



# Student Disability Policy

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## Policy for Supporting Dyslexic Students and those with Other Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs)

### Student Disability Policy

#### 1 Introduction

Cranfield University aims to promote an inclusive learning, teaching and working environment in which disabled students are not disadvantaged or treated unfavourably. Teaching, work environments and practices are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that disabled students do not experience barriers to full participation in the life of the university and to ensure that the skills and potential of all students are developed fully.

#### 2 Definition of Disability

The Equality Act 2010 prevents unlawful discrimination relating to disability. Under the Act, a person is considered to be disabled if they have or have had a physical and/or mental impairment which has 'a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. If a student is unsure whether a particular difficulty would be considered a disability, he or she is welcome to discuss this in complete confidence with a Learning Support Officer.

Cranfield University recognises its responsibility to make anticipatory and reasonable adjustments to all policies, procedures and provision of services and actively seeks to widen the participation of disabled people in Postgraduate education.

The University has Learning Support Officers, based in the Student Advice Centre on each campus who act as the initial point of contact with the School to provide support for disabled students. The Learning Support Officers work closely with the Senior Diversity & Inclusion Business Partner and the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing, who formulate policy and procedures in all areas of diversity for staff and students. The University maintains close links with Disability networks in order to keep abreast of national legislation and local and regional policy.

#### 3 Admissions and entry

The University welcomes enquiries and applications from everyone with an interest in the University's courses. All disabled students considering whether to apply to Cranfield University are encouraged to contact a Learning Support Officer based in the Student Advice Centre, to find out about the support available to them.

All applicants are considered entirely on their academic merits, in accordance with the University's diversity policies. Disability information on the application form is removed in advance of submission to admission staff. The criteria and procedures for selecting students are relevant only to the general academic requirements of the University's Regulations and the specific additional requirements of each course of study or programme of research. Guidance and training in diversity and disability awareness is available to all staff.

Once a formal offer is made to a student who has declared a disability, the student is invited to contact the relevant Learning Support Officer to discuss specific support needs and adjustments (if required).

For students who omit to declare a disability on their application form, become disabled, or are diagnosed with a Specific Learning Difficulty during the course of their studies, processes are in place to provide support and adjustments throughout the academic year through the Learning Support Officers.

## **4 Learning, Teaching and Assessment**

University staff take into consideration students' specific needs when organising registration and induction procedures. Advice on financial support available (such as the Disabled Students Allowance) is available to students via the Intranet, student communications and induction presentations.

The University will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that disability does not constitute a barrier to learning and maximise the opportunities for disabled students to achieve the same learning outcomes as non-disabled students. To achieve this, reasonable steps will be taken to provide specialist equipment, facilities and other assistance required. The University considers each case on an individual basis, in the light of the specialised nature of the technical aspects of much of its work.

After registration, presentations by the Learning Support Officers, material in course handbooks and the [Student Advice Centre intranet pages](#) provide information on the sources of support and guidance available to disabled students at Cranfield University. The Learning Support Officers will also write to students with a declared disability to inform them of the support available within the School.

Most students are allocated to a personal tutor or supervisor whose interest in them is pastoral as well as academic. Each campus has access to student counsellors and the Students' Association. The delivery of courses will be as inclusive as reasonably possible with judicious use of handouts, appropriate specialist computer software and varying modes of delivery. Every care will be taken when placing students in appropriate work placements and field trips. It is the responsibility of the individual School or Department to ensure that work/project placement providers receive copies of the relevant University disability policy and that they provide adjustments for the student if appropriate (with the student's consent).

The only basic requirement for the award of a degree or other academic distinction of the university is that students must satisfy the examiners that they have achieved the intended learning outcomes for the degree or distinction concerned. The University has the provision to grant reasonable adjustments to assessments and examination arrangements for students who have a disability when medical evidence/diagnostic assessment reports have been presented.

## **5 Disclosure and Confidentiality**

Cranfield University encourages applicants and students to inform the University at the earliest opportunity of any disabilities or support needs they may have and at any time during the course of their studies. Students are reminded that whilst the University aims to accommodate the needs of disabled students, it may not be able to do so if it has not been informed of access requirements in

advance. Students who commence study without notifying the University do so at the risk that adjustments subsequently requested might not be able to be provided.

With the express consent of the student, the University will inform those who need to know that a student has a disability, in order to ensure that the needs of the student can be accommodated. Wherever possible, only the adjustments required and not the disability will be communicated to others. If no adjustment is required, students are not required to tell us about their disability. If a disability is disclosed but no adjustment is required, this information will not be shared.

The University recognises that there may be cases where students do not wish to declare their disability. However, we can only provide reasonable adjustments if we know they are required. In particular, students who disclose a disability after an assessment will not normally be able to obtain adjustments retrospectively. The Learning Support Officers will be able to provide advice and expertise and will not disclose information to anyone with regards to students who have requested confidentiality without express consent.

## **6 Access and Environment**

The University has undertaken an access and facilities audit of its premises using an access specialist to ensure that disability issues were included in on-going plans for upgrading and refurbishment. While every reasonable attempt will be made by the University to address the particular requirements of disabled students, the university buildings are of varying age. Newer buildings have been designed and built to meet the latest standards of provision, but some older buildings are not at present suitable for use by some disabled students.

The University will, however, attempt to address on an individual basis any specific problems as they arise and access issues will be incorporated into new projects (whether new build or refurbishments).

## **7 Policy review and monitoring**

The University has a Student Experience Committee comprising representatives from across the University. This Committee meets 4 times a year to review and monitor progress against the University's diversity objectives and to approve diversity related procedures and policy.

Students are invited to comment formally on the University's disability policies and processes – through a range of feedback opportunities, including questionnaires and the Learning Support Officers. The Learning Support Officers regularly meet and review student cases with the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing to ensure the appropriate support is in place.

# **Policy for Supporting Dyslexic Students and those with Other Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs)**

## **1 Introduction**

This Policy is supported by the University's overall Disability Policy (section 13.1). Dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties (such as dyspraxia) are covered by the Equality Act 2010 as they are ongoing conditions. Dyslexia is a combination of abilities and difficulties that affect the learning process in one or more of reading, spelling and writing. Accompanying weaknesses may be identified in areas of: speed of processing, short term memory, organisation, sequencing, spoken language and motor skills.

## 2 Assessment of needs

Students who have already been assessed as having dyslexia or other specific learning difficulties should bring a copy of their latest assessment with them to the university at Registration.

At student induction information will be provided on the sources of support and guidance available to SpLD students at Cranfield University. This information (which includes a link to the QuickScan screening tool on the intranet) will prompt students to consider whether or not they have difficulty in studying, taking notes, writing essays, spelling correctly, organising their work and remembering what they have learnt. Details will be given on whom to contact if students suspect they are dyslexic. The initial contact will be the Learning Support Officer based in the Student Advice Centre [studentadvice@cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@cranfield.ac.uk). Information will also be available via the Intranet and the Cranfield website.

A diagnostic assessment will be organised by the Learning Support Officer – wherever possible within the first term of the academic session. As it is important that no disabled student should be further disadvantaged on grounds of inability to pay for effective support, the University will fund the cost of the assessment in most cases.

The diagnostic assessment report will belong to the student who will then discuss its recommendations with the appropriate Learning Support Officer who will agree how to proceed and what additional assistance is required. The Learning Support Officer will draft a Learning Support Agreement based on the recommendations from the diagnostic assessment report. Confidentiality will be maintained as far as is reasonable and consistent with ensuring the appropriate provision of effective support.

Advice will be offered to those wishing to apply for a Disabled Students Allowance or DoE Masterships Learning Support funds to resource this support.

## 3 University assessments and progression

The Learning Support Officer will advise the appropriate members of staff (Course Director, Student Academic Support Lead, Examinations Office etc.) via the Learning Support Agreement of any practical measures required, in the light of recommendations in the diagnostic assessment report.

These might include:

- additional time for formal examinations (25% extra time)
- use of specialist software throughout the year
- use of coloured paper (for those with scotopic sensitivity syndrome)
- oral examinations to supplement written examinations and to enable the student to clarify written work
- a reader during an exam who will read aloud the examination paper and questions
- a scribe to write down what the student dictates in examination scripts (in exceptional circumstances)

Academic approval for concessions such as use of extra time or oral examination to supplement written examination shall be sought by the Learning Support Officer acting on recommendations from the student's diagnostic assessment report. Details will be notified to the examination invigilators at the time of the examinations.

## 4 Use of computers in examinations

Cranfield University will allow the use of computers in examinations when this is specifically recommended in a student's diagnostic assessment report. Where the use of a computer is permitted in a formal examination, the University will usually provide a laptop without internet access, which has had its hard drive cleared. In exceptional cases where a student is permitted to

use his or her own laptop, Education Services staff will liaise with IT to ensure that the hard disk has been cleared before the candidate sits the examination.

## **5 Additional Time for examinations and assessments**

Where additional time is required for examinations (following the recommendations made in the diagnostic assessment report), the Learning Support Officer will note this in the Learning Support Agreement and ensure that the appropriate staff e.g. the Examinations Office are aware of the specific support requirements.

Deadlines for the submission of assignments should be adhered to since part of the learning process is to meet deadlines. If there is a change in your condition that impacts your ability to meet the assessment deadline, then you should request an extension through the 'Exceptional circumstances' process.

Should a Course Director refuse a request for additional time, the student has the right of appeal (see grounds for appeal in Student Handbook on Assessment Rules), to Education Committee. The student should contact the Learning Support Officer in the first instance to discuss the particular circumstances of the appeal.

While a student may be given additional time in examinations or additional time in which to submit a project or other coursework assignments, no additional concession will be given in the marking.

## **6 Specialist equipment and funding**

The University cannot always provide specialist equipment but will make every effort through the Student Advice Centre to assist students in making an appropriate application for support from the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), DoE Masterships Learning Support funds or sponsor. The Learning Support Officer is the initial point of contact for students applying for a DSA.

The Learning Support Officers will maintain a register of the specialist equipment purchased by the university for individual students together with listings of equipment and support services available externally.

## **7 Training and advice to academic staff**

Academic staff should ensure that they have a general understanding of the learning implications for students with Specific Learning Difficulties. As part of their induction, academic and support staff will undertake development on disability and equality issues and the range and types of support available to students with Specific Learning Difficulties both within the university and externally. More specific advice can be sought from the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing.

Teaching and learning strategies should make the delivery of the course as inclusive as reasonably possible (e.g. videos, visual displays, lecture notes in advance etc).

## **8 Policy review and monitoring**

The University will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing and the Student Experience Committee comprising representatives from across the University.

Feedback is captured through a number of routes including student surveys and focus groups and will be reviewed by the Student Experience Committee. The results will be collated and analysed by the Head of Student Support and Wellbeing to help inform policies and action plans.

## 9 Publications

The University will publish details of its Disability Statement (Student Disability Policy) in positive terms in pre-registration material and online information. The emphasis will be solution-focused and will stress the aim of maximising potential rather than of addressing inherent disability. The policy will advise that, although the university has a formal policy, each student with a registered learning difficulty will be considered on an individual basis within those guidelines. All advice and appropriate follow-up action will be discussed confidentially as far as is possible. Responsibility will lie with the student to decide whether or not he or she wishes to take advantage of the services available once these have been made known.

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