

Student Disability Policy

Effective September 2024 - Present

Potential applicants should be aware that this policy is under review in light of newly introduced regulatory requirements from the Office for Students. It is anticipated that it will be republished before 31 October 2025. Once republished a summary document will be included on the University website summarising changes made.

Purpose of Policy	This policy applies to students with a disability. It explains the University's commitment and its legal obligations to those students. The University will not always be in a position to make adjustments that students request. It also provides detailed information about the process from disclosure of a disability to the implementation of reasonable adjustments.
Internal services involved	Student Services
Related regulations, policies and procedures	Admissions Policy & Applicant Complaints Procedure Regulations for the Conduct of Students Fitness to Practise Policy
Enquiries to	Student Wellbeing Services, 01772 893020 / wellbeing@lancashire.ac.uk
Senior Managers responsible	Director of Student Services
VCG Lead	Pro Vice Chancellor - Students and Teaching

Version	Approved	Effective from	Revisions made	Next Review
1	May 2020	September 2020		May 2021
2	May 2022	September 2022		May 2023
3	January 2024	September 2024	Updated to include governance and oversight clarification, 'tell us once' and the sharing of information, use of Support to Study process/procedure, and updated language/process details.	May 2024

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A. Policy Statement

The University of Lancashire is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for its students and apprentices. The University aims to ensure that all learners achieve their academic potential and that no learner is unreasonably disadvantaged because of a disability when applying to and/or studying at the University.

This policy sets out the University's commitment to its disabled learners and provides a framework to facilitate a supportive environment within which to study.

B. University Commitment

The University will:

- Work to ensure its environmental, social and institutional practices and attitudes are inclusive of learners with disabilities, specific learning difficulties, mental health conditions, and long-term health conditions.
- Not discriminate against disabled learners by subjecting them to 'less favourable treatment', unjustified unfavourable treatment, victimisation or harassment.
- Work to support the effects of a disability, rather than focusing on the disability or condition itself.
- Provide an inclusive learning environment, endeavoring to be anticipatory in making reasonable adjustments and in taking proportionate steps to overcome barriers which potentially impede or disadvantage disabled learners.
- Will encourage full disclosure of disability, as greater disclosure will help the University improve support for disabled learners.
- Support learners with applying for and accessing Disabled Students' Allowances, and other external disability funding sources.
- Support staff by providing disability training and resources to raise awareness and support disabled learners.
- Work collaboratively with students and the Students' Union via the Disabled Students' Forum, providing a safe space where they can speak directly to university services about their experiences on campus and make any positive changes or recommendations to help shape their journey.

C. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to any disabled learner as defined by the legal framework below, who reasonably requires adjustments and support to assist with their studies, regardless of whether

they are a UK, EU or international student, or whether they are studying full time, part time or through distance learning.

Any applicant who has declared a disability during their application to study and has been made an offer by the university will be contacted by Inclusive Support to provide further information to review their support needs.

Disabled degree apprentices can access reasonable adjustments and support through Inclusive Support. Learning support for disabled apprentices is also often referred to as "additional earning support" or "additional learner support", and Inclusive Support will claim for any Learning Support Funding via the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

The policy covers disabled students and apprentices at Preston, Burnley and Westlakes campuses.

Out of Scope

Personal care needs of a student are not provided by the University or covered by this policy e.g. wheelchairs, carers etc. Learners are encouraged to contact their Local Authority who will assess personal care support and funding, if required.

D. The Legal Framework

In line with the Equality Act (2010), the University will take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled learners are not placed at a disadvantage in applying for, or undertaking a course of study, in comparison with a person who is not disabled.

According to the act, disability is defined as "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day- to-day activities." By way of guidance, a "substantial effect" should be interpreted as anything that is more than minor or trivial and a long-term effect is one that has lasted or is likely to last 12 months or is likely to last for the rest of a person's life.

Examples of a disability include but are not limited to:

- Long-term health conditions (e.g epilepsy, chronic fatigue)
- Specific learning Difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia)
- Mental Health conditions (e.g depression, bipolar)
- Visual Impairments
- D/deaf

- Autism

The Equality Act imposes a duty to make reasonable anticipatory adjustments for disabled learners at the University.

This includes:

- Ensuring University services, regulation, policy and practices do not put a disabled student at a substantial disadvantage
- Ensuring physical features do not put a disabled student at a substantial disadvantage
- Providing appropriate equipment or technology that can help a disabled person access the University e.g. induction loops and assistive technology

The University's duty to make adjustments applies to the totality of the University's relationship with disabled applicants and learners and extends not only to the provision of courses, but to any additional services.

E. Governance & Oversight

The University has in place a student disability governance structure whose purpose is to provide oversight, quality assurance and governance for the Student Disability Policy.

The **School Disability Lead Forum** communicates and shares sector information and institution practice for the benefit of learners, working collaboratively to enhance the experience of disabled learners.

The **Disabled Students' Forum** works collaboratively with disabled students to secure an enhanced and improved experience for disabled students. Students can speak directly to services about their experiences on campus and to make positive changes which will help shape their journey, which is key in the fulfilment of the Disabled Student Commitment.

Both the **School Disability Lead Forum & Disabled Students' Forum** feed into the wider work of the Disabled Student Commitment, and will provide assurances to the Safeguarding, Mental Health & Wellbeing Committee who ultimately report into the Academic Board, who in turn report to the Vice-Chancellor Group and University Board.

F. Admissions

The University welcomes applications from persons who have a disability, specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia), mental health condition, long-term health condition, or are neurodiverse. Applicants are strongly encouraged to disclose as part of the UCAS and/or application, so that support can be reviewed and assessed, prior to starting the course.

All applicants to the University are considered equally. Admission to a course is based on the academic judgement that the learner can be reasonably expected to fulfil the competence standards and, where applicable, the professional body requirements of the course. The Equality Act (2010) defines a competence standard as "an academic, medical or other standard applied for the purposes of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability." Reasonable adjustments can be made to the way courses are taught and assessed, but not to the competence standards themselves. Where competence standards are inextricably linked to the methods of assessment, it is unlikely to be reasonable to make adjustments to those methods of assessment.

Applicants applying for programmes requiring Occupational Health (OH) intervention will be eligible for OH referral on accepting an offer of study (firm or insurance). Reasonable adjustments will always be explored with students. OH will make recommendations for

suggested reasonable adjustments in line with [HEOPS General guidance on adjustments for students training in regulated professions](#).

Students identified as requiring reasonable adjustments for practice will be referred to Inclusive Support for triage of the impact of impairment to inform the appropriate support process for the applicant.

G. Disclosure

Applicants are strongly encouraged to disclose their disability to the University as early as possible in the application process, so that appropriate support arrangements can be put in place prior to starting the course; however, we welcome disclosure at any point in the course, recognising that health conditions may fluctuate, and needs may change during a learner's studies.

Upon receipt of the information, the Inclusive Support team will discuss support options with the learner, including who information would need to be shared with in order to put that support in place.

The University will usually require evidence of the disability from a relevant expert. Should the learner fail to provide the University with the relevant information when requested, the University may not be able to assess what adjustments are required or put those adjustments in place, and entry may be deferred.

If learners are experiencing difficulties with providing medical information, they are encouraged to contact [Inclusive Support](#), who can assist with obtaining information, and will review any interim arrangements which might be necessary.

H. Confidentiality

Applicants and learners have the right to request that their disability is kept confidential. Where absolute or limited confidentiality has been requested, the University may not be able to make adjustments that would otherwise be reasonable, particularly in relation to disabilities that are hidden and complex or where the related needs are specific to the individual.

We aim to adopt a 'tell us once' approach, ensuring that information is shared appropriately to offer support to learners in a timely manner. If a learner shares information about a disability, specific learning difficulty or long-term medical condition that has not previously been shared

with any member of University staff, this information will be shared with the Inclusive Support team. At this stage the student is asked whether they consent to sharing their information with those involved in the delivery of their support.

More information about how your information will be used can be viewed in the [Student Support Privacy Notice](#).

I. Assessment of Need

Learners will be allocated an Inclusive Support Advisor/Officer who will assess any reasonable adjustments and support needed to access their studies and campus. Applicants may also be invited to visit the University to discuss support requirements further, prior to enrolment. The Inclusive Support team will also assist with applying for external funding, such as Disabled Students' Allowances, which is funding available from the Government to cover the study-related costs because of a mental health problem, long term illness or any other disability.

In circumstances where an applicant or learner has complex circumstances relating to their mental health, physical health, and/or inclusive support needs, they will be supported through the [Support to Study policy and procedure](#).

Support to Study aims to promote a positive and inclusive university environment which enables learners to engage effectively with all aspects of their studies. Following Support to Study, the University may hold a University Disability Decision Panel (UDDP), to understand if the University environment is right for the student and appropriate reasonable adjustments can be made.

J. Reasonable Adjustments

Adjustments for an individual will be made on the basis of appropriate evidence of the effect of the disability and providing that:

- the adjustments are likely to significantly reduce or prevent the substantial disadvantage faced by a learner with a disability while maintaining relevant standards
- the adjustments are affordable, taking into account the University's resources, and practicable
- the adjustments do not endanger the health and safety of the person with a disability or other people
- the adjustments do not substantially disadvantage other learners or other people.

Examples of adjustments and support can be seen on the [Disability & Inclusive Support](#) webpages.

Where learners have given consent to share information about any disability and adjustments with relevant University staff, this will be made available via Starfish. Learners can review their adjustment information at any point by accessing the [Student Support Portal](#).

Support and reasonable adjustments can be reviewed at any point during a learner's studies by contacting Inclusive Support.

K. Funding

The University can provide advice and information on the types of funding that may be available. UK learners are encouraged to apply for Disabled Learners' Allowance (DSA). Where funding, aids or services are available to disabled learners from other sources, the University will not be obliged to pay for an adjustment.

Degree apprentices may be eligible for Learning support funding which is used by the University to make reasonable adjustments to support an apprentice who has learning difficulties or disabilities so that they are able to complete their apprenticeship. The Inclusive Support Team will complete an assessment to review any additional learner support required, in line with the Education & Skills Funding Agency funding rules.

DSA is not available to EU/International learners, or if a learner is getting equivalent support from another funding source. However, the University will work in partnership with EU/International learners to agree reasonable adjustments specific to their individual case. EU and International learners are encouraged to investigate funding which may be available to them from their home country and provide confirmation to the University of the outcome.

L. Accommodation

The University has a number of specially adapted rooms on campus for disabled learners. Extra consideration will be given if the student has a disability or medical condition that requires them to live on campus.

Examples of accommodation adaptations include:

- Specially adapted bathroom

- Emergency pull cord in bedroom
- Red flashing lights for D/deaf students
- Alerter systems for D/deaf students
- Kitchens designed for wheelchair users
- Assistance dogs can be accommodated

Personal care needs of a student are not provided by the University or covered by this policy, such as personal assistants to assist with daily living. Learners are encouraged to contact their Local Authority who will assess personal care support and funding, if required.

More information about University accommodation can be found on the [Accommodation web pages](#).

Appendix 1 - Policies and guidance that support the University's commitment to disabled students

- [Equality Act \(2010\)](#)
- [Disabled Students' Commitment](#)
- [Disabled Students Allowances \(DSA\)](#)
- [Education and Skills Funding Agency](#)

Student Support and Wellbeing:

- [Support for Students and Apprentices, including Counselling, Mental Health, Wellbeing and Inclusive Support](#)
- [Referrals for support](#)
- [Support to Study](#)
- [Report + Support](#)
- [Student Support, Wellbeing and Inclusive Support Privacy Notice](#)
- [Supporting your Students' Mental Health & Wellbeing site](#)
- [Safeguarding](#)

Health and Safety:

- [Safety, Health and Environment Policies](#), including General Emergency Evacuation Plans (GEEPS)

Academic Registry:

- [Admissions Policy & Applicant Complaints Procedure](#)
- [Fitness to Practice](#)
- [Regulations for the Conduct of Students](#)
- [Complaints Procedure](#)
- [Mitigating Circumstances](#)
- [Interruption to Study](#)

