Accessibility, Equality and Diversity

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Overview and Aims

This session aims to provide:

• Guidance to help you review your own practice and adopt more inclusive learning, teaching and assessment approaches

• Information about your responsibilities in relation to Equality and Diversity

• Information about reasonable adjustments and the arrangements in place at the University of Aberdeen

• Awareness of advice and support services available for disabled students
Why does it matter?

It’s embedded in the University’s Strategic Plan:

Our University’s future is inextricably linked to the existence of a positive culture where staff, students and alumni are fully engaged and committed to success and where Equality and Diversity is celebrated and championed. We will empower our community to lead the change required to enhance Equality and Diversity, and continue to listen to the needs of staff and students as we progress this agenda.

It helps us create a safe and positive learning environment where we can get the best out of everyone

It makes business sense – it creates happier students and staff

Our campus is increasingly diverse – there were registered students from more than countries in AY2015/16

It’s a legal requirement
Equality Act 2010

- Consolidates all previous legislation into one Act
- Requires the University (as a public body) to:
  1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
  2. Advance equality of opportunity
  3. Foster good relations between people from different groups
- Introduces **Protected Characteristics**:
  - Age
  - Disability
  - Gender
  - Gender reassignment
  - Marriage/Civil Partnership
  - Pregnancy and Maternity
  - Race
  - Religion and belief
  - Sexual Orientation
Disability Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 provides protection against discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of disability.

Higher Education Institutions have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for staff, students and service users in relation to:

• Provisions, criteria or practices
• Physical features
• Auxiliary aids

Examples of reasonable adjustments:
• Copies of lecture notes in advance
• Large print handouts
• Permission to make an audio recording of a lecture
• Extra time in exams
• Private exam room
Perception of disabled people as the problem:

- “unable to get up steps”
- “unable to use their hands”
- “unable to see”
- “unable to hear”
- “ill and in need of a cure”

Realisation that societal barriers need tackling through:

- well-designed buildings
- assistive technology
- alternative formats
- sign language interpreters
- inclusive workplaces

Medical or individual model

Social or structural model

“in need of help and carers”
“having a specific learning difficulty”
“having a mental health difficulty”
“confined to a wheelchair”

independent living
inclusive methods of assessment
positive and non-discriminatory attitudes
accessible environments
Organisational arrangements

Student Advice and Support Service

School Disability Coordinator

All School staff

The University also provides additional support centrally:
Academic writing courses
Assistive Technology Advisers
Task: SENAS forms

Working in a group, discuss the SENAS forms provided. Pay particular attention to the information **highlighted** on each SENAS form.
Fieldwork:
• How accessible are the sites? Are there more accessible sites where the same features could be seen?

Timing:
• Will this be a difficult time for students who have caring responsibilities, or students who want to work? Are there any alternative times that could be considered?

Residential:
• Is the centre fully accessible?
• What are the sleeping arrangements?
• Can catering be arranged to take account of different requirements?
• Are arrangements for social events accessible for all?

Providing clear information in advance can help reduce anxiety – travel details, room allocations, toilet facilities, catering arrangements...
Biotechnology (Industrial Placement)

Placements:
• Will all students be equally able to find a placement independently?
• Check the QAA Code of Practice for placement learning – duty of care for students who are on placement
• Check the quality of placement provision
• Consider international placement issues

Assessment:
• What is a “typical” biotechnologist? Could this question be phrased in a better way?
• Could students work in pairs/small groups to complete lab work?
Lectures:
• Is two hours too long? Can students all concentrate for that length of time?
• Could there be a break to allow students to eat or take medication if they need to?

Sensitivity of the topics:
• Thorough briefing of all staff involved in lectures/tutorials to familiarise them with the topics, and the issues that may be raised
• Provide guidance to both staff and students on tutorial etiquette
• Treat the topics with respect at all times
• Offer de-briefing for staff who may have found the sessions difficult to manage
It is good practice to consider inclusivity from the early stages of course design:

• Consider which curriculum elements staff or students may find difficult in advance, and think about alternatives

• Plan to respond to different approaches to learning – factor in different methods of learning for the students

• Use technology to enhance learning and assessment – videos, podcasts, online discussions...

• Avoid stereotypes and celebrate diversity – using a range of examples, images and illustrations

• Ask students what they think courses should contain – students who are engaged in the process better understand the nature and purpose of their education

More information can be found on the University website: http://www.abdn.ac.uk/disability/accessible-teaching.shtml
Training

The University provides online Equality and Diversity e-training via the University website:
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/diversity
Further Information

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Come Here.

Go Anywhere.

That’s the difference