



University of
St Andrews

Academic adjustments for disabled students

Guidance for students

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Purpose	This guidance provides students with practical information on procedures for declaring a disability and the kind of reasonable adjustments which are available on a case-by-case basis.

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UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

POLICY ON ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

Introduction

This guide should be read in conjunction with the University Policy on Academic Adjustments for Disabled Students. In preparing this guide we gratefully acknowledge feedback from current and former students.

The Equality Act 2010 protects students against discrimination or disadvantage arising from a disability by requiring the University to make reasonable adjustments to help students overcome substantial adverse consequences due to a disability or chronic illness. These academic adjustments apply to both teaching and assessment. You can also make use of [AccessAble](#), your accessibility guide to the University. The University does recognise that, due to the ancient and medieval layout of the town and University, limitations can be encountered. However, working with AccessAble, the University endeavours to ensure that all its users are aware of the facilities on offer at the University.

The University provides support for students who declare a disability at any stage of their degree programme. If you are a new student then we can start the process of putting arrangements in place before you start your studies and we would recommend that you contact the Disability Team as soon as you have made an application to study here. You are not legally obliged to inform the University of your disability but declining to do so will make it harder to access the support and reasonable adjustments to which you are entitled.

Disability Team

The Disability Team in Student Services has specialist advisers who provide information, advice and guidance to students who declare that they are disabled including those who have physical disabilities, sensory impairments, unseen medical conditions, long standing health or medical conditions, mental health difficulties, Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD).

The Disability Team offers a wide range of support and can assist in the following areas:

- * Assessing appropriate support for you to access your course of study
- * Informing Academic Schools and the Exam Office of teaching and exam arrangements
- * Arranging SpLD assessments and referrals to Educational Psychologists
- * Advice on Disabled Students' Allowance (UK students only)

All information is treated as confidential and is not disclosed without your consent. Please read the [Student Services Confidentiality Statement](#).

Declaring a Disability

Declaring a disability is a four-step process:

1. Update your personal details on the student record system, My Saint, where it asks if you have a disability. This can be accessed in the first 3 weeks of Semester.
2. Make an appointment with one of our disability advisers by e-mailing disability@st-andrews.ac.uk.
3. Provide appropriate evidence of your disability. This can be a letter from a doctor, or other suitably qualified professional practitioner, or a report from an Educational Psychologist if you have a learning difficulty such as dyslexia, ADHD or dyspraxia. The Disability Adviser whom you meet with will give you guidance on the need for information and the required format.
4. Review how the support is working for you.

University Applicants

If you have applied or are considering applying to the University of St Andrews and want information on the kind of adjustments or arrangements that are in place or can be put in place then please contact the Disability Team at your earliest convenience. This will ensure that we can offer the appropriate level of support. The application processes for both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes allow you to declare the nature of your disability and provide additional information.

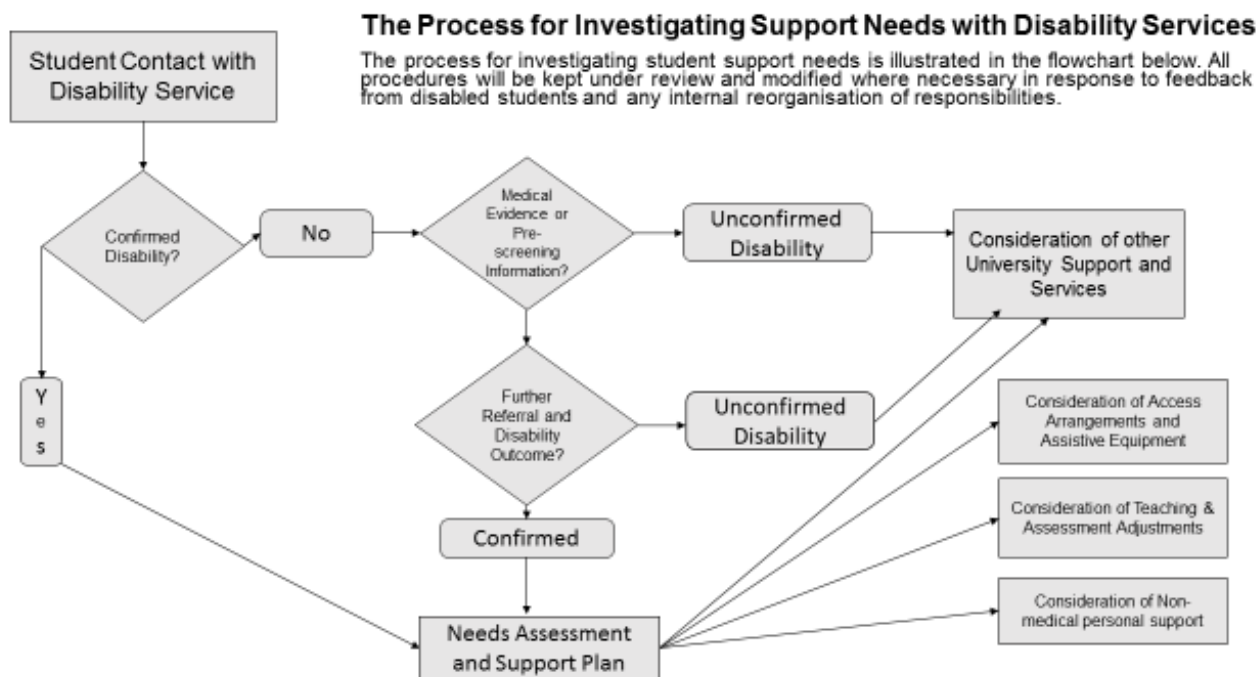
Once you have been offered a place, you will be asked to send a copy of recent medical information or diagnostic report (preferably from a recent consultation or assessment) as this will help us consider appropriate teaching and examination arrangements. In some cases, diagnostic information can be used to support an application for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) (UK students only). You will receive advice on your eligibility to apply for DSA as well as help in making an application. If you do not have information about your longstanding condition but have received additional support elsewhere, such as school or college, you are advised to make an appointment with an Adviser in the Disability Team to discuss options.

Once you have advised us of your qualifying disability and have provided the details requested, teaching and exam arrangements can be considered. You will have an opportunity for these to be reviewed every academic session. For further advice email disability@st-andrews.ac.uk

Please note: if the University has not been made fully aware of the requirements of a disabled student as soon as possible during initial communications with the University, we cannot guarantee that suitable resources will be available on the student's arrival in St Andrews although, of course, every reasonable effort shall be made.

Please make an early
appointment with a
Disability Adviser

The Flow Chart Below shows the Support Process for Disabled Students



Dyslexia and Special Learning Difficulties (SpLD) Screening

The University offers a SpLD (Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyspraxia, ADHD) screening service for any student who thinks that they may have a learning difficulty. If you wish to discuss certain difficulties that are having an impact on your learning then please make an appointment with a Disability/SpLD Adviser. Your concerns will be discussed at this appointment and you may decide to go through screening for dyslexia and/or other specific learning difficulties.

Screening assessments usually take up to an hour, during which time you will be asked to complete a number of tasks to obtain a profile of your strengths and areas of difficulty. Should the screening assessment positively indicate dyslexia with or without co-occurring dysgraphia, educational dyspraxia, dyscalculia, you will be advised to see a chartered educational psychologist for a comprehensive diagnostic assessment. The University can arrange this on your behalf and will guide you through the Disabled Students' Allowance, if you are eligible to apply (please see later for more details on the DSA).

If we cannot refer you on for a full diagnostic assessment, either because the screening outcome was inconclusive or because you have already provided the University with sufficient information to support reasonable adjustments, we will advise you on how you can access a suitably qualified practitioner and can give you information on University discretionary funds if you are unable to afford a full diagnostic assessment. Where the screening outcome is inconclusive, we would also refer you on to other support services or your School.

Please Note: Assessment of AD(H)D or Autistic Spectrum Conditions are usually carried out by a multidisciplinary team. Where screening points to one or other of these conditions, we can refer you to your doctor to go through their referral pathway.

Screening assessments do not provide a definitive diagnosis. This can only be provided by an educational psychologist

Reasonable Adjustments and Support Plans

Certain adjustments will be anticipatory or inclusive, that is they will be built into programmes of study, and others will be based on your individual requirements, if you have a qualifying disability.

How will Schools know if I have declared a disability and require reasonable adjustments?

Recommended reasonable adjustments will be documented in a support plan which is shared with relevant module staff, School Disability Coordinators, and the Examination Office. Students can access their support plans on MMS or on My Saint (My Details).

Here are some examples of adjustments that can be made. This list is not exhaustive and not relevant to all students. Reasonable adjustments will be identified on a case-by-case basis according to the evidence and individual needs assessment:

- Examination arrangements – e.g. access to a PC, smaller venue, extra time (the standard amount of extra time to complete timed assessments given in the UK is 25%)
- Lecture slides issued in advance
- Support to access assistive technology
- Support with alternative formatting of information
- Equipment Loan e.g. digital recorder, smart pen
- Non-medical personal support (NMPH) e.g. reader or scribe in examinations
- Flexible deadlines

Individual reasonable adjustments can also be made for PhD students with respect to their viva voce examinations.

The above arrangements are some examples of the kind of support that we can offer you. They are not automatic and you are advised to speak with a Disability Adviser who will liaise with your Academic School and Exam Office about **your specific situation**

Deadline for Declaring a Disability

To allow time for reasonable adjustments to end of semester examinations to be implemented, undergraduate and taught postgraduate students without a support plan already in place must declare their disability prior to the end of Week 8 in the relevant semester. Beyond this deadline, there is no guarantee that time will be available to ensure the reasonable adjustment can be provided. In the case of postgraduate research students seeking reasonable adjustments to a viva,

they are asked to declare their disability by the time they complete the process of declaring their intention to submit the thesis.

School Disability Coordinators

On meeting a Disability Adviser in Student Services, a support plan detailing your recommended teaching and examination arrangements is made available to relevant School Disability Coordinators and Module Coordinators. School Disability Coordinators ensure that appropriate members of staff in their School check your support plan and make necessary reasonable adjustments, where they can. They also liaise regularly with the Disability Team for ongoing advice and support on matters such as equality legislation and the University's obligations. The following [link will take you to the list of Disability Coordinators for each School.](#)

Differential Marking

The University wishes to assess all students as fairly as possible and therefore, does not employ a 'two tier' or differential marking system for students with dyslexia. Written work should be marked as anonymously as possible and against the same academic standards for all students. There are several reasons for not using differential marking systems: a) differential marking can become inconsistent and arbitrary and; b) reasonable adjustments can be put in place for those who require writing support including access to study skills and assistive technology such as advance spell and grammar check tools.

It is acknowledged that students will make errors in timed assessments such as examinations and tests where there is limited opportunity to proofread content. To this end, minor errors in spelling and grammar where meaning is not altered and content can be understood should not be penalised in test or examination conditions. The exception to this is where spelling and grammar is a core competency that has to be demonstrated e.g. spelling of distinct technical/subject specific terms, language courses or in relation to professional and/or work based assessments.

It is legitimate to provide students with constructive feedback on spelling and grammar in order to help improve writing quality.

Extensions and Change of Circumstances

Throughout your course you will have many assignments to hand in and assessments to complete. Students are not given extensions automatically; however, should the situation arise where you need an extension, please do not wait until the last minute to speak to someone. You are strongly advised to make contact with the module coordinator and/or Disability Adviser as soon as you realise that you are having difficulty so that additional support can be discussed and arranged.

Class Tests

You may also have to complete class tests. These are not formal exams but they are assignments which have to be written under examination conditions. Please keep in touch with the Disability Team regarding your additional support requirements for class tests well in advance of the test date so that they can liaise with the School and make necessary arrangements. It may not be reasonable to make an adjustment if information is provided too close to the class test date.

Alternative Modes of Assessment

In exceptional cases, where reasonable adjustments to a given type of assessment are unable to alleviate a substantial disadvantage arising from a disability, a student may submit a request for an alternative mode of assessment. The procedure outlined below is followed:

1. The student should submit a request to the Disability Team as early as possible. It may not be feasible to accommodate a change in the mode of assessment in the semester within which the request is made.
2. The student must ensure that all supporting evidence is submitted to the Disability Team, if not already available.
3. The request will be considered by the Disability Team in consultation with School staff including the Director of Teaching, Module Coordinator(s) and the School Disability Coordinator. If necessary, the Head of School and Pro Dean (Advising) may also be consulted.
4. For an alternative method of assessment to be adopted, it must: (i) be able to alleviate the disability related disadvantage for a student; (ii) permit the student to demonstrate the competency evaluated by the standard assessment and; (iii) be more effective than any other mode of assessment at alleviating the disadvantage and demonstrating the competency.
5. A request for an alternative mode of assessment will be declined if any of the following conditions apply: (i) reasonable adjustments to the standard mode of assessment are sufficient to alleviate the disadvantage for a student in demonstrating their learning; (ii) the alternative mode of assessment is ineffective in overcoming the disadvantage; (iii) alternative assessment modes do not demonstrate the required competencies or; (iv) it is not reasonable to implement an alternative assessment mode within the time available.
6. Following the consultation, the School and the student will be informed of the recommendation by the Disability Team.
7. If an alternative mode of assessment is agreed, the Disability Team will amend the student's support plan and notify the Examination Office.

Alternative Formats and Inclusive Technology

The University has specialist advisers who offer training in how to use inclusive technology and equipment and can show you how to convert documents into your preferred format (e.g. electronic or audio file). If you would like more information on **training** or **alternative formats** then please visit our [webpage](#). We also have inclusive software that you can access including: **TextHelp Read & Write** and **Mindjet** idea mapping. TextHelp Read & Write provides many tools to help you access and compose written material. Mindjet is a flexible idea mapping program that enables users to draw dynamic diagrams with added notes that can be used to manage and organise information, plan assignments and aid revision. Training on how to use inclusive software can be arranged via the Disability Team, and each program provides comprehensive user guides to help get you started. TextHelp Read& Write is available on the University network PCs but you can download Mindjet for your own personal use.

TEXTHELP Read & Write



Log on to a PC, then go to Start >All Programs > Read & Write Gold



Can be downloaded from [here](#). Go to Purchasing and Software> log in using your University log in>Software Downloads

Study Support Toolkit

We also have a toolkit that provides information and links to study aids and strategies. You can access this [here](#).

Disabled Students' Allowance

The government provide an allowance called Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), which you can claim to pay for additional support whilst studying at university. This allowance is not means tested and is available to full and part time students who are ordinarily resident in the UK. Depending on your support needs, four allowances can be applied for:

- Specialist Equipment
- Non-Medical Helpers'
- General Expenditure
- Travel Cost

DSA is not meant for costs that you would ordinarily have because of your disability nor is it to be used for costs that all students incur. For more details, contact a Disability Adviser, who can provide advice on your eligibility and help you make an application. If you are experiencing financial hardship, please see [money advice](#).

Appeals and Complaints

If a student is not satisfied with the adjustment recommended by the Disability Team and considers that the level of service or treatment they have received from the University has fallen short of what might reasonably have been expected then a student may consider making a complaint under the [Complaints Handling Procedure](#).

If a student is not satisfied with the implementation of the adjustment then there may be grounds for requesting a review under the [University Policy on Student Academic Appeals](#). In order to have grounds to lodge an appeal under the Appeals Policy the student would have to demonstrate that the alleged unsatisfactory or improper implementation of the adjustment constitutes improper

conduct of an examination or assessment, or irregular application of academic regulations, that had materially impacted on the result or outcome. The Student Education Advocate at the Students' Association can provide impartial and independent advice on appeals and complaints procedures and how to formulate a submission. The Student Education Advocate is Iain Cupples and he can be contacted by e-mail at helpub@st-andrews.ac.uk

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