

## Document Details

Document Reference	<b>Disabled Student Policy</b>
Document status	<b>Approved</b>
Document owner	Sarah Sweeney, Head of Student Support and Wellbeing
Review period	Every 3 years
Date of first approval	2013
Date of next review	2027
Version number	3.1

## Version control

Version	Date	Description of changes and name and job title of person responsible for making changes
1.0	May 2013	First version
2.0	June 2020	Updating with additional sections 5,6,7,8,12,13 and 14 Changes of named staff roles following changes to role titles
3.0	September 2023	All references to Disability and Inclusion Service changed to Disability and Inclusive Practice Service Links checked for currency. Clarity provided regarding scope of policy and process. Reference to our commitment to the implementation of the Disabled Student Commission's Commitment Statements.
3.1	January 2025	Changes to evidence requirements for reasonable adjustments. Minor changes to wording to reflect sector practice. Additional clarification of staff responsibilities in relation to implementing ILSPs. Reference to the Supported Study and Fitness to Study Policy and Code of Practice on Free Speech.

## Referenced policies and documents

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) at Lancaster University

[Accessibility Regulations](#) at Lancaster University

[Review and Appeals](#) process

Lancaster University [Privacy Notices](#)

Lancaster University [Records Management](#)

Lancaster University [Admissions Policy](#)

[Lancaster University Code of Practice on Free Speech](#)

[Supported Study and Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures](#)

# Lancaster University Disabled Student Policy

Lancaster University is fully committed to the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. This policy document describes Lancaster University's approach to supporting disabled students.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Legal context

- 1.1 The Equality Act 2010 harmonises, consolidates and replaces previous equality legislation (including the Disability Discrimination Act), with respect to the nine protected characteristics, including disability. The Act sets out the types of discrimination which in the context of disability include direct and indirect discrimination, discrimination arising from disability, harassment, victimisation and/or failing to make a reasonable adjustment.
- 1.2 Further information on the University's duties under the Equality Act 2010 relating to all protected characteristics is available on the Lancaster University [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#) website. The University [Accessibility Regulations](#) website sets out institution and staff responsibilities with respect to information accessibility.

## 2. Definitions

- 2.1 Disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
  - 2.1.1 Disability covers a wide range of physical and mental impairments that may co-occur and may or may not be visible. This includes but is not limited to: physical or sensory impairments; mental health conditions; specific learning difficulties including dyslexia; autism spectrum disorders; chronic medical conditions like diabetes or multiple sclerosis; severe disfigurement; progressive conditions; HIV infection; or cancer.
  - 2.1.2 Long term means the condition has lasted for at least 12 months, or it is likely to last at least 12 months, or more.
  - 2.1.3 Additionally, people who have been disabled in the past remain covered by the definition of 'disability', which may be particularly relevant for people with fluctuating and/or reoccurring impairments.

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'disabled student' is used in this policy in line with the social model of disability to recognise that while an impairment is a given, a disability is not but rather arises from disabling environmental, attitudinal or cultural factors. We acknowledge that identity is multi-faceted and people with impairments assimilate them into their identity in different ways and therefore individual preferences with respect to terminology will differ.

2.2 Reasonable adjustment is defined as a decision taken by the University to allow students additional arrangements in relation to their experience at Lancaster which remove or reduce a disadvantage related to a student's disability. Adjustments will be made within the parameters of the following factors.

- The nature of a student's circumstances and needs following consultation with the student and examination of available information, evidence and/or relevant assessments.
- The nature of the academic programme of study including the existence of competence or fitness to train/practice standards set by the institution or applied by the institution on behalf of or recommended by a Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB).
- The likely effectiveness of the adjustment in removing the disadvantage posed by the disability.
- The practicality of the adjustment, taking account of: disruption; health and safety issues; the reasonable expectations of others; and external factors (for example, factors in relation to student placements).
- The costs, including the availability of external funding sources to assist in the implementation of the adjustment.
- Legal precedent/case law.

### **3. Principles of the Disabled Student Policy**

3.1 Lancaster University acknowledges that the disadvantage and exclusion faced by many disabled people is not an inevitable result of an impairment or health condition but can arise from environmental, social and attitudinal barriers and institutional practices and that this disadvantage is caused by systemic barriers.

Lancaster University's commitment is to:

- not discriminate against disabled students by subjecting them to 'less favourable treatment' than non-disabled students;
- as far as possible through inclusive approaches and reasonable adjustments, change practices or environments to remove any disabling effects or barriers to participation, in order that disabled students can fully participate in the education, facilities and services provided by the University;
- endeavour to be anticipatory in making reasonable adjustments and in taking proportionate steps to overcome barriers which potentially impede or disadvantage disabled people;

- promote a culture of positive attitudes and inclusivity towards disability and endeavour to increase disclosure of disability, as greater disclosure will help the University improve support for disabled students;
- review our services and embed our response to the Disabled Student's Commission's Commitment in our Equality Objectives.

#### **4. Scope**

- 4.1 This policy applies to current students as well as former students where there is a continuing relationship or students holding qualifications conferred by the institution, who are defined as having a disability, for example, those accessing Careers Services. Specifically, the University will not act in a way which disadvantages former disabled students in comparison with former non-disabled students. This only applies if the disadvantage arises out of and is closely connected with them having been a student.
- 4.2 This policy applies to all disabled students regardless of nationality, fee status, place of residence or any other equality characteristic.
- 4.3 This policy applies to all students enrolled on an undergraduate programme, postgraduate taught programme, postgraduate research programme or other programme of study offered by Lancaster University with the Bailrigg campus as their primary affiliation, including distance learners. Where programmes may present variants to arrangements on Bailrigg Campus students will be advised beforehand, and where possible consulted regarding reasonable adjustments. Placements and opportunities with variations (such as Study Abroad) will be flagged to enable students to make informed decisions and arrangements with their placement provider/host institution.
- 4.4 Students registered with international partner institutions will be subject to separate policies and procedures in relation to disabled students at the partner institution which would typically be in adherence with local equality laws in their host country. Students registered with UK partner institutions will be subject to separate policies and procedures in relation to disabled students at the partner institution; these are expected to be compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.5 This policy also applies to students studying at Bailrigg campus through the Global Partnership Programme.
- 4.6 Lancaster University is fully committed to the protection and promotion of freedom of speech. This commitment is set out in the University's Code of Practice which applies to all members, students, staff and invited visitors. As such, we draw your attention to our [Code of Practice](#) to help uphold the institution's values and expectations in relation to freedom of speech.

#### **5. Disclosing a disability**

- 5.1 If a student wants to share details of their disability with the University to enable consideration of reasonable adjustments, there are several opportunities to do this.

- 5.1.1 Applicants can share details of their disability on their University Central Admissions Systems (UCAS) or University application form. This information will be passed to the Disability and Inclusive Practice Service who will then contact the prospective student to request further information and supporting documentation about their disability and its impact on them within the University environment with a view to implementing reasonable adjustments.
- 5.1.2 If an applicant chooses not to share details of their disability at the application stage, they can choose to do so on entry during the registration and enrolment process.
- 5.1.3 Students can also contact the Disability and Inclusive Practice Service directly at any time of the year to share details of their disability (by phone, email, or in-person) or they can register with the Disability and Inclusive Practice Service online via the [Disability and Inclusive Practice Service website](#) or via a link to the online registration from the iLancaster app.

## **6. Process for consideration of reasonable adjustments**

- 6.1 When a student shares details of a disability, the Disability and Inclusive Practice Service (DIPS) may request further information from the student to inform the consideration of appropriate reasonable adjustments. Some common reasonable adjustments will be automatically available to all disabled students. For those reasonable adjustments which require additional resources or are intended to mitigate risk of academic disadvantage, DIPS may require supporting information or medical evidence. Students will be advised of the type of evidence required for each category of reasonable adjustment. Additional information may also be requested to inform the assessment of reasonable adjustments (e.g. Disabled Students Allowances Study Needs Assessment reports) and information obtained through consultation with the student.
- 6.2 Where the Disability and Inclusive Practice Service recognises that a student may have enhanced individual needs, the student may be referred for a Reasonable Adjustment and Support Appointment. This will be a discussion of support needs between the student and a Disability and Inclusive Practice Service (DIPS) Adviser and may involve the academic department. The DIPS Adviser will consider the student's circumstances and the learning and teaching context of the academic discipline and make recommendations to the Disability and Inclusive Practice Service Manager regarding support recommendations.
- 6.3 The DIPS team will use the information provided by the student to create an Inclusive Learning and Support Plan (ILSP). The ILSP is created based upon the requirements of the learning and teaching disciplinary context, required competence standards and any professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB) considerations. Consideration will be given to the student's condition and how this may impact on those requirements. The ILSP details the student's conditions and any approved reasonable adjustments. The ILSP represents the University's formal record of the student's support and reasonable adjustments requirements.

- 6.4 Responsibility for the implementation of any reasonable adjustments lies with the learning and teaching team in the student's academic department. If a student is studying modules in multiple departments, it is the responsibility of each department to ensure that the agreed reasonable adjustments are implemented.
- 6.5 Students are asked to inform the Disability and Inclusive Practice Service at an early stage if there are any challenges with the implementation of the reasonable adjustments outlined in their ILSP and if their needs are not being met. The Disability and Inclusive Practice will endeavour to work with the academic department concerned to overcome any challenges.

## **7. ILSP reviews and appeals**

- 7.1 Where an ILSP is not proving to be effective in meeting a student's needs or their circumstances change, the student or a member of staff can request an informal reassessment of their ILSP at any time by contacting the Disability and Inclusive Practice Service.
- 7.2 Students dissatisfied following a reassessment of their ILSP are entitled to seek a formal review or appeal, subject to conditions. Details are outlined on the Disability [Review and Appeals](#) website.
- 7.3 The decision of the appeal panel will be final.

## **8. Record keeping and retention**

- 8.1 Records will be kept and retained in the Disability and Inclusive Practice Service in line with the [University's Retention Schedule](#).
- 8.2 The University will manage the process of information sharing and will treat all personal data in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR); access to disability-related information will be provided to colleagues on a need-to-know basis only, for reasonable adjustments to be implemented.
- 8.3 LU [Privacy Notices](#) give further details of how the University collects, uses, discloses and protects personal data.

## **9. Student health and wellbeing**

- 9.1 The University is committed to implementing reasonable adjustments and focused, appropriate support with clear boundaries to ensure students and applicants declaring disabling conditions or long-term mental or physical health issues are enabled to succeed in all aspects of University life. However, if the University has concerns for the health and wellbeing of a student or applicant, or concerns that the level of support the University is able to provide is not sufficient to meet the student's or applicant's needs, [the Supported Study and/or Fitness to Study Policy and Procedures](#) may need to be considered. We will aim to liaise with the affected student throughout.

## **10. Policy Implementation**

10.1 The Disabled Student Policy will be available from the [Disability and Inclusive Practice Service](#) website: [Disability policy and FAQs - Lancaster University](#).

10.2 Staff will be informed about the Policy and its implementation through:

- staff induction;
- staff Digital Services Portal: [Digital skills training | ASK - Lancaster University](#) where staff can be made aware of what is available to ensure delivery and resources are inclusive of all students;
- relevant staff professional development offered by the Curriculum & Education Development Academy (CEDA) and other staff training and development service areas, as appropriate;
- People and Organisational Effectiveness who have responsibility for the general EDI and Mental Health Awareness training for staff;
- advice from the Disability and Inclusive Practice Service.

## **11. Responsibilities arising from the Policy**

11.1 All staff and students of Lancaster University have a personal responsibility to adhere to and to apply this policy in their dealings with others, both internal and external to the University.

11.2 *Staff responsibilities*

11.2.1 Lancaster University expects all staff to be aware of this policy and the related equality legislation, and to treat disabled students in accordance with this policy. All staff are responsible for ensuring that they:

- recognise potential disabilities;
- understand how to ask students about potential disabilities;
- know how to respond to a student who shares details of a disability and when and how to share this information with DIPS;
- understand their responsibility to review students' ILSPs before any learning and teaching or pastoral support activity takes place;
- know where and how to access and view ILSPs for students in the student records system;
- know how to implement recommended reasonable adjustments (if relevant to their role) or where to seek support on implementation;
- within two weeks of receipt of a notification that an ILSP has been updated, review and respond to the changes as noted in the student records system and subsequently check the effectiveness of any amended adjustments with the student;
- know how to help students without an ILSP in place to access reasonable adjustments.



11.2.2 Advice guidance and support is available to staff from the Disability and Inclusive Practice Service. Any staff member in breach of this Policy may be personally liable for their actions and may be subject to University disciplinary processes and/or legal action.

### 11.3 *Student responsibilities*

11.3.1 Students are responsible for sharing their disability with the University to ensure that reasonable adjustments can be considered and implemented.

11.3.2 Students have the right not to disclose a disability or to request that the existence or nature of their disability be treated as strictly confidential and therefore not shared with relevant staff across the University. Requests for such strict confidentiality may mean that a less satisfactory adjustment is provided or that no adjustment can be provided.

11.3.3 Where a disability impacts upon professional fitness to train/practice standards, students are personally responsible for sharing relevant information about their disability/disabilities or medical condition(s) and any adjustments to their academic department/DIPS and professional body in line with their professional registration requirements.

11.3.4 Students are encouraged to share their disability/disabilities and to discuss their support needs as early as possible with the Disability and Inclusive Practice Service so any reasonable adjustments can be implemented quickly.

11.3.5 Once an Inclusive Learning Support Plan is created, it is the student's responsibility to approve the document so that this can be shared with the relevant academic department(s) quickly; failure to do so may mean that the adjustments recommended may not be implemented or may be delayed.

11.3.6 Where a student is on an exchange to another institution or on a UK/International placement as part of their degree programme, relevant information in accordance with GDPR and sharing agreements may be shared with them to ensure reasonable adjustments will be provided at the host institution/organisation and to ensure no disadvantage is experienced by students engaged on exchanges and placements. For further details refer to the LU [Privacy Notices](#).

11.3.7 Students are responsible for requesting any review of implemented reasonable adjustments, if such adjustments are not proving to be effective in meeting their entitlements.

## 12. **Accountability and governance**

12.1 The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) is the accountable officer for this Policy; accountability is exercised through their chairing of the Student Experience Committee (SEC), or equivalent body. This accountability may be delegated to the Director of Student, Education and Academic Services.

The University's Head of Student Support and Wellbeing is responsible for the operational implementation and review of this Policy under the guidance of the Associate Director – Student Wellbeing and Inclusion.

- 12.2 The Senate, as the body with responsibility for academic matters, has delegated the duty to make reasonable adjustments to Student and Education Services, through procedures operated in the Disability and Inclusive Practice Service.
- 12.3 The Head of Student Support and Wellbeing has delegated authority to make minor changes to Policy wording and content. Such changes will be reported to and approved by the Director of Students, Education and Academic Services.
- 12.4 Major changes to the Policy, such as significant content changes, changes to responsibilities, policy application or changes resulting from new legislation, must be approved directly by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) through the Student Experience Committee.

### **13. Review**

- 13.1 The Policy will be formally reviewed every 3 years.

### **14. Contact details**

- 14.1 For information related to this policy, see the [Disability and Inclusive Practice Service website](#).
- 14.2 Questions can be sent to [disability@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:disability@lancaster.ac.uk).