STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES | Student Advice
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Student Disability Handbook

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Related Policies & Procedures	Special Assessment Arrangements Policy

Contents

IMPORTANT

The information in this handbook applies to students registered on <u>full-time or part-time face-to-face programmes of study (or the equivalent intensive digital programme)</u>, including students enrolled in:
- Master's programmes
- Research degree programmes
- Short courses
- Individual modules

Such students are eligible to access disability support via the Student Advice team within Student Support Services.

Students on <u>Distance Learning</u> programmes of study should contact the University of London International Programmes – Inclusive Practice team for guidance. Information can be found on their website: https://london.ac.uk/applications/how-it-works/inclusive-practice-access-arrangements.

For <u>students based overseas</u> (who are not Distance Learning students), provision of support will depend on the nature of support required and the location. Students in this situation should contact the Student Advice team at studentadvice@lshtm.ac.uk for further advice.

<u>Students registered jointly with another institution</u> should contact the relevant disability support service at both institutions to request support and adjustments for their studies at each institution. It's important to note that adjustments and processes may vary between institutions.

Abbreviations

DSA   Disabled Students' Allowances
LSA   Learning Support Agreement
SpLD   Specific Learning Difficulty

1. Eligibility

1.1. What is a disability?

The UK Equality Act 2010 defines that a person has a disability if:
- the person has a physical or mental impairment, and
- the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities

The effect of an impairment is substantial if the impact on day-to-day activities is more than minor or trivial. Normal day-to-day activities include education.

The effect of an impairment is long-term if:
- it has lasted for at least 12 months,
- it is likely to last for at least 12 months, or
- it is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.

Based on this definition, the range of disabilities can include:
- sensory impairments
- physical impairments (including motor difficulties, speech impairment)
- mental health conditions
- Asperger's Syndrome or other autistic spectrum disorders
- long term health conditions (e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, HIV, Crohn's disease)
- specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia)

1.2. Who is eligible for disability support at the School?

Registered students who meet the UK legal definition of disability, as stated above, are eligible for disability support, regardless of the length of their programme of study.

However, in establishing what constitutes a 'reasonable adjustment', the length of time a student is studying at the School will be taken into consideration.

If a student's registration status changes, e.g. a student takes an Interruption of Studies, it may not be possible for the School to continue offering disability support during the period of interruption.

If you are unsure whether you are eligible for disability support, we would encourage you to contact the Student Advice team at studentadvice@lshtm.ac.uk for a confidential discussion and advice.

2. How to access disability support

2.1. Declaring a disability

Students have the opportunity to disclose a disability when they apply for their course, when they register for their course or at any stage during their studies at LSHTM.

Students are not obliged to declare that they have a disability but are strongly encouraged to disclose their disability to the School so that any reasonable adjustments and support can be arranged.

Students are encouraged to disclose their disability in their application. This helps us anticipate any support needs well in advance, especially if there are complex or multiple disabilities. Declaring a disability as part of the application process also means that students receive communications from the Student Advice Service prior to the start of session, about accessing disability support at the School.

Nevertheless, students can disclose their disability and engage with the Student Advice team at any time during their studies, as and when the need arises (though students should note there are deadlines throughout the academic year to put certain types of adjustments in place).

2.2. Who can see information about a disclosed disability in the application form?

Applicants have the opportunity to disclose a disability in the Equal Opportunities section of their application form. Only the Student Advice team and the Admissions team in Registry have access to the Equal Opportunities form and this is not passed on to the programme selection team, i.e. those who are responsible for the admissions assessment process are not able to view any information disclosed in the Equal Opportunities form.

2.3. Who should students declare a disability to?

The Student Advice team within Student Support Services is responsible for formalising disability support for students at the School.

If you have declared a disability at either application or registration stage, then this information is passed on to the Student Advice team by the relevant teams in Registry, during the summer and at the beginning of the academic year.

Students who decide to declare a disability at any point after enrolment should contact the Student Advice team directly.

The Student Advice team contacts all students who have declared a disability at the beginning of each term to remind them to book an appointment with a Student Adviser to set up their disability support.

Personal information (including details of disability) provided to the Student Advice team is treated confidentially and will not be shared with others without the student's prior permission. However, in order to enable us to implement reasonable adjustments to support you in your studies, we may need to share certain information about your disability and/or support requirements with other members of staff. This will be discussed with you and information will only be shared with your explicit consent.

2.4. Arranging disability support

Disclosing a disability is the first step, but students are still required to attend an appointment with a Student Adviser to discuss their study support needs arising from their disability and to create a formal Learning Support Agreement (LSA), which is a document outlining the disability and recording the agreed adjustments to be put in place.

It is important to note that simply declaring a disability or sending a medical report to the Student Advice team is not sufficient to put support or adjustments in place. Students must attend an appointment with a Student Adviser as described above.

Students must also provide documentary evidence of their disability and its impact on studies in order to be able to access formal disability support at the School. Details of suitable evidence can be found below.

Appointments with the Student Advice team can be made by completing our 'appointment request form' via our Moodle pages.

2.5. Providing evidence of disability

Students must provide documentary evidence of their disability and how it impacts on their studies in order to be able to access disability support at the School.

Below is detailed guidance about what is considered acceptable evidence.

To note:
- ➢ Evidence provided to the Student Advice team in relation to a disclosed disability will be treated as confidential and will not be shared without the student's written permission.

- ➢ Unaltered scanned PDF copies of the original evidence are acceptable and can be emailed to studentadvice@lshtm.ac.uk prior to an appointment with a Student Adviser.

- ➢ For medical conditions, there is a template available for medical professionals to complete so that all the relevant information is captured. This can be downloaded from our website: https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/study/studentservices/disability

- ➢ Supporting evidence will be used for guidance only and the School will make an assessment of what it considers to be a reasonable adjustment.

Acceptable evidence

Supporting evidence should come from an appropriate healthcare professional who is qualified to comment on the student's condition(s), including:

- General Practitioner (GP) / Physician
- Occupational Health Physician
- Consultant
- Psychiatrist
- Clinical Nurse Specialist
- Occupational Therapist
- Educational Psychologist
- Clinical Psychologist

Supporting evidence from the following will not be considered satisfactory:

- Physiotherapist
- Psychotherapist
- Counsellor

- Osteopath
- Other complementary / alternative health practitioners
- Previous institution's paperwork relating to adjustments

The supporting evidence should:

- Be recent (ordinarily no older than two years; more recent evidence may be requested for fluctuating conditions)
- Be printed on headed paper, signed and dated, and stamped where possible
- Provide confirmation of the diagnosis or impairment
- Indicate whether the condition is long-term or temporary (if the latter, then indicate likely duration)
- Describe the impact of the condition on the student and their studies
- Where possible, provide specific recommendations for reasonable adjustments to assessments

The evidence must be in English or a certified translation of the original.

Multiple conditions requiring special arrangements will require supporting evidence for each condition.

Evidence of a SpLD must be a full diagnostic assessment report from an Educational Psychologist or a suitably qualified specialist teacher. The School will not accept a letter from a GP, for example, as evidence of a SpLD.

Please note, we will not be able to accept a Learning Support Agreement (or equivalent) from a previous educational establishment as evidence of disability or support requirements.

2.6. Overview of how support is put in place

During your appointment with a Student Adviser a Learning Support Agreement (LSA) will be created. This is a document which captures information about your disability and how your studies are affected, and outlines the range of support and adjustments that will be put in place for your studies. The LSA is a formal agreement between you and the School, and as such, it will only have effect once it's signed by both you and the Student Adviser.

Usually the LSA is shared with the Taught Programme Director for your Faculty, your Programme Director (or Tutor Group Leader), Personal Tutor and Laboratory Manager (where applicable), although this will first be discussed with you and, ultimately, the LSA will only be shared with any other member of staff with your explicit consent.

Depending on the range of reasonable adjustments agreed in your LSA, we may need to liaise with relevant professional services and/or teaching staff in order for the adjustments to be implemented. The LSA itself is not shared with administrative or teaching staff, only your name, student ID number, programme of study as well as the specific adjustments that you require.

3. Types of support available

3.1. Special arrangements for assessments

Given the functional impact of their condition, some students with disabilities may require special arrangements to summative assessments (i.e. those that count towards the final grade), such as timed assessments and written assignments.

The student's eligibility for special assessment arrangements will be based on the documentary evidence provided (please see section 2, item 2.5, above for details of suitable evidence) and on a discussion with the student about their disability and how it affects their ability to undertake a particular type of assessment. This will be covered during your appointment with the Student Adviser.

Standard arrangements may include rest breaks, additional time or the use of a computer to type answers in an exam. Any requests for special assessment arrangements will take into consideration the School's Examination Regulations and will be in line with the Special Assessment Arrangements Policy.

Students with a formal identification of dyslexia or another SpLD may have had a "special cover sheet" to attach to all their assessments in previous institutions they attended. The School does not have such a scheme in place, as students' work is marked for content and small errors in spelling or syntax are not penalised.

➤ For **short-course students**, arrangements can usually be put in place for examinations and/or written assignments.

➤ For **MSc students**, arrangements can usually be put in place for module assessments (timed tests and individual written assignments), end of year examinations (papers 1 and 2), and for the summer project.

➤ For **Research degree students**, arrangements can usually be recommended for the upgrading and viva examinations, as well as for the taught phase of the DrPH.

Arrangements for formal submission deadlines should be requested through the [Research Degrees Extensions Policy & Procedure](#).

➤ **Students registered jointly with another institution** should also contact the relevant disability support service at the partner institution to request special arrangements for assessments conducted at the partner institution. Assessment adjustments, as well as the processes and deadlines for setting them up, may vary between institutions.

➤ **Students taking re-sit assessments overseas** will have their existing special arrangements put in place by the local assessment centre.

3.1.1. Deadlines for setting up special assessment arrangements

Master's programmes and individual modules
Students enrolled on Master's programmes or individual modules should note there are deadlines for setting up special arrangements for assessments in each term or module block (set in conjunction with the Teaching Support Office and the Assessments team in Registry). Students are, therefore, advised to contact the Student Advice team as early as possible and well in advance of the start of their assessments.

Historically the deadlines have been:
- For Term 1 assessments[*]: at least two weeks before the assessment date
  [*]Excluding early January assessments[†]
- For Term 2 C Modules assessments: Friday of week 2 of teaching
- For Term 2 D Modules assessments: Friday of week 2 of teaching
- For Term 3 E Module assessments and final summer examinations: Friday of week 3 of teaching
- For the MSc Project: at least two weeks before the submission deadline
- For module assessment resits: early August

This should be viewed as guidance only. *Students will receive email notifications from Student Advice with a reminder of the official deadline at the beginning of each term/module block.*

[†]January assessments for ITD Faculty
As of 2018/19, the following programmes will have January assessments (in the second week of January):
- MSc Immunology of Infectious diseases
- MSc Medical Entomology for Disease Control
- MSc Medical Microbiology
- MSc Medical Parasitology
- MSc Tropical Medicine & International Health

The deadline for setting up adjustments to the January assessments will be the Friday of week 6 of teaching.

January assessment resits will take place at the end of the following April.
The deadline for setting up adjustments to the resits is the end of March (usually 4 weeks before the re-sit assessment date).

Professional Diploma in Tropical Medicine & Hygiene (DTM&H)
Historically, the deadline to set up special arrangements for the DTM&H assessments has been Friday of week 6 of teaching.
DTM&H students will receive an email from Student Advice notifying them of the official deadline at the start of session.

Professional Diploma in Tropical Nursing (PDTN)
Students enrolled in the PDTN should have their Learning Support Agreement set up at least two weeks in advance of their assessment dates, to ensure that any special arrangements can be implemented.

Historically, the PDTN assessments have taken place in weeks 12 (written assignment), 16 or 17 (lab assessment) and 19 (MCQ exam) of the programme. Considering this scenario, PDTN students would have to have special arrangements agreed by week 10 of the programme for the individual written assignment, by week 14 or 15 for the lab assessment (depending on which week the assessment takes place) and by week 17 for the MCQ exam.

PDTN students will receive an email from Student Advice at the start of session notifying them of the timeframe to have special assessment arrangements set up.

Other Short Courses
Please contact studentadvice@lshtm.ac.uk for further information.

3.2. Specialist study skills tuition and specialist mentoring support

Some students with disabilities may benefit from supplementary support to help them develop additional learning strategies and/or strategies to manage the effects of their condition on their studies.

This may include one-to-one sessions with a specialist study skills tutor for students with SpLDs, or with a specialist mentor for students with mental health conditions, long term health conditions or autistic spectrum conditions. This is commonly referred to as 'non-medical helper' support.

The School does not offer this type of support in-house, but students can be referred to an external provider.

Currently, this type of support is only available to students who have an LSA in place and, therefore, eligibility will be based on the evidence provided. However, it is not necessary for students to have a specific recommendation from their doctor or another healthcare professional, but rather, the need for such a referral will be determined in discussion with the student, and based on the evidence provided.

Funding for non-medical helper support
Home students will need to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) to access funding for this type of 'non-medical helper' support. Typically, DSA will fund up to 30 one-hour sessions of either study skills or mentoring support for a full time academic year. It may be possible for the School to fund a limited number of sessions (up to 6) whilst students' DSA applications are being processed by their funding body.

For students not eligible for DSA, such as overseas students, the School will fund an initial 6 sessions. If it is subsequently felt that the student would benefit from further sessions, we may fund up to 6 extra sessions upon provision of supporting information from both the student and the study skills tutor or mentor. In exceptional circumstances we may be able to fund further sessions beyond 12 sessions for non-DSA funded students.

Students with multiple disabilities may be eligible to receive both mentoring and study skills support.

Further information about DSA and funding can be found in section 4.

Cancelled sessions or non-attendance
Students receiving this type of support funded by the School should note that the School gets charged for sessions not attended, if the student fails to cancel their session with sufficient notice, i.e. if less than 24 hours' notice is given. The School will also be charged for cancelled sessions due to late arrivals of greater than 15 minutes. Students should therefore make every effort to attend scheduled sessions or to cancel sessions in advance with enough notice.

Students who miss two successive appointments without satisfactory explanation or adequate notice will not be offered future sessions by our external provider and will be referred back to the Student Advice team. If students then wish to access this support again they will need to contact the Student Advice team and a decision to re-refer students for support will be made on a case-by-case basis. Repeated missed sessions or late cancellations without good reason is likely to result in the complete suspension of support.

3.3. Other types of non-medical helper support

Some students may require additional support such as notetaking or practical assistance, for example in the library or laboratory. It is likely that only students with sensory impairments or significant mobility or physical impairments would be eligible to access this type of support.

The School may need specific recommendations from a qualified healthcare professional and may need the student to undergo an assessment of their study needs if they have not had one already. Students eligible for DSA would be expected to apply for DSA funding and undergo a DSA-funded study needs assessment.

3.4. Library support

Additional support for accessing Library Services may include extended library loans, a book fetching service and/or a one-to-one induction, among other things.

3.5. IT support

The School aims to provide an inclusive approach to teaching and learning. The majority of lectures are recorded, with the recordings and presentation slides made available to students via Moodle, which is the School's virtual learning environment.

All students have access to SensusAccess, which is a self-service solution to convert files into a different format based on individual needs. It allows the conversion of documents such as image PDFs, JPEGs, text files, PowerPoint presentations and others into a range of alternative file formats including e-book, text file, audio (MP3, DAISY) or digital braille.

Furthermore, the assistive software TextHelp Read & Write Gold, which provides literacy support, is available to all students on the School network computers. It has features including read aloud (text-to-speech), advanced spellchecker and coloured screen filters.

Additionally, a reasonable adjustment may include an increased printing allowance for students or one-to-one support with network packages.

The School may also be able to loan or provide specialist IT equipment including software packages to help you during your studies. For example, a speech-to-text (dictation) software or mind-mapping software to help you plan and write essays. This will be based on a study needs assessment and supporting evidence. DSA-eligible students are expected to apply for DSA funding for their equipment allowance.

3.6.   In-course support

For some students it may be appropriate to recommend specific support in relation to the delivery of teaching, e.g. for a student not to be pressured to read aloud in class, or for meetings with a personal tutor or supervisor to be structured in a particular way.

3.7.   Physical accessibility

Classes take place across our two buildings located on Keppel Street and Tavistock Place, in addition to buildings belonging to other institutions in the Bloomsbury area.

For students who may have difficulty walking between different buildings during the teaching day, the Student Advice team can liaise with the School room booking and timetabling office to request that classes are situated in accessible rooms and to minimise distance between venues for lectures or seminars, where possible.

Any physical accessibility needs should be raised with the Student Advice team as early as possible given the logistical difficulties with room bookings. Last minute changes to timetables may not be feasible.

3.8.   Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)

A PEEP will be created for students who may require assistance to evacuate a building in an emergency. The Safety Office will draw up a personal evacuation plan in collaboration with the student and the Student Advice team.

If you think you need this type of support you should inform the Student Advice team as early as possible.

3.9.   Screening for a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)

The Student Advice team offers a screening service for students who suspect that they may have an SpLD.

An appointment with a Student Adviser should be requested via our Moodle pages and you should briefly state why you think you may have an SpLD, to help us consider whether a screening would be appropriate.

Depending on the nature of the suspected SpLD, the screening may consist of self-assessment questionnaires, an online computerised test and/or an informal interview.

The informal interview with the Student Adviser would cover your experiences of learning throughout your educational life, since primary school to postgraduate studies, including your learning experiences in specific study skills areas, such as reading and writing. This informal interview usually takes up to one hour and is designed to help identify if you have areas of difficulty which are similar to an SpLD profile.

If indicated, the School can then refer you on for a full diagnostic assessment with an Educational Psychologist or a qualified specialist teacher which is funded by the School[‡].

[‡]Diagnostic assessments will be fully funded by the School **except** for those students who have less than three months remaining in their student registration. For Master's students, for example, this means students will need to have had a screening with a Student Adviser by no later than mid-June. Students should allow sufficient time from date of requesting a screening to having a screening appointment scheduled. Students who have less than three months remaining in their student registration will be required to pay 50% of the cost of their diagnostic assessment (currently it costs £400 or £599 in total depending on the assessment type). Such students will need to make payment arrangements directly with the assessment centre and the School will be invoiced for the remaining 50%.

4. Funding for support

Further information on funding for specific types of support can be found in sections 3.2, 3.3 and 3.5 above.

4.1. Home students

Home students are encouraged to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA), which are non-means tested grants that help to pay for the extra costs students incur because of their disability.

DSA funds four types of allowances, with the support package dependent on individual needs:
- Specialist non-medical helper's allowance, including specialist study skills, specialist mentoring, assistive technology trainer, BLS interpreter, mobility trainer, electronic note-taker (for deaf students), etc.
- Equipment allowance, including hardware and assistive software
- General allowance for other disability-related costs of studying, e.g. extra printing

- Travel allowance if additional costs are incurred as a result of your disability

It is important to note that eligibility for DSA can only be determined by Student Finance England (or relevant funding body). Entitlement to funding through DSA will be based on the recommendations of a DSA study needs assessor. Therefore, students should not purchase equipment or services on the assumption that funding through DSA will be made available.

Postgraduates in England are funded by Student Finance England except those funded by the NHS or a Research Council.

Further information about DSA and the application process can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas

Students who are making an application for DSA for the first time are encouraged to apply as early as possible, given that the full process can take up to 14 weeks from your initial application.

To ensure your DSA is in place for you as quickly as possible, follow these tips:
- Apply as early as possible – in most cases, you don't need to have a place confirmed at university or college to apply,
- Once you receive notification that you are eligible, book your needs assessment as soon as you can,
- When you attend your needs assessment interview, in addition to the medical evidence returned to the centre, you should give the assessor as much information as possible. You may want to take along any other relevant paperwork you have to help the assessor with determining what will help you,
- As soon as you receive your entitlement notification from your funding body, you should contact the authorised supplier to set up the agreed support and/or equipment.

The Student Advice team will need to complete Section 5 of the DSA application form. You should email studentadvice@lshtm.ac.uk with your details (full name, LSHTM application number, course and mode of study) and we will be able to email you the completed form back.

4.2.   International students

Non-UK students are encouraged to apply for disability-related financial support from their home country where possible and in advance of their studies. If no support is available, the School may be able to fund additional support as required, based on a needs assessment and supporting evidence.

Disabled Students' Allowance for non-UK students
Some international higher education students in England may be eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances funded by Student Finance England (SFE), if certain, more complex criteria are met. UKCISA provide a full explanation of the SFE eligibility rules and all the ways to qualify for SFE funding.

4.3. Research degree students

Research degree students who are in receipt of a UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) funded studentship will be eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances through their Research Council. Support will usually be organised through the higher education institution.
You can read more about UKRI's DSA policy on their website:
https://www.ukri.org/skills/funding-for-research-training/

4.4. What if DSA does not cover support?

The School tries where possible to ensure that disabled students achieve parity of access to the educational experience, by removing barriers pre-emptively. In some instances, more complex disabilities may need specific support which the School is not equipped to provide. In this case, we will make an assessment as to what constitutes a "reasonable adjustment" as set out in the Equality Act 2010.

5. Relevant School Policies

- Academic Regulations

- Special Assessment Arrangements Policy

- Extenuating Circumstances Policy

- Academic Appeals Policy & Procedure

- Student Interruption & Withdrawal of Studies