

**Policy Title:** Higher Education Student Study Support

**Created By:** Higher Education Manager

**Approved By:** Principalship

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## 1. Introduction and Scope

- 1.1 New College Swindon University Centre (referred to herein as 'the College') encourages a diverse range of students to study Higher Education. We recognise that those entering College Higher Education may have a wide range of support needs. This policy provides information relevant to all students of programmes designated as Higher Education and provided at the College.
- 1.2 Some differences in approach will be signposted for students studying through a University partner on a franchised basis.
- 1.3 This policy supports the intentions of the College to uphold the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (QAA:2018) which states that 'from admission through to completion, all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from Higher Education.'
- 1.4 This policy takes account of the duty of the college with regard to the protected characteristics of the Equality Act 2010.
- 1.5 The College will uphold academic standards under the law; this policy and the support advised within, will not compensate for the academic requirements of the courses not being met, despite support being provided, as detailed in Condition B4 (OfS:2022)

## 2. Policy Objectives

The policy aims to provide information for students about the support for their studies available to them whilst studying Higher Education at the College and will include:

- 2.1 The importance of informing us of individual needs
- 2.2 How we identify student needs through an initial screening exercise
- 2.3 How we use that information as a guide to your needs
- 2.4 The process of gaining support through Disabled Student Allowance (DSA)
- 2.5 How we can support the application for DSA
- 2.6 The additional support available for learning differences

## 3. Identifying your needs

On application

- 3.1 During the process of applying for their chosen programme of higher education, the applicant will be asked to complete application forms, and may also be interviewed. It is important that if the applicant has a diagnosed disability, medical condition, sensory or physical impairment, that this is flagged on the forms or at interview.
- 3.2 We can then discuss any access needs, adjustments needed, any treatment and any concerns that may have arisen about coming to college, together with our Nurse and HE team. We want to ensure that we are prepared for every student to begin their studies, and that they are confident that everything is in place, and that the relevant staff have all the information they need to remove any barriers to learning, and are clear on the student's individual needs and preferences too.
- 3.3 Applicants with a specific learning difference or mental ill health should also ensure the college is informed as early in the process as possible so

we can understand the support needs of individuals about to begin their studies.

3.4 For applicants of courses franchised from one of our University partners, we may also liaise with the University Disability team for any advice and support that our students may be able to access.

#### **4. During Enrolment and Induction**

- 4.1 We know that some of our students may be returning to education after a break (whether short or long) and some will have a diagnosed learning need, and may have had support previously for their learning. For some students, difficulties they may have experienced during their educational journey may not yet have been recognised, or formally diagnosed.
- 4.2 This is why we carry out initial screening during the induction period. Our HE Study Support Officer carries this out in classroom groups. It is not a test, nor does it have any bearing on a student's status as enrolled on the programme, but we strongly encourage all students to take part, as it gives us a very useful picture of any potential support needs for each individual.
- 4.3 This screening is not a formal diagnosis, but it can give indicators of an issue such as dyslexia, and can help to plan next steps in support both within and outside of the classroom environment.
- 4.4 Once the screening has been initially assessed, results will be shared with individuals and any students identified who may need support will be contacted to discuss their needs further.
- 4.5 Those students who will need support throughout their studies will co-create an Individual Support Plan (ISP) with the HESSO, which can be shared with those teaching the student, to ensure appropriate help and support is put in place.

#### **5. Disabled Student Allowance (DSA)**

##### **5.1 Eligibility**

- a. Students with a disability, medical or physical impairment, or learning difference, may be entitled to support during their studies through DSA.
- b. DSA can support with some financial costs during study, as well as practical support through resources, equipment and assistive technology depending on the individual need.
- c. To be [eligible for DSA](#), students must qualify for Student Finance England funding, and cannot be a student of the EU, nor studying a Higher or Degree Apprenticeship. You should apply with your SFE application and as soon as possible as it can take up to 14 weeks to complete the process.

##### **5.2 Evidence for Application**

- a. If the student has a disability, long-term health, or mental health condition they will need a report or letter from their doctor or consultant, and to fill in a [disability evidence form](#).
- b. GOV.UK provide a [printable version](#) of the DSA guide where there is also further information and how to apply.
- c. In order to apply for DSA with a specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia, the evidence required is a copy of a diagnostic assessment (carried out post-

16 years) from a practitioner psychologist or suitably qualified specialist teacher.

### 5.3 College Support for application and evidence

- a. If initial screening identifies any challenges the student may have, the HE Study Support Officer (HESSO) may carry out an initial Dyslexia Adult Screening Test (DAST), which can give a better understanding of the extent of such difficulties.
- b. The HESSO can then discuss the outcomes with the student, and if agreed, discuss the process of how to get a Diagnostic Assessment, (post-16 years) which is needed for DSA application.
- c. The HE Study Support Officer can put students in touch with a qualified specialist teacher and assessor who will carry out a diagnostic assessment, the cost of which can be supported by the College through a bursary fund (providing the course qualifies for student finance, and with the exception of franchised programmes).
- d. Students studying with University partners may need to apply for support through the University and guidance is available on this process from the HE Study Support Officer.
- e. The College is not a Non-Medical Help (NMH) provider, and so welcomes support for our students from registered providers of DSA support.
- f. Once DSA is confirmed, the student will be asked to contact a provider for a Needs Assessment to determine the support to be provided.
- g. These providers will also contact our HESSO to ensure the College is aware of the support being provided for the student, and in order for us to ensure that the necessary adjustments and support in college is available as advised in their DSA needs assessment report.
- h. Students in receipt of DSA or with an approved ISP will be eligible to apply to their tutor for up to 10 days extension to deadline without a formal application for Mitigating/Extenuating Circumstances, based on their ongoing diagnosis/support needs. (Anything above this allowance must be formally applied for to the HE Office using the form for Mitigating/Extenuating Circumstances).
- i. Time given through any extension will be deducted from the maximum 5 weeks available, if a subsequent application for Mitigating Circumstances is made.

## 6. Support available

### 6.1 On programme support

- a. Once students have begun to study, and have provided details of their support needs, our HE Study Support Officer (HESSO) will meet with individuals to discuss strategies for support.
- b. The HESSO may liaise with teaching staff (with student permission) to ensure a holistic and appropriate approach to support.
- c. Students who do not qualify for DSA, can access regular or occasional support sessions with the HESSO.

- d. Tutors may collaborate with the HESSO provide sessions to a whole group on certain aspects of study skills such as report writing or referencing skills based on student needs.
- e. The HESSO will support those with learning needs such as specific learning difficulties (SpLD), English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) They may refer students to other sources of support such as the Wellbeing Team, Counselling, or provide details of other agencies as appropriate.
- f. Students who are registered with the HESSO may have ongoing support such as help with understanding assessment requirements, organisational and study skills support, and support with draft work, throughout their studies.
- g. Students may be advised to refer themselves to the Study Support Officer by their tutor at any point in their studies.
- h. Students will be signposted to learning technology support to assist them with assignment writing/grammar and proof reading
- i. Proof reading is not offered as a general service and may only be applicable during face-to-face sessions with those registered for, and regularly attending support opportunities with the HESSO.

## **7. Sources of support**

For support and advice with learning difficulties and disabilities:

[Higher Education | Dyslexia Foundation \(dyslexia-help.org\)](https://www.dyslexia-help.org/)

[British Dyslexia Association \(bdadyslexia.org.uk\)](https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/)

[Learning disability support - Mind](#)

[RNIB - See differently –](#)

[RNID - National hearing loss charity](#)

[Support for disabled students - Office for Students](#)

For advice and support on DSA and finance:

[Help if you're a student with a learning difficulty, health problem or disability: How to apply - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Student finance for undergraduates: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[How to apply for DSA's – The DSA Hub](#)

[SFE Student Finance Zone | The Student Room](#)

## X. Version Control

### Document Location

*This document if printed can only be considered up to date on the day that it was printed. For a current version of this document please see the Central Storage Library.*

### Revision History

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**Date of next Revision:** June 2024

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### Approvals

This document requires the following approvals:

Committee/Principalship	Date
Principal and CEO	

### Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Title/External Organisation/All Staff	Date of Issue	Version
All Staff		1.0

### Impact Assessment

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