



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
Student Disability Service

Challenging attitudes | Mainstreaming equality



Annual Report 2016/2017

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Annual Report 2016/2017

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 them to create an accessible learning and teaching environment.

Our Values

Contributing to an equal and positive learning experience. Communicating with staff, students and others. Professional and effective.

The Student Disability Service supports students by:

- Arranging pre-application visits
- Assessing students' requirements – with each student
- Assessing assistive technology needs
- Liaising over building adaptations
- Producing individual Schedule of Adjustments detailing support required
- Matching students with student support assistants such as notetakers
- Screening for specific learning difficulties and referring on for assessment
- Negotiating exam arrangements
- Liaising with academics on student support and adjustment implementation
- Supporting students to apply for funding
- Supporting students with temporary impairments which impact on study
- Working strategically to mainstream accessible and inclusive learning
- Promoting disability issues via the Student Disability Committee.

1. Summary of impact of service activities from the previous academic year

1.1 Update on actions and impact in relation to service priorities

The Principal's Review of Support for Disabled Students

The Student Disability Service (SDS) welcomed the Principal's Disability Review, initiated in April 2016 following concerns raised by students at the Student Council in March 2016.

The review focussed on two main areas:

- The implementation of learning support/adjustments and
- The accessibility of the physical estate.

The report and recommendations are available here:

www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/reviewsupportdisabledstudents2017-finalreport.pdf

The Student Disability Service is implementing review recommendations, with the first SDS progress report submitted in October 2017 to the Review 'Recommendations Oversight Group'.

A summary of SDS achievements so far:

- SDS held a very successful Open Day in August – 'Meet the Student Disability Service'. This will become an annual event.
- Initial meetings took place with the new senior School Disability Contacts, who will act with the designated authority of their Head of School
- All Schools were given the opportunity to comment on the full list of SDS learning adjustments – useful dialogue with Schools continues.
- Guidance has been produced for Coordinators of Adjustments regarding the new IT system and means of overseeing the implementation of learning adjustments
- Discussions with the Students Association led to a disabled students' forum on 7 November 2017. These will be held each semester.
- The Students Association amended the criteria for their inclusive teaching awards to include a reference regarding adherence to the University's Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy.

Schools liaison and institutional engagement

Student Disability Service (SDS) liaison work with Schools continues and will be enhanced by the establishment of the role of Schools' senior Disability Contacts.

SDS fully supports and participates in the development of the University's Lecture Recording project and policy (the aim being to have 80 per cent of our lectures online in two to three years).

External impact

Processes are in place to accommodate changes to Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) for English domiciled students, ensuring equity for all disabled students at the University.

SDS is registered as a provider of non-medical personal (NMH) help with the new DSA Quality Assurance Group (DSA QAG) quality assurance framework, which applies to English domiciled students. The service was audited in November 2017 and is now implementing recommended changes to practice.

The Scottish Government's validation of Disability Services to undertake Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) needs assessments is currently suspended. Further detail on revision of the process is awaited.

New SDS IT Systems in place

The major SDS IT Systems project is in the final stages. In addition to enhancing working practice, this work was necessary as the platform supporting our IT systems is about to become obsolete.

Gael Campbell, SDS Assistant Director, project managed this key initiative, working closely with Student Systems colleagues. The project involved consultation with all key users (staff from SDS, Schools, exams, library and students) and representatives from all Schools throughout summer 2017 to discuss new system and its positive impact on their local working processes. The SDS Director, as project sponsor, reported to a project board.

Phase One (finance systems and sessional staff timesheets) was completed by March 2017 and is functioning effectively.

Phase Two utilises EUCLID as the means of communicating learning support proposed by the Student Disability Service for disabled students. Key staff in Schools, Exams and the Library can now view students' Schedules of Adjustments (Learning Profiles) on their EUCLID desktop.

Students can now view their Learning Profile/Schedule of Adjustments at any time from their own MyEd desktop.

Bugs in the system have been fixed and the focus shifted to review of the system's effectiveness, noting suggestions for future enhancements and ensuring that the system will produce essential management information.

At the time of writing, Schools are generally positive about the changes, with some reservations regarding distribution of key information to all staff who need to know, including guest lecturers. We continue to work with Schools on system enhancement and reporting.

SDS staff are getting used to the new system, which can seem slower during this familiarisation period. As our previous IT platforms were obsolete, the changes were essential. Development of School and SDS management information reporting is under development at the time of writing.

SDS Operational Issues

Frontloading of service provision continues, with an increased number of evening appointments (with Disability Advisors, Mental Health Mentors, SpLD Tutors and sessional Needs Assessors) available for students. Several core staff have moved to flexible working patterns, which freed up space for sessional staff appointments. An unused (no-show) appointment rate of 10.4 per cent (282 appointments) in semester one of 2017/18 is giving cause for concern. (Increased from six per cent the previous year).

Appointment management and planning have reduced waiting times somewhat but not completely. The waiting times for Mental Health Mentoring are, at the time of writing, giving cause for concern. A triage process has been implemented by Martin Judd, Assistant Director.

In semester 1 of academic year 2017/18 we experienced a massive volume of email traffic, in part due to our new appointment system which requires students to have the necessary medical or diagnostic evidence before they see an Advisor.

In addition to main premises, SDS staff also work from Kings Buildings, ECA, the new Holyrood Building and Moray House. The lack of physical space in the service and across the University continues to impact on SDS's ability to provide a more timely service to students.

SDS appointment referral/waiting times

SDS continues to work to establish 'acceptable' waiting times and managing student expectations. This is a work in progress and was included in the SDS annual plan and key performance indicators (KPIs), relevant extract below:

KPI/Objective	Monitor (on two weekly basis) waiting time for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Initial appointments (if feasible) 2. DSA needs assessments 3. Ed Psych/diagnostic assessments 4. Assistive Technology training 5. Mental Health Mentors 6. SpLD Tutors
Purpose	Establish benchmarks, delivering on acceptable waiting times as future KPIs
Metric/Target	Establish maximum waiting time per appointment type
2015/16	Variable (0–4 weeks wait based on regular snapshots)
2016/17	Finalise KPIs for future years – still under discussion 2017/18

Continue ongoing work for support of disabled online distance learners and report on developments.

Assistant Director Jan Gardiner represented SDS on the short-life Distance Education Task Group and produced an Equality Impact Assessment template to enable staff developing new ODL courses to ensure full accessibility. Feedback was received raising concerns around ensuring the accessibility of all course materials, particularly those not generated in house by the University.

The Task Group was suspended as two new Assistant Principals, Melissa Highton and Sian Bayne, were appointed with an online distance education remit. It was advised that the work of the Task Group was likely to be taken forward in a different way. No further communications have been received since the notification of the two new appointments (June 2016).

Additional developmental work includes:

- **BSL (Scotland) Act:** the SDS Director, with Rachel O'Neill from the School of Education, drew up terms of reference and suggested membership for a working group to develop and implement the University's BSL plan, as required by the Scottish Government. This will be submitted to the Central Management Group in early 2018 by the Deputy Secretary (Student Experience).
- **Assistance Animals (Dogs) Policy:** The policy was finalised in summer 2017 by the SDS Director, with input from the University's legal department and Accommodation Services. www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services/policies-regulations/a-to-z/a-to-l
- **Authorised Interruption of Studies (AIS) working group:** the SDS Director sat on the short life group on AIS. The group, amongst other issues, aims to ensure that a more consistent approach is adopted across the University and recognises that support services are seeing some students e.g. over the summer vacation, to facilitate an effective return to study.
- **Lecture Recording Policy task group:** Assistant Director Jan Gardiner represents SDS.
- **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs):** Assistant Director Jan Gardiner, has contributed to this working group. Paper on PEEPS is due to be submitted to the Central Management Group in early 2018.
- **SDS training provision:** SDS staff co-deliver mental health training every second week, with Counselling colleagues, to Personal Tutors and Student Support Officers. SDS delivers a wide range of disability training, including disability awareness/equality training for Estates and Information Services and impairment specific training on dyslexia, Autistic spectrum disorder and hearing impairment.
- **Student Support:** Disability Advisor Kathy Smith initiated a – now successful and well-established – Transition event in late July for new students on the autistic spectrum. Kathy also successfully piloted 'SocialEyes' for the first time in 2017. This is an 8-week programme for students on the autistic spectrum, which supports them to develop greater social skills and strategies for functioning effectively in the world.

2. Fit with Strategic Plan

Strategic objectives and development themes relevant to the Student Disability Service:

- Leadership in learning;
- Fostering diversity and inclusion;
- An estate that matches expectations, responding flexibly to student and staff needs and showcases the University;
- More students supported via online distance learning.

The Service takes a strategic approach to inclusion and equality and actively works towards the mainstreaming of individual recommended adjustments within the curriculum.

SDS Director represented the service in the Mental Health Thematic Review and is a member of the University's Mental Health Strategy Group. SDS are involved with implementation and further work resulting from these initiatives including Support for Study panels, mental health training for Personal Tutors and revisiting the University's confidentiality policy with Records Management.

Our vision of 'Challenging attitudes. Mainstreaming equality' reflects our aim to mainstream and embed equality for disabled students. We work in partnership with academic and other colleagues to support them to create an accessible learning and teaching environment. The University implemented our Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy in 2013, which mainstreams seven areas of support previously recommended for disabled students: www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/accessible_and_inclusive_learning_policy.pdf

The Equality Act (2010) gives the work of the Student Disability Service (SDS) a legislative context which underpins the ethos and operational delivery of the service. Under the Equality Act, someone is considered to be disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Changes imposed by the UK government on entitlement to Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) for English domiciled students have impacted financially and been absorbed by the University.

The UK government continue to expect that Universities become more inclusive and stated that the sector has '**now had adequate time to understand and comply with**' the provisions of the Equality Act and '**that all reasonable adjustments are the legal obligation of the HE provider and the HE provider therefore needs to bear this cost, without additional public funding.**'

For information and context, the classification of disability type in higher education is covered by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) codes:

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

3. Service usage figures

3.1 Total number and key statistics

In academic year 2016/17, 4,193 students disclosed a disability, 10.6 per cent of the total student population. This is an increase of over 15 per cent from 2015/16.

The disability disclosure rate from the 'Equality in higher education – statistical report, 2016' (Equality Challenge Unit), reveals that 10.6 per cent of students in the UK and 10 per cent in Scotland are known to have a disability.

Key SDS statistics at a glance

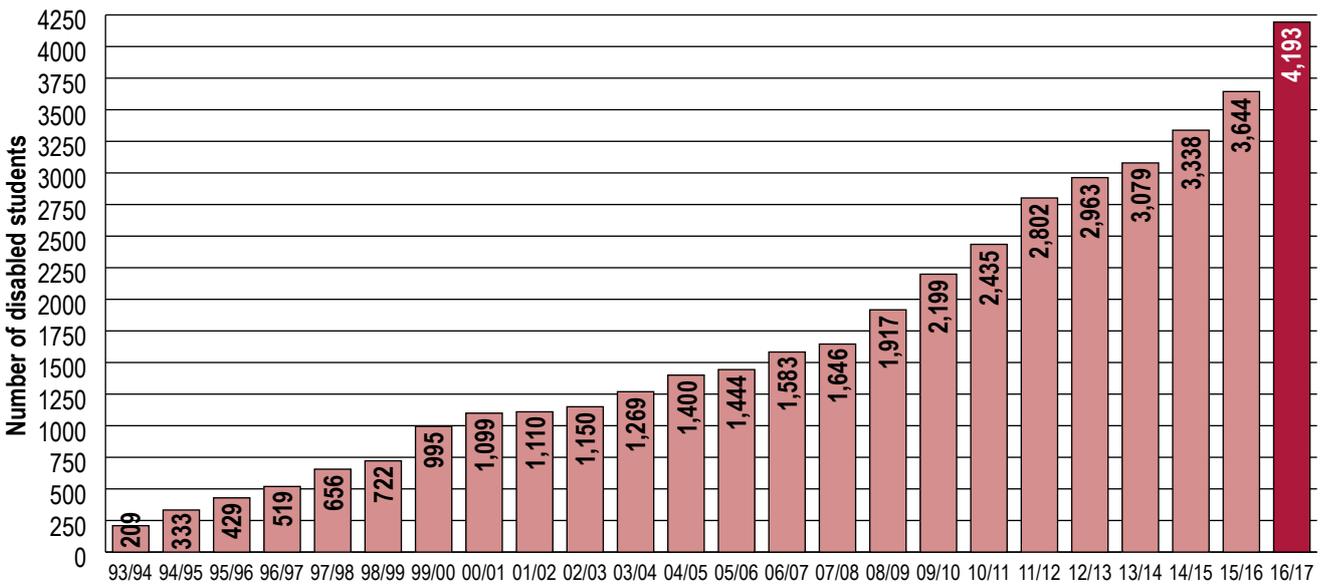
- 15 per cent additional disabled students disclosed a disability in 2016/17 (4,193)
- 45 per cent (1,893) have specific learning difficulties (mainly dyslexia)
- 21 per cent (870) disabled students disclosed mental health problems, up by 45 per cent on the previous year
- 25 per cent increase in the number of students on the autistic spectrum (119)
- 289 students (not entitled to DSA) supported via the Disabled Students Support Fund (DSSF) – an increase of 45 per cent
- DSSF spend increased by 21 per cent from £83,868 to £101,502
- Disabled students submitted 18 per cent of academic appeals (34 students), down from 20 per cent
- 582 –19.5 per cent – of students seen by the Student Counselling Service and/or who attended workshops disclosed a disability, up by 40 per cent
- SDS currently supports 174 online distance learners, up by 25 per cent.

3.2 Academic appeals

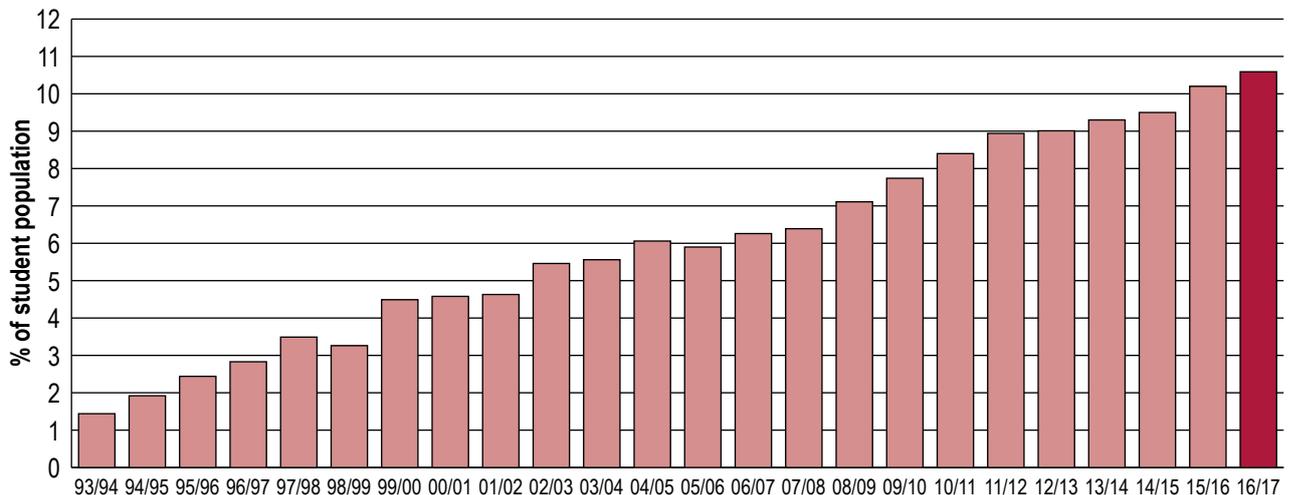
In academic year 2016/17, 18 per cent of appellants had a declared disability, a fall from 20 per cent in 2015/16. Breakdown by impairment:

UCAS code	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Autistic disorder	2	3	1
Learning difficulty	7	16	20
Mental health	3	9	6
Other disability	1	0	0
Unseen disability	2	3	4
Wheelchair/mobility	1	1	1
Visual impairment	0	2	0
Multiple disabilities	1	0	2

Graph 1: Number of students disclosing a disability (undergraduate and postgraduate)



Graph 2: Disabled students – percentage of student population



Breakdown by College and School

College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	SpLD	Visual	Hearing	Mobility	Autism	Mental Health	Unseen	Multiple	Not listed	Total
Business	69	-	3	4	1	7	19	2	9	114
Edinburgh College of Art	264	1	7	6	8	57	40	12	18	413
Divinity	37	-	-	1	1	22	6	5	6	78
Economics	45	4	-	2	1	11	15	1	5	84
Health in Social Science	45	2	5	2	2	26	26	4	11	123
History and Classics & Archaeology	130	1	4	5	14	59	31	8	22	274
Law	56	9	13	6	2	45	29	13	8	181
Literature, Languages & Cultures	104	6	7	5	13	107	65	11	20	338
Philosophy, Psychology & Language Sciences	109	3	3	10	7	84	40	11	19	286
Moray House School of Education	175	6	16	7	4	39	46	6	14	313
Social & Political Sciences	149	4	4	14	2	104	53	15	19	364
Centre for Open Learning	26	4	4	7	8	33	25	9	11	127
HSS General Degree or Visiting Student	33	2	1	1	-	26	15	5	13	93
College total	1,239	42	67	70	63	620	410	102	175	2,788
College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine	SpLD	Visual	Hearing	Mobility	Autism	Mental Health	Unseen	Multiple	Not listed	Total
Medicine (SBCLS, SCSCHE, SMCM)	58	2	1	3	1	9	13	2	9	98
Biomedical Sciences	71	2	3	5	3	31	19	6	17	157
Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies	80	-	4	2	4	27	27	4	14	162
Clinical Sciences	23	2	2	-	-	7	12	4	14	64
Molecular & Clinical Medicine	11	1	2	3	1	7	8	-	3	36
College total	243	7	12	13	9	81	79	16	57	517
College of Science and Engineering	SpLD	Visual	Hearing	Mobility	Autism	Mental Health	Unseen	Multiple	Not listed	Total
Biological Sciences	64	1	2	3	7	35	23	2	13	150
Chemistry	32	2	2	1	2	20	13	2	10	84
Engineering	80	-	3	3	4	24	22	2	9	147
Geosciences	110	4	4	3	5	31	26	6	14	203
Informatics	47	2	-	4	11	25	16	7	14	126
Mathematics	18	-	1	1	5	7	11	2	3	48
Physics & Astronomy	51	3	-	1	13	25	13	2	8	116
CSE General Degree or Visiting Student	9	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	1	14
College total	411	12	12	16	47	169	124	25	72	888
Total for all Schools	1,893	61	91	99	119	870	613	143	304	4,193
Percentage students by impairment	45.1%	1.5%	2.2%	2.4%	2.8%	20.7%	14.6%	3.4%	7.3%	

3.3 Numbers of disabled international students

		2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Undergraduate	EU	98	108	125	126	142
	Overseas	266	293	305	314	393
Taught Postgraduate	EU	68	34	34	51	92
	Overseas	96	67	75	120	204
Research Postgraduate	EU	30	30	27	38	43
	Overseas	52	53	58	67	74

3.4 Annual footfall statistics (including visitors to Student Counselling)

Year	No. of visitors	Variation from previous year
2012/13	24,435	–
2013/14	27,163	+11%
2014/15	27,890	+3%
2015/16	27,254	-0.23%
2016/17	28,895	+6%

Breakdown of students by disability and degree level

UCAS Categories (Code)	UG	PGT	PGR	Total
SpLD (11)	1,484	276	133	1,893
Visual impairment (2)	29	22	10	61
Hearing impairment (3)	39	44	8	91
Mobility impairment (4)	60	24	15	99
Autistic spectrum disorder (T)	87	20	12	119
Mental health problems (6)	631	162	77	870
Unseen disability (7)	397	139	77	613
Multiple disabilities (8)	85	36	22	143
A disability not listed above (96)	162	103	39	304
All disabilities	2,974	826	393	4,193

Breakdown of students by disability and degree level as a percentage of total disabled student population

UCAS Categories (Code)	UG	PGT	PGR	Total
SpLD (11)	35%	7%	3%	45%
Visual impairment (2)	1%	0.5%	0.2%	1%
Hearing impairment (3)	1%	1.0%	0.2%	2%
Mobility impairment (4)	1%	0.6%	0.4%	2%
Autistic spectrum disorder (T)	2%	0.5%	0.3%	3%
Mental health problems (6)	15%	4%	2%	21%
Unseen disability (7)	9%	3%	2%	15%
Multiple disabilities (8)	2%	1%	1%	3%
A disability not listed above (96)	4%	2%	1%	7%
All disabilities	71%	20%	9%	100%

4. Innovations and successes

4.1 SDS restructure

The merger of our Advisory teams is fully embedded. All of our Disability Advisors see any disabled student, regardless of impairment. Disability Advisors with specialisms are expected to share knowledge and expertise with peers.

Due to the growth in the Advisory and Mental Health Mentor teams, an Additional Assistant Director will take up post in late January 2018 and the line management of these teams will be split between two Assistant Directors. We are mindful of the need for a consistency of approach across this team.

The introduction of the new IT system meant that the post of Technology Coordinator became redundant. We changed our approach to providing Assistive Technology training, for a one year period as a pilot project, enabling SDS to have the necessary absence cover, whilst making significant cash savings.

4.2 SDS planning process

A more structured approach to operational planning has been implemented, although volume of email and telephone traffic continues to be significant. We continue to review measures to deal with this ongoing challenge, especially in relation to phone calls.

Regular discussions between the Administrative and Advisory teams resulted in a series of clear priorities for semester one, including:

- Defining the number of students an Advisor is expected to see in a day, taking into account the growing complexity of student support, growing volume and email/phone/Skype work.

- A new system 'InTel' which clearly designates telephone traffic for daily follow up by Advisory staff in allocated timeslots.
- Email folders 'InDis' and 'InMgt' where emails are forwarded requiring the attention of the Advisory or Management teams.

4.3 Sessional staff/frontloading

Three sessional Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) Needs Assessors were employed to 'frontload' the service at the start of semester one, enabling students to be seen more quickly and have their funded support in place earlier. These sessional staff work across the academic year, with workload lessening towards the end of semester 2.

An additional five sessional Mental Health Mentors were employed in order to accommodate the ever increasing number of students disclosing mental health problems. However, issues were encountered with PVG clearance and their appointment was delayed. Two Mental Health Mentors resigned and left the service at the end of semester 1, December 2017.

Due to staff absence and resignations in the administrative team, we employed a temporary administrator to manage email throughout semester one. The team is now up to full complement.

5. Business process developments/new ways of working

5.1 New SDS IT System

As detailed above, the new IT system is now in place, consisting of:

Phase One: the new timesheet systems for payment of Non-Medical Helpers/Student Support Officers were in place by June 2017. This enables students to authorise the number of hours of support provided

Phase Two: the communication of proposed learning support (adjustments) via EUCLID has gone live for academic year 2017/18.

Outcome

Students can now see and review their Schedule of Adjustments (Learning profile) via their individual MyEd page.

5.2 Changes to the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)

The University continues to cover costs towards the first £200 towards a computer for disabled English domiciled students. Thirty students took up this offer in 2016/17, ensuring equitable provision with Scottish and EU/International peers.

The University also funds current provision for non-medical helpers, e.g. manual note takers and proof readers which DSA no longer supports for English domiciled students.

5.3 Shadowing/exchange visits

SDS continues to host a range of international visitors, most recently from:

- Karin Moser, Technical University of Vienna – August
- Group of five teachers of the deaf from Spain – May
- Myra Tantengco, University of the Philippines – May
- Liu Xiaohui, Fudan University, China – April
- Susan Johnston, University of Maryland – February
- We look forward to hosting the Head of the Disability Service from Trinity College, Dublin in January 2018

6. User communications and feedback

The SDS annual student evaluation was suspended in academic year 2016/17 due to the Principal's Review of Support for Disabled Students. SDS plans to seek student views via a series of focus groups in semester 2 of academic year 2017/18.

6.1 The Edinburgh Student Experience survey (ESES)

ESES ratings signify 'good' or 'very good' in terms of service satisfaction. ESES is currently suspended pending review.

Year	Satisfaction	Change from previous year
2013	55%	
2014	69%	+14%
2015	62%	-7%
2016	62%	No change

6.2 The International Student Barometer (ISB)

The most recent ISB results (2016) show that our disabled international students are 91 per cent satisfied. This has increased from 86 per cent in 2015, with 2014 satisfaction ratings of 97 per cent.

6.3 Additional communication and feedback measures

Less formal SDS review mechanisms include:

1. Ongoing liaison with students, who escalate their learning issues to Advisors, which in turn may require the SDS Director to raise problems with Heads of Schools
2. Annual feedback requested from students on their satisfaction with their Non-Medical Helpers (note takers, Mental Health Mentors etc.)
3. Annual contact with students at the start of semester two to request feedback on the quality of their learning support and whether all recommended support has been implemented by the Schools, Library and/or Exams Office.

7. Service reputation/esteem measures

7.1 Accreditation

The Scottish Government has currently suspended the annual process to validate higher education institutions to carry out DSA Needs Assessments, as part of the SAAS review.

The service is a registered provider of non-medical helpers/student support assistants, validated by the Disabled Students Allowance – Quality Assurance Group (DSA QAG)'s new quality assurance framework, for English domiciled students. SDS was audited under this system in late November 2017, achieving a 68 per cent 'satisfaction' rating, with a number of recommendations for change to communications and process.

7.2 Networking and reputational enhancement

The Director of the Service works regularly with Scottish Heads of Disability Services. The group initiated an annual Scotland-wide conference for Disability Advisors, where the SDS Director presented on the University's Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy.

The SDS Director represents the Scottish Heads on the Scottish Government's Disabled Students Advisory group (DSAG) and is the co-opted Scottish representative on the National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP) who held their first Scottish conference in November 2016.

The SDS Director attends the Heads of Russell Group Disability Services network. The Director presented a workshop to colleagues from Imperial College London on UoE working process in relation to DSA, to inform their future working.

The SDS Director is a member of the UK government Disabled Students Sector Leadership Group (DSSLG) with the Vice Principal (People and Culture) Professor Jane Norman. This group is made up of senior academics, students and key HE representative organisations, to take forward the mainstreaming and inclusion agenda at a senior level in higher education.

The Student Disability Committee, convened by Professor Tina Harrison and supported and serviced by SDS, is currently under review and awaiting the recommendations from the Principal's Disability Review. The Committee brings together representatives from across the University from Estates, technology and academia.

8. Analysis of service monitoring and achievement of service levels

8.1 Appointment waiting times

SDS provides a range of appointment types and waiting times vary throughout the year. SDS contacts all disabled students in advance of the start of the academic year to encourage them to make an appointment as early as possible. We have yet to define an 'acceptable' waiting time and on managing students' expectations.

Statistics show that most waiting times decreased with a maximum wait of two weeks, until November 2017 when the wait for Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) tuition reached four weeks and early December when a Mental Health Mentoring list was established. The latter increased throughout the semester and triage arrangements implemented as of December 2017.

8.2 Output statistics

Work areas	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Learning Profiles/ Schedules of Adjustment* completed (new and repeat)	new: 906 repeat: 493 Total: 1,399	new: 956 repeat: 506 Total: 1,462 (+4.5%)	<i>2016/17 statistics unavailable due to IT system changes.</i> Snapshot from January 2018 Total: 1,769 (+21%)
Needs Assessments for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) completed	252	276 (+9.52%)	303 (+10%)
Students receiving DSA	Not available	First degree: 617 PGR: 34 PGT: 59 Total: 710	First degree: 606 PGR: 39 PGT: 73 Total: 718
Enquiries dealt with	26,344	17,775*	23,721 (+33%)
Website visitors	23,412	20,735	22,303
Website unique page views	80,769	69,254	77,699
Visitor numbers (weekly average)**	547	538	567 (+5%)
Online distance learners supported by SDS (figures vary through the year)	82	139 (+69.5%)	174 (+25%)

* A Schedule of Adjustment is a list of learning support recommended by SDS Advisors for Schools, Library and Exams to put in place.

** includes visitors to the Student Counselling Service.

9. Income generation activity

9.1 Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) related income

The Student Disability Service generates an annual income from assessment fees for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA).

In 2016/17 the total income for assessment fees was **£110,620**, an increase of 48 per cent (£74,713) on the previous year. We also receive monies (which includes an administrative fee) to cover the cost of disabled students' non-personal help such as note takers, proof readers and specialist tutors. Income of **£185,851** for academic year 2016/17 offset the full cost of provision.

Due to changes in statutory support for English domiciled students, we now require to supply more than one quote for non-medical helpers. This – and the removal of funding for note takers and proof readers – resulted in additional administrative workload.

9.2 Achieving greater efficiency

Due to the shortage of physical space in the Main Library, we currently operate from four additional sites: ECA, The King's Buildings, Moray House, and the new Holyrood Centre.

Efficiency savings achieved

- New IT system savings – post holder redundancy.
- Assistive Technology Advisor resigned and new way of providing AT support now in place – one-year pilot until end of academic year 2017/18.
- SAAS uploader: the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) introduced an electronic system which enables SDS staff to send DSA assessment reports electronically rather than by post.
- One Disability Advisor on one year sabbatical meant that we are able to employ Centre for Open Learning (COL) staff member, at risk of redundancy, for a year.
- The above staff member originally came to work at SDS on a secondment opportunity.
- Temporary administrator needed for the duration of semester 1 due to staff turnover and absence.

Initiatives implemented

- Frontloaded and tailored provision to enable us to cope more effectively with the impact of student volume, e.g. before and during semester one and during both semesters.
- Continuing to develop appointment management, with a continued emphasis on using telephone/Skype appointments.
- Increasing the number of evening appointments to maximise use of available space.
- Employment of grade 4 administrator to focus on matching students with non-medical helpers, freeing up Advisory time.

10. Partnership/shared services

(including working with Schools and Colleges)

Please see Appendix 1 for list of internal and external partnerships and areas of work.

SDS supports and services the University's Disability Committee. A review of the remit and effectiveness of this committee has been initiated by the Committee Convenor, Professor Tina Harrison with the intention of implementing change in 2018.

11. External reference points/benchmarking

(for example, best practice outside the sector)

The University's Equality and Diversity Monitoring and Research Committee (EDMARC) produces annual student data in relation to gender, ethnicity and disability. The most recent report was published in 2016.

The proportion of students disclosing a disability at PG level is lower than undergraduate level. The proportion of undergraduate students exiting with a 1st class or 2.1 honours degree is lower over the last 10 years than for non-disabled students. This mirrors the situation in all four countries of the UK, according to the Equality Challenge Unit (RCU).

In relation to the Russell Group, Edinburgh lies eighth in the proportion of disabled students disclosing a disability. We lie at mid-point for PG taught and have the fourth smallest cohort of PG research students disclosing a disability.

12. Staffing

SDS employs 16 core staff (15.5 full time equivalent), not including one Disability Advisor on a one-year leave of absence. SDS employs 33 sessional staff and 11 self-employed sessional consultants who work on guaranteed hours offered contracts or who are paid by assessment/diagnostic report).

Staff undergo a range of in-house training sessions covering mental health, visual and hearing impairment and take part in regular case study meetings, to enhance consistency and best practice. Disability Advisor, Angela Joyce, initiated a useful staff induction document and programme, to be further developed in 2018.

SDS staff access a range of internal University/HR training, including leadership training.

In addition to a regular presence at Open Days and Welcome events, the SDS Director, Assistant Directors and Advisory staff deliver training sessions and presentations to UoE staff throughout the year, including a rolling programme of disability training to Estates and IS colleagues, PGCap (IAD), full Schools meetings and impairment specific training, encompassing the mental health training for Personal Tutors and Student Support Officers (SSOs).

The SDS Director, Sheila Williams, leaves the service at the end of April 2018, after almost 10 years working as Assistant Director and then Director. Sheila was appointed Director in August 2009.

13. Risk analysis

It continues to be a very real risk – both legislative and reputational – to the University that, by non-implementation of support proposed by the Student Disability Service, the University may be discriminating against disabled people.

The University has had an Accessible and Inclusive Learning Policy in place for over three years, but some academics appear to be unaware of the policy or do not adhere to the need to implement the seven ‘mainstreamed’ adjustments enshrined within it. This puts the University at legislative and reputational risk.

The additional challenges presented by the inaccessibility of much of the physical estate, unless effectively managed, also present a significant legal risk in terms of access and egress, specifically after 5pm. (Work continues on Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans – PEEPs).

Growing student expectations, in relation to the student experience, also present a challenge, specifically in relation to appointment waiting times. The build-up and backlog at start of the academic year leads to a growing volume of enquiries and varying waiting times for different types of appointments, which in turn may result in delays to certain support being implemented.

14. Key priorities for the coming year

These have been referenced throughout the document.

Key priorities are to:

- continue implementation of the recommendations of the Principal’s Disability Review, specifically developing and enhancing Schools’ liaison, working with the senior Disability Contacts in Schools, raising the profile of the service and writing additional guidance materials to educate stakeholders in the work we do;
- engage further with disabled students, via focus groups to ensure that student feedback is heard and taken on board to effect positive change;
- review of the remit and role of the Student Disability Committee;
- work with colleagues to develop the University’s first British Sign Language (BSL) Plan;
- appoint and induct new senior staff (new Director and Assistant Director (Student Support));
- effectively embed the change to the line reporting structure of the Advisory and Mental Health Mentoring teams;
- aim to see and support disabled students more quickly and effectively;
- embed and enhance our new IT system;
- refine and report on key statistics and data on a monthly basis;
- plan move to 7 Bristo Square in late 2019, ensuring that sufficient and suitable space is available to effectively deliver a quality provision.

Appendix

Key relationships and partnerships

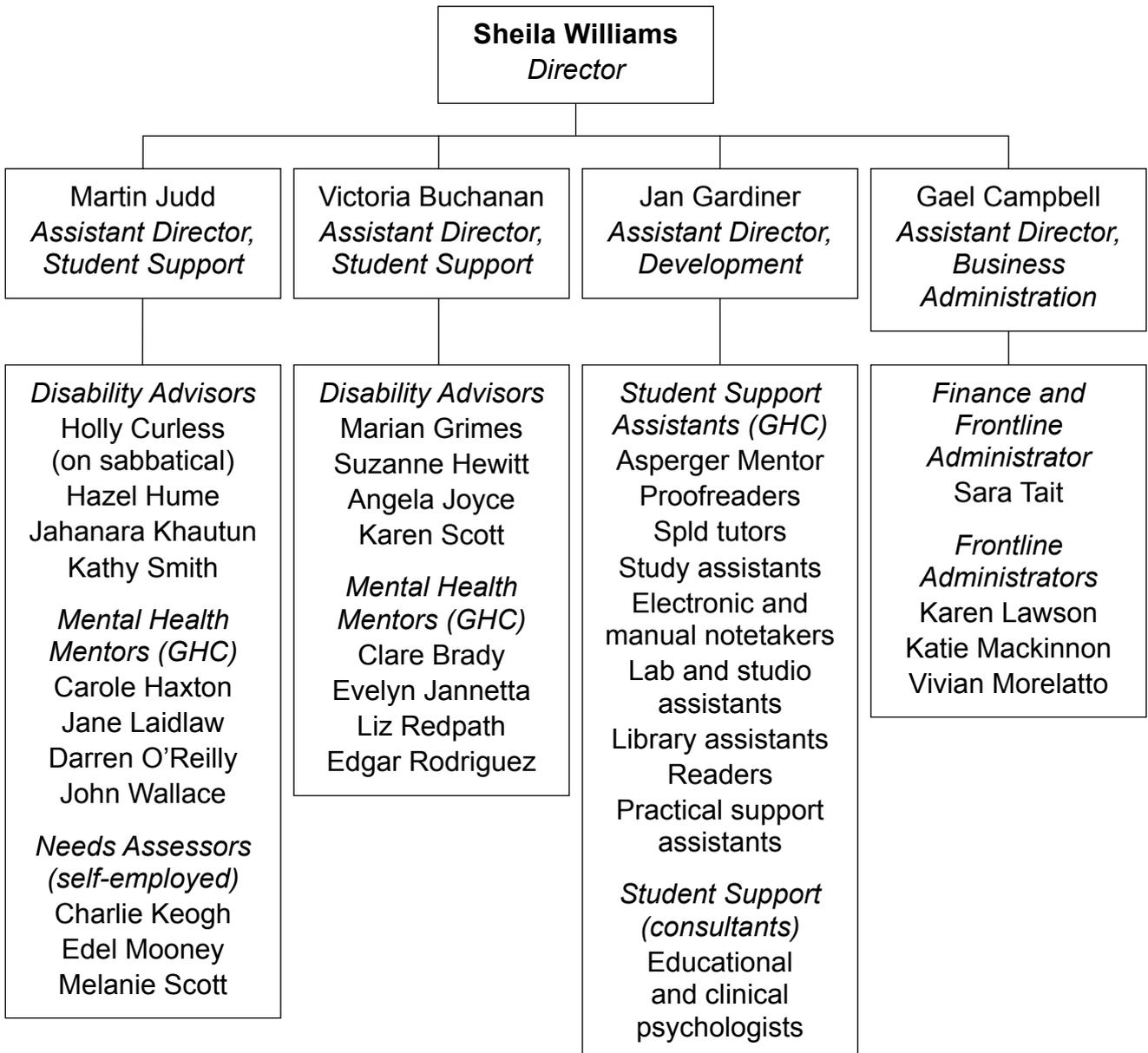
Area	Relationship and example activities
Student Counselling Service	Jointly managing frontline services. Deliver mental health training for staff and contributing to the Student Disability Committee
Edinburgh University Students Association (EUSA)	Active contributor to the Student Disability Committee and its sub-groups. Liaison with sabbaticals and EUSA staff.
Accommodation Services	Arranging suitable accommodation for disabled students, and contributing to the Student Disability Committee
Student Administration (Exams)	Advising on policy, discussing, resolving exam adjustments and inputting to student appeals. Putting in place examination arrangements for students.
University Health Service	Liaising with GPs for advice, and contributing to the Student Disability Committee
Careers Service	Contributes data on the first destinations for graduating disabled students, and contributing to the Student Disability Committee
Chaplaincy	Students are referred both from and to the Chaplaincy; the Chaplain sits on the Student Disability Committee
Information Services	Contributing to IS Disability working groups, advising on best practice and actions required to improve accessibility. IS represented on the Student Disability Committee.
College, Schools, academic colleagues	Enhancing disabled student support via consultation with Colleges and Schools
Coordinators of Adjustments	Ongoing liaison and further development due to the introduction of the new senior Disability Contact role in Schools.
Institute for Academic Development (IAD)	Contributing to Postgraduate Certificate in University Teaching, and guidance documents. Liaison on study skills support to disabled students.
Equality and Diversity Committee	Director is involved in the Support Groups Committee
Russell Group Heads of Disability Services	Director represents the University of Edinburgh
Welfare Consultancy Group	SDS, Careers, Student Counselling, Accommodation, Health Services, EUSA and International Office
Lecture Recording Policy Group	Assistant Director represents SDS

Continued overleaf.

Key relationships and partnerships (continued)

Disability Heads of Service, Scotland	Director represents University of Edinburgh
Disabled Students Sector Leadership Group (DSSLG)	Director represents Scottish Heads of Disability Services
National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP)	All SDS Advisory staff are members and contribute to online discussion on a UK-wide basis
Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education (ADSHE)	SDS Advisory staff are members
Association of Managers of Student Services in Higher Education (AMOSSHE)	Director is a contributing member of AMOSSHE – a forum for sharing information, experience and good practice.
Disabled Students Advisory Group (DSAG)	Director represents Scottish Disability Heads of Service (higher education) on this Scottish Government advisory group
Student Disability Committee	SDS services and is represented on this committee
Online Distance Learners working group	Assistant Director represents SDS
UoE Mental Health Strategy Group	SDS Director represents SDS
PTAS (Principal's Teaching Award Scheme) panel	SDS Assistant Director sits on PTAS

Student Disability Service organisational chart (29 January 2017)



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