Guidance for Co-ordinators of Adjustments

Part 1: Implementing Support* for Disabled Students

(*recommended reasonable adjustments)

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This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Radium User Manual, November 2015

Student Disability Service

Our Vision
Challenging attitudes. Mainstreaming equality.

Our Mission
Supporting students with impairments to fulfil their academic potential. Working with academics and other University colleagues to support to create an accessible learning and teaching environment
1. Introduction

This guidance is for Co-ordinators of Adjustments (CoAs) in Schools.

It outlines the role of the CoA and the process for managing and implementing support for disabled students. Appendices give guidance on terminology and key people; part 2 of the guidance covers the effective use of Radium, the database which Coordinators of Adjustments use to manage the process of implementing adjustments.

Support for disabled students is recommended by the Student Disability Service (SDS).

UK legislation ie the Equality Act 2010, makes discrimination against disabled people, including students, unlawful. Recommending support in the form of “reasonable adjustments”, is intended to ensure that disabled students, including those with mental health problems and specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dyscalculia and dyspraxia, have an equal opportunity to fully access their course of study.

2. The process, the legislative context and confidentiality

2.1 Process

The process of recommending adjustments is initiated by the Student Disability Service (SDS) following a meeting between an SDS Disability Advisor and the student.

The Advisor will prepare a Learning Profile, which is a list of the recommended, required support for that student.

The Learning Profile is then sent electronically from the SDS to:

- the Coordinator of Adjustments in the relevant School
- the student
- the student’s Personal Tutor or Supervisor
- to Student Administration (previously Academic Registry), if there are exam adjustments
- to the Library, if support is recommended for the student in using the Library.

Please see section 3 for an example of a Learning Profile.

This process applies to the management of support/ recommended adjustments for all students (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research, visiting students and online distance learners) except where specified.

2.2 The legislative context – the Equality Act 2010

When a student discloses to a member of University of Edinburgh staff that s/he has a disability, the University is deemed to know about the disability and has obligations under the Equality Act 2010, and the Data Protection Act (1998). This has implications for the University in relation to how it records such disclosures, how information is passed on and what happens in the event a student asks for a disclosure to be kept confidential.
The Equality Act consolidates previous anti-discrimination legislation for England, Scotland and Wales. The SDS offers training on the legislation, on request.


### 2.3 Confidentiality

Information about disability is classed as sensitive personal data and will be processed by the University in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University’s Data Protection Policy.

The University cannot pass on personal or sensitive information without the student’s permission. When the student comes into the Student Disability Service, they are asked to sign a disclosure form allowing us to forward on any relevant information regarding their disability and/or support needs. This allows us to forward the student’s Learning Profile, outlining adjustments. Details of the student’s specific disability, medical condition or specific learning difficulty (SpLD) is not required to be included in the Learning Profile, and a student is not obliged to reveal detailed information to the School about their disability. In some instances it may be useful for the School to know, but in many cases it may not be relevant to the support requested to be set up. A discussion about this usually takes place between the Advisor and the student with the student deciding what information can be passed on when the Learning Profile is set up.

Please also see the Student Disability Service website: [www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service/staff/supporting-students/student-disclosure](http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service/staff/supporting-students/student-disclosure)

### 2.4 Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy 2013

The University has introduced an Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy. This policy aims to make all students’ learning a more positive and inclusive experience. It mainstreams seven adjustments previously recommended only for disabled students.

The mainstreamed adjustments are:

1. Course outlines and reading lists shall be made available at least 4 weeks before the start of the course.
2. Reading lists shall indicate priority and/or relevance.
3. Lecture outlines or PowerPoint presentation slides for lectures/seminars shall be made available to students at least 24 hours in advance of the class.
4. Key technical words and/or formulae shall be provided to students at least 24 hours in advance of the class.
5. Students shall be notified by email of changes to arrangements/announcements such as changes to courses/room changes/cancellations.
6. Students shall be permitted to audio record lectures, tutorials and supervision sessions using their own equipment for their own personal learning.
7. All teaching staff shall ensure that microphones are worn and used in all lectures regardless of the perceived need to wear them.
These seven adjustments are considered to be good practice and it is intended that they become embedded as inclusive teaching practice. This makes teaching and learning more accessible and reduces the need for specific adjustments to be set up. The policy aims to ensure equality for all students.

The policy can be found here: www.docs.sasq.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Policies/Accessible_and_Inclusive_Learning_Policy.pdf

Further guidance is available on the Institute of Academic Development’s (IAD) website. www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development

2.5 Mainstreamed adjustments and disabled students
The adjustments listed in the Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy will continue to be recommended by the Student Disability Service until the provisions are fully embedded.

3. Guidance for Co-ordinators of Adjustments (CoAs)

3.1 What is an adjustment?
An adjustment or a “reasonable adjustment” (as it is referred to in the Equality Act) is an amendment to the student’s course of study which enables her/him to participate fully in their education.

An adjustment is
- intended to help ensure disabled students are not disadvantaged
- available to students with specific learning difficulties and other disabilities
- can be recommended for temporary disabilities e.g. if a student suffers an injury or illness which impairs their ability to study
- intended to address a disability related issue not an ability “gap”.

3.2 What is a Learning Profile?
A Learning Profile (list of recommended adjustments or support) can be made for disabled students at any time during their academic career.

It is a list of required, recommended support which the Student Disability Service prepares for the student, following discussion with her/him, based on abilities and needs.

Example of a Learning Profile, listing adjustments by heading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching and Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provide outline of course content, if not in course handbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comment on assignment plan in advance, if requested by the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tasks to be broken down into smaller chunks if requested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide clear instructions for the task, either verbally or written as requested by student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Provide additional supervision sessions with clear target setting - If requested by student

Assessments (non exam)
• Provide coursework questions and deadlines at start of course/semester
• Changes to submission deadlines for assessed written work may be required to allow access to a proof reader. (The recommended extra time required for this purpose is 5 working days. Any changes to submission deadlines for this purpose must be requested by the student to the School Teaching Organisations or the Course Organiser. This recommendation does not apply to weekly hand-ins for formative continual assessments. Proof reading support has been recommended for the student based on evidence of specific need.)

Library Adjustments
• Provide double loan time on reserve/short loan books.

Essential Information – for all staff working with this student
• Information regarding impairment should not be disclosed or discussed with placement providers

3.3 How are adjustments decided?
Adjustments are recommended by an Advisor at the Student Disability Service following the submission of relevant medical evidence (e.g. a letter from a medical professional or an Educational Psychologist report) and discussion with the student.

This discussion will explore the student’s strengths and areas where s/he may need support.

Students normally self-refer to the Student Disability Service, but may be also encouraged to do so by their Personal Tutor, Supervisor or other staff member.

Then the process as described on page 3 will be implemented.

3.4 What does the Coordinator of Adjustments do?
The Coordinator of Adjustments (CoA) is responsible for overseeing the process in Schools of implementing the student’s learning profile.

The CoAs duties are:
• reading through the student’s learning profile when received and identifying any potential issues
• liaising with the Student Disability Service (SDS) to resolve any potential issues
• generating an Adjustment Schedule using the Radium system
• using Radium (or another mechanism) to forward the Learning Profile to relevant colleagues in the School eg those in subject areas and the Teaching Office

NB. Student Administration (Previously Academic registry) is responsible for support in formal exams and is therefore responsible for setting up exam support. However, any class tests carried out within the School still require support to be set up. In these instances the School would be responsible for the student’s support.
3.5 Potential Problems

A CoA may face a number of problems in their School. Examples are given below.

Example 1- Alternative to exams

The Student Disability Service expectation is that this adjustment may not be formally set up through the Learning Profile system without discussion and agreement. In the main, however, alternative assessments are relatively rare but becoming more common. Alternative to exams can be challenging to arrange for students. For essay-based exams, for instance, alternatives of take-home essays can be considered. Students are given various degrees of time and this depends on what the school feels is reasonable.

Some Schools, however, feel that alternatives are not practical. On courses where grades are changed according to overall class performance, it may be more difficult to accommodate this adjustment. Schools need to think carefully about what is being assessed and why an exam assessment is core to the learning outcomes of the course. If they are merely an established way of assessing students rather than an essential means of assessment, then it would be reasonable to consider an alternative to an exam. Coordinator of Adjustments should discuss these issues carefully with the course organiser, the student and the Student Disability Service.

Example 2- Discuss with student ways of facilitating their contribution to group work / discussions

This can often be difficult to manage because it involves potentially making other students aware that one student may have issues or problems. Groups have successfully managed this in the past as they often have different members doing different tasks. If the student struggles to work in a group environment, discussing issues, etc then s/he may be able to carry out more individualised research and send on information via email. If the student struggles with presentations, they may be able do other work (of equal value) that does not involve presentations. The key to this adjustment is to discuss how best to take this forward with the student and to get a sense of what exactly is problematic for the student. The student may be happy to discuss issues with the group but need some formal back-up or they may wish a staff member to contact others in the group on their behalf. They may want to be extremely open as to why there are issues, they may want confidentiality. Disability Advisors may also have some experience of times where this has been managed in the past. The key is to ensure the student is comfortable with the management of this.

Example 3- Student has specific requirements for teaching/examination/study rooms – accessible chair with good back support.

Sometimes, undergraduate students require more appropriate seating in lectures and tutorials. Post-graduate students may require specialist seating for their office/desk space. This may cause practical difficulties for Schools. The University’s Furniture Department can provide help with this by providing chairs eg with adjustable back support, from their stock.
If a student needs a chair in tutorials, for instance, the School needs to make sure that the chair is available in the tutorial room. A student may have 2 different tutorial rooms. The help of the Servitor is often useful, or alternatively trying (if possible) to have the tutorials in the same room or even the same building. The student and the relevant Disability Advisor may be able to give guidance on how this could work.

For post-graduate students, the solution may be simpler. If they have an office space and require more ergonomically suitable seating, then this should be provided. However, given that post-graduate students work from their desk for many hours daily, the seating provided by Furniture may not always be suitable. Students may require more specialist (and more expensive) seating. The Student Disability Service has chairs students can trial and SDS can offer advice on how best to support the student, including support to apply for funding.

Please discuss all potential issues or problems with the Student Disability Service throughout the process.
Appendix 1: Terminology Guide

Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy: A policy and on-going work being taken forward in the University of Edinburgh, to promote a mainstreaming approach and provide guidance for academics on how to make all aspects of learning and teaching accessible. See sections 2.4 and 2.5.

Adjustment: A change that might be made to academic processes in order to alleviate barriers to participation in learning and teaching activities or assessments

Adjustments schedule: Those agreed/decided adjustments which will be implemented in a particular School or support service for a disabled student

Academic contact: The person with whom the disabled student discusses adjustments once he or she arrives at the University. This is usually the Personal Tutor (previously Director of Studies) for undergraduates, the Programme Director for taught postgraduates and the Principal Supervisor for research postgraduates. For convenience, in this document, the role is referred to as the Personal Tutor.

Competence standard: The Equality Act defines a competence standard as an academic, medical, or other standard applied by or on behalf of an education provider for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability. For academic purposes, a competence standard is not subject to recommended adjustments, but the way that a student may demonstrate ability to meet the competence standard may be adjusted.

Example 1: The requirement for students studying for a law degree to demonstrate a particular standard of knowledge of certain areas of law in order to gain their degree is a competence standard.

Example 2: A requirement that a student completes a test in a certain time period is not a competence standard – unless the competence being tested is the ability to do something within a limited time period.

Co-ordinator of Adjustments: The individual in each School who, with the delegated authority of the Head of School, decides the adjustments to be made to the academic processes in that School for a disabled student, and oversees their implementation through the Adjustments Schedule for that School.

Kelso: Not a Borders town, but the database which Advisors in the Student Disability Service use to record a student’s learning profile and to send it electronically to all recipients. Kelso is also used to record any contact with the student or his/her academic or support services contacts which may impact on the student’s course of study.

Learning Profile: A profile of the student’s disability together with a list of recommended adjustments and support resources such as IT equipment.

Radium: The database used by Coordinators of Adjustments (and key staff in the Student Disability Service) to manage adjustment schedules effectively and oversee the implementation of adjustments for students.

Reasonable adjustment: As outlined in the Equality Act, a reasonable adjustment is “an action that helps to alleviate a substantial disadvantage” and which the institution can “reasonably” be expected to implement. Reasonableness is not defined in the legislation,
but the Equality and Human Rights Commission note that what is reasonable in each case will depend on the individual and suggests that the following factors can legitimately be considered – “all the individual circumstances of the case, including the importance of the service, the financial or other resources of the institution and the practicality of the adjustment. Other issues, such as the need to maintain academic standards, health and safety and the relevant interests of other people including other students are also important”

**Recommended Adjustment:** An adjustment that the Student Disability Service has recommended be implemented to accommodate the student’s requirements.

**Teachability:** A project and series of guidance booklets produced in 2004-05 by the University of Strathclyde and funded by the Scottish Funding Council. The guidance covered areas including “Creating accessible lectures for disabled students” and “Creating accessible examinations and assessments for disabled students”. The guidance has been updated by the University of Edinburgh and is available on the Institute of Academic Development’s (IAD) website. See sections 2.4 and 2.5.
Appendix 2: Key People and Services

**Student:** in this context, a disabled student, as defined by the Equality Act 2010. The Equality Act says that someone has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long term or substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairment such as those affecting sight or hearing. Impairments covered by the Act also include dyslexia, long term health conditions such as diabetes, cancer or HIV.

**Personal Tutor (PT):** The student’s academic contact (in some Schools this may be the Student Support Officer or, for postgraduate students the Supervisor or Programme Director)

**Coordinator of Adjustments (CoA):** The individual in each School who, with the delegated authority of the Head of School, finalises the adjustments to be made to the academic process, and oversees the implementation of adjustments.

**Student Disability Service (SDS):** The service which will meet with most disabled students to discuss their needs (if necessary in conjunction with the student’s academic contact), compile and distribute a Learning Profile, help those eligible to apply for Disabled Students Allowance, and match students with Student Support Assistants (note takers etc.) as required.

**Student Support Officers (SSOs):** CoAs may designate additional academic delegates or administrative support, often Student Support Officers, to receive and act on Learning Profiles on their behalf. Whilst it is helpful to have an academic contact involved, the decision on who should take forward the process of implementing academic adjustments is one for each School.
## Appendix 3: University and College Admissions Service (UCAS) disability codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UCAS Codes</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>No disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Social communication impairment e.g. Asperger’s syndrome/autistic spectrum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Blind/serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Deaf/serious hearing impairment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Long standing illness or health condition e.g. cancer, HIV, epilepsy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mental health condition e.g. depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Specific learning difficulty e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia or ADHD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Physical impairment or mobility issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Disability or medical condition not listed above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Two or more impairments or disabling conditions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>