Students with disabilities: key principles for staff, students and applicants

learning difficulties including dyslexia, medical conditions such as HIV or cancer, and mental health difficulties.

11. It is important to note that the term ‘disability’, although often connected to physical disability, in particular wheelchair users, is a much broader term encompassing a wide range of ‘invisible’ as well as visible disabilities. Support provided for students with non-physical and less immediately visible disabilities is equally important and legally protected as for those with physical disabilities.
12. The term ‘disability’ is problematic and frequently contested by those who are labelled as such. Students may not identify with the term but still require support in order to access education on an equal basis and achieve their full academic potential. Support

- staff training, e.g. ensuring staff are aware of the social model of disability
- recruitment and marketing, e.g. ensuring a variety of formats for marketing material, such as podcasts embedded into online webpages
- planning estate management, ensuring accessibility, such as automatic doors, at architectural design stage
- accommodation – e.g. ensuring a sufficient number of adapted rooms

For further specific examples of anticipatory adjustments please refer to the Toolkit for Inclusive Practice in Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Admission: https://sitesd.reading.ac.uk/inclusive-teaching-and-learning/

Individual adjustments

24. Not all matters can be dealt with under a generic policy, nor can an entirely pan-inclusive environment be provided which caters for all students and their diverse support needs. Individual adjustments therefore need to be made on a case-by-case basis where bespoke support is required that could not be anticipated nor accommodated within the overall inclusive practice provided by the University.

25. An example of an individual adjustment would be a student with Asperger's Syndrome requiring an individual room in examinations due to sensory sensitivity and needing an Oral Language Modifier to ensure correct interpretation of the questions; adjustments such as these need to be made on a case-by-case basis depending on particular individual needs (not all students with Asperger's need Oral Language Modifiers or individual rooms). However, it should be noted that this adjustment can still be anticipated more broadly by ensuring at estate management and architectural design stages that small, individual rooms are factored into the design of buildings where examinations will take place.

    For further specific examples of individual adjustments please refer to the Toolkit for Inclusive Practice in Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Admission: https://sitesd.reading.ac.uk/inclusive-teaching-and-learning/

26. In addition to support provided internally by the University, students with disabilities may also be eligible for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), funded by Student Finance England. The support provided by DSA is tailored according to individual support needs, for example supplying the funding for a specialist mentor for students with mental health diagnoses to help them manage their emotional wellbeing alongside the demands of their course. The Disability Advisory Service supports students to apply for, adjust and implement support funded via DSA.

Exceptional Circumstances

27. The University's exceptional circumstances procedure is available to all students. Those students with disabilities may not use the procedure as a blanket provision, nor can exceptional circumstances be granted by dint of disability alone. However they can use the procedure for an exacerbation/change of an existing condition, the impact of a newly/recently diagnosed condition or the impact of an existing disability on other

undiagnosed mental health issues can be referred to their GP, the Counselling team and Disability Advisory Service for support.

63. Specific learning differences can be difficult to assess where English is the second language; to this end the Disability Advisory Service has an additional section to the SpLD screener specifically orientated towards students for whom English is an additional language.

Confidentiality

64.

advance. It should also be noted that this may mean staff will not be aware of the need to make reasonable adjustments in these cases.

69. Confidentiality applies to verbal and written exchanges, both within and without the University. Staff must be aware of legislation governing Data Protection and Freedom of Information when committing information about students to writing.

Offshore Delivery

66. The University delivers a number of degree programmes in conjunction with partner institutions based overseas, as well as course which are delivered through online and blended delivery.

67. Whilst it is acknowledged that different legal jurisdictions operate in overseas locations, the principles described in this policy are assumed to apply to programmes involving offsite delivery.

Key sources of information and support

Disability Advisory Service: www.reading.ac.uk/disability, disability@reading.ac.uk, 0118 378 8921

Toolkit for Inclusive Practice in Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Admission https://sitesd.reading.ac.uk/inclusive-teaching-and-learning/

Counselling and Wellbeing Service: www.reading.ac.uk/counselling, counselling@reading.ac.uk, 0118 378 4216

Departmental/School Disability Representative – contact DAS if you are unsure of your contact

Study Advice: www.reading.ac.uk/studyadvice

Exams Office: www.reading.ac.uk/exams, examinations@reading.ac.uk

Student Services: https://www.reading.ac.uk/essentials/Ask-a-question

Centre for Quality Support and Development: http://www.reading.ac.uk/cqsd/

Academic Tutor Toolkit: https://sites.reading.ac.uk/academictutors/

Useful general guidance on all matters relating to equality is provided by:

- The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC): www.equalityhumanrights.com
- The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU): www.ecu.ac.uk/publications
- The Equality Act 2010 can be found at: www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2010/pdf/ukpga_20100015_en.pdf
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 can be found at:
- www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/ukpga_19950050_en_1

Appendix: Legal requirements in provision for students with disabilities

70. The legislation, particularly Part 6 of the Equality Act, places obligations on us to change practices or environments in order to remove the disabling effects or barriers to participation in HE encountered by academically qualified people with disabilities. We are under an obligation not to discriminate against students with disabilities by