

### General

Nationally, almost 10% of students in England and Wales are registered as having a disability (source: the Equality Challenge Unit's 2013 statistical report), and the College must be prepared for a similar proportion amongst its students.

The College welcomes applications from students with disabilities, as part of its support for the principle of equal opportunities for all. It endeavours to enable equality of access to its facilities and courses, and equality of treatment, for all students eligible to take them and in sympathy with the aims and ethos of the College. It intends that no-one, whether staff or student, is disadvantaged or discriminated against because of disability, but that all are treated on the basis of merit and capability. The College supports the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 (which subsumes all previous associated Disability legislation) and aims to assist everyone to engage in College life and studies on equal terms by removing, as far as reasonably possible, all barriers to achieving full potential.

The College is also committed to promoting positive attitudes in College life towards people with disabilities, and creating a culture in which harassment or discrimination, direct or indirect, cannot develop.

Further, the College encourages engagement between staff and students in relation to the nature of all disabilities in order to improve understanding of and provision for them, where reasonable adopting flexible work practices, teaching methods and the use of relevant appropriate resources. This allows the facility of feedback from students to staff about potential indirect discrimination where a rule or policy or way of doing things has a worse impact on someone with a disability (or "protected characteristic" under the Equality Act 2010) than everyone else.

### Contact Person

The College has an Enablement Officer, responsible for implementing the Policy, maintaining it, liaising between staff and students, facilitating staff awareness, and helping to source all relevant advice and support in order to fulfil the Policy's aims. Currently that person is the College Administrator, Sandie Reeves (who may refer specific academic issues to the Academic Coordinator). The dedicated email address for the Enablement Officer is [enablementofficer@redcliffe.ac.uk](mailto:enablementofficer@redcliffe.ac.uk).

### Disability

The College believes that the greatest barrier to people with disability is that posed by the adverse attitudes and behaviour, as much as the environment, in which they live, study and work. *Students are encouraged to disclose the nature of their disability, preferably on admission, or if discovered during the course of their studies.* The College, on its part, by its culture and practice, is committed to supporting the individual and identifying whatever solutions or resources are appropriate to help, and whatever reasonable and possible adjustments to practice, methods or premises are required. This commitment has an anticipatory component, so on-going discussion between staff and student is valued. Thinking in advance (and on an on-going basis) about what students with a range of disabilities might reasonably need (e.g. visual impairment, hearing impairment, mobility impairment or learning difference) is a part of the College's support, so open communication between staff and students is important.

## **Physical, Sensory or Mobility Impairments**

Although a relatively low numbers of students access and use the site full-time, as a College we take seriously our responsibility to provide equal access to all students. However, the College premises at College Green pose some challenges in terms of “easy access”: the buildings are old and listed, and to this end the fitting of a stair lift would be difficult. Whilst some ground floor spaces are accessible, with help to open up half doors, the majority of the College library is not wheelchair accessible due to steps. Similarly, teaching rooms at Redcliffe Centre are accessible only by stairs. Alternative provision for students using wheelchairs would therefore be facilitated by using accessible rooms in other buildings in, or near to, College Green. An accessible, ground floor meeting room at Redcliffe Office is available for meeting with members of staff on a one-to-one basis. Parking in the Cathedral grounds is currently possible for a limited number of students with disabilities.

When selecting locations for teaching at overseas hubs, the College will consider the needs and rights of students with disabilities, including equal access and disabled parking spaces.

For those with hearing impairments, the use of an individual hearing loop would be utilised. Other impairments would be dealt with on an individual basis in consultation with the Enablement Officer.

## **Specific Learning Differences**

The College is aware that there are many hidden aspects to these. Dyslexia is one common example (10-15% of the population) since it affects not only difficulties with reading/writing/spelling, it negatively influences organisation, use of time, processing of information, taking notes in lectures, working memory and copying notes, among others. It can therefore become a substantial barrier to achieving a student’s full potential, even where that is high. Valid certification of a Learning Difference by a relevant professional (usually a Chartered Educational Psychologist) is necessary. This identifies what appropriate reasonable adjustments can be made, prior to starting the course.

## **Admissions**

All applicants for admission to the College are assessed on the basis of their merits and abilities for the intended course, whether they have a disability or not. There is a separate part of the application process where the College encourages disclosure of any known disability, together with evidence of any professional certification for the same, and any breakdown of relevant needs assessment. This may form the basis for more detailed discussion of the anticipated reasonable, and possible, adjustments required to enable the student to achieve their educational potential while at the College. Adjustments cannot be applied retrospectively if no formal evidence is presented.

The student is encouraged to disclose the disability on the application form. That will then be directed from admissions to the Enablement Officer, who may then send out a more detailed questionnaire. When this is returned to the Enablement Officer, it would be assessed (in consultation with a medical specialist where relevant) and form, if necessary, the basis for a separate appointment with the Enablement Officer on presenting for admissions interview. This would greatly enhance anticipatory adjustments and reassure a capable but disabled candidate, and would give the opportunity to advise on seeking Disabled Student’s Allowance, if applicable (see <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/overview>). At this stage, in the rare situation that any prospective adjustments are believed to be “un-reasonable” either in terms of excessive cost or exceptional physical disruption or severe psychological distress or unacceptable risk of failure of the course, the College would reserve the right, after due discussion, to decline admission, with the reasons given in writing.

## **Curriculum and Assessment**

The College makes every effort to enable students with disability to fully participate and reach their full potential within their chosen course.

Assessment of validated courses consists of essays, dissertations and presentations, to varying extents. It is recognised that the nature of this impacts heavily on students with, for example, dyslexia, sensory impairments, dyspraxia, and some physical impairments. In order to prevent disadvantage to otherwise able students or discrimination because of recognised disability, individual needs require to be discussed, as soon as reasonably possible, with the student's Course Leader in conjunction with the Academic Coordinator, together with appropriate certification detail, so that approved reasonable adjustments and variations in assessment can be established, since they cannot be retrospectively applied. No adjustments can be made to marks "to take account" of a disability without a previously agreed variation in assessment.

The College will have regard to the recommendations made in the Specialist's report (Doctor or Educational Psychologist) presented to it. These would normally be accepted and implemented in full. If any specific recommendation is considered unreasonable, after discussion with the Enablement Officer, reasons will be given to the student in writing.

The College supports an anticipatory duty towards all with disability (Equality Act 2010, EHRC, etc). For example, certain common conditions like dyslexia have common characteristics exposed by word-based courses that can be anticipated, and reasonable adjustments made in advance to reduce additional barriers caused by the disability. In that example, these would include routine (i.e. matter of course) provision of lecture notes in advance of lectures to take account of the known differences in the processing of information, 25% minimum additional time for examinations, extension of assignment deadlines to take account of degree of research involved, etc. Once a disability is disclosed, ongoing discussions with the Course Leader and/or Academic Coordinator may lead to further adjustments, including approved variations in assessment. The overall aim of these types of provisions is to remove barriers brought about by a recognised disability, so that every student can have an equal opportunity to achieve full potential, in support of current disability legislation.

## **Support for Students with Disabilities, including Financial**

The Enablement Officer supports all students and potential students with disabilities by offering advice. The College recognises that students with disabilities may have additional costs in their chosen studies directly as a result of their disability. UK students (normally eligible) are encouraged to apply for Disabled Students' Allowance to help with these extra expenses. Students who need assessment for Dyslexia (a cost not covered by the DSA) can be put in touch with an approved specialist (normally a chartered Educational Psychologist) and should seek what financial help may be available (which varies between institutions and from time to time). The Enablement Officer is also able to advise about assistance with Dyslexia study skills and/or tutoring, and about sources of counselling support for students with all recognised disabilities.

Further advice may be obtained from the Disability, Dyslexia and Learning Support Service at the University of Gloucestershire:

General contact: the Disability Services Manager and Disability Advisers, University of Gloucestershire

The Disability, Dyslexia and Learning Support Service  
Park Campus - HL-107  
University of Gloucestershire  
The Park, Cheltenham  
Gloucestershire, GL50 2RH

Tel: 01242 714541

Email: [disability@glos.ac.uk](mailto:disability@glos.ac.uk)

Information for Students:

<http://www.glos.ac.uk/life/support/pages/disability-and-dyslexia.aspx>

Disability Students' Allowance is a Directgov website (<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas>)

### **Pastoral Support**

Part of the support offered by the Enablement Officer is providing help for the student with disability to make best use of the programme and its choices. To avoid making a choice of course content which does not especially disadvantage any student given the nature of the disability (indirect discrimination, though inadvertent), and because the Enablement Officer is aware of the nature of each student's disability, the Enablement Officer will discuss the student's preferences with them before choices are made, usually at or before the beginning of each stage of their degree. The Enablement Office may then liaise with the Course Leader to enable the student to navigate the programme effectively and to ensure that the student gains the support they need.

### **Training and Awareness**

The Enablement Officer supports students with special needs and implements the College's Policy. This includes arranging, maintaining and monitoring the College's provisions under the Enablement Policy for each student with a recognised disability. Arrangements are made on a regular basis for all staff to have updated appropriate inclusive disability awareness training at an approved level. A record is made of the practical implications for any such student in respect of their disability, the reasonable adjustments made and any approved variations in assessment agreed, copies given to the student and circulated to all relevant staff for each course. Under the process of monitoring the Enablement Officer will periodically run a questionnaire to both staff and students to gauge the effectiveness of the College's disability policy.

These arrangements reflect the College's commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and non-discrimination of those with disability, within a culture upholding inclusiveness.

### **Complaints Procedure and Improvements**

The College welcomes comment and reflection on its support processes, and is constantly seeking ways to improve its provisions for students. Where a student with a disability has reason to believe that the College is failing to meet its stated obligations in this Policy the matter should in the first instance be discussed with the Enablement Officer. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of that discussion, they may wish to make a formal Student Complaint through the College's procedures (see Student Complaints Procedure document) by submitting a Student Complaint Form, together with any relevant evidence. This Form should be submitted to the Academic Coordinator at [appealsandcomplaints@redcliffe.ac.uk](mailto:appealsandcomplaints@redcliffe.ac.uk). Should the complaint relate to the behaviour of the Academic Coordinator, the Form should be submitted to the Principal instead.

# Appendix

## Inclusive language: words to use and avoid when writing about disability

Published by the Office for Disability Issues, December 2018

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/inclusive-language-words-to-use-and-avoid-when-writing-about-disability>)

### 1. Language guidelines

Not everyone will agree on everything but there is general agreement on some basic guidelines.

#### 1.1 Collective terms and labels

The word 'disabled' is a description not a group of people. Use 'disabled people' not 'the disabled' as the collective term.

However, many deaf people whose first language is BSL consider themselves part of 'the deaf community' – they may describe themselves as 'Deaf', with a capital D, to emphasise their deaf identity.

Avoid medical labels. They say little about people as individuals and tend to reinforce stereotypes of disabled people as 'patients' or unwell.

Don't automatically refer to 'disabled people' in all communications – many people who need disability benefits and services don't identify with this term. Consider using 'people with health conditions or impairments' if it seems more appropriate.

#### 1.2 Positive not negative

Avoid phrases like 'suffers from' which suggest discomfort, constant pain and a sense of hopelessness.

Wheelchair users may not view themselves as 'confined to' a wheelchair – try thinking of it as a mobility aid instead.

#### 1.3 Everyday phrases

Most disabled people are comfortable with the words used to describe daily living. People who use wheelchairs 'go for walks' and people with visual impairments may be very pleased – or not – 'to see you'. An impairment may just mean that some things are done in a different way.

Common phrases that may associate impairments with negative things should be avoided, for example 'deaf to our pleas' or 'blind drunk'.

### 2. Words to use and avoid

Avoid passive, victim words. Use language that respects disabled people as active individuals with control over their own lives.

Avoid	Use
(the) handicapped, (the) disabled	disabled (people)
afflicted by, suffers from, victim of	has [name of condition or impairment]
confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound	wheelchair user
mentally handicapped, mentally defective, retarded, subnormal	with a learning disability (singular) with learning disabilities (plural)
cripple, invalid	disabled person

<b>Avoid</b>	<b>Use</b>
spastic	person with cerebral palsy
able-bodied	non-disabled
mental patient, insane, mad	person with a mental health condition
deaf and dumb; deaf mute	deaf, user of British Sign Language (BSL), person with a hearing impairment
the blind	people with visual impairments; blind people; blind and partially sighted people
an epileptic, diabetic, depressive, and so on	person with epilepsy, diabetes, depression or someone who has epilepsy, diabetes, depression
dwarf; midget	someone with restricted growth or short stature
fits, spells, attacks	seizures

### **3. Some tips on behaviour**

- use a normal tone of voice, don't patronise or talk down
- don't be too precious or too politically correct – being super-sensitive to the right and wrong language and depictions will stop you doing anything
- never attempt to speak or finish a sentence for the person you are talking to
- address disabled people in the same way as you talk to everyone else
- speak directly to a disabled person, even if they have an interpreter or companion with them