

Disability Statement

1. Mission statement

The University of Suffolk values diversity in our community and recognises individual academic identities, which includes specific learning needs, we positively welcome applications from people with disabilities.

We are committed to an ethos of development that aims to fully achieve equality of opportunity and access. The University recognises the importance of anticipatory and individualised support mechanisms in enabling all students to achieve their potential and as such will continue to improve and expand provision for students with a disability.

We aim to answer some of the questions you may have about the University of Suffolk and support that is available, whether you are considering it as a place to study, you are an applicant, or you are a current student.

1.1 Introduction

The University of Suffolk and Partners are located as follows:

- University of Suffolk, Ipswich
- University of Suffolk, Suffolk New College
- University of Suffolk, West Suffolk College
- University of Suffolk, East Coast College
- London School of Commerce (LSC)

All campuses conform to the standards outlined in this statement.

Coordinators of individual reasonable adjustments and support arrangements are often known as disability advisers or hold a similar title. There is an adviser based at each campus.

To contact or make an appointment with the relevant staff member, please refer to the [contact details](#) for the disability adviser at your place of study.

2. What is a disability?

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as: 'a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities'.

This could include:

- Autism Spectrum Conditions
- Long-term illnesses and health conditions such as Diabetes, Epilepsy, Multiple Sclerosis
- Mental Health conditions such as Anxiety, Depression and OCD
- Sensory difficulties such as hearing and visual impairments
- Significant physical and mobility impairments
- Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Dyscalculia

2.2 Disclosure

A) What do I need to share?

There is no statutory duty for students to disclose a disability. We recognise that disclosure can be difficult and so the University aims to create an environment where staff and students feel supported and confident in discussing their individual needs.

Disclosing any additional needs will enable the University to advise you of relevant support and to create an individual support plan that will facilitate full participation in your studies. Non-disclosure may limit the support available to you and prevent the University from fulfilling its statutory duty to make reasonable adjustments.

We encourage applicants and students to disclose a disability or medical condition diagnosis and provide information about the way in which a disability or medical condition may affect you on a day-to-day basis.

To be eligible for reasonable adjustments and funding such as, Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA), you will be asked to provide evidence of your diagnosis. This may be a letter from a medical professional, Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or a diagnostic report.

If you have a disability but do not require reasonable adjustment for learning, we ask that you nevertheless indicate your disability. Doing so will enable the University to monitor its equality duties and performance and it may be necessary for other purposes such as ensuring safety in an evacuation.

B) Who do I tell?

There are many opportunities for disclosure:

- At any time during your course, you can contact the disability adviser at your place of study
- On application, you can indicate on the UCAS or University of Suffolk application form that you have a disability or additional support need
- Through the online enrolment process, you will be invited to complete the disability / learning difficulty fields. You can tick the box requesting an adviser to contact you to discuss your requirements and the support we can offer
- Students studying professional health courses may also need to meet the occupational health service representative
- You can speak to your tutor or support staff at any time throughout your course

Please see the relevant [contact details](#) for your campus.

Advisers can provide one to one meetings for students and applicants, where support arrangements can be discussed. The outcome of these discussions will be recorded on a Reasonable Adjustment Agreement (RAA) or care plan. Advisers can also provide guidance about making applications for funding with your relevant funding body.

You may also find it helpful to tell your Personal Tutor and/or Course Leader, Placement or employer so that they are aware of ways in which your studies may be affected and reasonable adjustments that support your learning. With your consent, your disability adviser will share your Reasonable Adjustment Agreement with your course team and other relevant departments in order to implement all support arrangements.

C) What happens to my information?

Information is only shared with others with your express consent. For example, when information is shared as part of the Reasonable Adjustment Agreement process, your written consent will be obtained. Please see our [Code of Practice on Reasonable Adjustments](#) for students for more information.

Typical information gathered includes notes or records of meetings, correspondence from parties associated with the Disabled Student Allowances (DSAs) process and evidence about the disability or medical condition. All records will be kept securely and only available to immediate members of the disability team. We will only use personal information for the purposes we collect it, typically this will be:

- to keep a record of your contact with a service thereby enable continuing work and;
- to provide advice and guidance based on accurate information.

For more information please see the [Student Services Privacy Notice](#).

Other examples of occasions where student consent is required is to provide a statement to accompany an Extenuating Circumstances application.

D) Confidentiality and data storage

Advisers store all student records safely and confidentially and will not allow anyone outside the department to access any records without your consent, except when required to do so by law, for example to protect a person's vital interests.

We take all reasonable steps to safeguard the security of any information about you that we hold in written or electronic format and destroy all written and electronic records five years after graduation. Disability support records are not stored as part of your academic (students) or personnel (staff) records.

We ensure that any statistical information, such as for service evaluation purposes, is produced in an anonymous format so that individuals cannot be identified.

If a third party (e.g. family member, friend, partner or healthcare worker) contacts the University we will not disclose any information about you. Advisers may listen to any concerns that they have and may take proportionate action, such as to contact a student to perform a welfare check or to notify the student that a third party has contacted the University. Staff can offer generic information about University processes.

3. Prospective students

Applicants

To help make your decision about where to study, we recommend that you research the services and support available both at your prospective University and in the local area. If you attend an open event at the University of Suffolk, Ipswich Campus there will usually be an opportunity for you to meet a member of the Disability and Wellbeing team. You can also

arrange an individual visit and meeting with a disability adviser. Alternatively, an individual telephone appointment can be arranged.

Applications are usually made via UCAS or in some cases directly through the University of Suffolk application process. Your application will be considered on academic suitability and any discussions you have with disability advisers are treated separately from your application to study.

If you require reasonable adjustments for an interview or entry exam, such as extra time, a scribe or a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, please contact the appropriate staff at your site.

For courses delivered at any of the sites below please contact the [Admissions Department](#).

- Ipswich
- University of Suffolk at Suffolk New College
- University of Suffolk at West Suffolk College
- University of Suffolk at East Coast College

If you are applying for courses at the London School of Commerce please contact Disability Officer, Rabindra Shrestha for a discussion about support you may need at interview.

rabindra.shrestha@lsclondon.co.uk

Tel: 0207 053 9650

If you do not wish to declare a disability on your application form but would like an informal discussion about your needs please contact your disability adviser, [contact us](#) at any time.

Why are you asking for details of my disability?

We ask for this information so we can assess what support you may require and then, with your consent, disability staff will liaise with the respective academic departments and professional services to ensure the necessary support arrangements are put in place at the start of your studies.

You may also be eligible for funding which is available through Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA), and fund a range of support measures, for example: specialist equipment, assistive technologies or non-medical help.

- English students should apply for DSA through [Student Finance England](#)
- Northern Irish students: [Student Finance NI](#).
- Scottish students: [Students Awards Agency for Scotland](#) (SAAS)
- Welsh students: [Student Finance Wales](#)
- NHS funded students should apply via [NHS bursaries](#)

DSA application forms can be accessed via the relevant website.

Will my application be rejected?

Your application will be assessed based on academic suitability and any information you provide about your disability will be dealt with sensitively and normally separate to your academic application.

Applications are usually made via UCAS or in some cases through the University of Suffolk application process. Decisions are made on academic grounds with agreements made between prospective students and the University to ensure that appropriate support may be

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provided to enable students to undertake their chosen course of study. It should be noted that some courses which are regulated by external Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), such as Nursing, Midwifery or Social Work, may be unable to admit students who do not meet the requirements of the professional body for their chosen course. Check [our courses](#) for information about entry, or additional requirements.

Once you have been offered a place, more information will be sent to you about how to contact a disability adviser so that you can discuss specific study arrangements. In addition, you can discuss any arrangements that may ease your transition into higher education, for example an individualised induction.

4. Throughout your studies

Disclosure

We encourage early disclosure so that support can be put in place early in your programme of studies. In some circumstances, a minimum amount of time may be required to ensure that the support arrangements can be fully implemented and are appropriate for the individual. An example of this is set out in our *Regulations for the Preparation and Conduct of Examinations*, whereby exam concessions usually require at least 3 weeks' notice.

Students can also disclose a diagnosis at any point during your studies, we recognise that sometimes personal circumstances change.

If you are experiencing a temporary injury or ill-health, it may also be possible to receive temporary adjustments to support your learning. Please discuss this with your Personal Tutor or Disability Adviser.

Arranging support

To make an appointment to discuss support please contact your [local disability adviser](#) throughout your studies.

We also work closely with the Infozone team who aim to make getting the answer to your question as simple as possible. If you are not sure who to speak to, the knowledgeable team of advisers provide a friendly and responsive service. They aim to deal with the majority of enquiries on the spot or will refer you to a person who can answer your query.

You can pop into the Waterfront Building, Ipswich and speak to them in person, ask the [Infozone a question](#) or contact them via telephone. Tel: 01473 338833

Services and Support

Diagnostic assessment

Screening and full diagnostic assessments are available at the following campuses:

- University of Suffolk, Ipswich
- University of Suffolk at Suffolk New College
- University of Suffolk at West Suffolk College
- University of Suffolk at East Coast College

If you are a current student at one of these campuses and think you may have a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD), such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia or Dyscalculia, you apply for a screening or full diagnostic assessment.

A screening can be provided free of charge. It cannot provide a diagnosis, but can identify areas of need that can be supported by reasonable adjustments such as, exam concessions.

A full diagnostic assessment meets the relevant professional standards and can provide a diagnosis of a SpLD, if applicable. A full diagnostic assessment is required as evidence for an application to Disabled Students' Allowances for SpLD. The University subsidises the cost of these assessments, but asks for a £100 contribution towards the total cost of a full diagnostic assessment.

If you are a student at another campus, please speak to your disability adviser about arrangements for screening and assessment.

Funding

Some Students with a disability will be eligible to apply for specialist support and equipment via DSAs. Applications can be made any time throughout your studies, as long as you have at least three months left on your course.

You may also be eligible for funding which is available through Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA), and fund a range of support measures, for example: specialist equipment, assistive technologies or non-medical help.

- English students should apply for DSA through [Student Finance England](#)
- Northern Irish students: [Student Finance NI](#).
- Scottish students: [Students Awards Agency for Scotland](#) (SAAS)
- Welsh students: [Student Finance Wales](#)
- NHS funded students should apply via [NHS bursaries](#)

DSA application forms can be accessed via the relevant website.

Useful information about the process can also be found at [YourDSA](#) and our [student guide to DSA](#). If you are not eligible to receive DSAs your Disability Adviser will advise on the support available at your campus.

Non-medical help (NMH)

Non-medical help (NMH) describes one-to-one human assistance you may be eligible to receive. Some examples of non-medical help support are described below.

Practical Support Assistance

When making a decision on whether a student will be provided with a practical support assistant we will use the following criteria:

- Students with visual impairments that affects their mobility; NB: Sighted Guides can be provided through DSAs
- Students with significant mobility issues, e.g. wheelchair user

Workshop / laboratory Assistance

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When making decisions on whether a student will be provided with a workshop or laboratory assistant we will use the following criteria:

- Students with visual impairments that affects their mobility; NB: Sighted Guides can be provided through the DSA
- Students with significant mobility issues, e.g. wheelchair users
- Students with fine motor control issues

Note Taking

The University is supportive of the use of Digital Voice Recorders (DVRs) to audio record taught sessions. [The Code of Practice on Audio-Recording Taught Sessions](#) sets out the expectations in this practice.

When making decisions on whether a student will be provided with a human note-taker we will use the following criteria

- Students with sensory impairments which will prevent them from taking notes in lectures because they cannot see or hear the content
- Students with significant mobility issues, especially students with conditions affecting their upper limbs, that will affect their ability to either word process or hand-write notes

Reader

Someone to read aloud course texts and books. This may also be provided in an exam setting.

Specialist study skills tuition / Mentoring

Specialist One to One Study Skills/Mentoring is usually provided through the DSA, where appropriate. If you are international student requiring these forms of support, please make an appointment to speak to an adviser.

The University does not provide personal care or medical assistance that you may need as part of your day-to-day care. Please contact your local authority to discuss appropriate support arrangements.

5. Parents, guardians and carers

UK law (the General Data Protection Regulation) and University policy prohibit the disclosure of an individual's information to a third party. This means that staff members are unable to give any information about a student currently studying at the University to a third party. This includes parents, other family members, friends etc. (All Universities in the UK follow similar guidelines and are bound by the same legislation.)

This means that if you make contact with any member of the University and ask about your daughter or son, staff will not be able to divulge any details concerning their academic progress, their wellbeing, their attendance etc. For this reason, we encourage parents and students to keep in regular contact with each other.

We realise that this can sometimes be frustrating, but hope you appreciate the reasons for this.

In general, students are expected to act on their own behalf when dealing with offices and departments within the University, and when requesting services. Parents will not normally be allowed to make requests, or otherwise act on behalf of their daughter/son.

In certain exceptional circumstances and with the student's written consent, we may communicate with a third party, if the University deems it is in the interests of those concerned. Please contact your adviser to discuss.

6. Placements

Where can I get support?

Disability Advisers can offer advice and information about support during your placement; however, they may not have specialist knowledge of the placement environment. With your consent, a discussion can be facilitated between you, the course team and placement supervisor / mentors to explore how reasonable adjustments apply in a working or placement environment.

Part of the Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs) process requires applicants to meet with an independent Needs Assessor who will talk to you about all aspects of your course including a placement, where it is a mandatory part of your programme of study. The purpose of this will be to identify where funding can support in both the learning and placement environments. For more information about Disabled Students' Allowances please see our [student guide to DSA](#).

If you have regular one-to-one or specialist support (e.g. specialist mentoring or study skills support) please speak to your adviser who may be able to arrange for this support to continue remotely via telephone, email or skype.

Should I disclose my disability to my placement provider?

Your disability adviser will not disclose your disability to placement teams without your consent. However, we would encourage students and applicants to disclose to ensure that support can be in place in a work setting. In some professions, it is mandatory to disclose a condition which may affect your practice. Please check your professional body regulations for information.

Students with reasonable adjustments undertaking practice placements in a health setting, such as Nursing or Midwifery will usually have the opportunity to complete a 'reasonable adjustments pack' with their Personal Tutor. When you meet your Personal Tutor to discuss adjustments for placement, you will have the opportunity to discuss how your disability may impact on your placement and complete a summary of reasonable adjustments required for practice. This summary can be placed in your practice assessment document for discussion with your mentor or practice educator.

Students on professional health courses may be required to meet with occupational health to ensure you can access all appropriate support during your placement.

7. International Students

All information about University procedures regarding reasonable adjustments and support equally applies to our international students. Please discuss any requirements with your disability adviser.

Scholarships and financial support

There are a number of UK scholarships and financial support schemes for international students with disabilities and special educational needs. These schemes may be run by UK or international governments, charities or businesses – or by the UK universities, colleges and schools themselves.

You can find out more about scholarships and financial support generally [here](#).

Disabled Students Allowances (DSAs)

Some international Higher Education students in England are entitled to the Disabled Students' Allowance. It is open to:

- EU (European Union) students who have been ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands for three years immediately before the first day of their first academic year.
- EEA (European Economic Area) and Swiss migrant workers who have been ordinarily resident in the EEA for three years immediately before the first day of their first academic year, and who are assessed as meeting the criteria of 'worker'.

[Apply for DSAs](#)

8. Feedback or complaints

Feedback

We welcome feedback on the services we provide, including positive experiences and suggestions. You can provide feedback or suggestions in a number of ways, for example:

- Directly to the adviser you met;
- Through our online feedback form and;
- To the Manager/Head of the service.

We evaluate our services annually and may actively ask for feedback.

Complaints

The University of Suffolk expects all staff, students and visitors to be treated with dignity and respect. Any form of harassment or discrimination is unacceptable. Please refer to our Dignity at Study Policy. If you have a concern or informal complaint about our support, service or your experience, please raise this with either the adviser directly or Manager/Head of the service.

If you have a formal complaint this can be made by submitting a Student Complaints form as referred to in the Student Complaints Procedure. More information can be found through our [Office for Student Appeal, Complaints and Conduct](#) (OSACC).

There are staff available to advise and support those who feel that they are being discriminated against because of a disability. In addition to your advisers, you can speak to your Personal Tutor / Tutors, Students' Union and the Office for Student Complaints and Conduct (OSACC). [Email: OSACC@uos.ac.uk Tel: 01473 338506]

Contact details for Disability Advisers

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University of Suffolk, Ipswich

studentservices@uos.ac.uk

01473 338833

University of Suffolk at Suffolk New College

Student Support Adviser: Faye Parker (in liaison with the Additional Learning and Support Team)

Email: FayeParker@suffolk.ac.uk

Email: studentsupport@suffolk.ac.uk

Tel: 01473 382738

University of Suffolk at West Suffolk College

Disability Adviser: Emma Harrison

Email: learnersupport@wsc.ac.uk

Tel: 01284 701301

University of Suffolk at East Coast College

Additional Learning Support Manager, David Hawkins-Weeks

www.eastcoast.ac.uk

0800 854 695

London School of Commerce

Disability Officer: Rabindra Sharestha

rabindra.shrestha@lsclondon.co.uk

Tel: 0207 053 9650