INFORMATION FOR DISABLED STUDENTS AND THOSE WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFERENCES AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS
Information for disabled students and those with specific learning difficulties and medical conditions

For general enquiries, the Disability Advisers at the University of Aberdeen can be contacted at:

Student Advice and Support Office
University of Aberdeen,
The Hub, Elphinstone Road
Old Aberdeen
AB24 3TU
Tel: 01224 273935
Fax: 01224 273569
Email: student.disability@abdn.ac.uk

We are happy for you to contact us at any time with general queries.
Why not get in touch before applying to University?

You can find further information on our website: www.abdn.ac.uk/disability

Alternative formats
If you would like this information in an alternative format, please contact a Disability Adviser on 01224 273935.
Applying to the University

The University has a well-established support structure for disabled students. Applications from disabled students are considered on the same academic basis as all others. Degrees allied to professional bodies may require additional consideration, but the University is committed to removing any barriers that may exist, wherever possible.

Making contact

You are most welcome to visit the University at any time, before you apply, or at any stage during the application process. Why not take the opportunity to make contact with a Disability Adviser to discuss the types of adjustments that may be implemented? You don’t need to wait until you have the offer of a place.

However, you are also very welcome to get in touch at any time during your time as a student at the University of Aberdeen.

Arranging a visit

You are encouraged to visit the University in person, to meet with relevant members of staff and to assess for yourself the facilities and support structures which are available. To arrange a visit, please contact the Student Recruitment Office (www.abdn.ac.uk/sras/). The purpose of such visits is to communicate a positive, welcoming environment, to identify potential barriers and to have initial discussions about possible adjustments.

Disclosure

To disclose or not

Naturally, this is your choice and one that we shall respect. However, if you choose not to disclose a disability or medical condition, you are unlikely to receive maximum benefit from our support framework. If you are entitled to alternative lecture or examination arrangements, it is particularly important that you let us know as early as possible. Disclosing a disability at the University of Aberdeen simply allows us to provide you with relevant and appropriate support for the successful completion of your studies. If you have particular concerns related to disclosure, you are welcome to discuss these ‘off the record’ with a Disability Adviser.

How to disclose

You can discuss the issues in person with a Disability Adviser, or you’re welcome to send correspondence from a doctor, Educational Psychologist or member of staff from your previous educational establishment as the initial method of disclosure.

What adjustments can be made?
Depending on your requirements, a number of adjustments can be made, which are designed to ensure that all students have the opportunity to reach their full potential. These include:

- Lectures: note takers, copies of lecture notes (often posted on the University’s intranet), tape-recording, moving lectures to more accessible venues.

- Examinations: scribes, readers, separate room, extra time, use of PC with assistive technology, papers in alternative format.

In addition, students who are expected to take part in field trips or lab. work as part of their degree programme will have the opportunity to discuss specific requirements, to enable full participation in these activities, wherever possible.

Adjustments will be implemented further to receipt of medical evidence and discussions with you, and can be updated at any time if your circumstances change.

We are happy to be contacted at any time throughout your course, but the sooner, the better!

Further information can be found at:
www.abdn.ac.uk/disability/students/provisions.shtml

Evidence required

Before adjustments are implemented, we ask for some written confirmation. This may be a letter from your GP or Consultant, or it may be a report from an Educational Psychologist.

A doctor’s letter does not need to be long. It simply needs to confirm the nature of your impairment or medical condition and it is also helpful if recommendations can be made about specific adjustments. If you have had an assessment for a Specific Learning Difficulty conducted by a Chartered Psychologist, then we ask for a copy of the report.

It may also be helpful if you are able to provide a letter from your school or previous institution that details any adjustments you have previously received.

We can act on medical evidence even if it is not fully up to date. However, we may ask for new medical evidence if it is more than two years old.

If possible, you are encouraged to provide the evidence in advance so we can prepare for your arrival.

What happens to the information provided?
When you disclose a disability or medical condition to the University, the information you provide is treated in strictest confidence. We would never inform Schools or Departments about your requirements without your explicit knowledge and consent, so we ask you to sign a Disclosure Form to confirm that you are happy for the list of required adjustments to be passed to the relevant staff in Schools or Departments.

The original copy of any medical evidence/assessment is kept by the Disability Advisers. A provisions form, detailing your requirements, is prepared and the information is stored on a database linked to the Student Record System, to which only authorised personnel in your School or Department have access.

The up to date list of required adjustments will be available for viewing at all times on your student portal.

**Preparing for the start of term**

**Associate student scheme**
New students are able to take part in the Associate Student Scheme prior to commencing study and this can be a good way of getting to know the campus before the hustle and bustle of Freshers’ Week.

**Orientation**
Even if applicants do not become an Associate Student, it can be advantageous to spend some time at the University before the start of term, to begin the process of orientation and familiarisation. If specialist support with this is required, such as orientation for students with a visual impairment, the Disability Advisers are able to link with external agencies.

**Registration and advising**
You will receive plenty of information about e-registration and advising. Adjustments can be made during the registration and advising process in Freshers’ Week, so please do not hesitate to get in touch with a Disability Adviser if you have concerns about queuing and/or crowds.

**GP registration**
It is essential that all University students register with a doctor in Aberdeen. There will be opportunities to do this on campus during Freshers’ Week. Alternatively, you can register with any of the local GP practices.

**Implementing the support**

Each academic School has a School Disability Co-ordinator who has the overall responsibility of ensuring that the requirements of disabled students are met within their area. They have close contact with the University’s Disability Advisers and have direct input into disability-related discussions at the University. They are likely to have some insight into possible adjustments which might be particularly appropriate in a specific subject area.
The School Disability Co-ordinators will contact you about disability-related examination arrangements at each examination diet. They will also be responsible for allocating note takers and proof readers, where required, from a pool of assistants.

**Disabled Students’ Allowance**

The Disabled Students’ Allowance (DSA) is for eligible disabled students who incur additional expenditure arising from attendance on their University course.

It is not means-tested and may include an allowance for basic costs, specialist equipment and non-medical personal assistance.

The following are eligible:
All UK students with disabilities, medical conditions or dyslexia who are:
- full-time undergraduates registered on a degree programme
- part-time undergraduates registered on at least 50% of a degree programme
- postgraduates (subject to certain criteria).

In the first instance, you are advised to contact a Disability Adviser to discuss your circumstances. You will receive specific advice on how to proceed with your application, together with ongoing support throughout the application process. You will also be required to provide supporting evidence confirming your disability or medical condition and this usually needs to be less than 2 years old.

Further information can be found at:
[www.abdn.ac.uk/disability/students/dsa](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/disability/students/dsa)

**Follow-up**

Once the adjustments are in place, they will remain so for the duration of your studies, unless you request otherwise.

The Disability Advisers will try to keep in touch and will occasionally send you an email to ask how things are going. In the meantime, if you experience any difficulties, or you would like your support to be reviewed at any time, please do not hesitate to get in touch with a Disability Adviser. Although we do our best, we can’t know everything that is going on, so please keep us informed.

**Getting involved**

There are many opportunities for you to contribute to making improvements for disabled students at the University. We regularly hold Open Sessions on disability matters, which are chaired by a Vice-Principal and at which the views of disabled staff and students are particularly welcome. We also have an Access Panel which
is consulted on issues to do with improving the accessibility of the campus. In addition, Aberdeen University Students’ Association has an active Equal Opportunities Committee. If you would like to know more about any of these opportunities to get involved, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Providing your feedback

At various times of the year, you will be asked to provide feedback on your experience of the services we provide. This feedback is invaluable to us as it enables us to make continual improvements which you and other students can benefit from. We are also happy to receive feedback at any time – you do not need to wait to be asked.

Most students have an extremely positive experience at University. However, for any student, there can be occasions when things don’t go according to plan.

We will always endeavour to resolve any difficulties promptly and personally, so please let us know without delay if you have concerns. In the unlikely event that we are unable to resolve matters to your satisfaction, the University has a robust complaints procedure: www.abdn.ac.uk/student-support/complaints.php.

Accessibility of the campus

The University of Aberdeen is committed to ensuring that we are as accessible as possible to all users. An internal Access Panel, consisting of disabled staff and students, is consulted on issues to do with improving the accessibility of the campus.

Although the vast majority of University buildings are accessible, there is no denying that the historical site of King’s campus means that access for students with mobility difficulties requires some careful advance planning. Where access is difficult or impossible, alternative timetable arrangements will be made.

The University has worked with DisabledGo to provide detailed accessibility information about each University building: www.disabledgo.com/en/org/University-of-aberdeen.

Induction loops have been installed in the main lecture theatres and at reception desks throughout the University.

Disability Advisers

The Disability Advisers are located within the Student Advice and Support Office on the ground floor of the Hub. Their main role is to advise disabled students, applicants and potential applicants, and also to advise staff on matters relating to disabled students. Their aim is to ensure that all students have an equal opportunity to gain maximum benefit from their University experience.
The Disability Advisers work alongside the International Student Advisers and Student Support Advisers and have good links with a number of other support networks around campus.

**Assistive Technology Advisers**

The role of the Assistive Technology Adviser (ATA) team is to provide you with information, advice, support and training in the use of assistive technologies.

At University, the majority of assistive technology support needed is provided through the use of specialist computer software or hardware devices. However, the ATAs can give you advice about other forms of assistive devices where appropriate e.g. ergonomic aids, listening aids, recording devices etc.

The University has assistive software installed on all classroom computers, and there are several single occupancy Assistive Technology Booths available for use by disabled students.

If you receive specialist equipment or software through the Disabled Students’ Allowance, you are strongly encouraged to contact the Assistive Technology Advisers to arrange training. This will ensure that you gain maximum benefit from the technology.

Further information can be found at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/atech](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/atech)

**Academic Skills Advisers**

The Academic Skills Advisers within the Student Learning Service run workshops and one-to-one advice sessions to assist all students with study skills, if required. Within the Student Learning Service is an Academic Skills Adviser (Dyslexia), who can provide specialist advice on appropriate learning strategies for students with Dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties.

Over time, the aim is the promotion of independent learning and the building of academic confidence.

Further information can be found at: [www.abdn.ac.uk/sls](http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sls)