

360 GSP Training

POLICIES, RULES AND PROCEDURES

Disability Policy

Policy Last Reviewed on: 20/11/2017

The College will use its best endeavours to:

- adopt teaching and learning strategies which are as inclusive as is reasonably possible;
- encourage those students with disabilities to disclose the fact and the nature of their disability and identify the resulting implications for learning and teaching;
- make reasonable adjustments appropriate to the needs of individual disabled students;
- be appropriately responsive to feedback from disabled students.

Explanation of Terms

"Disability"

In legal terms, a person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

"Inclusive Adjustments"

Wherever possible, adjustments to provision should anticipate the various needs arising from disabilities in a general sense, rather than attempting to cater for individuals on an ad hoc basis.

"Reasonable Adjustments"

"Reasonable adjustments" are based on practical feasibility and the circumstances of individual students. They would include, but not be limited to, adjustments to course content and delivery, changes to the physical environment and further adjustments which may be needed to ensure that a disabled student is not placed at substantial disadvantage in comparison to students who are not disabled.

Requirements of Recent Legislation

The College Policy summarises the duty and responsibility for the College under the **Disability Discrimination Act Part IV (DDA)**. The Act makes it unlawful for educational institutions to discriminate against disabled students. The legislation includes all "services" provided to students including teaching, assessment, and access to information. The Act defines disability widely, including individuals with physical, mobility, visual or auditory impairments, medical conditions or mental health difficulties, and those diagnosed with dyslexia.

The College has two main duties under the DDA:

- not to treat disabled persons 'less favourably' than non-disabled people for reasons related to their disability without justification
- to make 'reasonable adjustments' so that a disabled person is not placed at a 'substantial disadvantage' by comparison with an individual without a disability.

Less Favourable Treatment

There are certain circumstances in which less favourable treatment may be justified and therefore lawful where it is possible to demonstrate that it is necessary, for example:

- where the maintenance of academic standards may be compromised;
- where health and safety may be compromised;
- where the practicalities make adjustments virtually impossible;
- where the requirement of professional practice in effect essentially rule out particular disabilities.

Context of learning and teaching

In the context of learning and teaching, the Act and policy covers the following areas of provision:

- admissions policies and procedures;
- teaching and learning methods
- provision of course material (including lecture slides, course handouts and worksheets);
- assessment policies and procedures
- buildings and learning resources.

Inclusive Adjustments

The DDA places responsibility on the College to anticipate adjustments that may be required for future students or applicants. Wherever possible such adjustments should

be made in advance rather than being reactive in response to the specific needs of an individual.

Disclosure and Proof of Disability

The College's policy on confidentiality and disclosure in relation to students with disabilities requires personal information to be disclosed on a 'need to know' basis only. In all other respects, such information is confidential. However, an important aspect of legislation is that students or prospective students are not required to disclose disabilities. Colleges, Faculties and Departments should consider how to foster a culture which facilitates disclosure thus enabling students to gain maximum benefit from their study and the various educational opportunities open to them. Particular attention should be paid to students who have declared a disability at the admission stage.

Some disabilities are visible but many are "hidden". Examples of the latter include dyslexia, diabetes, Crohn's disease and ME. Faculties and Departments need to decide whether and when they require proof of such a disability, and for what purposes.

Communication is critical. Without good communication between Faculties and Departments, and the Disability Resource Centre, there is inevitable potential for unintentional discrimination which could compromise a student's education and could leave the College open to a legal challenge.

The General Board expect all Faculties and Departments to now make such an appointment. It is suggested that given the emphasis in the DDA on anticipatory adjustments in teaching, learning and assessment, it would be appropriate for this to be a responsibility associated with the Faculty or Departmental Teaching Committee or equivalent body, and for the responsibilities of the role to be reviewed in the light of the College policy and these associated guidelines.

For any matters relating to the above policy and guidance, enquiries should be made in the first instance to the Administration Department