



## **Policy and procedure for Applicants who have disclosed a disability**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To set out principles and procedures for the management of applications from potential students who have disclosed a disability, to ensure that such information is used to the benefit of the applicant.

### **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy and procedure forms part of the wider University of Edinburgh Admissions Policy, and refers to applicants applying to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at the University of Edinburgh, and to visiting students.

### **3. Definition**

- 3.1 The Equality Act defines disability as: "A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day to day activities", where "substantial" means more than minor or trivial and "impairment" includes long term, fluctuating or progressive medical conditions.

### **4. Policy**

- 4.1 The University of Edinburgh is committed to providing inclusive education which meets the specific needs of individual students. The University welcomes applications from people with disabilities, health conditions and specific learning difficulties, and aims to ensure that no applicant is disadvantaged due to a disability or impairment.
- 4.2 The policy sets out procedures for admissions staff to ensure that applications received from applicants who have disclosed that they have a disability are treated fairly. The procedures seek to ensure that applicants are considered on the basis of their aptitude, skills and ability in relation to their proposed programme of study.
- 4.3 Information regarding an applicant's disability is not used in the academic decision making process. It is used constructively to ensure that we can make necessary adjustments in order that a programme of study is accessible to the applicant.
- 4.4 The University strongly encourages applicants to provide information about any disability, health condition or specific learning difficulty that they have, in their application, or as soon as possible after the application is submitted.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **5. Applicants who disclose a disability**

- 5.1 All applicants to the University of Edinburgh are encouraged to disclose any disability that they may have in the relevant section of their UCAS or University of Edinburgh online application form. The lists of disability codes currently used by UCAS and by the EUCLID Postgraduate Admissions System are provided in Appendix 1.
- 5.2 In addition, applicants are encouraged to provide information relating to their disability, and in particular whether additional facilities or support are likely to be required during the course of their studies. This could be included in the application, or through direct contact with the University.
- 5.3 Visiting students are asked to indicate whether or not they have a disability, but are not asked for details of the disability in the application form. Those who have indicated that they have a disability are contacted directly by the Student Disability Service.
- 5.4 If an applicant has disclosed a disability on their application form, this data is captured in EUCLID.
- 5.5 Applicants (except for applicants to programmes detailed in Section 8: Professional Programmes) who have not provided any information on disability, and who have not ticked any box, will be assumed not to have a disability, although that status would be changed should the applicant provide information regarding a disability later in the admissions process.

### **6. Selection Procedures**

- 6.1 Selection is carried out either by professional admissions officers or by academic selectors for specific programmes. For the purposes of this document the term “admissions selector” will be used to include both types of selector.
- 6.2 The selection procedure for applications from students who have disclosed a disability is identical to the process for all other applications.
- 6.3 Applications are assessed against agreed selection criteria for each undergraduate degree programme or postgraduate programme.
- 6.4 Consideration of a disclosed disability and any required adjustments will take place separately, after the academic selection decision has been made.
- 6.5 All information provided by an applicant regarding his/her disability will be treated as confidential. It will be shared only for the purposes of making reasonable adjustments.

### **7. Reasonable adjustments**

- 7.1 The University of Edinburgh is required to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled students to access their studies and to ensure that they will not be

disadvantaged during their time at the University. The Student Disability Service is responsible for assessing a student's needs and ensuring that appropriate adjustments are put in place.

- 7.2 Admissions selectors are not expected to assess what adjustments will need to be made in order for a disabled applicant to successfully access their studies at the University of Edinburgh. However, it may sometimes be necessary for admissions selectors to request additional information from an applicant about his/her disability, and to discuss this information with the Student Disability Service and, in some cases, the Programme Director, after the selection process has been completed but *before* an offer is issued. This is most likely to be the case for programmes where there are professional registration requirements related to core competencies or fitness to practice (see Section 8 below).
- 7.3 In many cases, applicants will have provided information about any specific support they will require in order to study at the University within their application. If the admissions selector is uncertain as to whether the required support is available, he/she should contact the Student Disability Service and, in some cases, the Programme Director for advice. In most cases, this will lead to the offer being made as normal.
- 7.4 Where discussions with the Student Disability Service and Programme Director indicate that there may be difficulties in making the adjustments required to enable the applicant to access the programme, the Student Disability Service will facilitate further discussions with the applicant to try to resolve the issue. This will include a meeting with the applicant and the Programme Director, if that is possible. The application will be on hold during this process. There will be no requirement for the admissions selector to contact the applicant since the applicant will be part of the discussion organised by the Student Disability Service. If the decision is taken that the offer can be made, the admissions selector will be informed and will be able to make the offer as normal.
- 7.5 In some cases, applicants will not have provided information about any specific support they will require when studying at the University. Unless the applicant has applied to a programme where there are professional registration requirements related to core competencies or fitness to practice (see Section 8 below), the offer should be made as normal and the Student Disability Service will make contact with the student to discuss any adjustments they require once they have accepted the offer and become UF.
- 7.6 Very occasionally, it may not be possible to make the adjustments required to enable the applicant to undertake the course applied for. For example, this may be because the person is unable to meet the professional competencies or fitness to practice requirements of the course (see Section 8 below), or because of health and safety risks related to equipment which the applicant would be required to use on the course. In these situations, the School and the Student Disability Service would work with the student to consider if a place on an appropriate alternative programme could be offered.
- 7.7 If no agreement can be reached regarding an alternative programme, and the University decides that it cannot offer a place to the student, the applicant should be informed of this decision in writing by a senior member of staff (Head of College or

his/her nominated representative), and provided with reasons as to why no reasonable adjustments were possible. The applicant should be assisted in the process of securing an appropriate alternative programme at another institution.

- 7.8 In the event that the University finds that it is unable to meet an applicant's support needs after the offer has been issued, it may in exceptional circumstances be necessary to withdraw the offer. In such cases the applicant will be informed of the reasons as to why no reasonable adjustments were possible. Whenever possible, the applicant should be involved in discussions to find a place on an appropriate alternative programme at the University of Edinburgh and, if this is not possible, the applicant should be assisted in the process of securing an appropriate alternative programme at another institution.

## **8. Professional Programmes: Core Competencies and Fitness to Practice**

- 8.1 Some professional programmes such as medicine, veterinary medicine, teacher education, social work and nursing require a student to meet certain "core competencies" or "fitness to practice" conditions in order to receive professional registration. Information about these requirements should be available to prospective applicants to assist them in making informed decisions when choosing to apply for a course. Links to HEOPS fitness to practice information would be appropriate.
- 8.2 It is possible that a condition which might impact on an applicant's ability to meet the fitness to practice standards may not have been disclosed through the disability code system. For example, the HEOPS guidance on fitness to practice veterinary medicine specifically mentions allergies, but an applicant may not have considered this to be a disability when completing the form. It is therefore suggested that a link to the relevant HEOPS fitness to practice information be included in all offer letters for medicine, veterinary medicine, teacher education, social work or nursing, and that offer holders be encouraged to contact the admissions office should they wish to discuss any concerns they have about their ability to meet these standards.
- 8.3 All applicants for the MBChB programme who have disclosed a disability and who fall into the offer range after the standard selection process will be contacted by the College admissions office to obtain further information relating to the disability. No decision will be made on an application until this information has been received. If the information highlights any concerns, it will be considered by the admissions selector in consultation first with the MBChB Admissions Disability sub-committee to determine any professional competence issues, and then with the Student Disability Service to determine whether the student can be admitted to the degree programme. The applicant will be involved in these discussions wherever possible.
- 8.4 For applicants to other professional degree programmes (i.e. teacher training, nursing, social work and veterinary medicine) information regarding a disability will be considered by the admissions selector alongside any guidelines from the professional/regulatory body regarding admission of students with disabilities. Where a programme includes a placement component, consideration should be given to what reasonable adjustments will be required to be made by partner placement agencies in order for the applicant to complete their programme of study. If necessary, alternatives to the normal placements should be considered.

- 8.5 Where consideration of the information provided by the applicant indicates that any necessary adjustments can be made and, in the judgement of the admissions selector, there are no other barriers (professional or otherwise) to admitting the applicant, the decision will normally be to make an offer of admission.
- 8.6 Where it appears that an applicant may not be able to meet professional requirements, the admissions selector should investigate with the relevant professional or regulatory body and with the appropriate academic School whether these requirements are relevant. Consideration should be given to alternative means of achieving competence standards. The Student Disability Service can provide advice, and the applicant should be involved in discussions wherever possible.
- 8.7 For more information regarding professional requirements, please follow the links below:

*HEOPS fitness to train standards:*

<http://www.heops.org.uk/guide.php>

*Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons policy and day one competency requirements:*

Student disability policy

<http://findavet.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/dda-guidance/>

Day and Year One competences

<http://www.rcvs.org.uk/document-library/day-and-year-one-competences/>

## **9. Interviews / Auditions / Portfolio inspection**

- 9.1 If the selection procedure involves an interview, audition or portfolio inspection, all applicants should be asked if they require any adjustments to be put in place and the admissions selector should make adequate arrangements to ensure that an applicant with additional needs is not disadvantaged. The Student Disability Service can provide advice if required.

## **10. Reports and Communications**

- 10.1 All communications with offer holders should include the University's accessibility statement, offering to provide communications in an alternative format if required.
- 10.2 Student Recruitment and Admissions run monthly reports identifying undergraduate and postgraduate offer holders who have declared a disability. Later in the cycle these will be modified to show only UF applicants. The relevant reports are sent to Estates and Buildings, and to College undergraduate and postgraduate admissions offices. Should any other service require copies of these reports, they should contact Student Recruitment and Admissions to make a request.
- 10.3 The Student Disability Service currently runs its own reports. During the admissions cycle, the Student Disability Service will send a standard email to all offer holders who have disclosed a disability, sign-posting them to the support services available.

- 10.4 The Student Disability Service will also proactively contact UF students for further information where necessary, and to advise Estates and Buildings, and Accommodation Services in order to plan ahead. The Student Disability Service will act as the main point of contact between the new students and these services.
- 10.5 College undergraduate and postgraduate admissions offices should provide academic Schools with details of any UF applicants who have disclosed disabilities as soon as possible after confirmation, in order that Schools can begin to plan any adjustments required, in consultation with the Student Disability Service. Schools will be expected to ensure that Personal Tutors are aware if any of their students have disclosed a disability.
- 10.6 All invitations to Offer Holders' Visit Days or any other post-application event should include information about the Student Disability Service to encourage both applicants who have disclosed a disability, and those who have not, to take the opportunity to speak to Student Disability Service staff if they feel it may be beneficial to them. An example of this would be:

“The University’s Student Disability Service provides support to students with a wide variety of additional needs, and staff are happy to meet with new students at the [*Offer Holders’ Visit*]. Please visit their website to make an appointment: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service/home> “

## **11. Feedback, Appeals and Complaints**

- 11.1 Where the decision has been taken not to offer a place to an applicant, the applicant may request feedback and subsequently make an appeal or a complaint, using the process set out in the University of Edinburgh Admissions Feedback, Appeals and Complaint Policy.

## **12. Monitoring**

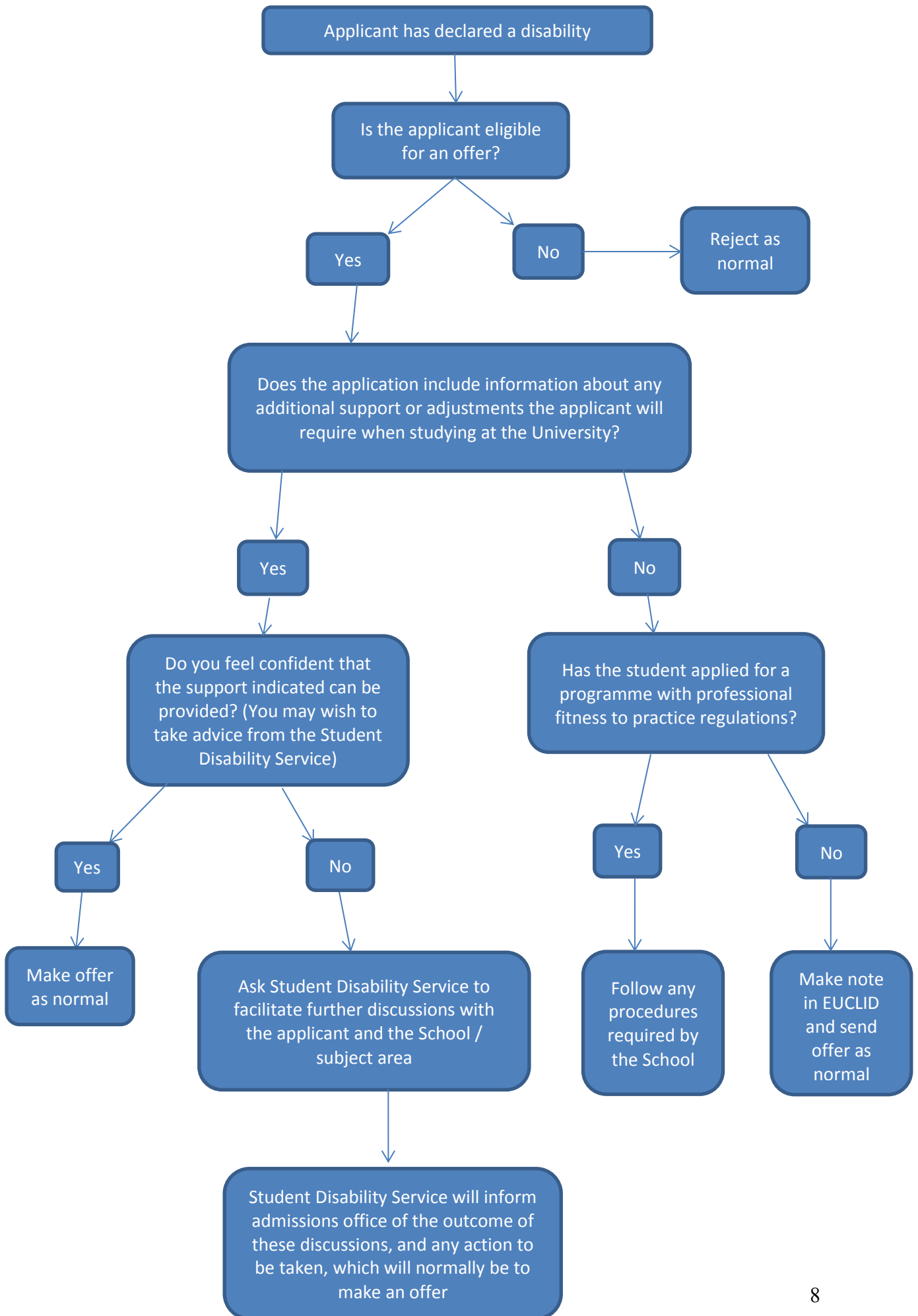
- 12.1 Student Recruitment and Admissions will liaise with the Student Disability Service and other University offices as appropriate to keep admissions staff informed of any changes to legislation that might impact on disability issues.
- 12.2 Student Recruitment and Admissions has responsibility for providing regular data reports to College admissions offices relating to the numbers of applications and offers made to students who have disclosed disabilities.
- 12.3 Admissions statistics are published on the University of Edinburgh website on an annual basis (<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-recruitment/admissions-advice/admissions-statistics>) and equality data on student entrants to the University is published by the Equality Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/monitoring-statistics/edmarc>).

Key statistics on the disabled student population are published on the Student Disability Service website: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student->

[disability-service/about/annual-reports/annual-report-2010-11/student-support/users-of-student-disability-service/key-statistics.](#)

Revised and approved: October 2017

First Approved by Recruitment and Admissions Strategy Group: March 2014





## **Appendix 1**

### **UCAS Disability Codes:**

- A No disability
- B You have a social/communication impairment such as Asperger's syndrome/other autistic spectrum disorder
- C You are blind or have a serious visual impairment uncorrected by glasses
- D You are deaf or have a serious hearing impairment
- E You have a long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy
- F You have a mental health condition, such as depression, schizophrenia or anxiety disorder
- G You have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or AD(H)D
- H You have physical impairment or mobility issues, such as difficulty using your arms or using a wheelchair or crutches
- I You have a disability, impairment or medical condition that is not listed above
- J You have two or more impairments and/or disabling medical conditions

### **EUCLID Disability Codes**

- 0 No disability (HESA code 00)
- 8 Multiple disabilities (HESA code 08)
- 1 Learning difficulty (HESA code 51)
- T Autistic disorder (HESA code 53)
- 7 Unseen disability (HESA code 54)
- 6 Mental health (HESA code 55)
- 4 Wheelchair/mobility (HESA code 56)
- 3 Deaf/partial hearing (HESA code 57)
- 2 Blind/partial sight (HESA code 58)
- 9 Other disability (HESA code 96)