

Queen's University Belfast

Student Disability Policy

Policy Statement

Queen's University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and seeks to ensure that students with a disability or long term condition have equitable access as far as reasonably possible to all aspects of university life.

In outlining this commitment, the University will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all students can benefit from the full range of academic, cultural and social activities that the University offers.

The University also endorses the social model of disability, thereby not focusing on the individual's disability or long term condition, but instead identifying the structural, organisational, physical and attitudinal barriers that prohibit students with a disability or long term condition from achieving equality of opportunity.

The Disability Policy applies to any prospective or current student who may require the implementation of reasonable adjustments as result of disability or long term condition as defined by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (2005).

Queen's University will be guided by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order 2005 and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Legislative Background

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Order (SENDO) came into effect in Northern Ireland on 1 September 2005. This extended the provision of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to education providers and has ensured that people with a disability have equal opportunities to benefit from and participate in the teaching, learning and other services available in Higher Education institutions.

Northern Ireland legislation defines 'Disability' as:

"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."

For further information on what constitutes as a disability in Northern Ireland, please refer to:

<https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/protection-against-disability-discrimination>

Discrimination against students with disabilities and long term conditions can take place in two ways by:

- *treating them less favourably than non-disabled students*
- *failing to make a 'reasonable adjustment' thereby placing them at a substantial disadvantage to non-disabled students for a reason relating to their disability or long term condition*

The University, in recognition of its duties under SENDO, will seek to anticipate the needs of future applicants and students with disability in creating an inclusive environment within the University, as far as practically possible. To ensure best practice in relation to provision the University works

closely with Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and follows closely the recommendations and examples within the Code of Practice for Higher and Further Education Institutions and Good Practice Guidelines produced by HEFCE and other disability-related organisations.

General Principles of Support

The University is committed to creating an environment where students are comfortable in disclosing a disability or long term condition. There is a dedicated Disability Service to provide prospective and current students and staff of the University with appropriate information relating to disability issues and make individual support recommendations for student's based assessed need and the relevant resources at the University's disposal.

Any student who discloses a disability or long-term condition to the University can expect the following general principles of support to be applied:

- Applications for admission from students with a disability or long term condition are assessed on the same basis as all other applicants. The main selection criteria for most programmes are academic background and qualifications.
- The University endorses the principles of inclusive curriculum for all students.
- Will have access to appropriate reasonable adjustments to enable them to participate in all aspects of university life.
- The opportunity to discuss their individual requirements with an appropriate member of staff.
- Staff who are required to implement reasonable adjustments will have access to appropriate information.
- Students will be supported by appropriately trained staff
- The University Estate will be accessible to all students, where reasonable, and Personal Emergency Plans arranged to ensure a safe environment for students who require assistance to evacuate buildings.

Information obtained regarding a student's disability or long term condition will be treated as personal and sensitive data. The information will be held in accordance with the University's Data Protection Policy and is only shared to ensure agreed supports and reasonable adjustments are implemented or when a safeguarding issue necessitates.

The University's '[Disability Support Code of Conduct](#)' provides a guidance framework for staff to ensure support is implemented consistently and equitably:

For further information on the support available through Queen's Disability Services, please visit:

<http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/>