



Brunel
University
London

**Disability and Dyslexia
Service**

Handbook for students





Brunel University London

Addressing society's challenges

www.brunel.ac.uk

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Welcome

The aim of the Disability and Dyslexia Service at Brunel is to give expert advice and support to all disabled students so that they can fulfil their potential to become confident, talented and versatile graduates. This handbook sets out how we do this.



The Disability and Dyslexia Service works with a large number of students, many of whom never think of themselves as disabled. This includes people with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, mental health conditions such as anxiety, and medical conditions such as epilepsy and arthritis.

The first thing to say is that our service is confidential - information about you is only passed on to other people in the university with your agreement, and then only to make sure you get the support you need. Secondly, we know that it is often the environment that causes the problems (access maybe, or people's lack of awareness) so we work with you to change the things that get in the way of your progress.

Disability and Dyslexia Service

Tel: 01895 265213

Email: disability@brunel.ac.uk

Web: www.brunel.ac.uk/disability



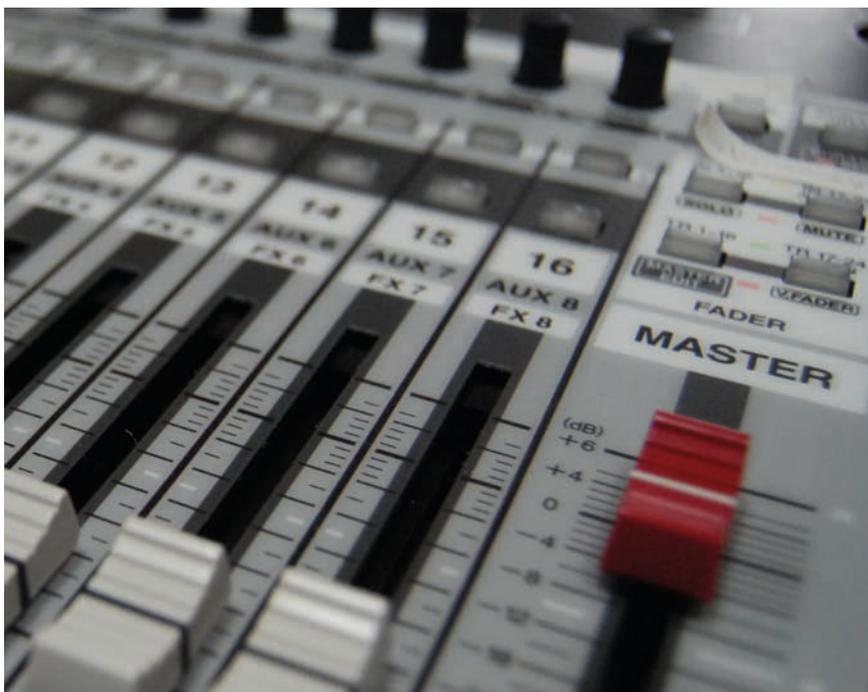
From the student's perspective...

"I am aware that I have a specific learning difficulty and that I can't read as well or spell as well as I should be able to; it means I can't write down ideas quickly or note what someone is saying. I'm aware that to other people this can look like I'm thick or stupid. On the other hand I see other people like Richard Branson and think he obviously doesn't let it get him down, so why should I?"

The decision I made to enrol at Brunel was definitely one of my best decisions. The support has been excellent and the Disability and Dyslexia team have more than met my expectations. They have helped me build confidence and self-esteem and like everything else in life you get out what you put in.

Whereas before, what I put into life was based on my misconceptions about my own ability, now I can put in 100%

Phil, Music & Technology



“My first year at Brunel was um, well fun. And interesting. And eventful. You meet loads of new people, some, like international students, different to who you might normally meet.

Living on campus is nice, you don't have to rush in the mornings, well unless you're me, and when you live in halls you live with other first years, so you experience the ups and downs of uni life together.

The difference to school and college was a revelation - how you learn is different, lectures are different, everything is just really different. But once my needs were established the process and the help ran really smoothly.

So basically uni is great... apart from the working bit. You do have to work hard, but not as much as you do in the second year so enjoy yourself and make the most of everything that's available to you.”

Maryam, Psychology



Supporting students

At university there are two main types of support for disabled students: general support that the university offers and the more individual support that comes with Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA). First, here's a run down of how Brunel supports you.



Brunel's campus

A multi million pound investment in Brunel's campus has seen massive changes in the university's physical environment over the last few years, and the needs of disabled students have played an important part in this development. We now have an impressive range of academic and teaching areas, social spaces and accommodation accessible to students with mobility impairments.

Accommodation

As a disabled student you can apply for a room that meets your individual needs - en-suite, centrally located, wheelchair accessible or equipped for those with a hearing impairment; other adaptations can be made to rooms if necessary. All of these rooms are allocated fairly, according to need.

In addition, some disabled students would be at a substantial disadvantage if they weren't able to stay on campus after their first year - all such cases are considered fairly.



Parking

There are plenty of designated bays all over the campus for blue badge holders. If you don't have a blue badge but have mobility difficulties which mean you need to park on campus, we can arrange a vehicle permit for you even if you live within two miles of the university. We can also arrange free car parking for personal assistants.

Coursework extensions

Brunel encourages all students to plan their time and meet deadlines; otherwise things get out of control and work can pile up. However, sometimes, for reasons outside your control, you may find it impossible to meet a deadline.

If you have had difficulties because support no longer meets your needs, for example if you have a health condition which has worsened, you need to contact your College and fill in a 'mitigating circumstances form'. The Disability and Dyslexia Service may be able to write a letter to support your case.

Exams and other assessments

Exams should be a fair test of your knowledge and what you're able to do. For some disabled students the usual exam format may not be suitable; if this is the case, adjustments can be made. These adjustments aren't designed to make exams easier, or to give disabled students a head start; they just level the playing field by allowing you to show what you can do without being disabled by the assessment format itself.

Typical adjustments might be:

- extra time (usually 25% but can be more)
- rest breaks
- personal time reminders
- exam papers in different formats (enlarged font, coloured paper, electronic copy)
- use of computer, software and/or hardware
- separate room
- use of a scribe or reader

To make sure we're being fair, we always ask for evidence that you are a disabled student before making exam adjustments

Lectures

Lectures and seminars are an important part of learning at university, but many disabled students struggle to make the most of them.

You may have difficulty with physically writing notes, or you may struggle to remember what's being said for long enough to write it down, or maybe you make lots of notes but can't read them back afterwards. Something can always be done to make sure you don't miss out.

Support might include:

- lecture handouts provided in advance of lectures (if not available through Blackboard)
- use of a recording device
- use of a portable note-taking device
- use of a note-taker
- use of a sign language interpreter
- transcription of audio material used in sessions.



Assistive technology

The Assistive Technology Centre (ATC) has up-to-date specialist technology to help with your studies. This includes:

- mind mapping software that helps you plan essays and revise for exams
- text to speech software and headphones so that you can listen to electronic text read aloud
- scanners to convert print into electronic text, which can then be listened to
- screen reading software which reads out the text on the screen
- screen magnification software which expands a part of the screen so it can be seen more easily
- CCTV magnifiers which display enlarged images of books
- ergonomic equipment such as ergonomic chairs, keyboards, mice and adjustable desks
- voice recognition software that writes down what you say
- loan equipment such as voice recorders and back supports that you can use while you're waiting for your DSA.

The ATC offers training and support in how to use this equipment and will also help with standard IT tasks, such as saving files, using Microsoft Word and browsing the internet.

West London Assessment Centre

The West London Assessment Centre (WLAC) is a fully accredited centre providing needs assessments for disabled students applying for DSA. It is located with the Assistive Technology Centre and provides advice and guidance on support, equipment and specialist software and specialist equipment training.

You don't need to be a student at Brunel University London to have your needs assessment at WLAC.

Library

The library supports disabled students by:

- providing one-to-one help in using the library
- arranging extended loans
- photocopying items for you to collect from the issue desk
- collecting books for you to pick up the next day
- loaning reference books (in exceptional circumstances)
- providing two study rooms equipped with assistive technology for you to use
- loading coloured paper into the photocopier for you
- allowing you to authorise someone else to borrow items on your behalf.

Placements

Some disabled students may need adjustments to be made for them whilst on placement. The university's placement office can arrange support so it's a good idea to think about this in advance.

There are a lot of adjustments that can be made on placement so talk it through with us, or with your personal tutor, and the placement office before you go on placement.

International disabled students

If you are a disabled international student, please get in touch with us. Although DSAs are only available for home students, the university is committed to supporting all its disabled students and we can discuss with you how we can help. For instance, we can recommend exam adjustments, you can use the Assistive Technology Centre (ATC) or borrow equipment and we can provide a support worker if you need one.

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA)

Disabled students at university can apply to their funding body (usually SFE or the NHS) for a DSA to pay for any extra costs that result from their support needs. DSAs aren't means-tested so any disabled student can apply. They aren't loans and do **not** need to be paid back.

Students who may be eligible for DSAs include those with mental health conditions, specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, and medical conditions such as epilepsy, diabetes, arthritis and repetitive strain injury. You'll need to send appropriate evidence with your DSA application, and then go for a needs assessment to agree what support you may need.

To apply for, or get advice about, DSAs you can either contact us or go straight to the student support team at your funding body.

You can apply for DSAs at any time during your course but we strongly recommend you do so as soon as possible - the process can take up to 3 months, so the sooner you start, the better.



You can get a DSA application form from the Disability and Dyslexia Service office, or download it from our website (www.brunel.ac.uk/disability). Alternatively you can contact your funding body directly.

DSAs may be able to pay for, or contribute towards the cost of:

Equipment:

- computer *
- printer and scanner
- assistive software
- furniture used for study purposes
- recording devices

Non-medical helpers:

- training in the use of assistive software
- note-takers
- study skills tuition
- mentors
- library support
- sign language interpreters
- readers and scribes

General allowances:

- book allowances
- photocopying costs
- additional travel costs
- consumables (batteries, cartridges, paper)
- additional costs of en-suite accommodation

* If your DSA assessor recommends DSA funding for a computer, it will fund any costs over £200; students are expected to fund the first £200 themselves. Disabled students who are enrolled at Brunel will not have to meet this cost themselves; they will receive £200 from the university to cover the shortfall.

Needs Assessments

Once your DSA has been approved, you'll be asked to have a needs assessment. This is your chance to say what you find difficult at university and what support may help, so it's a good idea to think about this before you go.

The needs assessment takes about two hours, and is carried out at an approved assessment centre, such as WLAC at Brunel. The needs assessment is **not** an assessment of your impairment, mental health or specific learning difficulty, or your academic ability.

After the assessment, the assessor will write a report listing the support and equipment you need. This is sent to the funding body, with your approval, who'll then write to you to say what they've agreed to pay for. As soon as you get this letter, contact us so we can talk it through with you and make sure the university is doing what it should to support you. We can help arrange the recommended support, including helping with ordering the equipment and organising support workers.

Remember, we won't do anything until you've said it's ok, so get in touch.

From the student's perspective...

"Being at university is a completely new experience in so many different ways. As I'm deaf, this was likely to throw up many unexpected barriers for me, but being at Brunel has smoothed that transition.

Studying Psychology was an easy choice for me as I enjoyed it so much at A-level and wanted to find out more about the complex workings of the human mind. Psychology at Brunel is taught in a robust and motivating environment and, as a student, it has just made the subject even more fascinating.

Being deaf always meant that I would find it harder, from the social and educational perspectives, but everyone is so friendly, and extremely supportive. I did initially worry about understanding people, and being able to keep up with what was expected of me, but there is an excellent support system in place, which has meant that I have found it a lot easier."

Hattie, Psychology



Services for students

Studying at university is about much more than lectures, exams and degree certificates; there are plenty of opportunities to join in a huge number of activities while you're at Brunel. There is also a wide range of student services to support you if things get difficult, and to help you plan what to do when you finish.



The Academic Skills Service (ASK)

Tel: 01895 266147

Email: ask@brunel.ac.uk

Specialises in teaching to all Brunel students the skills you need to learn independently and thrive academically, whatever your subject.

Accommodation

Tel: 01895 267900

Text: 07624 805069

Email: accom-uxb@brunel.ac.uk

Responsible for the allocation of all undergraduate, postgraduate and research students to university residences.

Advice and Representation Centre (ARC)

Tel: 01895 269169

Email: advice@brunel.ac.uk

For advice and representation on anything that affects your life while you're studying – housing, immigration, complaints, welfare benefits etc.

Arts Centre

Tel: 01895 266074

Email: artscentre@brunel.ac.uk

Learn to paint, draw, play jazz, join a choir, act, do sculpture, calligraphy, be in a musical and more.

International Student Services

Tel: 01895 265519

Email: bi.studentservices@brunel.ac.uk

Support for international or EU students.

Brunel Volunteers

Tel: 01895 265924

Email: brunel.volunteers@brunel.ac.uk

Helps students to arrange voluntary work.

Chaplaincy

Tel: 01895 266459

Email: meeting-house@brunel.ac.uk

Provides spiritual and pastoral guidance.

Counselling Service

Tel: 01895 265070

Email: brunel-counselling@brunel.ac.uk

Provides emotional and personal support for concerns including personal, relationship and academic-related difficulties.

Diverse Brunel

Tel: 01895 265782

Email: diversebrunel@brunel.ac.uk

For information and advice on any issues relating to equality and diversity.

Job Shop

Tel: 01895 265759

Email: jobshop@brunel.ac.uk

For advice on employment, tax etc as well as jobs available on and off campus.

The International Pathways and Language Centre (IPLC)

Tel: 01895 265519

Email: iplc@brunel.ac.uk

Provides English support through a range of courses and one-to-one tutorials and offers free foreign language courses.

Library Services

Tel: 01895 266141

Email: library@brunel.ac.uk

Medical Centre

Tel: 01895 234426

Professional Mentoring

Tel: 01895 265583

Email: beverley.crooks@brunel.ac.uk

Professional mentoring programmes to help undergraduate students prepare for graduate level employment.

Placement & Careers Centre

Tel: 01895 266840

Email: careers@brunel.ac.uk

Provides a one stop service for part-time jobs, vacation work, sandwich placements and graduate jobs.

Sports Centre

Tel: 01895 265305

Email: sports.centre@brunel.ac.uk A state of the art gym and a wide range of activities in the sports halls and sports park.

Student Centre

Tel: 01895 268268

Email: student.centre@brunel.ac.uk For all student administration enquiries enrolment, fees, accommodation etc.

Union of Brunel Students (UBS)

Tel: 01895 269269

Email: ubs.helpdesk@brunel.ac.uk

The university's societies, clubs, bars etc. all run by students for students

Student life

Bars, cafes, fast food, sports, arts, shops - life outside lectures is more than met by the facilities offered on campus...

Clubs/bars: The Academy, Loco's, The Mezz

Food outlets: Social Kitchen, Subway, Costa, Be Active, Metrobite, Yardbird

Sports: Exercise/dance studio, indoor athletics centre, fitness suite/gym, climbing wall

Arts: Arts Centre, Beldam Gallery

Student involvement

Feedback from students helps us to improve the quality of our service. You are welcome to give us feedback, express your opinions and share your ideas.

The UBS has a disabled and dyslexic student working group who'll be able to feed back your views to our team, and help us see things from a student point of view. Once a year we also invite all disabled students to complete a student survey.



Frequently Asked Questions

Should I disclose that I am disabled to the university?

Yes, because if we know that you are disabled, the university can support you to achieve your full potential.

Who is the information about me passed on to?

We only pass on information necessary to make sure you get the support you need, and only with your agreement. A disability adviser will explain what support you're entitled to and who needs to know about it, so if you're concerned about this, ask your adviser.

If I'm asked to give evidence that I am disabled, what kind of evidence is required?

Suitable evidence will usually be a letter from a medical professional such as your GP, consultant, or psychiatrist, or a full diagnostic assessment of your specific learning difficulty. If you need exam adjustments we always ask for evidence to make sure we're being fair.

Will the fact that I am registered with the Disability and Dyslexia Service be stated on my degree certificate?

No, nor will it mention any support you've had.

Is my condition considered to be a 'disability'?

The Equality Act (2010) defines a disabled person as someone who has 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. Anyone with a condition (medical, mental health, physical or sensory impairment) or specific learning difficulty which fulfils this definition could be considered to be disabled.

I think I might be dyslexic. How can I find out if I am?

Contact the Disability and Dyslexia Service and ask to book a dyslexia screening.

Will DSA pay for my tuition fees or living costs?

No, the DSA will only pay for the extra costs that are a direct result of your support needs.

Can I get a free laptop or voice recorder?

If your funding body approves your DSA application, you'll be asked to go for a needs assessment at an approved centre. Here you'll discuss your difficulties and the support that might help. The assessor

then writes a report and lists what you'll need, which might include a laptop and voice recorder. If you would like a computer with a different specification to the one recommended you can ask your funding body if you can pay any extra costs to have the computer of your choice.

Does the Disability and Dyslexia Service offer drop-in support? Yes, every weekday from 2pm – 3pm. You can call in to the service without an appointment and meet with an adviser.

What happens if I need to take time out from my course?

If you need to take time out, come and talk this through with a disability adviser. You might be able to take a short time out and catch up or you can take a longer time out (a period of 'abeyance') and then come back to your course when you're ready.

Can I record my lectures?

Yes, but you must only use the recordings for your own personal study and shouldn't copy them or pass them on, unless we've arranged for someone to write them out for you. It's courteous to let lecturers know that you're recording but you don't have to say why.

Can I have extra time in exams?

If you need extra time in exams then you should discuss this with a disability adviser. If appropriate, the adviser can then make recommendations to your College.

How do I pay for the extra photocopying I'll need?

Some of the things that are recommended at your needs assessment (such as extra photo-copying, printer cartridges etc.) have to be paid for upfront. Keep all the receipts to send to your funding body so that you can claim the money back.

Is my dyslexia taken into account when my exams and assessments are marked?

No, because the support that's put in place is designed to make sure that you can produce work to the best of your ability by minimising the impact of your difficulties. For this reason all work is marked anonymously.

As a disabled student will I be able to apply for on-campus accommodation after my first year?

Returning students aren't usually entitled to on-campus accommodation. However, if you would be disadvantaged by not living on campus, it's something that can be discussed with a disability adviser.



Disability and Dyslexia Service

Tel: 01895 265213 | Email: disability@brunel.ac.uk
Web: www.brunel.ac.uk/disability