

Reasonable Adjustments Framework for Disabled and Dyslexic/Specific Learning Difficulties Students

Version 2 Updated 2021

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1. The context

Oxford Brookes University is committed to equal opportunities and will strive to ensure that students with a disability are supported as far as is reasonably practicable to ensure that they can participate in the full range of academic, social and cultural opportunities offered by the University.

Oxford Brookes University recognises that adjustments which benefit a student with a disability can be beneficial for all, and will work towards a curriculum which is flexible, accessible and adaptive to individual needs

whilst maintaining the high standards of work and research expected from Higher Education.

The Inclusive Support Service, part of Wellbeing, is responsible for assessing medical evidence and full diagnostic assessments of specific learning difficulties and making recommendations for reasonable adjustments.

- 1.1. This document provides a framework for the implementation of individual reasonable adjustments for students with a disability. It applies to students who would be considered to have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 including students with dyslexia/SpLD (see 1.4).
- 1.2. Oxford Brookes University Charter states that;

“For our students, Oxford Brookes University will... Provide an inclusive and supportive environment for all”

- 1.3. As well as having a commitment to advancing equality which is embedded in its values, the University has a legal responsibility to provide ‘reasonable adjustments’ to ensure that disabled students are afforded the same opportunities as others to succeed in their studies. Under the Equality Act 2010 it is against the law for the University to discriminate against students with a disability by treating them less favourably than other students during both the application process and their studies.
- 1.4. The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long term’ negative effect on a person’s ability to do normal daily activities. ‘Long term’ is defined as a condition which has lasted, or is likely to last, 12 months or more. ‘Substantial’ refers to a significant impact upon normal day to day activities. The legislation also applies to progressive conditions such as Multiple Sclerosis, HIV infection and Cancer. More information can be found with the [government's definition of a disability](#).
- 1.5. Reasonable adjustments must be implemented where a disabled student may experience disadvantage compared to their peers. The parameters of what is considered ‘reasonable’ will depend on circumstances related to:
 - available resources
 - cost
 - practicality
 - whether the adjustment may be of benefit to other students
 - level of disability-related need

Reasonable adjustments can be broadly identified as those made at an

individual level e.g. provision of a note taker, alternative formats, or special exam arrangements, and those which are made at a whole Institutional level e.g. lecture capture, and accessibility, which need to be considered at the planning stage.

There is an anticipatory duty to provide reasonable adjustments for students, which means service providers must plan ahead and take a strategic approach to addressing the barriers that potentially impede disabled students. Longer-term [development of inclusive teaching and learning approaches and course design](#) may reduce the need for individual provision.

- 1.6. Short term health conditions are not covered by legislation. However, staff are encouraged to take a flexible and sympathetic approach to significant and properly verified short term needs, for example, students may apply for [Exceptional Circumstances](#) if examinations or coursework are affected by short term conditions.

2. Responsibility - University and its staff

- 2.1. All staff members are expected to treat others with dignity and respect. It is illegal to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their disability.
- 2.2. Oxford Brookes University is responsible for the implementation of this policy and resulting arrangements for reasonable adjustments. While Oxford Brookes University will make every reasonable effort to apply the principles set out in this statement and help students to make the best use of available specialist support, budgetary and other resource constraints make it impossible to guarantee that all potential adjustments and adaptations will be available to students without restriction. This disclaimer forms an expressed term of any contract the students may have with the University for the provision of educational or related support services.
- 2.3. The Inclusive Support Service has a responsibility to work with a student to identify suitable adjustments. Students who apply for Disabled Students' Allowances will undertake an independent Needs Assessment conducted by an external agency, and will provide medical evidence or a recognised report of their specific learning difficulties as appropriate. Advisers will disseminate information as agreed with that student, for example, via the Inclusive Support Plan (ISP).
- 2.4. Student Central no longer have a responsibility to share information in the ISP with relevant parties as detailed on the signed disclosure form as this

- is done through the Student Records System.
- 2.5. Faculties and individual staff members are responsible for ensuring that reasonable adjustments are put in place for students as recommended by the Inclusive Support Service. We would encourage staff to contact the the Inclusive Support Service if there are any concerns regarding the application of, or feasibility of implementing any suggested adjustments.
 - 2.6. For students studying at partnership colleges the responsibility for identifying and implementing reasonable adjustments, assessing evidence and disseminating information as necessary, lies with the college.

3. Responsibility - Students

- 3.1. Students are responsible for the decision to disclose their disability to the University. Students are expected to make contact with the Inclusive Support Service as appropriate to ensure the University is aware of support needs and can implement any reasonable adjustments that may be required. If a student discloses a disability to another part of the university, for instance via a Mitigating Circumstances application, this information will not be shared with Wellbeing, and will not therefore constitute or trigger a process for putting reasonable adjustments in place unless a direct approach to the relevant service is made.
- 3.2. Students are responsible for providing up to date documented medical evidence to support any requests for reasonable adjustments. Students must ensure the medical evidence is written in English, or is translated from another language to English prior to submitting it to the Disability Service. For Dyslexia and specific learning difficulties this evidence must be in the form of a full diagnostic assessment which meets the criteria set out by the [SpLD Assessment Standards Committee](#). Students agree what information is to be disclosed and to whom as per paragraph 4 below.
- 3.3. Students are responsible for applying for and taking up their funding entitlement through Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) via Student Finance England, or other funding body, where there are likely to be additional costs related to their needs. The Inclusive Support Service can advise and support students with their applications for DSAs.
- 3.4. Students should notify the Inclusive Support Services or Student Support Coordinators if there are any problems in the implementation of reasonable adjustments as identified in the Inclusive Support Plan, or if their condition changes and support needs are altered. It cannot be assumed that the relevant specialist section within the Wellbeing

department is aware of these changes unless this is brought directly to their attention.

- 3.5. Students are responsible for arranging personal care. The University does not provide support for day to day living tasks such as washing, shopping, cleaning or for the provision of specialist equipment required regardless of status as a student. Personal care can be applied for through Social Services in a student's Local Authority (if from the UK).
- 3.6. Students studying at partnership colleges are responsible for the decision to disclose their disability to the relevant support service, to update them of any changes to their condition and to provide medical evidence as outlined in 3.2.

4. Confidentiality

- 4.1. Wellbeing provides confidential services and will only share information with relevant staff associated with a student and with their permission. All information given to the Inclusive Support Service will be treated with respect and in confidence, in accordance with Data Protection legislation and the [Wellbeing policy on confidentiality](#) . The Inclusive Support Service may liaise with others across the University, to ensure that the student receives the support that they need. These include but are not limited to: Examinations team, Academic Advisers, Placement Officers, Module Leaders, Student Support Coordinators, and Library Services. A student may disclose a disability and ask that the information is kept confidential. However, this will limit the type of reasonable adjustments that can be recommended and/or implemented.

If a student discloses a disability to another part of the university, for instance via an Exceptional Circumstances application, this information will not automatically be shared with other departments.

5. Application / Admissions

- 5.1. All students applying to the University will be assessed for suitability based upon academic grounds. Please refer to the [admissions policy](#). We encourage students to disclose a disability during application. Students who do this will be invited to meet or discuss requirements with a Disability Adviser prior to entry. This enables any reasonable adjustments to be put in place for the start of a course.

There are certain programmes of study for which certain disabilities *may* preclude entry. These include courses in the medical and teaching professions. Students need to comply with the Fitness to Practise policies of the regulating bodies attached to their course. These courses are detailed in the prospectus.

6. Physical Access

- 6.1. Creating an environment that enables everyone to fully participate in all aspects of university life is a high priority for Oxford Brookes. Oxford Brookes University campuses are generally accessible to wheelchair users and others with mobility or sensory issues. Accessibility is being continually monitored and improved. Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the Inclusive Support Service to discuss their individual access needs. Students with a disability are also encouraged to apply for the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA). DSA can help to ensure that individual access needs are met.

7. Travel

- 7.1. All students, staff and visitors are encouraged to use public transport wherever possible in line with the Oxford Brookes Travel Plan. All the Oxford campuses and halls of residence are linked by the BROOKESbus services.

All campuses and halls of residence have parking spaces for holders of a Blue Badge. Students who hold a Blue Badge also need to apply for a university issued Blue Badge Holders Permit which is free of charge.

Students living in halls of residence are not permitted to have a vehicle on site (apart from holders of a Blue Badge). Students not living in halls may be eligible for a car parking permit if they are studying at either the Harcourt, Swindon or Wheatley campuses. More details are available at [Student Car Parking](#).

Students with a disability, or a temporary condition, studying at the Headington sites and for whom parking is considered a necessity should contact the Disability Service to discuss further.

8. Accommodation

- 8.1. The Accommodation office has an [allocation policy](#) which gives priority to students with a disability or long term health condition. Due to the nature of room allocation, it is important that students include details of any disability requirements when applying for University accommodation. Students are required to support requests with medical evidence. Students with a disability may remain in halls for the duration of their course if needed.

The University offers a range of accommodation to suit different living arrangements and budgets. It has a variety of adapted rooms and applicants/students who require accessible accommodation should liaise with the Inclusive Support Service as early as possible. Where an adaptation can be made but there is not sufficient time for it to be put in place, this may result in the student needing to delay their studies if no comparable accommodation is available.

Choice and availability may be more limited for students who apply late or through the clearing process.

Where students have specific accommodation needs owing to their disability and which would incur significant additional costs, the university may be able to provide some financial support to meet their needs. This would be assessed on an individual basis and medical evidence would be required.

9. Teaching, Assessment & Examinations

- 9.1. The University endeavours to provide students with an inclusive curriculum, and recognises that this can be of benefit to *all* students. Following changes to funding from the Disabled Students' Allowances the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills/Department for Education emphasised that universities are responsible for providing the majority of reasonable adjustments for disabled students. Developing inclusive practice reduces the need for individual adjustments and enables students with a range of abilities to access a variety of instructional materials to fulfil their learning needs. Student needs are anticipated and acknowledged under an inclusive model.

- 9.2. Reasonable adjustments may be applied for formal examinations to enable students to be fairly examined and assessed. Please see the [Assessment and Feedback policy](#). Requests made for these types of adjustments must be made by the student to the Inclusive Support Service as early as possible and with sufficient medical evidence to demonstrate substantial disadvantage.
- 9.3. Reasonable adjustments cannot be applied for formal examinations or assignments retrospectively, so if you have a diagnosis of a condition after you start at University all adjustments will be from the date of the diagnosis. Additionally, we cannot adjust previous marks based on a late diagnosis of a condition.

10. Monitoring

- 10.1. The Inclusive Support Services welcome feedback regarding student support and the implementation of reasonable adjustments. This information is used to inform best practice and highlight areas for development. We encourage communication with the Inclusive Support Services in the event of any difficulties or complaints related to disability support. The [Student Complaint Procedure](#) may be used if a situation remains unresolved or unsatisfactory.

11. EU/International students

- 11.1. Students should contact their home government for information on any funding that may be available to students with a disability, medical condition or Dyslexia/SpLD. Students not able to secure additional funding may be able to access some support, and are encouraged to speak with a Disability Adviser to find out what may be possible.

The University does not provide any funding to cover the cost of assistance with day-to-day living tasks. International students who require any kind of care assistance during their time at university should ensure that well in advance of arrival that they have sufficient funding to pay for this.

12. Reasonable Adjustments Panel

- 12.1. The Reasonable Adjustments Panel (RAP) has been convened since August 2020 in order to make decisions on 'reasonableness' for complex cases, in line with University's legal obligations under The Equality Act

2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

- 12.2. A referral to the panel is made via a Disability or Dyslexia/SpLD Adviser or other staff member using the referral form and providing supporting documentation.
- 12.3. For further information refer to the [Reasonable Adjustments Panel Terms of Reference](#).

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