact assessment within programme design processes, programme delivery, materials produced, learning outcomes and assessment methods are fair, accessible and inclusive, and do not unfairly disadvantage students because of disability.
- Encouraging academic staff to consider possible alternative assessment options within a module, where this may be required for a student with a disability.
- Ensuring that visiting speakers/members of staff are aware of this policy / procedure and appreciate their responsibilities in respect to it.

30. HR and Organisation Development is responsible for:

- Embed materials relating to accessibility and inclusion into Academic Development (AD)/ teaching bites/CPD opportunities for academic staff.
- Ensure all faculty staff have completed appropriate equality and diversity training.

Communication

31. Email is an official form of communication within the University and all students are provided with University user accounts. Only University e-mail accounts will be used for official University communications. All students are expected to check these frequently for messages. If students use a different e-mail account, it is their responsibility to set up a forward to the University account to ensure that all official University communications are received. Students must use their University user accounts to send e-mails to the University.

Personal Tutors and Adviser of Studies Scheme

32. The University has introduced a Personal Tutor scheme from 2014/15 and all undergraduate and taught postgraduate students will be allocated a Personal Tutor. [See details of the Personal Tutor scheme.](#)
33. In tandem with the Personal Tutor scheme, the University also operates an Adviser of Studies scheme.

Student Learning Services

34. Student Learning Services are committed to providing comprehensive guidance on all aspects of effective and efficient learning. The ultimate aim of the service is to enable students to make the most of their academic studies at university and for students to become independent, successful learners during their time at the University of Stirling. This is facilitated through collaborative work with experienced tutors and by offering a variety of courses, workshops and tutorials.
35. All students, whatever stage of their academic studies, are welcome to use Student Learning Services. However the service may be particularly beneficial to:
 - Students in their first two years of study.
 - Students who are making the transition from college to Higher Education.
 - Students who have been out of education for some time.

Student Learning Services are able to:

- Advise students on academic skills relevant to their studies at University.
- Help students consolidate their previous learning and develop new learning strategies.
- Advise on action-plans to potentially improve grades.
- Suggest practical solutions if students feel overwhelmed by assignment work.
- Help students gain confidence in the transition to Higher Education.

Appendix 1 – Equality Act Information

Equality Act 2010

Institutions are under a duty when carrying out their functions, to have regard to the need to: promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other people; eliminate discrimination and harassment; promote positive attitudes to disabled people; encourage participation by disabled people, and take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

Definition of Disability

You are disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.

A disability might include: visual or hearing impairment; autistic spectrum disorders such as Asperger Syndrome; specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and dyspraxia; chronic illnesses such as Crohn's disease and epilepsy; mental health conditions; and physical or mobility impairments.

Progressive conditions can also be classed as disabilities even if they are not yet long term. However, you automatically meet the disability definition under the Equality Act from the day you're diagnosed with HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis.

Under the Equality Act HE Institutions have several specific duties with respect to disabled students

This is the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

- The duty to make reasonable adjustments aims to make sure that a disabled student can use a service or carry out their day to day activities as close as it is reasonably possible to get to the standard usually offered to non-disabled students. When the duty arises, institutions are under a positive and proactive duty to take steps to remove or prevent obstacles. If adjustments are reasonable for the organisation to make, then it must make them.
- Avoid substantial disadvantage where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage.
- Avoid substantial disadvantage, where a physical feature puts disabled persons at a substantial disadvantage; this includes removing the physical feature in question, altering it or providing a reasonable means of avoiding it.
- Provide an auxiliary aid where without one, disabled students would be put at a substantial disadvantage.

Institutions are required to take reasonable steps to:

What is "reasonable" depends among other factors, on the size and nature of the institution and the nature of the goods, facilities or services provided.

The duty is an anticipatory and continuing one. Institutions must think in advance (and on an ongoing basis) about what disabled people with a range of impairments might reasonably need.

Measuring and recommending adjustments at the University of Stirling

University of Stirling employs a team of specialist assessors who are part of the Accessibility and Inclusion Service and wider Student Support Team. This team's function amongst others, is to ensure that all students who have already disclosed a disability to The University, and those who develop a disability during their time at the institution, are fully informed of all of the support, services and facilities which are available.

Assessors have responsibility for assessing individual students in detail to determine what is "reasonable" in terms of adjustments under the law through a needs assessment process (AoN). Assessors work closely in partnership with faculties, academic staff and other support services such as accommodation, library and information studies when assessing student needs and making recommendations.

Our practices are measured for quality assurance under the Scottish Government Toolkit of Quality Indicators and we are audited yearly to ensure we are meeting required standards in needs assessment.

Disclosure of a Disability: Statement to be Included in Student Handbooks

The Equality Act 2010 assumes that disclosure of a disability by a student to any member of UoS staff or service constitutes disclosure to the institution. As the University has a commitment to supporting students and making adjustments that are reasonable and appropriate, students who disclose are referred to the Accessibility and Inclusion (A and I) team within Student Support Services (SSS). A and I staff will explain sources of funding and of support, and discuss the extent to which the University's current arrangements and mainstreamed approach meet a student's learning and other needs. In the event that it appears adjustments may be necessary, the A and I Team will document a student's needs in an Agreed Record of University Access Adjustments (ARUAA), and use the ARUAA to liaise with the appropriate internal academic and service teams, as well as relevant external teams to take this forward.

An ARUAA provides information for academic, professional services and appropriate external partners to help support students, as it is recognised that, sometimes, students will require adjustments to remove barriers and equalise their access to accommodation, the institution, education, learning and research, and whilst interacting with staff. It is a process designed to help students overcome/manage the effects of their disability/circumstances in order to achieve their academic potential both on campus (e.g. relating to class tests, examinations, coursework, attendance, the learning environment, research, meetings, viva, supervision, access to technology, accommodation and the wider campus), and whilst operating out of the University (e.g. on placement or participating in field work or conferences).

If a student does not wish to access support or adjustment, or feels none are required, the University will respect this decision. The student will be advised by the A and I team that they can change their mind at any time. A record will be retained by the A and I team of that decision. A student can decide at any time to disengage from an ARUAA. Where the University is advised by a student that they no longer wish to have the ARUAA maintained, adjustments and support agreed through the ARUAA process will cease to be in place/operation.

To receive support students must provide written evidence of their disability, health condition or learning needs. This may be provided in the form of an educational psychologist's report (dyslexia or other SPLD) or a letter from a GP or consultant.