

Student Disability Policy

Index

<u>1.</u>	<u>Introduction</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>2.</u>	<u>Scope</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>3.</u>	<u>Studying in higher education</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>4.</u>	<u>Legal Context</u>	<u>4</u>
	4.1 Definitions	5
<u>5.</u>	<u>Social model of disability</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>6.</u>	<u>Inclusive learning environment</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>7.</u>	<u>Reasonable adjustments</u>	<u>7</u>
	7.1 Maintenance of academic or other standards	7
	7.2 Financial considerations	7
	7.3 Funding / other services available to the student	7
	7.4 Practicality	8
	7.5 Health and safety	8
	7.6 Effect on other people, including students	8
<u>8.</u>	<u>Encouraging disclosure</u>	<u>8</u>
	8.1 Admissions	8
	8.2 Facilitating disclosure	9
	8.3 Confidentiality	9
<u>9.</u>	<u>Non-disclosure</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>10.</u>	<u>Initial assessment of needs: The Disability and Wellbeing Office</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>11.</u>	<u>International students</u>	<u>11</u>
<u>12.</u>	<u>Financial support for students with a disability</u>	<u>11</u>
	12.1 Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)	11
	12.2 Bloomsbury Institute Disability Support Fund	11
	12.3 Bloomsbury Institute SpLD Diagnostic Assessment Fund	11
	12.4 Timescale for processing an application for both funds	12
	12.5 Awards for both funds	12
<u>13.</u>	<u>Mental health support</u>	<u>13</u>
	13.1 Togetherall	13
	13.2 Self-help and online resources	13
	13.3 Mental Health First Aid	13

<u>14.</u>	<u>Guidance for external Non-Medical Helper providers</u>	<u>13</u>
14.1	Monitoring DSA funding and invoicing responsibilities	14
<u>15.</u>	<u>Related regulations, policies and procedures</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>16.</u>	<u>Review of the Student Disability Policy</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Appendix A</u>		<u>15</u>
<u>1.</u>	<u>Assessments and timetabling arrangements</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>2.</u>	<u>Examination and coursework adjustments</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>3.</u>	<u>General guidance on examination arrangements for students</u>	<u>16</u>
3.1	Guidance on the role of readers in examinations	16
3.2	Guidance on the role of scribes in examinations	16
3.3	Guidance on the role of prompters in examinations	17
3.4	Guidance on using approved rest breaks in examinations	17
3.5	Guidance on the use of computers in examinations	18
<u>4.</u>	<u>Guidance for external NMH providers</u>	<u>18</u>
4.1	Initial contact with the student	18
4.2	Appropriate location for delivering the support	19
4.3	Communication and feedback	19
4.4	Access to note-taking/support worker support	20
<u>5.</u>	<u>Bloomsbury Institute Disability Support Fund</u>	<u>20</u>
5.1	Application process	20
5.2	Fund amount	21
5.3	Payment	21
5.4	Monitoring and reporting	21

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This Student Disability Policy will be reviewed annually by the Document Lead. Any significant changes beyond the scope of an annual review will require the approval of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC).

1. Introduction

Bloomsbury Institute is firmly committed to offering the best possible learning and teaching opportunities and student experience. This policy outlines the ways in which Bloomsbury Institute addresses the needs of students with disabilities. It is designed to be read by prospective and current students as well as members of staff.

Central to the Student Disability Policy is the intention to take account of individual needs and to work with students with disabilities to find appropriate and practical reasonable adjustments to ensure that our learning and teaching environment is as accessible as possible.

We encourage applicants and existing students to declare a disability at application or anytime throughout their course so that we can make them aware of possible entitlements and the support that is available to assist them to achieve their potential in higher education. Information provided to us is held in confidence and is shared with colleagues only with applicants' or students' written permission, and disability is in no way linked with academic decisions regarding offers of places.

2. Scope

This Student Disability Policy sets out Bloomsbury Institute's commitment to students with a disability, providing a framework to contribute to the ongoing development of an enabling and inclusive environment for students and service users of the Institute.

3. Studying in higher education

We recognise that studying for a higher education degree is a great opportunity. We are committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, students with a disability (including students with specific learning differences such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia) receive the support they need to take advantage of that opportunity and succeed.

There is no statutory duty on a student to disclose a disability. However, institutions are expected to take reasonable steps to find out about a student's disability and facilitate disclosure. We cannot act upon any disclosure until the student provides written consent for the sharing of information regarding their disability.

In accordance with current legislation, we make reasonable adjustments so that applicants and students with disabilities are not placed at a 'substantial disadvantage.'

Where a disability impacts upon professional fitness to train/practise standards, students are personally responsible for disclosing relevant information about their disability/disabilities or medical condition(s) in line with professional accreditation requirements.

4. Legal Context

The Public Sector Equality Duty, with which all public sector organisations must comply came into force in April 2011. Although we are not a public sector organisation, we are committed to matching and exceeding any requirements aimed at preventing unlawful discrimination of our students. The Equality Act 2010 explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The Act further states that meeting different needs involves taking steps to account for people's disabilities. It describes fostering good relations as tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups. It states that compliance may involve treating some people differently from others. The Equality Act 2010 also provides protection against discrimination, harassment, and victimisation on the grounds of disability.

Bloomsbury Institute will manage the process of information sharing and will treat all personal and sensitive data in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. Access to disability-related information will be provided on a 'need-to-know' basis and with the consent of the applicant or student only, in order for reasonable adjustments to be implemented. In accordance with Bloomsbury Institute's [Records Management Policy](#), [Privacy Notice](#), [Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy](#)¹, we will retain records for up to 6 years from course completion or withdrawal depending on the type of document. After that time, all documents will be deleted (please refer to the above policies). Further details of how long we will keep each type of record can be found in the [Records Management Policy](#)².

For more information about how we handle personal information, and data protection legislation, please see our [Privacy Notice](#)³. More information about this is available from our Data Protection Officer who can be contacted at dpo@bil.ac.uk.

4.1 Definitions

Under the Equality Act 2010:

A person has a disability 'if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'. 'Substantial' is defined by the Act as 'more than minor or trivial'.

An impairment is considered to have a long-term effect if:

- it has lasted for at least 12 months
- it is likely to last for at least 12 months, or
- it is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person

Normal day-to-day activities are not defined in the Act, but they can include mobility, manual dexterity, lifting, hearing, eyesight, speech, memory, and the ability to concentrate, learn or understand. The Act defines "substantial" as being more than trivial and "long-term" as likely to last twelve months or being more than twelve months. Any impairment which would substantially affect a person, but which is controlled by medical treatment or prosthesis, is at present covered by the definition of disability. The definition includes cancer, HIV/AIDS and Multiple Sclerosis effectively from the point of diagnosis.

Whether a person has a disability is generally determined by the effect the physical or mental impairment has on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

People who have had a disability in the past are protected against discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. This may be particularly relevant for people with fluctuating and/or recurring impairments. The Equality Act 2010 requires higher education institutions to make reasonable adjustments for staff, students and service users in relation to:

- provisions, criteria or practices
- physical features

¹ Available at: <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/section-3/>

² Available at: <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/section-3/>

³ Available at: <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/section-3/>

- auxiliary aids

These adjustments apply where a person with a disability is placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to people without a disability. It is important to note that with regard to direct discrimination, an institution can treat a person with a disability favourably compared to a person with no disability, and this would not amount to unlawful discrimination against the person with no disability.

Under the Equality Act 2010, reasonable adjustments are required where staff, students or visitors with a disability personally experience substantial disadvantage in comparison with people with no disability. The measure of what is a reasonable adjustment will depend on an institution's circumstances in relation to the:

- resources available
- cost of the adjustment
- practicality of the changes
- potential benefit to other staff, students and visitors.

5. Social model of disability

We are committed to working towards the social model of disability, which emphasises the importance of changing society's attitudes and beliefs about people with impairments rather than trying to change the individuals themselves. It suggests that impairments are transformed into disabilities by the negative attitudes of society when people tend to see the impairment rather than the person behind it. The social model does not deny the problem of disability, but it is focused more on empowering individuals and helping them to remove the barriers that have been set by the rest of society.

Having an impairment does not mean that the individual has fewer rights than someone who does not. It is up to them to talk about their disability and disclose it. Some disabilities are obvious to the naked eye whilst some disabilities like autism and dyslexia are not.

6. Inclusive learning environment

Our curriculum design, teaching and learning practice is inclusive. Our inclusive focus extends to the life cycle of our students from recruitment to graduation and employment, and to our alumni, and is captured within our Inclusive Learning Environment Framework document.

We have a diverse student and staff population and welcome people from different backgrounds as we consider our diverse background to be a strength and valuable resource in creating an inclusive learning environment. It is for this reason we have taken into consideration our students' input and feedback when designing and delivering our own validated degrees.

As an institution, we recognise that there might be barriers that affect our students' learning and so our vision, is to create a teaching and learning environment where our students, supported by our staff, can participate and achieve their full potential. We have therefore devised a number of different services to try and eliminate these barriers. These include:

- Our Centre for Student Engagement, Wellbeing and Success (SEWS) which, with its open-door policy, provides support and guidance in areas related to student engagement, student wellbeing, and employability.
- Our Disability and Wellbeing Office which also has an open-door policy and is there to help our students make the most of their time with us by providing advice and support.
- The availability of financial support to students who struggle financially or need help to fund a SpLD assessment.

- Employability support involving activities and events that are aimed at helping students develop transferable skills and secure employment.
- Learning Enhancement offers a range of services including one-to-one support with study skills, presentation feedback, assessment feedback, study skills workshops and online study resources.
- The Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) scheme where trained students help and support their peers by leading supplementary study sessions.

We also ensure our students play an active role in their academic environment and serve on different key committees.

We are committed to meeting the needs of our diverse student population and we are constantly striving to provide an environment that facilitates inclusivity.

7. Reasonable adjustments

Bloomsbury Institute will ensure that wherever possible reasonable adjustments are put in place when an applicant or a student with a disability may be placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a person who does not have a disability. Examples of reasonable adjustments for applicants or students include making appropriate arrangements in such activities as:

- teaching, including lectures, seminars, and workshops.
- examinations and assessments.

Adjustments may include specific examination arrangements, provision of additional support for learning (provided through the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)), adjustments to assessment practices, accommodation arrangements, and specific access issues such as the use of guide dogs.

Students are responsible for requesting any review of implemented reasonable adjustments if such adjustments are not proving to be effective in meeting their entitlements.

7.1 Maintenance of academic or other standards

The law does not expect academic or other prescribed standards to be sacrificed. Staff will, however, need to be clear about which aspects (e.g. teaching and assessment methods) are core to a particular course and cannot be adapted without jeopardising standards, and those which are more peripheral.

Whilst there is no duty to make any adjustment to a competence standard itself, the duty does apply to the assessment of that standard. Institutions are therefore required to make adjustments to the ways in which they assess competence standards so that students with a disability are not disadvantaged when demonstrating their competence by the assessment method.

The requirement for students studying for a law degree to demonstrate a particular level of knowledge of certain areas of law in order to obtain the degree is a competence standard.

7.2 Financial considerations

The cost of making a particular adjustment and the funds available to an institution would be considered in determining reasonableness.

7.3 Funding / other services available to the student

The law does not expect institutions to duplicate support a student may be receiving from elsewhere. For instance, an institution would not be expected to provide a sign language interpreter for a Deaf

student on occasions where he or she already employs one funded through the Disabled Students' Allowance.

7.4 Practicality

The extent to which an adjustment is practical will be considered taking into account such factors as the effect on staff workload or the availability of services or resources.

7.5 Health and safety

Staff and Bloomsbury Institute must operate within relevant health and safety legislation, which may make some adjustments unreasonable. However, care should be taken that spurious health and safety considerations are not used as an excuse for avoiding making a reasonable adjustment.

7.6 Effect on other people, including students

If an adjustment would cause significant disadvantage to other students, then it may not be reasonable to make it. This disadvantage must be significant, not merely an inconvenience. The level of disadvantage to other students must be weighed against the substantial disadvantage to the student with a disability in deciding which adjustments might be reasonable.

8. Encouraging disclosure

8.1 Admissions

It is the express policy of Bloomsbury Institute that every applicant is assessed on academic merits and the applicant's potential ability to meet the requirements for the course. A disability, specific learning difficulty or long-term health condition will therefore not affect any decision made on academic grounds.

If an applicant has disclosed a disability, specific learning difficulty or long-term health condition, and if an offer is made based on academic merit, details will be forwarded to our Disability and Wellbeing Office who will contact the applicant in order to discuss the support we can provide. In very rare situations there may be elements of the course that cannot be delivered even with reasonable adjustments. In these situations, staff within our Disability and Wellbeing Office will discuss the options with the applicant.

It is essential to make it as straightforward and easy as possible for students to disclose information which will enable all staff to support them well. For some students, declaring a disability is straightforward. Their disability may be obvious, or they may be familiar with the support systems involved, having previously received support in education. Other students may be concerned that they would be put at risk by declaring this disability, perhaps because their disability is hidden (e.g. impaired hearing) or carries a social stigma (e.g. mental health difficulty), or because it is new for the student concerned.

Applicants or students do not have an obligation to tell us about their disability. The purpose of an applicant or student telling us about their disability is so that suitable support can be arranged. However, we have an 'anticipatory duty' to have systems in place which will accommodate the needs of students with a disability, to avoid the need for ad hoc arrangements.

Applicants with a disability/medical health condition/SpLD are strongly encouraged to make early contact with the Disability and Wellbeing Office before submitting their application. This will enable us to inform them of the support available and to discuss with them which reasonable adjustments they might require during their course of study. Knowing about a student's requirements in advance will enable us to prepare and arrange support in time for the start of the student's course. We therefore encourage students to disclose their disability/medical condition/SpLD to us as soon as possible. Not doing so may affect our ability to make the necessary adjustments.

If an applicant or student declares a disability/medical health condition/SpLD after an offer is made, their details are sent to the Disability and Wellbeing Office who will contact them and arrange a meeting. We will not pass any information about a student's disability to any other member of staff or external body without the student's express consent. In the case where it is beyond our means to provide the adjustment required, then we may need to review any offer of support made.

In order to meet a student's academic or personal support needs, we may need to convey specific information to other members of staff and external agencies. The Disability and Wellbeing Office will then ask the student to sign a disclosure consent form before any information is passed onto others and before support arrangements are put in place.

Students are advised to read the 'Disability and Wellbeing Office – What we do with your data' document before they sign the 'Consent to share information' form. Both documents are available from the Disability and Wellbeing Office.

8.2 Facilitating disclosure

We recognise that some individuals may be reluctant to disclose their disability and it may only be at a point when they are experiencing difficulties with their course that they choose to disclose. We facilitate disclosure in the following ways:

- By ensuring websites include information on the support services available to applicants and students with disabilities.
- By embedding disability disclosure into the Admissions process. This includes automatic referrals to the Disability and Wellbeing team of details of all applicants with a disability who are made an offer by the institution. The Disability and Wellbeing team will then contact each applicant.
- Provide reassurance that any information will be treated confidentially and as sensitive personal data and therefore processed in line with our [Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy](#) ⁴
- Clarify the breadth of conditions the term “disability” encompasses. Many applicants and students do not realise they are eligible to receive disability-related support.

8.3 Confidentiality

- All information supplied regarding your disability is stored electronically and will be held securely and confidentially within the Disability and Wellbeing Office and in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulations (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 as outlined in our [Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy](#).
- A student or applicant with a disability has a right to request that the existence or nature of their disability be treated as confidential. In such cases, the recommended support can be shared (as agreed with the student in terms of what is shared), but the nature of the disability must remain confidential. In some instances, this will limit the Institute's ability to implement satisfactory adjustments or result in no adjustments being provided.
- If students would like to have individual adjustments put in place, with their consent, the Disability and Wellbeing team will need to inform the relevant staff across the Institute who are responsible for arranging the adjustments. The students' consent also allows us to liaise with relevant external providers of support e.g. organisations

⁴ Available at: <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/section-3/>

who provide non-medical helpers, funding bodies, Disabled Students' Allowance assessment centres etc.

9. Non-disclosure

When a student asks for information about their disclosure not to be passed on, this must be respected, even if it means we are then unable to implement reasonable adjustments.

It is important to record that the student has been given the opportunity to disclose, and that they have decided that the information is not to be passed on. The student will be informed of this record.

The student should be made aware that in this situation:

- it may not be possible for us to implement reasonable adjustments, including exam accommodations.
- if they need help to evacuate a building in the event of an emergency, non-disclosure may mean putting themselves at risk.
- for courses with Fitness to Practise criteria, non-disclosure may later compromise their professional registration.

It remains open to the student to disclose their disability at a later date, at which point appropriate support can be arranged if deadlines are met.

10. Initial assessment of needs: The Disability and Wellbeing Office

Students are advised to contact the Disability and Wellbeing Office as soon as possible, either prior to starting their studies or on their arrival although they can make disclosures at any time during their studies. An initial assessment of a student's academic needs will be carried out in a discussion with staff within the Disability and Wellbeing Office. This discussion will include their previous experiences, any previous support arrangements within an educational context, and consideration of any supporting medical or educational psychological evidence. This discussion will identify potential barriers in the learning environment and ways in which these barriers can be eliminated or overcome.

The outcome of any discussions with staff within the Disability and Wellbeing Office will be recorded in a Student Learning Support Agreement (SLSA), which will be stored in the student's confidential file held within the Disability and Wellbeing Office.

The SLSA will be summarised and may be used (only with the student's prior written consent) to inform relevant members of staff and/or external agencies of any agreed reasonable adjustments or support measures that we should make. Details of the range of reasonable adjustments that we are able to make are provided in Appendix A.

The SLSA records the support the student can and cannot expect to receive throughout their studies with us. A copy of the student's SLSA and a full record of all support arrangements and associated correspondence will be retained by the Disability and Wellbeing Office. These documents will be held securely in accordance with our responsibilities under the UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018 as outlined in our [Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy](#)⁵.

Students will be offered the opportunity to review their academic arrangements each term, or as required, with staff within the Disability and Wellbeing Office.

⁵ Available at: <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/section-3/>

11. International students

We are committed to ensuring equality of support for all students, as far as reasonably possible. International applicants and students are encouraged to contact the Disability and Wellbeing team as early as possible to discuss disability-related support.

All students, including international students, are eligible for support from the [Disability Support Fund \(DSF\)](#). The fund is intended to help students with disabilities cover some of their unexpected disability-related costs such as, paying for a medical letter from a doctor. This can be particularly helpful for international students who may need to register with a new doctor in order to obtain evidence.

12. Financial support for students with a disability

12.1 Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

Students who are eligible for assistance towards tuition fees, grants or student loans may be entitled to an additional allowance called the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). To be eligible for the DSA, a student has to be classified as a 'Home status' student and be registered on an eligible course of study as a full-time student or a part-time student following at least 50% of a full-time course. Some postgraduate students on funded courses are also entitled to claim DSA.

For full details on DSA eligibility, please check the government services and information website:

<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas/eligibility>

The Disabled Students' Allowance can help with the costs of:

- specialist equipment, for example a computer if the student needs one because of their disability
- non-medical helpers
- extra travel because of the student's disability
- other disability-related costs of studying

Students may apply for a DSA after they receive a conditional or unconditional offer, or during their studies. Students are entitled to make a new application every year for ongoing costs such as photocopying, ink cartridges, note-taking.

The Disability and Wellbeing Office will be able to provide advice and assistance with any student claims.

12.2 Bloomsbury Institute Disability Support Fund

The Bloomsbury Institute Disability Support Fund is offered to all students with a declared disability/long-term medical condition who began post Academic Year 2021-22 and who are registered with the Disability and Wellbeing Office. This fund can be used to pay for disability-related assessments, materials and additional support (the list is not exhaustive). Details of the funding guidelines and process are available from Disability and Wellbeing team members. See Appendix A.

12.3 Bloomsbury Institute SpLD Diagnostic Assessment Fund

Some students will not discover that they have a Specific Learning Difference (SpLD) such as dyslexia until they reach Higher Education. If a student believes that they have a SpLD after they enrol, then they should:

- contact the Disability and Wellbeing Office disability@bil.ac.uk for an appointment to discuss the difficulties they are experiencing and to have a screening interview to identify what may be the cause of these difficulties.

or

- complete a short screening interview. This does not diagnose but indicates the likelihood of SpLDs.

The Disability and Wellbeing Office may refer students with a previous history of a SpLD, and whose last assessment was completed prior to the age of 16 years, for a full diagnostic assessment by an independent educational psychologist. This ensures that students have the required evidence to access the Disabled Students' Allowance and appropriate support from us for the duration of their studies.

The Disability and Wellbeing Office can provide guidance on where to find a qualified assessor.

12.3.1 Who can apply?

All fully enrolled students are eligible to apply for the SpLD Diagnostic Assessment Fund.

12.3.2 How can I apply?

Students may apply to Bloomsbury Institute for financial support once they have undertaken an approved assessment. Students will need to contact the Disability and Wellbeing Office and raise an SSP request in order to claim a contribution towards their assessment. Bloomsbury Institute will contribute up to £360 towards a SpLD assessment.

Completed applications, accompanied by all the required supporting evidence, should be submitted within the application window given in section 12.3.3 below in order to be considered for the academic year in which the student is studying. We encourage students to submit applications in good time and contact the Disability and Wellbeing Office if they require any assistance.

For the SpLD Diagnostic Assessment Fund only one application can be made while the student is studying with us. Final year undergraduate and postgraduate students must apply by the end of the first term of their final academic year.

12.3.3 When can I apply?

Applications can be made between 1 November and 30 July of each academic year. Students can apply more than once for the Fund, but the maximum amount of money a student can claim is up to £1,000 per academic year.

12.4 Timescale for processing an application for both funds

Processing an application usually takes 15 working days and a decision will be sent to the student by the end of this period.

12.5 Awards for both funds

Awards made from the Bloomsbury Institute Disability Support Fund and the Specific Learning Difference Diagnostic Assessment Fund are usually non-repayable grants and awards that are paid shortly after the closure of the application window. Financial assistance is limited. This means that we can only pay for a limited number of assessments per year. Should funding for an academic year be spent, then additional funds will only be made available in the following academic year.

13. Mental health support

Bloomsbury Institute aims to provide a supportive environment that will help students with mental health difficulties to realise their academic potential and more specifically, to meet course requirements. Our aim is to facilitate and promote positive mental health and wellbeing. For more information, students can refer to our [Student Guide to Mental Health and Wellbeing](#), and our [Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy](#)⁶.

13.1 Togetherall

To continue to support students we provide free access to [Togetherall](#).⁷

Togetherall is a digital mental health support service which is available online, 24/7, and is completely anonymous so everyone can express themselves openly in a safe environment. Professionally trained Wall Guides monitor the community to ensure the safety and anonymity of all members. In addition to Togetherall's online community, students and staff will have access to a wealth of useful resources and can work through tailored self-help courses covering topics such as anxiety, sleep, weight management, depression and many more. Togetherall offers a range of activities that allow people to work through what is troubling them.

13.2 Self-help and online resources

We have created an online resource bank of organisations that are able to provide information, advice and support in relation to a number of areas including mental health and wellbeing, eating disorders, substance abuse, domestic violence, self-harm etc. These can be accessed from our [CANVAS Wellbeing Module](#)⁸.

13.3 Mental Health First Aid

A number of student-facing staff have been trained as Mental Health First Aiders (MHF Aiders). The primary role of a Mental Health First Aider is to administer mental health first aid to any person experiencing mental health difficulties or emotional distress on Bloomsbury Institute's premises. **Mental Health First Aiders should not be seen as a replacement for proper treatment of mental health difficulties.**

All conversations with our MHF Aiders are kept confidential, unless the individual raises or presents causes for safeguarding concerns.

14. Guidance for external Non-Medical Helper providers

Providers of Non-Medical Helper (NMH) support must adhere to the Disabled Students' Allowance Quality Assurance Group (DSA-QAG) and Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) standards, and ensure that all relevant policies are in place, shared with the student, and made available to the Institution on request. DSA-QAG requires external NMH suppliers to set up reporting mechanisms with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to inform them of the support being provided to students. They must explain to students the importance of the reporting mechanism and encourage students to give permission for information to be shared. They must also familiarise themselves with the information provided by the HEI regarding the delivery of NMH services to their students and cascade this information to support workers (see Appendix A for more information).

⁶ Available at: <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/section-3/>

⁷ Available at: <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/section-3/>

⁸ Available at: https://canvas.bil.ac.uk/courses/777?_gl=1*dzwfyt*_up*MQ..*_ga*MTU0MDE4ODg0NC4xNzA2NjI1NjMx*_ga_XJPZ73XQ6Z*MTcwNjYyNTYzMS4xLjAuMTcwNjYyNTYzMS4wLjAuMA..

14.1 Monitoring DSA funding and invoicing responsibilities

Where an external NMH provider has been allocated the funding and support hours for Bloomsbury Institute, they will have full responsibility for monitoring the student's use of agreed hours, ensuring that they do not exceed their allocated funding.

It is the external provider's responsibility to ensure that the students they are supporting have their DSA in place at the start of each academic year before any support for that year is provided.

The responsibility for keeping appropriate signed timesheets and collating all the information necessary to invoice Student Finance England (SFE) for the support fully rests with the external NMH provider.

Bloomsbury Institute will not be held accountable for any payments resulting from SFE refusing to pay an invoice in relation to students supported by an external NMH provider.

15. Related regulations, policies and procedures

- Admissions Policy
- Assessment Procedures: Validated Degrees
- Consent to Share Information Form
- Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy
- Disability and Wellbeing Office - What we do with your data
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Health and Safety Student Guide
- Inclusive Learning Environment Framework
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Privacy Notice
- Records Management Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- Student Guide to Mental Health and Wellbeing

16. Review of the Student Disability Policy

This Student Disability Policy will be reviewed annually by the Document Lead. Any significant changes beyond the scope of an annual review will require the approval of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC).

Appendix A

1. Assessments and timetabling arrangements

The Disability and Wellbeing Office, Registry and Estates and Facilities are responsible for the final determination of assessment, examination and timetabling arrangements after consultation, where appropriate, with relevant staff or bodies.

Students will not necessarily be given extra time to complete their assignments. If a student is having difficulties with keeping up with the workload because of their disability, then they should discuss this with their lecturers and with the Disability and Wellbeing Office. Where students are unable to attempt their submission, they may apply for an extension to receive extra time to submit the assessment item (e.g. case studies, essays and reports). If students cannot submit an assessment item due to a situation beyond their control (e.g. health complications), they need to apply for Extenuating/Mitigating Circumstances depending on the awarding body.

However, it is the responsibility of the student to raise a request for an extension to a deadline from Registry via the Student Self-service Portal (SSP). Ordinarily, the request needs to be raised before the initial assessment deadline.

PLEASE NOTE: that except for circumstances in which a disability could not have been anticipated, the following deadlines will operate for notification of requests for special arrangements to Registry or to the Disability and Wellbeing Office:

Autumn Term (September/October Term)	no later than mid-November
Winter Term (January/February Term)	no later than mid-March
Summer Term (June Term)	no later than mid-July

Please note that Bloomsbury Institute will NOT normally grant special examination arrangements for any requests which are made after the appropriate deadline that relate to circumstances **which are not unexpected and could reasonably have been anticipated.**

If requests are made after the deadline, we cannot guarantee that they will be implemented until the next exam period.

Students with temporary conditions such as broken limbs can also apply for special examination arrangements, although these would only apply for one round of exams, and they would need to reapply in the following academic session should they feel that there was still sufficient cause to merit the award of additional time. If the students are not well enough to sit their examinations, they should apply for Extenuating/Mitigating Circumstances depending on the awarding body.

Submitting a falsified claim for a special examination arrangement could be regarded as an attempt to gain an unfair advantage, which would be an academic offence that would be dealt with by the Registry Department.

All students requiring alternative arrangements of any nature must be assessed by the Disability and Wellbeing Office. Academic staff should refer any student with a timetabling issue directly to the Disability and Wellbeing Office as a matter of urgency. The Disability and Wellbeing Office will undertake an assessment with the student and will pass recommendations for timetabling to the Timetabling Manager where rooms will be allocated/reallocated accordingly. When timetabling and allocating rooms, we will endeavour to take account of the needs of individual students.

2. Examination and coursework adjustments

Most students with a disability find that standard departmental and institutional arrangements for delivering the curriculum, for producing coursework and for sitting exams are appropriate for them. However, some students do find that additional adjustments are required, for example:

- the production of examination papers in an alternative format.
- separate accommodation for examinations.
- the use of IT facilities for examinations.
- additional time to complete examinations.
- respite breaks during the course of examinations.
- meeting dietary needs during examinations.
- extended deadlines for assignments.
- one-to-one specialist support (delivered by external providers).

3. General guidance on examination arrangements for students

The following information relates to examination arrangements for students on our undergraduate courses.

3.1 Guidance on the role of readers in examinations

Any student who is permitted a reader as an exam arrangement should be placed in a separate room, with an invigilator present to ensure there is no academic misconduct. The reader should be given a copy of the examination script.

The reader **may**, at the request of the student:

- read all or any part of the examination paper, as many times as the student requests. This includes any formulae sheet or additional materials students are permitted to take into the examination.
- read back all or any part of the student's answers at the student's request.

The reader **may not**:

- explain or clarify any of the paper. The reader may only read word-for-word from the paper or from the student's answers.
- prompt the student to move onto the next question or help the student to choose which question to answer.
- explain abbreviations and symbols. Readers may read out symbols or abbreviations but may need to be given guidance as to whether a student should be expected to understand the symbol/abbreviation as a part of the examination question.

3.2 Guidance on the role of scribes in examinations

Any student who is permitted a scribe as an exam arrangement should be placed in a separate room, with an invigilator present to ensure there is no academic misconduct. The scribe should be given a copy of the exam script.

The scribe will:

- write down answers exactly as the student dictates them.

- read back any of the answers if the student requests this.
- change an answer if the student asks them to write something different.
- strictly follow the student's instructions when drawing maps, diagrams and graphs (if required).

The scribe **may not**:

- explain or clarify any of the paper.
- prompt the student to move onto the next question or help the student to choose which question to answer.
- read any of the exam paper, unless they are working as both reader and scribe.
- continue writing answers once the examination has finished.

The student **must**:

- dictate punctuation in English language papers. In other examinations this is not necessary, and punctuation can be completed by the scribe.
- dictate spelling in foreign language examinations when answering in the foreign language.

Note: If a student is entitled to rest breaks and a scribe, rest breaks will only start once the scribe has finished writing down the student's answer.

3.3 Guidance on the role of prompters in examinations

Some students may be granted a prompter in examinations if they lose concentration or need to be prompted to move on to the next question in exams. Any student permitted a prompter should be placed in a separate room, with an invigilator present to ensure there is no academic misconduct.

To keep the student focussed on the paper, the prompter **may**:

- tap on the table or the student's arm to encourage them to regain concentration.
- speak to the student to tell them to focus, to move on to the next question or remind the student of how long is left.
- show the student a visual cue (flashcard) to encourage them to focus or move on to the next question.

The prompter **may not**:

- advise the student on which questions to answer.
- tell the student in which order to do the questions.

3.4 Guidance on using approved rest breaks in examinations

Rest breaks should be considered as pauses in the exam. The exam time should be stopped when a student takes a rest break. Students are entitled to 10 minutes per hour rest break, the total amount of rest break will be dependent upon the duration of the examination, e.g. 2-hour examination, 20 minutes rest break. Students should tell the invigilator when they want to have a rest break. They can use as much or as little out of their half hour rest time as they wish at any one time e.g. one break of 30 minutes,

three of 10 minutes, six of five minutes. If the student does not need to use any of the break time on the day, they may continue to work without interruptions.

Students can choose to stay in the exam room for their rest break, or they may leave the room if supervised by a member of staff. This can include going to the toilet, taking a drink or snack if recommended, or moving around to relieve physical discomfort.

The invigilator should tell the student at regular periods how long they have left in the exam and how much rest time they have left.

Students may not talk about or work on the examination during their rest break. The student's exam papers should be turned over during rest breaks.

The Assessment team will advise the student on where they will sit their examination as it may be in a different venue to the main halls.

Rest breaks, additional extra time, and other reasonable adjustments may be approved for examinations.

3.5 Guidance on the use of computers in examinations

The following should be noted for students permitted the use of a word processor in exams:

- students should label answers clearly.
- students must not be able to see one another's screens.
- students may be permitted to change the background colour of screens if required. This should be supervised by the invigilator.
- computers should have the following disabled:
 - internet access
 - calculator
 - thesaurus
 - any assistive software (e.g. text to speech software) unless this is specifically recommended as an exam arrangement

The spelling/grammar checker should only be disabled if English language competence is an assessed element (i.e. an English language exam for international students).

The invigilator should email the exam script with the students' approval directly to the Assessment team.

A student may ask for the script to be printed during the exam for proofreading purposes.

4. Guidance for external NMH providers

4.1 Initial contact with the student

Students will receive a DSA2 letter from SFE confirming the provider for different NMH services. When Bloomsbury Institute receives a copy of the DSA2 letter, it will email the student to encourage them to book their support from the external NMH provider. Providers of Non-Medical Helper (NMH) support must adhere to the Disabled Students' Allowance Quality Assurance Group (DSA-QAG) Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) standards, and ensure that all relevant policies are in place, shared with the student, and made available to the Higher Education Institute (HEI) on request.

DSA-QAG requires external NMH suppliers to set up reporting mechanisms with HEIs to inform them of the support being provided to students. They must explain to students the importance of the reporting mechanism and encourage students to give permission for information to be shared. They must also familiarise themselves with the information provided by the HEI regarding the delivery of NMH services to their students and cascade this information to support workers.

Information about support provision for disabled students should be sent to disability@bil.ac.uk.

4.2 Appropriate location for delivering the support

External providers are responsible for providing suitable meeting facilities that are comfortable, confidential and take account of the student's needs. 1:1 bookable meeting rooms at the Institution are very limited in availability so external providers would normally be expected to make independent arrangements external to the Institution. When the student expresses a wish for the support to be delivered on campus, external providers should contact the Disability and Wellbeing Office (disability@bil.ac.uk).

We do not consider cafés, or our campus food outlets or busy public areas to be suitable locations and support should not be delivered in such places on our premises.

4.3 Communication and feedback

The Disability and Wellbeing Manager is the dedicated point of contact for external NMH providers. Information about support provision can be sent to disability@bil.ac.uk

External suppliers must:

- inform the Institute if supplying support to our students;
- notify us of the named person within the organisation with whom we can liaise about any student support queries, including contact details;
- provide copies of any relevant policies on request;
- ensure funding is in place before commencing sessions with a student, monitor the use of the allocated hours, and ensure that students do not run out of funding (Bloomsbury Institute is not accountable for any payments that Student Finance England refuse to pay);
- arrange suitable meeting rooms for support sessions which will normally be off site due to the limited availability of suitable rooms on campus;
- signpost students back to the Disability and Wellbeing team to discuss any issues relating to Bloomsbury Institute's services or their course;
- contact the Disability and Wellbeing team via disability@bil.ac.uk immediately if any concerns arise relating to engagement with support services (e.g, welfare and safety/security), or academic progression so that this can be followed up in a timely manner;
- provide a summary report for each student receiving band 4 support at the end of each term (end of December, March, and June), to include the following information:
 - name of student(s) and company registration number (CRN);
 - name of support workers(s);
 - brief description of support supplied;
 - date on which support commenced;

- number of sessions/hours of support delivered that term, and total for the year to date
- location of support provision;
- a note about any issues that the institution needs to be aware of or follow up.

4.4 Access to note-taking/support worker support

Access to classrooms and other locations will be dependent on the building where the notetaking/support worker is supporting students. The note-taking/support worker will need to arrange to meet with the student prior to the start of the session at an agreed location. Also, the details of the note-taking/support worker will need to be shared with the Disability and Wellbeing Office so relevant staff can be informed about their presence in the classrooms.

If the student does not want to communicate directly with the note-taker/support worker, the Disability and Wellbeing Office will liaise with the external NMH provider.

5. Bloomsbury Institute Disability Support Fund

The Bloomsbury Institute Disability Support Fund has been set up in recognition of the additional support costs incurred by students with disabilities in pursuing their course of study to help offset these additional costs. The Bloomsbury Institute Disability Support Fund is available to all fully enrolled students who started their studies during the academic year 2021-22, who are registered with our Disability and Wellbeing Office and who have a diagnosed disability/long-term medical condition/Specific Learning Difference.

The Bloomsbury Institute Disability Support Fund considers applications for grants towards services or equipment required by students at Bloomsbury Institute, where this supports their academic study, either directly or indirectly.

The primary focus of the fund is to give financial support to students who are faced with additional costs that they are unable to fund through other channels, for example, the [Disabled Students' Allowance⁹](#). We strongly encourage students to apply for the Disabled Students Allowance before applying to the Bloomsbury Institute Disability Support Fund.

5.1 Application process

Applications can be made between 1 November and 30 June of each academic year and students should be fully enrolled. Applications submitted outside of these dates will not be accepted for the current academic year and a new application will have to be made during the following study year.

To apply, students must raise an SSP request for the Bloomsbury Institute Disability Support Fund and upload supporting documents to confirm their circumstances.

Bloomsbury Institute will only consider applications from students with a diagnosed disability, whether that be physical or sensory impairments, learning difficulties (including specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia), mental health difficulties or long-term illnesses, such as cancer/diabetes.

Upon receipt of the application, staff within the Disability and Wellbeing Office will review the application along with the supporting documents and reasons for application. If the student meets the criteria for support, approval will be given for the grant to be paid into the student's personal bank account.

Eligible students need to supply a quotation/evidence of costs for the specific help sought, together with details of suppliers. They may be asked to provide evidence that they have taken advice from the

⁹ Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa>

Disability and Wellbeing Office/the supplier on which equipment/service will best suit their requirements and has researched the best value option available.

Students will then be notified of whether their application has been successful or not via SSP. All unsuccessful applicants will be informed as to why their application was not accepted.

Our Disability and Wellbeing Office will be able to assist students with their application. Please contact disability@bil.ac.uk.

5.2 Fund amount

Students can claim up to a maximum of £1,000 per academic year. Successful applicants must provide copies of receipts for all purchases bought or part-funded with their award, within 4 weeks of receiving the award. Bloomsbury Institute requires the receipts for auditing purposes. Applicants who do not provide the receipts will be expected to return the amount of money that cannot be accounted for.

The fund is intended to help students with disabilities covering some of their unexpected costs that have arisen because of:

- Their disability/long-term medical condition (related to their studies)
- Pay for doctor's fees (letters)
- DSA £200 contribution
- Specialist equipment

This list is not exhaustive.

5.3 Payment

Once an application for support has been approved and the amount confirmed, the grant will be paid into the student's personal bank account within 15 working days from its approval.

5.4 Monitoring and reporting

The Disability and Wellbeing Office will run a quarterly report from Oracle on all applications received and whether they have been approved. The SSP request will be closed once the payment has been made.