

Handbook for international students





Welcome



Brunel is a modern, dynamic, campus based university situated in the west of London.

Brunel University London is probably the closest university in the UK to your home – just 5 miles away from Heathrow International Airport. The university is dedicated to providing a world class education for students and prides itself on the quality of academic teaching and research.

There are over 15,000 students at Brunel, including nearly 3,500 international students, from over 110 different countries.

Over 10% of students have told the university that they are disabled, and their needs have therefore played an important part in the recent £250 million investment to develop and improve facilities on campus.

The Disability and Dyslexia Service aims 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 explains the support that is available for disabled international students.



The following are examples of some of the physical, mental and learning difficulties experienced by students receiving support at Brunel:

Physical and sensory

- Hearing impairments
- Visual impairments
- Wheelchair users
- Arthritis
- Epilepsy
- HIV

Learning

- Dyslexia
- Dyscalculia
- Dyspraxia
- ADHD

Mental Health

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia

What is considered a disability in the UK?

Brunel University London recognises that every student will have their own views about what the term 'disability' means based upon their own life experiences. These views will have been shaped by the attitudes of others and the environment in which the student has grown up and these experiences will differ depending where you are from. A research project undertaken at Brunel University London looked into attitudes and beliefs about disability amongst international students and demonstrates these differences very well. There is no universal definition of 'disability' so it is important to understand what the law in the UK says about this and also the way in which Brunel




works with disabled students. If you consider yourself to have a disability it is important to contact an advisor as soon as possible.

UK definition

Under the terms of the Equality Act (2010), a disabled person is defined as someone who has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial, long term and adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, which can include things such as mobility, speech, hearing, vision, memory and learning. The Equality Act also makes it clear that it is illegal for disabled people to be discriminated against on the basis of their disability, that they must not be treated any worse than non-disabled people and that reasonable support must be provided.

At Brunel, we promote the right of every disabled individual to exercise personal choices, to be valued equally and to experience full inclusion in university life. The key belief is that a person can be disabled by other people's attitudes, the way in which things are done, or how buildings and facilities are designed. Accordingly, Brunel has been working for many years to try to improve both its services and the experiences of all disabled students.




"I wanted to study abroad to see more of the world, and live independently. I chose England because it seemed like the country with the most provisions for people with disabilities and as an EU country it was significantly more convenient and cheaper compared with America. I found out about Brunel through my high school.

It was mostly luck that it had good provisions for wheelchair users as it was a last minute decision to come here. I did not have time to look for any support or wheelchair access before applying, I'm just fortunate that Brunel had such a great disability team. I chose Brunel because it seemed to have good access, it was close to Heathrow Airport and one of my high school friends was going to come here.

Uxbridge as a town is wheelchair friendly, the underground is not very accessible but the buses

CHRISTOS



are excellent. The local area and Heathrow Airport are easily accessible, but central London takes around 3 hours using buses. If cost is not an issue, a black cab can get you into London in less than an hour.

The Disability Service provided me with a note-taker during my lectures and extra time for exams. They were also great getting adaptations in my room and the equipment I needed. They were able to designate the room next to mine for my personal assistant which is really useful. I have a larger than normal room with automated doors with swipe card access. They provided me with a motorised bed, a hoist and bathroom chair.

I found out about support available just after I got accepted but before I was given a room. I communicated my needs by emailing the disability team. The note-taking was paid for

through the Disability Service but fortunately there was another student in my lectures that used a note-taker which saved the paperwork.

In my spare time I like listening to music, watching movies with friends, clubbing and gaming. I also belong to the Cyprus and Hellenic Society and have been elected as the Cyprus Society's web master for next year. “

Christos is from Cyprus and studying computer science. He is a wheelchair user.

“I chose England because it seemed like the country with the most provisions for people with disabilities”



Getting support

We always recommend that you tell the university about your disability, since the sooner we know the sooner we can ensure that any support you need can be put in place.

The Disability and Dyslexia Service is open from Monday to Friday all year round and we always welcome any disabled student who wants to come and talk to us. If you have a disability that is unseen or hidden and you need some support at university then you will need to provide some

evidence of your disability. This is important especially if you need support with exams or written assignments, because we need to make sure we're being fair. The evidence should be recent, written in English, from a doctor or other medical professional, and this will help us when we discuss the type of support that can be offered to you.

The next section tells you about the type of general support that the university can offer, and the more individual support that the Disability and Dyslexia Service may be able to arrange for you.



Accommodation

As a disabled student you can apply for a room that meets your individual needs – a room with en suite facilities, a central location on campus, wheelchair-accessible or equipped for those with a hearing impairment. You will need to tell us about any specific adaptations you feel you need before you arrive so that any adaptations can be made to your room if necessary. If you require a room for your personal assistant to use, the room next door to yours can be allocated for this, though you will have to pay for both.



Assistive Technology Centre (ATC)

The ATC provides up-to-date specialist technology for disabled students to use. This includes computers equipped with mind mapping, text to speech software, magnification and screen reading software, scanners, CCTV magnifiers and ergonomic chairs, keyboards, mice and adjustable desks. The ATC offers training and support in how to use this equipment and will also help with standard IT tasks.



Exams and other assessments

For some disabled students the usual exam format may not be suitable; if this is the case, adjustments can be made. Typical adjustments might include arranging for you to have extra time for your exams, sitting in a separate room, providing exam papers in different formats, recommending that you can use a computer or providing a scribe or reader for you to use.



Lectures

Lectures 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. At Brunel, we can arrange support to make sure you don't miss out, including loaning recording devices and portable note-taking equipment and providing a note-taker.



Library

The library provides a range of support to disabled students including giving one-to-one help with 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; loading coloured paper into the photocopier for you and allowing you to authorise someone else to borrow items on your behalf.

Loan equipment

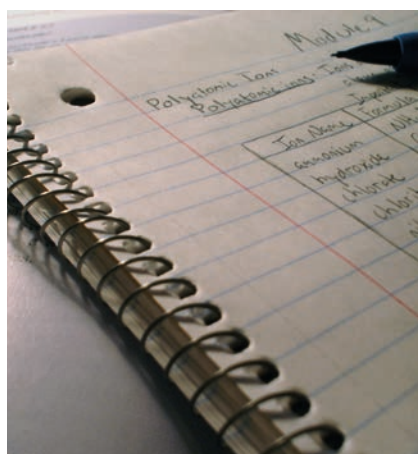
A loan equipment service is available providing digital voice recording devices, portable note-taking devices, back supports for chairs and a small number of laptop computers for disabled students who do not have funding to purchase their own equipment.

Parking

There are plenty of designated accessible parking bays all over campus. If you have mobility difficulties which mean you need to park on campus then we can arrange a vehicle permit for you. This can be for students living both on campus and locally.

Support workers

Support workers may include someone to take notes for you in lectures, someone to write for you in exams or someone to help in the library. If you think you will need a support worker to help you with your studies then you will need to discuss this with a Disability and Dyslexia Service adviser. If the adviser agrees that you require a support worker then we will organise this for you.



Htaik



Htaik is from
Burma (now
called Myanmar)
and studying
a BSc in
Physiotherapy

I decided to choose Brunel mainly because of the reputation of the course, but also hoped that being a student at Brunel would help me to improve my personal development, both academically and socially.

In my second year I knew a friend who was dyslexic, and she thought maybe I should have an assessment. In Burma dyslexia is not really a known disability. The Brunel website gave information about different disabilities and allowed me to find out more about dyslexia.

In the second year, I believed I would be able to cope. I later decided that having a screening may provide me with support to help my degree but the screening took longer than I thought. In the final year, I had a screening and was diagnosed with dyslexia. My exams were complete so it was too late for me to have exam support, and I had also gone on placements without the knowledge and support available. But other people can learn from my experiences and ask for advice early on. I would recommend arranging a meeting with the disability advisor as soon as possible if you have any problems as they can provide support.

“Overall, Brunel is the best place to go for students from all over the world.”

After I was diagnosed I had amazing support from Brunel International and the Disability and Dyslexia Service to help finish my degree. The Brunel Disability and Dyslexia Service provided some

excellent facilities. Without such I never would have believed I could get a great degree. I was able to use the Assistive Technology Centre and they provided me with software such as Inspiration and Read and Write. I also had weekly meetings with a study skills tutor. Most importantly, Brunel has created the most amazing academic support especially for international students.

I also had had the other wonderful experiences in my life at Brunel. I took an active role in student life through numerous activities available on campus which allowed opportunities to meet and befriend students from a diverse range of different nationalities and cultures.



How is support paid for?

The Disability and Dyslexia Service at Brunel University London works with all disabled students, including international students, to ensure they are not disadvantaged by their disability or specific learning difficulty.

For international students, advisers from the Disability and Dyslexia Service will work with you to investigate possible funding sources that may be available to pay for equipment and support workers. In order to help with this process, you are advised to investigate the following options before starting at Brunel:

- If you have a sponsor ask if they may be able to offer you additional finance to cover disability-related expenses. For example, some scholarships may have additional funding to contribute towards any disability-related costs so it's important to ask.
- If you are a European student on the EU Socrates / Erasmus exchange programme, you may be able to apply for grants, which are higher than normal study grants, to offset additional costs incurred by specific difficulties. For more information, please contact your Erasmus co-ordinator.



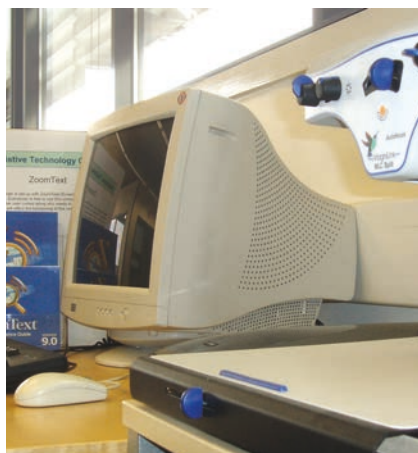
- It may be possible to obtain a grant from your own government, so contact your education department to ask about what support they may provide you with.
- Finally, it may also be useful to investigate the possibility of financial assistance from non-governmental organisations in your home country.
- Where additional funding is not available, the Disability and Dyslexia Service will work with you to arrange suitable support for you. We will endeavour to ensure that your needs are met in the best way possible, so please get in touch as soon as you know you are coming so that we can begin to plan your support.

Further information:

Information for international students

UKCISA: UK Council for International Student Affairs
available from www.ukcisa.org.uk

- Sources of funding for international students produced by the British Council available from www.britishcouncil.org



Mimi



Taking some time off...



Having a coffee...

Mimi is from Hong Kong studying her Postgraduate Masters in Sports Sciences. She also has a hearing impairment.

"I first came to the UK from Hong Kong in September 2000 and have been studying here in England for nearly nine years. I completed my undergraduate degree at Brunel in 2008 and am currently completing my masters degree here in the 2008/2009 academic year.

I wanted to study abroad to widen my exposure to different cultures. England's high quality of education and its widely recognised qualifications contributed to this being my country of choice. The UK is also renowned for giving opportunities to people with disabilities.

I found out about Brunel through the student prospectus, the website and because of its good reputation for high quality teaching and research in Sports Sciences. Apart from its reputation for academic research, the university also demonstrated it's dedication to support students with disabilities.

The high quality of support offered by the Disability and Dyslexia Service affected my choice of university. I recall that prior to my arrival Brunel International contacted me via email to understand my needs and were well aware of my special needs when I attended an English language course in the first year. They helped me to contact the accommodation office and the Disability and Dyslexia Service who offered me a special room and to arrange note-taker support for me.

The disability office arranged appointments with me to assess my eligibility for support. I used the note-taking service which was funded by the Disability and Dyslexia Service. The accommodation office provided me with a deaf alerter for fire alarms.

In my spare time I like to meet friends, go travelling, surf the web and go to the gym. I am also a member of the Brunel University table tennis club and was a member of the Chinese Christian society in my undergraduate years. The university has easy access to and from Heathrow airport by bus (30-40mins) and Uxbridge town centre (10mins). There is an underground station in Uxbridge for easy access to Central London.

I wholeheartedly appreciate the support services rendered by the university throughout my study, and have honestly enjoyed every moment at Brunel University over the past four years”



Working in the ATC



Happy days

Frequently Asked Questions

Is there any accessible public transport in the local area?

Uxbridge town centre is a 15 minute walk from the university, but there are good accessible transport links nearby. All the buses in the local area have ramps and allocated wheelchair spaces, providing easy access to and from the town centre, Heathrow airport and London. Uxbridge underground station has level access, suitable for most wheelchairs, though please be aware not all underground train stations are fully accessible.

Do the lecture halls have any facilities for disabled students?

The main teaching spaces have been designed to accommodate the needs of disabled students; hearing loops have been installed in many of the main teaching rooms, lifts provide access for wheelchair users and rooms are marked with large, clear signage for those with visual impairments

How do I know if I have dyslexia or if I'm struggling because English is not my first language?

You can arrange a meeting with an adviser to discuss your concerns and get advice on how you can have dyslexia diagnosed. If you are diagnosed with dyslexia we can then arrange some support. Supplementary language courses are available for students if English is not their first language.

This can be arranged via Brunel International.

How do I arrange specialist equipment like beds, hoists, fridges and heaters in my room?

In some cases, the university may be able to arrange for some equipment, as long as it is reasonable to do so. It is best if you contact the Disability and Dyslexia Service before you arrive, to discuss what support can be provided.

Contacts

Accommodation Office

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 267900
Text /SMS: +44 (0)7624 805069
Email: accom-uxb@brunel.ac.uk

Advice and Representation Centre

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 269169
Email: advice@brunel.ac.uk

Arts Centre

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 266074
Email: artscentre@brunel.ac.uk

International Student Services

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 267154
Email:
bi.studentservices@brunel.ac.uk

Chaplaincy

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 266459
E-mail:
meeting-house@brunel.ac.uk

Counselling Service

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 265070
Email:
brunel-counselling@brunel.ac.uk

Equality and Diversity Office

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 265782
Email: diversebrunel@brunel.ac.uk

Academic Skills Service (ASK)

Email: ask@brunel.ac.uk

Jobshop

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 265759
Email: jobshop@brunel.ac.uk

The International Pathways and Language Centre (IPLC)

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 265533
Email: iplc@brunel.ac.uk

Library

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 266141
Email: library@brunel.ac.uk

Medical Centre

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 234426

Placement and Careers Centre

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 265265
Email: careers@brunel.ac.uk

Sports Centre

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 265305
Email: sportscentre@brunel.ac.uk

Student Centre

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 268268
Email:
studentcentre@brunel.ac.uk

Union of Brunel Students (UBS)

Telephone: +44 (0)1895 269269
Email: ubs.helpdesk@brunel.ac.uk



Disability and Dyslexia Service

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

Opening hours: Monday-Friday 9am to 4.30pm
Drop-ins: Monday-Friday 2-3pm