

DISABILITY POLICY FOR STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1. PURPOSE

The College is committed to providing equality of opportunity to its students for them to reach their full potential. No student should be unreasonably disadvantaged because of a disability when applying for a course or whilst studying at the College.

Based on the Equality Act 2010, this policy sets out the framework within which the College will support disabled students. The Equality Act imposes a duty to make both anticipatory and individual reasonable adjustments for disabled students from admissions to graduation.

Please note that personal care needs, such as a Personal Assistant or carer are not provided by the College. If applicable, potential students need to seek advice from their local authority as soon as possible to ensure an adequate support package, for personal care needs, is provided prior to students starting their course.

2. SCOPE

According to the Equality Act 2010, a disability is 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantive and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. By way of definition, 'substantive' is defined as anything that is more than minor or trivial and 'long term' is defined as a condition that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months or the rest of a person's life.

In accordance with OfS Access and Participation Plan guidance, the aims to give due consideration to the needs and outcomes of students with declared mental health conditions, specific learning differences, and physical impairments. This includes inclusion within the Equality of Opportunity Risk Register (EORR).

3. OBJECTIVES

3.1 Recruitment and admissions:

We welcome applications from disabled people and all applications are considered equally. All course offers will be based on academic judgements and the ability to reasonably meet competence standards and/ or professional body requirements of the course. Reasonable adjustments can be made in teaching and assessments but not to the actual competence standards. Independent careers advice is available and accessible to all students should it be required to assist in the decision-making process.

3.2 Sharing of information:

Applicants are strongly encouraged to share their disability at the earliest opportunity, for example on their course application, or at any point on their course. This is to ensure that the Higher Education (HE) Disability Advisers or other colleagues within the ALS department can then advise what reasonable adjustments or support could be put in place and the types of evidence required. The HE Disability Advisers or other colleagues within the ALS department will start contacting applicants from the March or April of the year of entry. Some types of support can be arranged within a short timescale, whilst others involve more planning and can take several months to implement due to external funding from Student Finance England, through their Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) grant.

3.3 Confidentiality and data protection:

Applicants and students have the right to request that details of their disability are kept confidential, however this may impact on the level of support available. The HE Disability Advisers explain that there are three levels of consent they can choose from:

- Level 1 No consent to share information, which may prevent or limit the support offered.
- Level 2 Partial consent to share information, for example sharing only the recommendations, not the actual disability.
- Level 3 Full consent to share, meaning that information is shared with nominated members of staff on a need-to-know basis.

3.4 Record keeping:

The Learning Support Record on ProMonitor

Following the relevant consent to share information, the HE Disability Advisers or other colleagues within the ALS department make recommendations for support on ProMonitor, on the Learning Support Record, as agreed by the student. A comment is sent to the relevant staff with more information and directing them to the Learning Support Record. The recommendation, including exam access arrangements, are written in the second section, titled 'Recommendations for working with the student'. This then enables the academic teams to make reasonable adjustments in teaching, learning and assessments.

3.5 Reasonable Adjustments

Students will need to provide independent evidence of their disability for reasonable adjustments to be made. Reasonable adjustments can be offer to a student on the basis that:

- The adjustments help remove barriers the student faces, whilst maintaining relevant standards.
 - The adjustments are affordable taking into account the College resources.
 - There is no endangerment to the person in terms of health and safety.
 - The adjustments do not substantially disadvantage other students or individuals.
- Examples of evidence to be provided can be:
- A written statement or letter from a doctor or appropriately qualified medical profession.

- Diagnostic reports for a Specific Learning Difficulty (such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia or Dysgraphia), ADHD/ ADD or Autistic Spectrum Conditions.
- Reports from previous educational assessments may be acceptable.

3.6 Funding

HE Disability Advisers or other colleagues within the ALS department can provide advice and guidance on eligibility and types of funding available for specialist support. UK Higher Education students are encouraged to apply early for the Student Finance England Disabled Students Allowances (DSA) grant, during their course application process, due to the length of time it can take for a DSA support package to be finalised.

4. STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

This policy has been shared with the Executive Director of Student Support and Experience, HE Disability, ALS Team, and students in receipt of ALS support to ascertain feedback and agreement to the content.

5. MONITORING AND REVIEWING

The policy will be reviewed bi-annually to ensure that the College is operating in line with legal requirements pertaining to HE by the Head of Inclusion. In the light of any changes in year the policy would be reviewed and updated in advance of the renewal date.

6. RELATED POLICIES/ PROCEDURES

- Academic Regulations for Higher Education
- Supplementary regulations for Higher Education BTEC Higher National programmes
- Appropriateness To Study Policy and Procedure
- Data Protection Policy

7. MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY

The effective operation of the policy is the responsibility of the personnel listed below with their specific role/s identified:

7.1 Governor responsibilities for SEND:

The Governing Body holds the overall responsibility for ensuring that the institution has policies, procedures and structures in place to support and promote the inclusion of all students especially those with SEND or learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

7.2 Executive Director of Student Support and Experience:

- To report to and advise the Governing Body on SEND/DSA claimants.

- To report to and advise the Principal and Vice Principals on SEND/DSA issues.
- To produce an annual report SAR to the Governing Body setting out how the College has discharged its duties.

7.3 Head of Inclusion responsibilities:

The Head of Inclusion has lead responsibilities for SEND/DSA Support which include:

- To have overall accountability for the quality and performance measures for the service, ensuring that all individual student's support requirements meet legal requirements and are effectively and efficiently discharged.

The Head of Inclusion is supported by a specialist Management Team who also have clearly defined responsibilities as outlined above and are in line with this Policy as outlined in their individual job descriptions.

7.4 Key College staff with management responsibilities for SEND:

All employees have a responsibility, to provide an environment where students with SEN and learning difficulties and /or disabilities are fully included. There are, however, key people within the College who have specific responsibilities under SEND and Equality legislation and procedures. The roles of those carrying these responsibilities for this policy are listed below.

Inclusion and ALS Manager – The primary aim of this role is to:

- Ensure we fulfil our duties and responsibilities relating to Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and assign funding appropriately
- Ensure personalised and specialist assessment and deploy all reasonable adjustments required e.g., Access arrangements

7.5 Teacher responsibilities:

All teachers within Higher Education are responsible for ensuring that all their students participate in teaching, learning and assessment that are appropriately adapted to meet the needs of all students in their class/under their supervision, including those with SEND.

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Blackburn College is committed to the promotion of equality, diversity and providing a supportive environment for all members of our community. Our commitment means that this policy has been reviewed to ensure that it does not discriminate (either intentionally or unintentionally) any of the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and

sexual orientation and meets our obligations under the Equality Act 2010. Therefore, this policy has no adverse impact on any of the above protected groups.

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