



UNIVERSITY OF
WEST LONDON
The **Career** University



Disability and Mental Health Support Handbook



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Welcome and Introduction

The University of West London is committed to ensuring that disabled people are provided with equal access to their chosen course of study and facilities at the university.

The University recognises the social model of disability, whereby the individual is understood to be disadvantaged not by their disability, but by social barriers such as the physical environment, methods of communication and prejudicial attitudes. The University is committed to working towards removing these barriers, and developing a fully inclusive learning and teaching environment for all students.

The University aims to anticipate the requirements of disabled students by integrating universal design into the curriculum and planning processes. The University will seek to make reasonable adjustments where possible in order to enable disabled students to reach their full potential at university.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide information and guidance on the support available to disabled students at the University of West London.



What Support is Available?

The Disability and Mental Health Team within Student Services provides confidential, specialist advice and guidance to all students, staff and applicants on a range of disability and mental health topics.

We support students with a wide range of disabilities, including but not limited to:

- Specific learning differences (such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD)
- Mental health difficulties (such as depression, bi-polar disorder)
- Long-term medical conditions (such as HIV, cancer, multiple sclerosis)
- Unseen disabilities (such as diabetes, asthma, epilepsy)
- Sensory impairments (such as blindness, hearing loss or deafness)
- Mobility or physical impairments (such as paralysis, arthritis).

The team provides a number of services to students once registered. These include:

- Information on support and reasonable adjustments at the University
- Information on additional funding which disabled students may be eligible to apply for, such as Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)
- Advice and screening specific learning differences
- Tailored Individual Support Plans (ISPs)
- Liaising with the Exam Office to implement recommended exam provisions
- Assistance in arranging non-medical helpers (such as note-takers and mentors).





International Disabled Students

The University is committed to supporting all of our disabled students, including international students.

We encourage all international disabled students, to get in touch with us to discuss support. International disabled students are not entitled to apply for DSA, however there may be other sources of funding available.

The Reasonable Adjustment Fund is a discretionary university fund designed to contribute towards any additional academic-related costs a student may incur as a result of their disability. An Adviser will assess a students' individual

needs before support is arranged.

The University is unable to fund any non-academic support costs arising because of a students' disability, for example personal care or support with day to day living support such as shopping, cooking or cleaning. Government welfare benefits are not available to international students so these costs will need to be met by the student or another source of funding.

Mental Health Support

The Disability and Mental Health Team are here to support students who experience mental health difficulties during their study. The Team have dedicated Mental Health Advisers who offer advice, information and support to staff and students around various mental health issues and topics.

In conjunction to this, the Team are committed to raising awareness, reducing stigma around mental health conditions and supporting our students to maintain positive mental health. A range of resources, events and workshops are available for students across the academic year to support them in creating a toolkit to maintain their mental health and wellbeing.

The Team can offer advice and support to students who are at a varying stages of their recovery journey. This includes students who have been diagnosed with a mental health condition, are in the early stages of receiving a diagnosis or who have no current diagnosis.

Students who have a diagnosed mental health condition can register with the team and may be entitled to a range of reasonable adjustments. They could also be eligible to receive support through the disabled student allowance, as detailed in this handbook.

The Team can also offer advice to students about how to get medical evidence or how to take the steps towards diagnosis, if this is something that the student would find beneficial to their recovery. They can also signpost students to appropriate internal and external support services.

As part of the wider wellbeing support offered at the university, any student can choose to register with the UWL counselling service or engage with the new 24 hour mental health and wellbeing platform TogetherAll.

 <https://togetherall.com/en-gb/>



Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 came into force to legally protect people from discrimination who have a protected characteristic.

The protected characteristics are disability, age, race, gender reassignment, religion, pregnancy or maternity, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership.

Definition of Disability under the Equality Act

The Act states that a person has a disability if they have 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.

'Substantial' means that it has more than a minor or trivial effect on the ability to do normal day to day activities. 'Long-term' means it is likely to last at least 12 months. Persons who are registered blind, have a severe disfigurement, MS, HIV or cancer will automatically qualify for protection under the Act. They do not have to satisfy the requirements outlined above.

The Equality Duty

The Equality Duty is a part of the Equality Act 2010 which sets out the duties of public bodies (which includes universities) to ensure that the needs of individuals are considered. The Equality Duty states that public bodies must have due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who possess a protected characteristic and those that do not.



Disclosure and Confidentiality

The Wellbeing Team provides a confidential service to students, which means that data about a student is not passed on to third parties without their express consent.

When a student registers with the Disability and Mental Health Team via the Student Hub, they will be required to complete a registration form. This is a record of who a student has or has not given consent for us to discuss their case with and, where appropriate, share relevant information.

The University of West London is fully committed to upholding the principles laid out in the General Data Protection Regulations (2018), Data Protection Act 2018 and Equality Act 2010. The University's Data Protection policy is available from the University's website and intranet. Under the Data Protection Act (2018) physical or mental health information is treated as a special category and considered as sensitive data. We therefore operate a confidential service, which means that information disclosed to us is not passed on without your explicit consent. A student can choose 'full' or 'restricted' disclosure.

Full Disclosure

The Wellbeing Team may need to disclose information in order to implement reasonable adjustments and support. This information will only be shared where necessary on a 'need to know' basis. We define 'need to know' as sharing sufficient information in order for us to

be able to implement support and reasonable adjustments effectively and with people who are involved in that process. Examples of who we may share information with may include (but is not limited to): academic staff, course leader, examination staff, library staff, health and safety staff and professional and regulatory bodies.

We will never share information with a student's parent/guardian or with another student without explicit written consent.

Restricted Disclosure

A student can choose to restrict disclosure to any party or individual outside of the Wellbeing Team. Please be aware this may limit the advice and support that the team and the University can provide. Students can discuss how restricted disclosure may affect their support with an Adviser. The level of disclosure can be changed at any time by contacting the Wellbeing Team.

A decision to break confidentiality will only be made in exceptional circumstances, when either you or someone else is deemed to be at risk of harm. If a circumstance is deemed exceptional the University is required to uphold its Duty of Care to students and break confidentiality. In these instances the Director of Student Services will be informed. In addition, information may be disclosed where Student Services staff would be liable to a civil or criminal court procedure if the information were not disclosed.

Registering with the Disability and Mental Health Team

It's important to us that students feel supported throughout their time at UWL. Therefore, if adjustments or support from the University is required, we invite students to register with us. Upon registering, we offer students a 1-1 confidential meeting with an Adviser from the team to discuss and agree an Individual Support Plan (ISP) which will outline any reasonable adjustments and support that may be needed.

Student Hub

UWL have an online booking system called the Student Hub to access any of the support offered by Student Services. It's quick and simple to use to register and book appointments with the Disability & Mental Health Team. The flowchart overleaf can offer more guidance on how the registration process works and steps involved to implement support.



1-1 Support Appointments

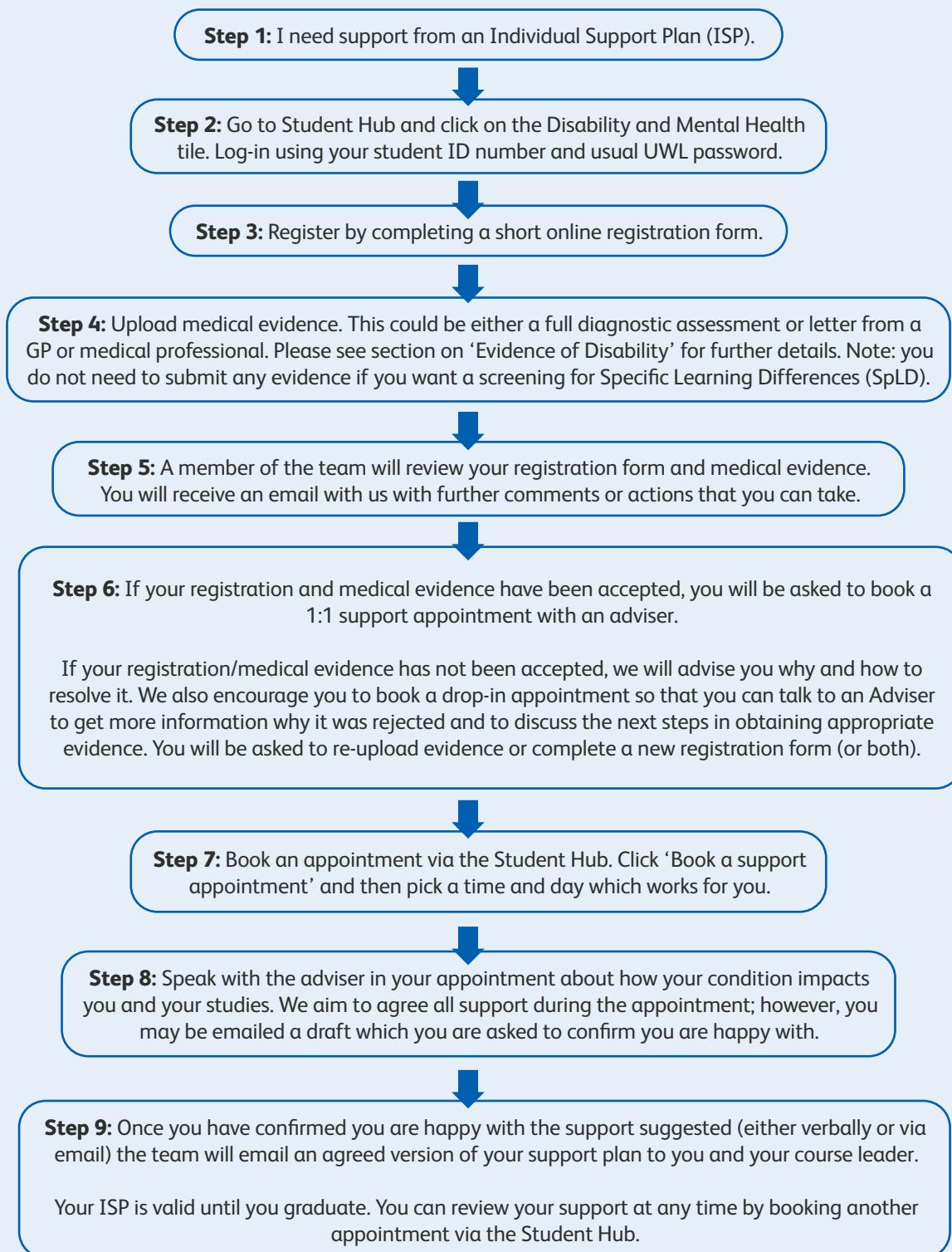
Once registered, a 1-1 confidential appointment can be booked to see either a Disability Adviser or a Mental Health Adviser. Appointments can last up to 50 minutes and can be in person or done remotely by telephone or video call (we use Zoom). If you need to cancel a booked appointment, you can do so via the Student Hub. Please try to give us at least 24 hours' notice so that we can release the appointment slot to another student.

Drop-in Sessions

Drop-in sessions are designed for you to discuss any quick queries with an Adviser. An appointment can be for up to 10 minutes and can be used to book a follow-up appointment if appropriate. You don't have to be registered to book a drop-in.

Visit our Wellbeing Service Communities page on Blackboard for a demo video of how to register with us on Student Hub.

Steps to register with the Disability and Mental Health Team and get support



Visit our **Wellbeing Service Communities** page on Blackboard for demo videos of how to register with us on Student Hub.

Evidence of Disability

In order to access support or reasonable adjustments, evidence of a student's disability must be confirmed in writing by an appropriately qualified professional.

Students with a disability or mental health difficulty must provide a recent letter from one of the following:

- GP
- Consultant
- Another suitably qualified medical specialist, such as a mental health practitioner or specialist nurse.

Students with a specific learning difference (such as dyslexia or dyspraxia) must provide:

- A formal diagnostic assessment report carried out by either a registered Educational Psychologist or Specialist Assessor with a clear diagnosis.

All evidence must be contemporary and refer directly to the students' disability and how it affects them. It is the students' responsibility to provide us with evidence of their disability. If the student does not have evidence of their disability, then we can provide advice and guidance on how to obtain it.

Support during Pregnancy

Students who are pregnant are able to register with the team and if necessary we will put support in place via a temporary Individual Support Plan. Pregnant students are also encouraged to contact their personal tutor so any health and safety risks can be assessed. Students can also seek advice from Student Services for information on how a pregnancy may affect student funding or immigration/visa status.

Assessment for Specific Learning Differences (SpLD)

If a student thinks that they may have a specific learning difference, such as dyslexia, they will need to arrange an appointment with a Disability Adviser to carry out a screening. If the screening is positive, the team can refer you for a SpLD diagnostic assessment to assess your learning needs and make a formal diagnosis. Funding for a diagnostic assessment will be discussed at the initial screening appointment. It can take several weeks to arrange an assessment and then implement any recommended support. Therefore students are encouraged to contact us as early as possible.

Reasonable Adjustments

Under the Equality Act, the University has an obligation to make adjustments for disabled students once it becomes aware that they have a disability.

A reasonable adjustment is a change that the University can make to the way in which a course is delivered, or the way in which we carry out assessments to remove barriers for disabled students. Reasonable adjustments are usually tailored to the needs of an individual student and will be recorded on a student's Individual Support Plan.

Individual Support Plan (ISP)

Once a student is registered and has provided appropriate evidence, an Individual Support Plan will be developed. This is a confidential document that details the learning and teaching support provisions a student requires and is intended to assist the student in communicating their requirements to tutors and course leaders.

Students will be involved in the process of developing their ISP. Once a student is happy with the content of their ISP it will be shared (with the student's permission) with their course leader, who will be asked to circulate this to the student's personal tutor and teaching staff.

ISPs are only effective once they have been agreed by the student and signed off by a Disability Adviser. The reasonable adjustments outlined in the ISP cannot be applied retrospectively.

Sympathetic Marking Guidelines

Students with specific learning differences and some hearing impairments are entitled to attach a cover sheet to their coursework to avoid being placed at a disadvantage because of their disability or penalised during the marking stage.

Electronic Cover Sheet

If coursework is submitted electronically via Turnitin, a cover sheet can be accessed via MyRegistry and attached to assessments. A short video explaining how to attach cover sheets electronically is available on MyRegistry.

Students can download a copy of an electronic coversheet from MyRegistry and attach it to their assessment before submitting it via Turnitin. Students will receive an email with instructions and a video on how to do this.


If coursework is submitted by physical hand-in, paper cover sheets can be requested directly from the Disability and Mental Health Team.

Marking guidelines are provided to assessors which offer recommendations on how to assess the piece of work in order to mitigate the effects of a student's specific learning difficulty, thus ensuring the student can fairly demonstrate their potential. Cover sheets may not be taken into account where it compromises any genuine competency standards or learning outcomes.

Extensions

We strongly encourage students to manage their own time, keep on top of their own coursework schedule and work to deadlines as time management is a skill that all students will need during university and beyond. However, due to the nature of some disabilities (particularly when the effects of a disability fluctuate), there may be times a student may need extra time to complete an assignment. It would therefore be a reasonable adjustment to permit a request for an extension on the grounds of disability.

The Disability and Mental Health Team do not authorise extensions directly; the student must in the first instance complete an online Extension Form. Further extensions and their length are granted at the discretion of the module leader.

 www.uwl.ac.uk/current-students/supportcurrent-students/academic-support/extensions-and-mitigating-circumstances

Examinations and Assessments

The purpose of exam provisions is to make reasonable adjustments to the assessment format to reduce any disadvantage a disabled student faces due to their disability. An example of adjustments for students could include; extra time, rest breaks or use of a computer.

A student's ISP will identify what reasonable adjustments need to be put in place. These adjustments will have been discussed during the planning of the ISP with an Adviser.

The Academic Schools are responsible for organising any adjustments for 'in class' tests. These are tests that fall outside of the formal exam period. When students become aware that they have an 'in class' test, they are

advised to speak with their module leader to discuss possible adjustments. If adjustments are not possible for an in-class test, you should discuss with your module leader what may be a reasonable alternative.

In some cases, dependant on the nature of a disability, alternative assessments may be considered. Alternative assessments may be considered if a student has difficulties accessing the usual form of assessment because of their disability. If required, alternative assessments will be decided on individual need and will be agreed by the Module Leader and student. Alternative assessments can only be possible if it does not compromise any genuine competency standards.

The Examination Department are responsible for implementing agreed examination reasonable adjustments.

Please note: all requests for examination reasonable adjustments must be agreed with the Disability and Mental Health Team **at least four weeks before the start of the examination period.** If a request is not made within this timescale, it may not be possible to implement the adjustments required.

Loan Equipment and Lockers

The Disability and Mental Health Team has a small selection of digital voice recorders and radio aids which can be loaned to disabled students. This equipment is prioritised to international students, students who experience delays with their Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) and Further Education (FE) students. Please discuss your requirements with an Adviser for more information.

A number of lockers are available for students who may require access to one because of their disability. Please discuss your requirements with an Adviser.

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) are grants designed to contribute towards some of the additional costs a student may incur whilst studying as a result of their disability. They are not means tested and students do not have to pay them back.

What can DSA help pay for?

Depending on the student's specific needs, DSAs can help towards the cost of:

- Specialist Equipment: specialist software or equipment
- Non-Medical Helpers: support workers such as a specialist study skills tutor, communication support worker or specialist mentor
- Travel: mileage costs or cost of a taxi to travel to and from University, above and beyond the cost of public transport
- General Allowance: other disability related costs related to studying such as printing, paper and ink cartridges.




Who is eligible for DSA?

Students can apply for DSA if they:

- Have a disability, long term health condition, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty that affects their ability to study
- Are an undergraduate or postgraduate student
- Are enrolled on a course which lasts at least a year
- Qualify for Student Finance.

Students should make a DSA application to the appropriate funding body. Please visit the relevant website for more information on DSA and to submit an application form.

For students living in:

- England:  [gov.uk/disabled-studentsallowances-dsas/overview](https://www.gov.uk/disabled-studentsallowances-dsas/overview)
- Wales:  [studentfinancewales.co.uk](https://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk)
- Northern Ireland:  [studentfinancenir.co.uk](https://www.studentfinancenir.co.uk)
- Scotland:  [saas.gov.uk](https://www.saas.gov.uk)
- Students enrolled on a non-medical healthcare course that started before 01/08/2017 may be eligible to apply for an NHS Bursary.t:  [nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students/816.aspx](https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/Students/816.aspx)

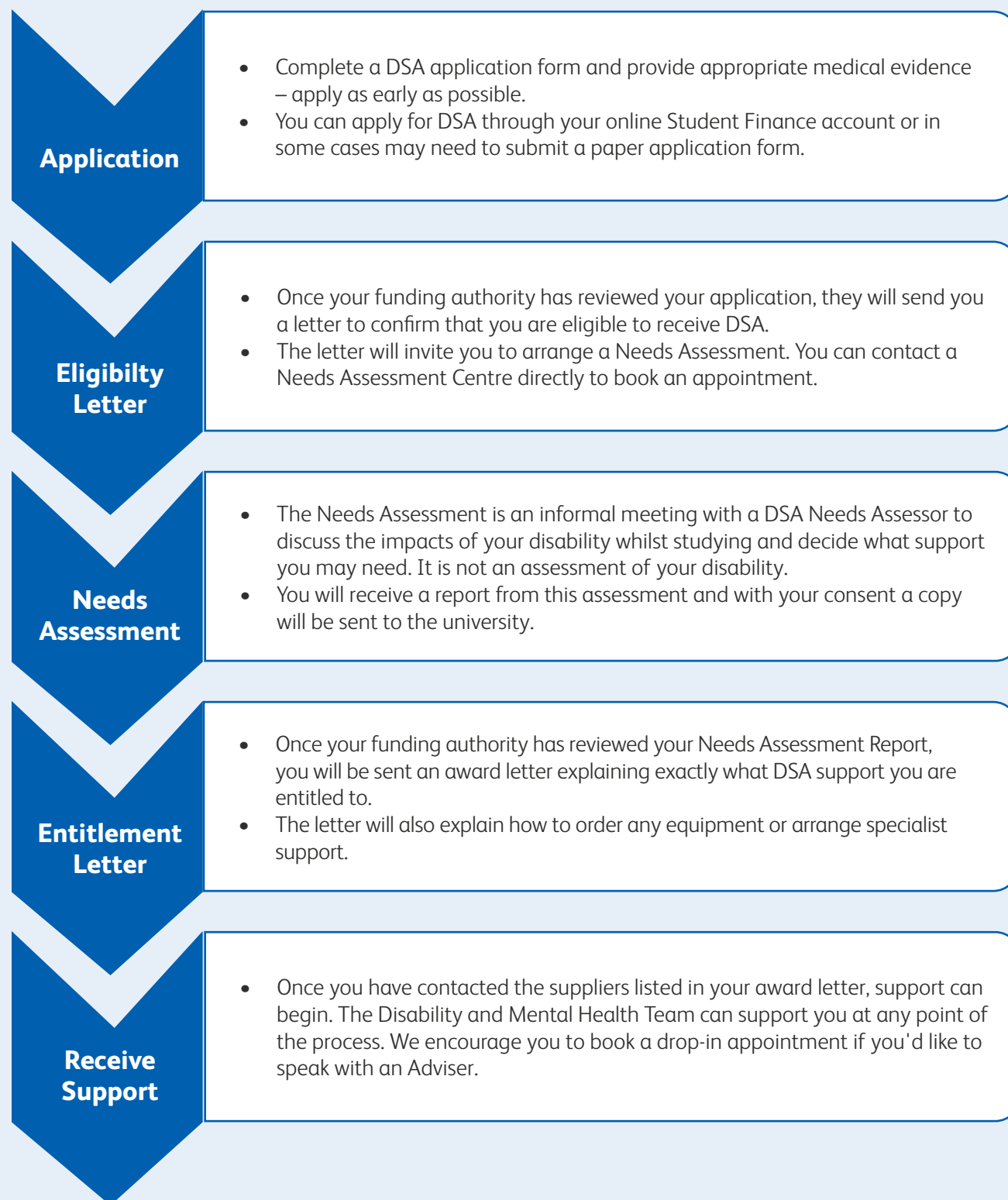
International students and students on Apprenticeship courses are not eligible to apply for DSA. If you are not eligible to apply for DSA, please make an appointment to see an Adviser to discuss possible alternative support or funding available to you.

What evidence do I need to provide to apply for DSA?

To apply for DSA, students must provide evidence of their disability, long-term medical condition, specific learning difficulty or mental health difficulty. Evidence of their disability could be a letter from a GP, consultant or another suitably qualified professional. If you haven't got suitable evidence, you can also ask a medical professional to complete a DSA evidence form. You can get this online or ask the team for a copy. Students are responsible for any cost involved in obtaining evidence of your disability.

Students with a Specific Learning Difficulty such as dyslexia must provide a copy of a 'diagnostic assessment' from a practitioner psychologist or suitably qualified specialist teacher.

An overview of the DSA process



Assistive Technology and Library Facilities

Assistive Technology

There is a range of Assistive Technology available for disabled students to use at each campus at Ealing, Brentford and Reading. Assistive Technology that is available includes:


- JAWS: screen-reading software for blind users that reads out the information that is on the screen
- SuperNova: screen magnification software for visually impaired users
- Dragon: speech-to-text software that transforms everything that is dictated into text
- Mind Manager: mind mapping software which can help students plan their assignments
- ClaroRead: text-to-speech software that reads documents out loud
- Enlarged desktop monitors
- Ergonomic keyboards and mice
- Ergonomic chairs and electric height adjustable tables
- CCTV desktop magnifier for visually impaired users that can magnify books and documents.



Library Facilities

The Library offers the following provisions to disabled students:

- Extended loan periods for books
- Assistance with fetching books
- Ordering books for collection
- Assistance with printing and scanning
- Library inductions
- Private and small study spaces suitable to work independently or with a support worker. If you want to access these rooms, you can book them with a Library staff member directly or via the Library website:

 www.uwl.ac.uk/current-students/library/about-library-and-archive/book-study-space-library

Alternative Format Service

The Library offers a service to provide books in alternative formats to disabled students who cannot access printed materials. This service is offered to any student who has a visual impairment, specific learning difficulty or any other condition that makes accessing printed material difficult. To request a book, please complete the online form:

 www.uwl.ac.uk/library-alternative-request-form

More information on the library services available to disabled students can be found on their website:

 www.uwl.ac.uk/current-students/library/about-library-and-archive/library-services-disabled-students

Accessibility

The University is committed to making all our buildings, facilities and services accessible to all our students, staff and visitors.

The University is working in partnership with AccessAble who provides advice and access guides for places and venues across the UK. Please visit the AccessAble website to view the Access Guides for the University of West London:

 accessible.co.uk/organisations/university-of-west-london

If a student experiences mobility difficulties because of their disability, the Disability and Mental Health Team is happy to arrange a campus orientation for them to become familiar with the campus facilities.

Car Parking

Parking on both SMR and Brentford sites is strictly limited. A limited number of accessible parking bays are available at both SMR and Brentford for those students who possess a blue disabled badge. This provision is offered on a first-come first-served basis and is not guaranteed. Students who have a blue badge will be required to show their student ID card each time they enter the car park via security.

University Shuttle Bus

There is a free fully accessible University Shuttle Bus available for all student and staff which links the Ealing and Brentford campuses with South Ealing and Ealing Broadway tube stations. A timetable for the shuttle bus service can be accessed from the portal, University reception and the website;

 uwl.ac.uk/location

You can also get live services times on the web-app:

 uwlshuttle.utrack.com

Accommodation

We know that accommodation is key to your university experience – you want to love where you live.

The University works with a number of residences to offer a range of accommodation including shared flats and houses. If you have any particular access requirements, the Accommodation Team will work with the Disability and Mental Health Team to advise and support your individual needs.

Further information can be found at:

 www.uwl.ac.uk/accommodation

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP)

A Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan can be developed for disabled students who may need assistance escaping the building in the event of an emergency. A plan will be discussed between you and a Wellbeing Adviser and implemented by your Academic School and the Health and Safety Team.

Recording Taught Sessions

As a reasonable adjustment under the Equality Act, the University of West London can permit disabled students to audio record lectures and taught sessions, for example, if a student has difficulties with note-taking or concentration. If recording taught sessions has been formally agreed then students should follow the guidance below:


- The Disability and Mental Health Team will inform the course leader and academic staff through an Individual Support Plan (ISP) that a student is permitted to record taught sessions. The student is asked, out of courtesy, to speak to module tutors at the start of each module and inform them that they intend to make personal recordings. This helps to maintain awareness amongst staff and to remind them to speak clearly.
- Whilst academic staff should not unreasonably refuse a student the opportunity to record their sessions, there may be some instances where it is not appropriate for students to make a recording; this is particularly the case on some health courses where confidential issues may be discussed. This may also be the case for some interactive seminars where there are multiple students contributing towards a class discussion. Lecturers will seek permission from the Head of School if a student is refused the opportunity to record lectures. Students are reminded that the sharing of any information of this type would constitute a breach of confidentiality and should be avoided other than for transcription purposes. Such a breach of confidentiality may have serious consequences, particularly for those studying on a professional course or which are regulated by professional bodies.
- Students should note that the content of any lecture/taught session remains the intellectual property of the person delivering it. Recordings must only be used for the student's personal study; they must not reproduce it or pass it on to anyone else other than for their own transcription purposes. Recordings should be destroyed at the end of the period of study at the University. If a student were to treat the recording as their own work or fail to reference it in an assignment they may be charged with plagiarism. If a student misuses an audio recording in any way, it will lead to serious disciplinary action from the University.
- Students are required to seek prior written permission from the lecturer concerned if they wish to video record.
- UWL Replay is the university's lecture recording system and is available in most teaching rooms. If a lecture is recorded using UWL Replay, the recording will be available on Blackboard for students to access.



Useful contacts

Student Hub

Online access to Student Services

 studenthub.uwl.ac.uk/

Disability and Mental Health

 **020 8231 2739**

 wellbeing@uwl.ac.uk

Counselling Service

 **020 8231 2218**

 counsellor@uwl.ac.uk

 www.uwl.ac.uk/counselling

Student Funding and Immigration Advice

 **020 8231 2591**

 studentadvice@uwl.ac.uk

Inter-Faith Adviser

Interfaith Advisor Liz offers confidential appointments of pastoral support - a listening ear, help and advice - to students of all religious backgrounds and none.

 **020 8231 2365**

 www.uwl.ac.uk/student-life/faith

 Faith@uwl.ac.uk

Academic Support

The Engagement Team offers academic support to all students through booking a 1-1 appointment or drop-in session. They also offer study skills workshops, maths and language support and opportunities to join their peer mentor scheme. 1-1s and workshops can be booked through the Student Hub.

 Academic.Support@uwl.ac.uk

 www.uwl.ac.uk/academicsupport

Welfare Team

Provide impartial confidential advice, urgent and crisis support and information on a wide range of issues.

 **020 8231 2313**

 studentwelfare@uwl.ac.uk

Careers Team

 **020 8231 2701**

 careers@uwl.ac.uk

Placement and Employment Services

 **020 8231 2700**

 PES@uwl.ac.uk

Accommodation

 **020 8231 2335**

 Accommodation@uwl.ac.uk

Library

 **020 8231 2405 (Ealing)**

 **020 8209 4434 (Reading)**

 library@uwl.ac.uk

Students' Union

 **020 8231 2276**

 uwl.su@uwl.ac.uk

 www.uwlsu.com

Florence Road and Bramley Road GP Surgery

 **020 8567 2111**

 www.florenceandbramleyroadsurgeries.nhs.uk

Samaritans

 **116 123**

 jo@samaritans.org

**University of
West London
Ealing Site**
St Mary's Road
Ealing
London W5 5RF

**University of
West London
Brentford Site**
Boston Manor Road
Brentford
Middlesex TW8 9GA

**University of
West London
Reading Site**
Fountain House
2 Queens Walk
Reading RG1 7QF

Tel: 0800 036 8888
Int: +44 (0)20 8231 2468

www.uwl.ac.uk

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