

Disabled Students & Inclusive Practice

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1. Purpose and overview

London South Bank University is committed to ensuring that disabled students have equal access to all teaching and learning and an equal opportunity to show their skills, reach their potential and excel in their chosen field.

The University adopts the social model of disability and understands that our procedures, processes and learning environment often creates barriers to learning.

In June 2024 LSBU was ranked third in the world for reducing inequality in the Times Higher Impact Rankings. In particular this was for supporting students with disabilities where there has been a 19% rise in the number of LSBU students with disabilities since 2023.

The purpose of this policy is to set out LSBU's position and expectations to ensure a minimum equitable experience for disabled students and a holistic approach to inclusive practice across our college structure, academic teams and professional service groups.

The document uses the **five touchpoints** of the Disabled Student Commitment (DSC) to set out LSBU's position and direct the reader to relevant knowledge articles on LSBU's webpages.

The touchpoints are:--

- Requests to share information
- Choosing a course of study
- Transition into the higher education community
- On-course experience
- Moving forward

2. Disability and Dyslexia Support (DDS).

DDS is a student-facing support service dedicated to LSBU students who have a disability such as a mental health condition, medical condition, sensory disability are neurodiverse, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, AD(H)D or on the Autistic spectrum. DDS also provide training and advice to colleagues working with students including lecturers, administrators, accommodation and estates. [DDS](#).

3. How do we define Disability?

Disabled students are protected under the Equality Act 2010. This is defined as a physical, medical, sensory or neurological condition that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on a person's ability to do normal daily activities.

Alongside this the **Social Model** (Mike Oliver 1983) is used and promoted throughout the University. The model states that people are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment or difference.

Barriers can be physical, like buildings not having accessible toilets. Or they can be caused by people's attitudes to difference, like assuming disabled people can't do certain things.

4. Identity first or person first language?

Some people prefer to use person-first language, because they feel that their disability is only part of who they are and should not get in the way of being seen as a person.

Still, others prefer identity-first, usually because they feel their disability cannot (or should not) be separated from who they are.

This can sometimes be fluid and interchangeable depending on the situation. LSBU chooses to use identify first language – i.e Disabled Student, Disability Support Service as a way to acknowledge a student's individuality and clearly sends a message out to the institution to acknowledge and make appropriate adjustments.

5.Disabled Student Commitment (DSC)

In September 2023 the University signed up to the [DSC](#) and published an action plan to mitigate the barriers experienced in higher education in partnership with our students and academic colleagues. [LSBU action plan](#).

5.1 LSBU's Disabled Student Panel was established in 2023 to respond to all five touchpoints of the DSC:-

- Requests to share information
- Choosing a course of study
- Transition into the higher education community
- On-course experience
- Moving forward

5.2 LSBU's Inclusive Practice Working Group was established in 2023 to respond to 'On Course Experience' as a mechanism to remove barriers to current methods of learning, teaching and assessment.

6 Requests to share information

Students are encouraged to share information via UCAS or other programme admissions process as applicable. The DDS team uses this information to contact applicants and discuss potential adjustments to teaching and learning before enrolment and register the student once. Review of support is available throughout the year and not dependant on sharing new information.

6.1 Support Arrangements are created based on the information students tell the University and shared with relevant colleagues to implement the adjustments. Medical evidence is only sought should it help inform the suggested adjustments or required for funding for Disabled Student Allowances.

Obtaining medical evidence can sometimes be an additional barrier for a student receiving adequate adjustments to their studies. Informed by the **EHRC advice note** for HEI's ([Legal case of University of Bristol vs Abrahart](#)) LSBU is using the following guidance: -

“Staff should be reminded that where a student has a severe or urgent condition, reasonable adjustments may be made without a diagnosis or medical or expert evidence”.

Students registered with Disability & Dyslexia Support that require additional adjustments are not required to share new or subsequent information.

Where possible requests for inclusive practice are built into the delivery of the student's programme unless there is a professional competency that needs to undertaken.

EHRC Advice note:-

“Determine how methods of assessment can be adjusted to still test the relevant competences while accommodating disabilities. Compile a list of replacement types of assessment to accommodate specific disabilities”.

[Do I need to provide DDS team with evidence of my disability?](#)

6.2 Suggested Strategies for Support

Each student's disability and/or neurodiversity is unique to the individual, however standard adjustments can be applied to certain categories of disabled students as well as strategies for teaching and assessment.

LSBU has published a series of **Strategy Guides** for Neurodiversity, Marking, Stammering, Deaf & Hard of Hearing, Blind & Visually Impaired, Mental Health, Autistic Spectrum, Mobility & Medical conditions.

Academic teams are encouraged to become familiar with these strategies to help mitigate the barriers students may experience and are published on [Strategies for Supporting Students](#)

Further **baseline reasonable adjustments** are also published on Connect – [Examples of Reasonable Adjustments](#)

6.3 Data Protection and Consent to Share

For Disability and Dyslexia Support (DDS) to share Support Arrangements with Course Teams and relevant colleagues we require explicit consent from students.

DDS only shares information that is relevant to a student's support, focusing on the adjustments and arrangements rather than the named disability and diagnosis.

[How do I complete the Disability and Dyslexia Support data protection task?](#)

6.4 Accommodation

The University has several bedrooms adapted for disabled students and where required applicants should make this known directly to the Accommodation team.

[How do I apply for accommodation?](#)

7 Choosing a course of study

Explicit information is to be made available for students across all programmes of study in regard to the range of adjustments and support built into the programme as well as what is on offer via the DDS team.

[How can the Disability & Dyslexia Support team help?](#)

Professional competency standards are to be made explicit so that disabled students can make an informed choice with options to discuss the demands of the programme before a formal interview is conducted.

7.1 Open Days

All Open & Offer Holder Days are to include information on the support available throughout a student's programme.

Event organisers are to be anticipatory by asking if prospective students will require support of any kind whilst visiting the campus. This may include, sighted guides, British Sign Language Interpreters, practical support assistance, quiet zones and/or bespoke small group or 1:1 advice and guidance.

Disabled Student Ambassadors are required for tours as well as providing their unique journey of transition into higher education throughout the events.

7.2 Website information

The LSBU website needs to be digitally accessible and compliant to WACG 2.2 requirements from Oct 24. [What you need to know about WCAG 2.2](#)

7.3 Digital Accessibility

Digital accessibility ensures our content has the widest reach and improves the learning experience for all our students.

It means that our content can be accessed by individuals using a screen reader or other assistive software. This can include individuals with a visual impairment, learning difference, mobility difficulties, deafness, or who may be hard of hearing.

- Use clear, plain English. Use Hemingway app for checking readability.
- Use Sans Serif Fonts such as Arial, Calibri, & Helvetica. Minimum 12 point on A4, and 24 point for PowerPoint.
- Provide alternative text for images, infographics, tables and charts.
- Structure by correctly adding Headings (headings and styles).
- Use meaningful hyperlink text (not 'Click here').
- Add captions to videos.
- Colour and contrast. At least 4.5 to 1 for normal text. WebAIM or Colour Contrast Analyser.
- Use the built in Office accessibility check.

[What is digital accessibility?](#)

Assistive Technology is provided throughout the University and regularly reviewed in regard to its uptake, relevance and renewal of licenses. LSBU currently provides: -

- Claro Read (Text to Speech)
- Mind View (Mapping tool)
- Text Help Read and Write (Literacy support tool)
- Dragon Dictate (Speech to text)
- Super Nova (Magnifier for VI)
- Jaws (Screen reader for VI)

7.4 Admissions and interviewing

Admissions team are to be fully aware of the support available and to provide flexibility within their program including the range of adjustments that could be applied to their delivery and assessment points throughout the year.

Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

Opportunities are to be provided for students to discuss their disability and to be able to make referrals to DDS if the student is unaware of the service.

8 Transition into the higher education community

LSBU acknowledges that the process of entering higher education can be daunting for students who are moving from college to Higher Education for the first time, and also for students who have been outside of Higher Education for many years.

For disabled students this can be exacerbated by the amount of additional information and support they may need to organise before enrolment and throughout their studies. LSBU are to ensure policies pertinent to disabled students are easy identifiable on the external website.

Ensure this is mirrored on the Connect for staff. Make all relevant policies accessible for students. This may include and not limited to:-

- A policy that encompasses student support and procedures.
- **Marking Policy** is available to students on the website and academic staff are aware of the '[Strategies for Marking Students](#)' guide on Connect.
- Disability Service to have input into the Equality Impact Assessment process for new or updated policies.

- The pre-entry advice and guidance to made available to all students, whether they have shared information about a support requirement or not.
- LSBU's transition events such as Student Services - '**Get to know us**', the libraries '**Getting Ahead**' and DDS's '**Be Prepared**' targeted events to raise awareness of support with all students.
- Students transitioning between modes of study, course, or year should be provided with information advice and guidance about disability support.
- A student's support arrangements and up to date status, course and campus location to follow them within the LSBU Group.
- Ensure that Information Advice and Guidance (IAG's) on support available is provided to Clearing students to ensure support arrangements are completed in a timely manner.
- Ensure that relevant academic colleagues, module leaders and services such as the library Acquisition Team, Timetabling, Estates and Exams Team know their students in advance of enrolment and assessment.

[How are Support Arrangements Shared?](#)

Support arrangements to be viewable by module.

All newly enrolled students at LSBU can undertake a screening for a neurodiversity. The results are processed and students' adjustments automatically updated to include:-

- Submit coursework up to 5 working days late. No application required.
- Marking policy: DDS marking policy applied to assignments and exams
- Extra time 25% (including in-class tests and timed assessments)
- Access to Assistive Technology Rooms in the Library

[How can I complete a screening for a specific learning difference?](#)

8.1 Postgraduate Research Students

While research courses differ from the structure of taught courses, much of the guidance is still be applicable.

- Research students do not have traditional assignments such as coursework, but they do need to submit to various deadlines throughout their studies. Disabled students can need extra time for a variety of reasons, so they may still need longer than others.
- It would be reasonable to extend the sentiment of the Marking Policy to generally refer to written work, which would include a Thesis.

- PhD students typically defend their Thesis after submission. Extra time is often needed for presentations and Vivas so students can prepare their thoughts and formulate their responses, so this would be transferrable.
- Research courses can still include some teaching, usually around how to undertake Postgraduate Research. If a student attends these sessions, guidance around Inclusive Practice in teaching would still apply.

Research students can also benefit from access to assistive technology, one to one study skills, specialist mentoring, and other non-medical help.

8.2 Campus facilities

Disabled students should be able to access all facilities, including education buildings for their lectures and seminars, and have suitable accommodation. In addition, that graduation ceremonies are accessible.

Students who require an accessible timetable are highlighted within their support arrangements and adjustments shared with the timetabling team to ensure access. **Access Able** carry out an access audit of all LSBU's facilities and update on an annual basis. LSBU notify of any changes or additions to our estates. Links to [Access Able](#) to be made explicit on LSBU website and My LSBU.

8.3 Student Union

Students' union to ensure that facilities are accessible and that all clubs and societies address the needs and support requirements of [disabled students](#).

9 On-course experience

Disability & Dyslexia Support work with academic teams and CRIT (Critical Research in Teaching & Learning) to advise and provide specialist advice and guidance in regard inclusive practice for disabled students.

LSBU acknowledges that barriers exist to current course delivery and assessment points throughout the year and have identified actions and priorities within the DSC against the following recommendations:-

9.1 Inclusive practice is embedded in curriculum design.

“Teaching which engages students learning that is meaningful, relevant and accessible to all, embracing a view of the individual and of individual difference as a source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others” (Hockings, 2010).

- Where students are required to undertake an assessment, there is choice in the form of assessment methods used wherever possible and where appropriate, with regards to the competencies and skills being assessed.
- All staff teaching and staff supporting a disabled student understand the student's support requirements, are provided with training and can access guidance.
- Placement providers are aware of and implement a disabled student's access and support requirements prior to the commencement of a placement.
- Extenuating circumstances, complaints and appeal policies do not require disabled students to re-share information that evidences their disability and indicates how issues experienced by disabled students will be addressed.
- However, where there is an additional challenge impacting the student that the University is not already aware of in the DDS registration then this may be requested.
- Disabled students are encouraged to develop advocacy skills, facilitated through training and/or mentoring, to enable them to be more fully integrated into student life and to be able to clearly articulate their needs.

LSBU Connect - [What is Inclusive Practice?](#)

Advance HE - [Creating an Inclusive Environment](#)

10 Moving forward

Careers and employment guidance acknowledges the barriers that may be experienced by disabled students, and emphasis and consideration are given to the positive attributes and skills that disabled students will have developed during their time at university.

The relationships built with employers include recognition of opportunities for disabled students and graduates.

Disability specific support in preparation for employment and the recruitment process is provided.

Employability activities are referenced whilst on course and embedded throughout the student life cycle.

11 Student Feedback

Student Panels

Regular hybrid meetings are facilitated throughout the year to capture the views and experiences of disabled students at LSBU. A group of approx 15 students are selected each year to represent the broad range of courses and their disability awareness. These panel meetings inform LSBU's priorities and achievements towards the published Disabled Student Commitment.

Student Forums

Informal forums are facilitated once a term to seek students experience in regard to our services, estates and operations such as examinations and access to the campus and buildings.

Wellbeing Post Appointment Survey

The following questions and a rating scale is sent automatically post appointment: -

- It was easy for me to access support
- My advisor understood me
- My appointment made me more likely to succeed at LSBU
- I would recommend this service to another student
- If you want to tell us anything more about your appointment, please let us know.

Annual DDS survey

An annual survey of 11 questions are sent out once a year in the summer months and feedback used to inform policy and practice and comparison to previous years.

- How did you find out about the service?
- Why did you contact the Disability and Dyslexia team?
- What was your experience of booking/arranging an appointment with the DDS team?
- What was your expectation of support?
- Do you feel your advisor understood your needs during your appointment?
- Were you happy with the support you received from the Disability advisor?
- How important was the appointment with the DDS advisor in your continued engagement in your course?
- Were teaching materials provided to you in advance of the lecture?
- Were lectures recorded and made available to you?

- Is there anything else you would like to tell us to improve the Disability and Dyslexia Service?
- Do you feel your support arrangements were applied within your academic setting?

DSUK – annual survey

The Disabled Student UK annual survey has been created by disabled students for disabled students. By taking part LSBU students join hundreds of students around the UK in improving Higher Education accessibility.

Statistics and anonymous quotes from the survey are available on [DSUK's website](#) to highlight best practice and compare Higher Education Providers. LSBU has been cited as a positive example in the sector:-

“London South Bank University (LSBU) has long been a leader in the field, championing disabled students’ access, and with the Annual Disabled Student Survey we can measure the effect on their disabled students. 64% of disabled students at LSBU feel that they have the support they need, compared to 61% UK wide”.

12. LSBU’s Strategies, Policies and Statements

The following strategies, policies and statements within LSBU provide further in-depth information on related topics that enhance the disabled student experience.

Name	Location link	Service Area/Team
Access and Participation Plan 2020-25	Location	DDS -Disabled students working group
Disabled Student Commitment	Location	DDS -Disabled students Panel
Who we are: Disability and Dyslexia Support	Location	DDS
Late submission & Extenuating Circumstances	Location	PVC Academic Framework
DDS Marking policy	Location	DDS

Inclusive Practice statement	Location	DDS
Screening and assessment for Specific Learning Differences	Location	DDS
What are Reasonable adjustments	Location	DDS
Accessibility statement for LSBU	Location	The Web Team
Digital Accessibility	Location Location	DDS & DEL
Academic Regulations	Location	Academic Board
Assessment & Examination procedure 24-25	Location	Academic Board
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy	Location	EDI
Lecture capture	Location	Academic Board
Dog/animal assistance policy	Location	DDS & Health & Safety Assistance Animal Policy

13. References

[LSBU Disabled Student Commitment](#)
[Disability and Dyslexia Support - Connect \(lsbu.ac.uk\)](#)
[LSBU's Academic Toolkit](#)
[National Association of Disability Practitioners](#)
[Creating and Inclusive Environment](#)
[Advanced HE Disabled Student Commitment](#)
[Disability rights: Education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/guidance/advice-note-higher-education-sector-legal-case-university-bristol-vs-abrahart>

[Reasonable adjustments in college and university education | Disability charity Scope UK](#)

[Social model of disability | Disability charity Scope UK](#)

<https://disabledstudents.co.uk/>

[Universal Design for Learning: A Critical Approach - 1st Edition - Nic](#)

Jonathan Thompson Disability & Dyslexia Services Manager 25.6.25