

## Student Disability, Mental Health, and Inclusion

<b>Policy name</b>	Student Disability, Mental Health, and Inclusion
<b>Owner and Key Contact(s):</b>	Damien Homer (Head of Disability Services, Wellbeing and Student Support).
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### Version control

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### Amendment history

Version No.	Date	Summary of amendments (if no change, write NA)	Author
3	16 August 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Separate student and staff policies.</li> <li>Minor updates to wording.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Michaela Hodges (Social Inclusion Manager, Strategy Group).</li> <li>Damien Homer (Head of Disability Services, WSS).</li> </ul>

### Policy Introduction and Purpose

To set out the University’s commitment to creating an inclusive environment for disabled students and provide a framework to contribute to the ongoing development of an enabling environment which promotes positive mental health and wellbeing for all members and service users of the University, in line with the institutional Wellbeing Strategy.

### Scope and Definitions

The policy covers students.

The formal definition of a disability as defined in the Equality Act 2010 is: “A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities.”

### Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Disability Services to facilitate and support reasonable adjustments for students.

It is the responsibility of staff working with students to provide reasonable adjustments for students to support their learning/study.

### Implementation

Students can find further guidance on the [Disability Services webpages](#).

### **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

This policy supports disability inclusion and accessibility and demonstrates how the University meets its legal duties to provide reasonable adjustments as outlined in the Equality Act. An EIA has been completed ([EIA83](#)).

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This policy reinforces the University's commitment to ensuring equality for our diverse student body and to review our policies and practices in light of developments in the Higher Education sector, the legislative framework, and the University strategy.
- 1.2 This document outlines the University's duties and the options available to students, including those with mental health disabilities, in seeking support or adjustments to their studying environment.
- 1.3 The University is committed to addressing the barriers to inclusion (structural, cultural, organisational, and attitudinal) which adversely impact upon disabled people, affecting the ability to meet their needs, rights, and requirements.
- 1.4 This policy aligns with the objectives of the University's [Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2024](#) championing wellbeing for staff and students.

**2. Aims**

- 2.1 This policy sets out the University's commitment to disabled students, providing a framework to contribute to the ongoing development of an enabling environment for all members and service users of the University. It addresses some of the specific operational aspects for students, and aims to provide guidance for staff and students.
- 2.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Social Inclusion Strategy](#) which outlines the University's main priorities, overarching objectives, and aims on social inclusion (including disability equality and accessibility).

**3. Overarching principles**

- 3.1 The University is committed to creating an inclusive, safe, and supportive environment for all students, promoting positive mental health and wellbeing for all members of the University in accordance with the University's [Wellbeing Strategy](#).
- 3.2 The University encourages a climate of openness, nevertheless we acknowledge students may find it difficult to share a disability. [Wellbeing and Student Support](#)

offer a safe and supportive environment for students to share disability related requirements.

- 3.3 All shared disability information is kept confidentially in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy, in line with GDPR guidance. If adjustments are needed, information may be shared with key contacts in relevant teams, this is on a need-to-know basis and only with the individual's consent.
- 3.4 The University takes appropriate steps to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students that meet their individual needs, are relevant, appropriate, anticipatory, inclusive, and in accordance with the University's policies and procedures and equality legislation.
- 3.5 Reasonable adjustments are evidence based and are determined through an assessment of the individual's disability related requirements, taking into consideration additional factors such as the environment and academic standards to prevent substantial disadvantage.
- 3.6 Training and opportunities for increasing disability awareness is recommended and offered to all staff and are integrated within the University's learning and development processes. Staff who need information or advice on a particular disability in order to support a student, should in the first instance speak with the Disability Services team.

#### **4. Responsibilities**

- 4.1 In line with the General Duty of the Public Sector Equality Duty of the Equality Act 2010 and the institutional [Wellbeing Strategy](#), the University has responsibility for promoting wellbeing and embedding support for all current students, including disabled students, together with actively encouraging disabled prospective students to join the University. These responsibilities are delegated via the Social Inclusion Committee to Heads of Departments and appropriate representatives to ensure support for disabled students. In addition, certain departments are accountable to ensure that specific activities are achieved as part of their objectives.

4.2 Individuals also have a responsibility to share/discuss disabilities so that the University can ensure that the appropriate reasonable adjustments can be put in place to support them in their roles.

## 5. The legal framework

5.1 The Equality Act (2010) came into force on 1 October 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty from 5 April 2011. The Equality Act consolidates and brings together previous anti-discrimination law (such as the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) into one piece of legislation. The Equality Act establishes nine 'protected characteristics', on the grounds of which it is unlawful to discriminate against a person. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and marriage and civil partnership.

5.2 The Equality Act prohibits direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. The Public Sector Equality Duty places an obligation on public sector organisations, including the University, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

5.3 The Equality Act also places on the University a duty to take such steps as are reasonable to provide adjustments or aids if a disabled person is substantially disadvantaged by a provision, criterion, or practice, a physical feature of the premises, or the absence of an auxiliary aid or service. The duty is 'anticipatory' meaning that public bodies, including the University, must be ready to comply with this duty at any time.

5.4 If students feel they have been subject to discriminatory treatment, they are encouraged to refer to make use of the [Report + Support](#) system, which includes a number of support articles and allows individuals to confidentially speak to an advisor about their concerns or report anonymously.

**6. Definition of disability**

6.1 Under the Equality Act, a person has a disability if they have a "physical or mental impairment" which "has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [their] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities".

6.2 The Act includes additional explanation of these terms:

- 'Substantial' means more than minor or trivial.
- 'Long-term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months.
- 'Normal day-to-day activities' include everyday things like eating, washing, walking, and going shopping.

**7. Temporary conditions**

7.1 The University recognises that not all disabilities are identified at the start of an individual's period of study and some students may experience and share disabilities at a later stage. It is also recognised that certain conditions are likely to fluctuate and may deteriorate over time.

7.2 The University will follow the same process of making reasonable adjustments for students who experience a disability at a later stage to that of students who have shared an existing disability at the start of their course of study.

7.3 For temporary conditions such as broken limbs, adjustments are considered locally by the individual's department in liaison with relevant parties such as Wellbeing and Student Support for students.

**8. Monitoring and reporting**

8.1 The University is legally required under the Equality Act to monitor and report annually the proportion of students who have shared disability information. These figures are collected via student admission data and student records.

8.2 Early sharing of a disability at application stage for students is encouraged so that all reasonable adjustments can be put in place as early as possible to meet any individual study needs.

8.3 All reporting will be in aggregate (no individuals will ever be identified). [Staff and student data can be accessed on the Social Inclusion pages of the University website.](#)

## 9. Car parking

9.1 Registered blue badge holders have the same rights on the University campus as they have on the public highway.

9.2 Parking on campus is free for blue badge holders and there are accessible spaces near all buildings on campus. Some disabled bays are behind an entrance barrier. If you require regular access to one of these, you should email [carparking@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:carparking@warwick.ac.uk) to inform the car parking team.

9.1 The University also recognises that there may be disabled students for whom travelling by car is essential but who are not entitled to a blue badge. In such scenarios, or for wider advice on the car parking process, please contact the car parking team on [carparking@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:carparking@warwick.ac.uk). For more information, see the [Car Parking Accessibility webpages](#).

## 10. Equality Impact Assessment

10.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a tool that will assist in the analysis of policies and practices, such as this policy, to ensure that said policy does not disadvantage or inadvertently discriminate against any individual or groups of individuals with a protected characteristic.

10.2 The University recognises its responsibility to ensure that no-one is discriminated against or disadvantaged because of a protected characteristic.

10.3 This policy has been assessed using the EIA process and will be reviewed on a regular basis in conjunction with annual monitoring to ensure that the policy remains fit for purpose.

## 11. Review

11.1 This policy will be reviewed annually in light of possible government/legislative changes. Any amendments to the policy will be discussed at the University's Social

Inclusion Committee and any significant changes communicated to the wider University community.

**12. Contacts and further information**

12.1 Information for disabled students is available through [Wellbeing and Student Support](#).

12.2 Personal tutors, senior tutors and student experience managers across the University can also act as a point of contact, referral, and signposting on disability matters for students.

12.3 Specialist assistive software is either networked or available through [IT Services](#) at the University.

12.4 If you require this publication in hard copy or a different format, please email [socialinclusionpa@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:socialinclusionpa@warwick.ac.uk).

**13. Related policies**

13.1 The University's [Social Inclusion Strategy](#) can be found on the Social Inclusion Group webpages.

13.2 The University's [Wellbeing Strategy](#) can be found on the Wellbeing and Student Support webpages.

13.3 The University's [Dignity at Warwick](#) policy is available on the HR webpages.

13.4 The University's [Fitness to Attend protocol](#) for students is available on the Wellbeing and Student Support webpages.

**14. Complaints and mitigation**

14.1 The University aims to provide all students with a high-quality level of service. We recognise though that there may be occasions where expectations are not met and, on these occasions, we encourage students to provide feedback. Students can also [submit a complaint](#) if the level of service that the University provides falls significantly short of what might reasonably be expected.



**15. Admissions**

- 15.1 The University welcomes applications from disabled students. The University's [undergraduate admission statement](#) and [postgraduate admissions statement](#) are available on the Warwick website.
- 15.2 We encourage applicants to share their disability on their application and provide an outline of their support needs, in order that we can make them aware of the range of support and guidance that is available and to also plan ahead for any reasonable adjustments.
- 15.3 Admissions decisions are based on academic suitability and where applicable, the requirement of professional bodies. Information regarding disability on applications is separated from the admissions decision process.
- 15.4 Wellbeing and Student Support offer advice and guidance to disabled prospective applicants on the range of support available in order to help them make informed decisions. In addition to sharing via UCAS applications, full time undergraduate applicants may also use the [AWARDS \(Access to Warwick Degrees\)](#) form to provide additional information about their circumstances.
- 15.5 Applicants who share a disability receive information from Wellbeing and Student Support about potential support available and they are asked to provide more information about their support needs in advance in accordance with our anticipatory legal duties. Where appropriate, applicants are encouraged to visit the campus when individual support needs can be discussed. Information provided to the University is held in confidence and in accordance with the University's Data Protection and GDPR requirements.
- 15.6 More information about the support services offered to students is available via [Wellbeing and Student Support](#).

**16. Fitness to Practise (medical, teaching, social work, counselling, psychotherapy and digital healthcare science students).**

- 16.1 Disability does not preclude application to study for qualifications in medicine, teaching, social work, counselling, psychotherapy, or digital healthcare science. However, students who take these courses are required to comply with the Fitness

to Practise guidance and policies of the bodies which govern their respective professions (General Medical Council, Department for Education and Employment, Social Work England, the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy, the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy, and the Academy of Healthcare Science).

- 16.1.1 In accordance with the General Medical Council and Medical School's Council's Guidance, conditional offer holders for the Joint Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery course must complete a Health and Conduct survey as a condition of their offer and declare any and all, past or current, health issues that may affect their fitness to study medicine and practise as a doctor following successful completion of the course.
- 16.1.2 The Department for Education places a responsibility upon initial teacher education providers to establish that all trainees have the health and physical capacity to teach and will not put children or young people at risk of harm. Applicants are therefore required to declare any conditions which could potentially have the capacity to impact on their fitness to practise. The activities that a teacher must be able to perform are set out in the [Education \(Health Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2003](#).
- 16.1.3 Social Work England places a responsibility upon education and training providers to make sure that everyone who is registered as a Social Worker is 'physically and mentally fit' to undertake the work they are training to do. Applicants are thus required to declare conditions which could be viewed as having a potential impact on their fitness to practise.
- 16.1.4 The Academy of Healthcare Science's 'Good Scientific Practice' sets out the principles, values and standards of behaviour for the Healthcare Science workforce. As its benchmark the 'Good Scientific Practice' uses the Health and Care Professions Council Standards of Proficiency and Standards of Conduct, Performance, and Ethics expressed within the context of the specialities within Healthcare Science. This includes an individual making changes on how they practise or to stop practising if their physical or mental health may affect their performance or judgement or put others at risk for any other reason.
- 16.2 Advice, guidance, and support to applicants, conditional offer holders, and students is provided by relevant academic departments (Warwick Medical School, Centre for Teacher Education, Centre for Lifelong Learning, and Warwick Manufacturing

Group as appropriate). Further support to students is available via Wellbeing and Student Support.

**17. Disclosure and Information Sharing**

17.1 The University endeavours to offer an environment that encourages positive disclosure but acknowledges that it is the individual's decision not to share. We encourage students to share any disability at the earliest opportunity and ideally on application. Students who choose not to share at application stage or whose disability occurs during their studies are encouraged to share at any time thereafter. Students who identify that they have disability-related support needs are strongly encouraged to discuss these with teams in Wellbeing and Student Support at the earliest opportunity so that they are aware of the support available.

17.2 Sharing information relating to a disability enables the University to inform students about the support options available and to make reasonable adjustments. These are aimed at minimising any disadvantage in accessing their academic course and contributing towards a positive student experience.

**18. Confidentiality**

18.1 All shared disability information is kept confidentially in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy, in line with GDPR guidance. No information given by a student to a member of staff from Wellbeing and Student Support will be shared with any person outside Wellbeing and Student Support unless the student has given their explicit permission, or with the exception of certain circumstances, which include the following:

- Where a student or staff member shares information or behaves in a manner which indicates that there is a possible risk of significant harm to self.
- Where a student or staff member shares information or behaves in a manner which indicates that there is a possible risk of harm to others.
- Where a student or staff member's behaviour or mental health condition is affecting the health, safety or wellbeing of other students, staff, or visitors to the University
- Where a student or staff member shares information pertaining to an offence which has been or is about to be committed which involves a serious breach of the law.

18.2 Where possible, the student or staff member will be informed of the need to breach confidentiality, except in cases where:

- There is a legal obligation to breach confidentiality without discussion with the student or staff member.
- The health and safety of the student or staff member or others may be adversely affected by doing so.

18.3 Wellbeing and Student Support make students aware of confidentiality, its limits, and the sharing of information when they engage with one of the services. For students whose studies include external placements specific consent is sought to enable reasonable adjustments to be made.

18.4 In the case of students who choose not to share their disability or do not give consent for information to be shared for the purposes of support, there will be restrictions or limitations to the level of support and the nature of reasonable adjustments the University or external placement providers can offer. For that reason, students are positively encouraged to share information about a disability and seek support.

18.5 In addition, it is difficult for the University to ensure that students who require assistance with evacuation through a [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan \(PEEP\)](#) if they chose not to share information appropriately regarding any disability related needs.

## 19. Reasonable adjustments

19.1 The Equality Act 2010 imposes an anticipatory duty on Higher Education Institutions to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students in relation to:

- A provision, criterion, or practice (for example teaching and assessment methods).
- Physical features (for example access to lecture theatres, labs, teaching rooms).
- Auxiliary aids (whose definition includes auxiliary services, e.g., for example hearing loops).
- Information in accessible formats or the provision of Non-Medical Assistance (NMA) support.

19.2 The purpose of reasonable adjustments is to facilitate inclusion, remove barriers to learning, and to contribute towards a positive student experience.

- 19.3 Reasonable adjustments on disability grounds are evidence based and could involve:
- Changes to existing practices and procedures.
  - Changes to course delivery and variations of assessment methods in accordance with academic standards.
  - Inclusive teaching and learning practices.
  - Alternative examination arrangements.
  - Changes to the accessibility of the physical environment.
  - Provision of non-medical helper (i.e., specialist mentoring or study skills)
  - Access to assistive technology.
  - Consideration when marking.
  - Providing Information in alternative accessible formats.
  - Accessible on campus accommodation.
  - Accessible parking when standard parking facilities are not suitable.
  - Facilitating communications between relevant parties.
  - Increasing disability awareness across the institution.

## 20. Wellbeing and Student Support

20.1 The University offers a comprehensive range of Wellbeing and Student Support to students to support them in managing the impact of disabilities on their studies, to promote positive mental health and wellbeing, and to enable students to reach their full academic potential. More information about [Wellbeing and Student Support](#) including how to access services can be found on the WSS webpages.

## 21. Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)

21.1 UK students have the option to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) which are administered by UK student funding bodies. DSAs can contribute towards the additional costs associated with studying that are incurred as a direct result of a disability.

21.2 Further information regarding Disabled Students' Allowances can be found at [Student Finance England](#), [Student Finance Wales](#), the [Student Awards Agency Scotland](#), and, for students in receipt of the NHS bursary, at the [NHS](#).

21.3 Further [information on DSAs can also be accessed on the Wellbeing and Student Support](#) webpages or by emailing [disability@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:disability@warwick.ac.uk).

21.4 International and EU students are not eligible to apply for DSAs. Reasonable adjustments for EU and International students who are not eligible for DSAs aim to be met through University funding in consultation with Wellbeing and Student Support and other relevant parties. Reasonable adjustments for all students are informed by relevant supporting evidence. The University is committed to meeting its legal obligation to support disabled students and provide an inclusive teaching and learning environment for all.

## 22. Physical Accessibility

22.1 The University aims to continually improve the accessibility of the campus and its facilities. The campus has good level access with the Gibbet Hill area of the campus on a steeper gradient.

22.2 Access to buildings is via lifts and ramps.

22.3 Accessible on campus accommodation is offered in several Residencies on campus. Accommodation blocks are in close proximity to teaching blocks and other facilities (please see the [Campus Map](#) for further details).

22.4 The Warwick Arts Centre, Warwick Student Union, and Warwick Sport all offer a range of accessible facilities.

22.5 There is a regular accessible bus service to the local area. Accessible taxi services are also available on campus as well as a free on campus shuttle bus service with accessible buses available on request.

22.6 Most centrally timetabled lecture theatres have induction loops and there are portable loops available in the library.

22.7 The Library is accessible and offers a range of services and facilities to disabled staff and students. Additional information is available on the [Accessibility page of the Library webpages](#).

22.8 Further information on [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans \(PEEPs\)](#) is available at.

**23. Teaching and Learning**

23.1 The University of Warwick is committed to the ongoing development of inclusive approaches to teaching and learning through the design of curricula and methods of delivery and assessment. More information on the University's [Education Strategy](#) and [Inclusive Education Model](#) can be found on the Warwick website.

23.2 The University seeks to ensure that all learning opportunities are accessible to disabled students and is committed to removing barriers for all.

23.3 The University will, as far as possible, make reasonable adjustments in order that disabled students can participate in their courses of study and access the facilities and services available to support them in their learning, while maintaining equity for all those being assessed.

23.4 Further reference points:

- [Information for disabled students](#).
- [University Assessment Strategy](#).
- [Alternative Exam Arrangements](#).

**24. Training and Support for Staff**

24.1 The University will endeavour to provide the appropriate training and support to all staff to enable them to undertake their roles and responsibilities confidently and effectively. Disability Awareness and Mental Health Awareness training is available to staff and may be accessed on the [Leadership and Management Development](#) webpages. [Information and resources for staff supporting students](#) are also available through the Wellbeing and Student Support pages.

24.2 The University seeks to ensure that all staff and students who have experienced any distress are supported, either through the line-management structure, [Human Resources](#), or by referral to appropriate professional services, such as the [Employee Assistance Programme](#).