



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 the Assistant Registrar (Student Support) or the University Diversity Manager.

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 within the School to provide support for disabled students. The Learning Support Officers work closely with the University Diversity Manager and Assistant Registrar (Student Support), 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. The University is also a member of the National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP) which offers advice on best practice in disability provision in Higher Education.

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 the relevant Learning Support Officer 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 or become disabled during the course of their studies, processes are in place to provide support and adjustments throughout the academic year either 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 and material in course handbooks 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.

Many 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 has been presented.

5. Disclosure and Confidentiality

Cranfield University encourages applicants and students to inform the University at the earliest opportunity of any disabilities 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 therefore, 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, Assistant Registrar (Student Support) and University Diversity Manager 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 – both through the use of feedback questionnaires and Learning Support Officers. The Learning Support Officers regularly meet and review student cases with the Assistant Registrar (Student Support) to ensure the appropriate support is in place. The Assistant Registrar (Student Support) continually seeks feedback from students throughout the year, to understand processes which are working well and those which could be improved.