

LSE STUDENT DISABILITY POLICY

Introduction

LSE is committed to providing an inclusive and equitable learning environment that enables disabled students to access the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers. LSE is also committed to the Social Model of Disability (where the emphasis is on removing the disabling effects of the environment and misconceptions rather than assessing the impact of individual impairments).

The legal context

Under the Equality Act (2010), higher education institutions are required to make reasonable adjustments in anticipation of, and in response to, disabled students' needs and must ensure that disabled students are not treated less favourably than other students for reasons relating to their disability. These duties apply to all services and facilities the higher education institution provides for students, including all aspects of learning and teaching.

Definition of disability

A disabled person is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as someone who has "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". This definition covers a wide range of physical, mental and sensory impairments, including specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia and chronic health conditions such as diabetes, epilepsy and depression. The definition also includes people with cancer, HIV and multiple sclerosis from the point of diagnosis. Long-term means it has lasted for at least 12 months, it is likely to last at least 12 months, or it is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person.

The concept of reasonable adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 places an anticipatory duty on higher education institutions to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students in relation to:

- A provision, criterion or practice (for example teaching and assessment methods)
- Physical features (for example access to lecture theatres, labs, teaching rooms)
- Auxiliary aids (whose definition includes auxiliary services, e.g. for example hearing loops)
- Information in accessible formats or the provision of Non-Medical Assistance (NMA) support

The School recognises that the impact of a disability or long-term condition and the way it is experienced varies from person to person and that some disabilities may recur. The School's Disability and Mental Health Service (DMHS) will work in partnership with the disabled student to ensure that appropriate reasonable adjustments are defined and applied, enabling disabled students to meet their full academic potential. Individual reasonable adjustments are informed by independent supporting evidence (such as a consultant letter, a diagnostic report, etc.) and determined by comprehensively examining the way disability affects the individual and their experience. These adjustments are detailed in the LSE My Adjustments; a plan that confirms and communicates to appropriate staff the student's expected reasonable adjustments.

Responsibilities – the School

All staff and students at LSE have a personal responsibility to adhere to and apply this policy in their dealings with others, both internal and external to the institution.

LSE is responsible for the implementation of this policy and resulting arrangements for reasonable adjustments. While LSE 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, what is reasonable depends on a range of factors. These include the effectiveness of adjustments, the size of an organisation, how practicable the changes are, the cost of making changes and the resources available.

LSE aims to work in an inclusive manner by anticipating the diverse needs of all students, wherever possible. Where a student has a disability that requires individual adjustments to teaching and assessment practice, DMHS will work with the student to identify suitable and reasonable adjustments in a timely manner. With express permission from the student, DMHS will detail the information as agreed with the student, via My Adjustments, and circulated to the named Departmental Circulator of the student's home department.

The Departmental Circulator has the responsibility to ensure the circulation of the Inclusion Plan with all relevant staff. If appropriate, the Departmental Circulator for the home department will ensure that My Adjustments is circulated to the Departmental Circulator for any other department where a student is taking additional courses (including LSE100, Language Centre and LSE LIFE). Academic and professional service staff involved in teaching disabled students are responsible for ensuring that the reasonable adjustments are put in place for students as defined in the student's My Adjustments. All staff are encouraged to seek advice from DMHS if there are any queries or concerns regarding implementing any suggested adjustments.

It is the responsibility of the Head of Student Exams Management within the Student Services Centre to apply any appropriate approved Central Examination Adjustments.

Responsibility – the student

LSE encourages all students to tell the School if they have a disability or long-term condition in order for the institution to offer appropriate support. The decision of whether or not to share information about a disability or long-term condition and the timing of this belongs entirely to the individual student. However, if opportunities have been given to tell the institution about a disability or long-term condition and an individual decides not to then the School will not be able to offer them individual support or adjustments, nor can they be applied retrospectively.

Students are responsible for liaising with LSE's Disability and Mental Health Service to discuss their support needs as early as possible and on a regular basis thereafter so that adjustments can be identified, modified where necessary, and implemented to meet their individual needs and in good time. This is particularly important for any adjustments to examination arrangements. Students are responsible for providing appropriate evidence of the nature of their disability (e.g. doctor's letter, psychologist's report), where this is justified. Support with this can be provided by DMHS if required.

Once My Adjustments are in place if students have any queries related to the implementation of any reasonable adjustments they should raise them with the key contacts listed on My Adjustments, for example the Academic Mentor, Departmental Manager or DMHS. If their support needs change during their studies, they are encouraged to contact DMHS for further assessment of support.

Disclosure and confidentiality

LSE endeavours to offer an environment that encourages disclosure but acknowledges that it is the individual's right not to disclose. We encourage students to disclose any disability including a mental health difficulty at the earliest opportunity and ideally on application. Students who choose not to disclose at application stage or whose disability occurs during their studies are encouraged to disclose at any time thereafter. Students who identify that they have disability support needs are strongly encouraged to discuss these with DMHS at the earliest opportunity so that they are aware of the support available.

Disclosing a disability enables the School to inform students about the support options available and to make reasonable adjustments. These are aimed at minimising any disadvantage in accessing their academic programme and contributing towards a positive student experience.

The [SWS Confidentiality Policy](#) sets out how we will deal with the information that we hold in the Disability and Wellbeing Service.

VS/MA
Student Services
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