

Disability Policy

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This Disability Policy will be reviewed annually by our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC). Any amendments will be subject to approval by the EDIC.

1. Introduction

Bloomsbury Institute is strongly committed to equality of opportunity in our provision for all students. A further commitment is to work towards supporting and enabling students with physical disabilities, sensory impairments, specific learning difficulties, special psychological needs and medical conditions which may have an impact on day-to-day activities, to take part in all aspects of Bloomsbury Institute's academic and social programmes.

We welcome applications from people with a disability and those with specific learning difficulties. We encourage existing students and applicants to declare a disability or specific learning difficulty either on application or any time thereafter to 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 students' written permission, and disability is in no way linked with academic decisions regarding offers of places.

Bloomsbury Institute expects all staff to be aware of this Disability Policy, our [Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy](#)¹ and related legislation, and to treat people with a disability in accordance with both policies.

2. Scope

This 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

Studying for a degree is not a forced decision for any person. Nevertheless, in order to function effectively in higher education and later in their professional lives, all students should be able to:

- organise themselves personally
- cope with independent learning and working
- manage their time effectively
- read and comprehend complex material accurately and fluently
- find relevant information from a variety of sources
- listen, understand and take notes quickly and legibly
- express ideas verbally and in writing
- type quickly
- demonstrate their knowledge and understanding in exams and assessment settings

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 comply with

¹ <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/>

current equality legislation under which we have a duty not to discriminate against students with a disability.

The legislation requires us to make 'reasonable adjustments' to our services so that students with a disability are not placed at a 'substantial disadvantage'. We cannot act upon this disclosure until the student provides written consent for the sharing of information regarding their disability.

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 only, in order for reasonable adjustments to be implemented. In accordance with Bloomsbury Institute's [Student Records Policy](#), [Privacy Notice](#), [Confidentiality Policy](#) and [Data Protection Policy](#)², we will retain your record for as long as you continue to use the service and we will keep it up to 6 years from your 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 [Student Records Policy](#)³.

For more information about how we handle your personal information, and your rights under data protection legislation, please see our [Privacy Notice](#)⁴. If you need more information about this, please contact 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'.

² <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/>

³ <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/>

⁴ <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/>

'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
- 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 inclusive focus is embedded within our values, as articulated within our Strategic Framework 2021-24), namely

Be inclusive

Welcome difference as a source of strength and enrichment.

Be curious

Ask questions. Be open to new ideas. Yearn to learn.

Show courage

Challenge yourself. Dare to think differently. Stand up for what's right.

Make things happen

Take ownership. Act responsibly. Get things done.

Don't be mean

Talk straight. Don't play games. Treat people well.

It is also embedded in our curriculum design, teaching and learning practice. This focus extends to the life cycle of our students from recruitment to graduation and employment, and to our alumni, and is guaranteed through our Inclusive Learning Checklist and Inclusive Learning Environment Framework.

We have a diverse student and staff population and we 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 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 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 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.

The Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Commission highlight certain factors which might be taken into consideration, namely:

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. For example:

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 taken into account 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 getting 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 taken into account, such as the effect on staff workload or the availability of services or resources.

7.5 Health and safety

Staff and institutions must operate within the relevant health and safety legislation, which may make some adjustments unreasonable. Care should, however, 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 has to be a significant disadvantage, not merely some 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. Disclosing information before applying for a course

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 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 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.

Students do not have an obligation to tell us about their disability. The purpose of a 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 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 would 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 a student declares a disability/medical health condition/SpLD after an offer is made, their details are sent to the Disability Office who will contact them and arrange a meeting. We will not pass any information about a student's support needs related to any disability to any other member of staff or external body without the student's expressed 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 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 Office – What we do with your data](#)' document before they sign the '[Consent to share information](#)' form (both available from the Disability Office and the [Student Portal](#)⁵).

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 considered, but not necessarily guaranteed.

10. Initial assessment of needs: the Disability Office

Students are advised to make contact with staff within the Disability 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 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 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 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 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 Policy](#) and [Confidentiality Policy](#)⁶.

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

⁵ <https://www.bil.ac.uk/student-portal/student-forms/>

⁶ <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/>

11. Financial support for students with a disability

11.1 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 Office will be able to provide advice and assistance with any student claims.

11.2 Bloomsbury Institute Disability Support Fund

For the academic year 2021-22 we are introducing a ring-fenced Disability Support Fund which is offered to all new students with a declared disability/long-term medical condition. This fund can be used to pay for disability-related assessments, materials and additional support (the list is not exhaustive). For more information regarding the application process students can refer to our Disability Support Fund document (see appendix A Section 5).

11.2.1 Who can apply?

The Disability Support Fund is available to all fully enrolled students who started their studies during the academic year 2021-22, and who are registered with our Disability Office and have a diagnosed disability/long-term medical condition. Students need to provide evidence by a qualified medical practitioner.

11.2.2 How can I apply?

Students with disabilities may apply to Bloomsbury Institute for financial support through the Student Self-service Portal (SSP). They should raise a request and upload their supporting evidence and proof of purchase where relevant. Students are advised to consult our Disability Office before making an application to discuss their application.

11.2.3 When can I apply?

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

11.3 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 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 using a [checklist](#)⁷. This will not provide a 'diagnosis' but it should allow possible problem areas to be identified and provide a good starting point for an action plan.

The characteristic difficulties associated with dyslexia and other SpLDs and their effects on learning are identified on the [British Dyslexia Association \(BDA\)](#)⁸ website.

The Disability Office may refer students with a previous history of 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 is to ensure that students have the required evidence to access the Disabled Students' Allowance. It also ensures appropriate support from us for the duration of their studies.

The Disability Office can provide guidance on where to find a qualified assessor or students can choose a psychologist or other qualified professional by contacting:

- [British Dyslexia Association](#)
- [British Psychological Society](#)⁹
- [Helen Arkell Dyslexia Centre](#)¹⁰
- [Independent Dyslexia Consultants](#)¹¹

Students should take care to ensure that assessors are suitably qualified to carry out a full dyslexia assessment to meet the requirements of the [Disabled Students' Allowance](#). A full assessment will include all the requisite details and tests for it to be accepted as evidence. Students will be asked to pay the full cost of the SpLD assessment. The cost varies.

11.3.1 Who can apply?

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

11.3.2 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 Office and raise an SSP request in order to claim a contribution towards their assessment. Bloomsbury Institute will contribute up to £350 towards a SpLD assessment.

⁷ <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia/how-is-dyslexia-diagnosed/dyslexia-checklists>

⁸ <https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia>

⁹ <https://www.bps.org.uk/>

¹⁰ <https://www.helenarkell.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/assessments.php>

¹¹ <http://www.dyslexia-idc.org/>

Completed applications, accompanied by all the required supporting evidence, should be submitted within the application window given in section 11.3.3 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 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 students must apply by 10 December of their final academic year.

11.3.3 When can I apply?

Applications can be made between 1 November and 30 May of each academic year.

Applications made 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.

11.4 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. Please avoid contacting us during this time unless absolutely necessary as this will slow the application processing down.

11.5 Awards for both funds

Awards made from the 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. This could be earlier than 30 May of the current academic year in which the student is studying if eligible cases exhaust the available funds available that academic year.

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.

12. 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](#)¹², and our [Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy](#)¹³.

12.1 TalkCampus

We provide all students with free access to a mental health app called TalkCampus. The app provides them with a safe and supportive space in which to talk (anonymously if they wish) with other students from around the world if they are struggling and worried about their mental health. In addition, trained peer supporters and professional staff monitor conversations on the app so as to provide 24/7 real-time support to students (worldwide) prior to their needing clinical intervention.

Information on the app and how to download it can be found on our [Student Services](#)¹⁴ webpage.

¹² <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/>

¹³ <https://www.bil.ac.uk/qem/policies/>

¹⁴ <https://www.bil.ac.uk/student-portal/>

12.2 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 [Disability and Wellbeing](#)¹⁵ webpages.

12.3 Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)

Several 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 with the aim of:

- Encouraging the person to access appropriate professional support or self-help strategies.
- Promoting the recovery of good mental health.
- Providing comfort to a person with a mental health difficulty.
- Reducing stigma and discrimination.
- Maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.
- Listening non-judgementally and holding supportive conversations.
- Preserving life where a person may be at risk of harm to themselves or others.

Mental health First Aiders should not be seen as a replacement for proper treatment of mental health difficulties.

When you are struggling with poor mental health, it is vital to have access to somebody with accurate and helpful information about support and resources. If you feel you need support in seeking help, or even just somebody to talk to, our Mental Health First Aiders are here to help. They have been trained to actively listen without judgment and signpost to appropriate services where necessary.

All conversations with our MHF Aiders are kept confidential, unless the individual has concerns for your immediate safety or the safety of others, in which case they will discuss this with you. Information on our Mental Health First Aiders can be found on our [Disability and Wellbeing Support](#)¹ page

13. 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).

¹⁵ <https://www.bil.ac.uk/disability-and-wellbeing-support/>

13.1 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 the SFE refusing to pay an invoice in relation to students supported by an external NMH provider.

14. Related regulations, policies and procedures

- Admissions Policy
- Assessment Procedures: Validated Degrees
- Confidentiality Policy
- Consent to Share Information Form
- Data Protection Policy
- Disability 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
- Safeguarding Policy
- Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedures
- Student Guide to Mental Health and Wellbeing
- Student Records Policy

15. Review of the Disability Policy

This Disability Policy will be reviewed annually by our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC). Any amendments will be subject to approval by the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Appendix A

1. Assessments and timetabling arrangements

The Disability 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 Office. Students can apply for an extension on their assignment for a maximum of two weeks. If the student needs more than two weeks, they need to apply for Mitigating Circumstances.

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 Office:

January exams	no later than mid-November
April exams	no later than mid-February
Summer exams	no later than mid of May

OR

End of teaching week 8 – for Exams in week 15
End of teaching week 21 – for Exams in weeks 28-37
End of teaching week 39 – for Resit Exams in August

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 complete the [Mitigating Circumstances Application Form](#)¹⁶.

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 Office. Academic staff should refer any student with a timetabling issue directly to the Disability Office as a matter of urgency. The Disability 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.

¹⁶ <https://www.bil.ac.uk/student-portal/student-forms/>

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.

4.2 Contacting institutions to deliver the support on our premises

Due to limitations in availability of rooms on site and due to security concerns, we would expect NMH providers to deliver the one-to-one support from private offices nearby the institution. When the student expresses a wish for the support to be delivered on campus, external providers should contact the Disability Office (disability@bil.ac.uk). Due to limited room availability, we cannot guarantee we will be able to book rooms for one-to-one support. External providers would normally be expected to make independent arrangements external to the institution.

4.3 Appropriate location for delivering the support

As per the DSA-QAF standard 2.4, we expect the support to be provided on a one-to-one basis, in a comfortable and confidential location, taking into account the student's disability.

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.

4.4 Communication and feedback

We are committed to helping students do well on their course and to ensuring that they have a positive student experience. Therefore, we reserve the right to contact students regularly and ask them to provide feedback about the support they are receiving from an external NMH provider.

Students should not be prevented in any way from communicating with us about the support that they are receiving from an external provider. If the student is not satisfied with the quality of the support, we may communicate this to the external provider. We also reserve the right to raise concerns ourselves when we have reasonable doubts that the DSA-QAF requirements are not being met.

We would expect a written response detailing how those concerns are being addressed. If the response is not satisfactory to the student or to us, we may notify SFE of this.

Equally, if a student raises concerns about our provision to the support worker, they should be encouraged to contact the Disability Office about it. The Disability Office will then seek to address this concern. We will withdraw access to our premises with immediate effect if there are safeguarding concerns for the student and/or the support worker fails to adhere to the requirements set out in this agreement. We will inform the external NMH provider should this be the case.

Where an external NMH provider has been allocated the funding and support hours for one of our students, the NMH provider 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 NMH 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 to gather all the information necessary to invoice SFE for the support fully rests with the external 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 provider.

External NMH providers should provide a summary report for each student receiving support at the end of [each term](#) to include:

- name of student(s) and Customer Reference Number (CRN) number.
- brief description of support supplied.
- date support started.
- number of sessions/hours of support delivered each year/term.
- location of support provision.
- details of any issues that Bloomsbury Institute needs to be aware of or follow up on.

We welcome more regular communication with external NMH providers when this would facilitate support and improve a student's chances of doing well on the course (for example, if a student stops coming to sessions) so that an appropriate review of support can occur.

4.5 Access to note-taking/support worker support

Access to classrooms and other locations will be dependent on the building where the note-taking/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 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 Office will liaise with the external NMH provider.

5. Disability Support Fund

The 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 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 Office and who have a diagnosed disability/long-term medical condition/Specific Learning Difference.

The 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' Allowance](#)¹⁷. We strongly encourage students to apply for the Disabled Students Allowance before applying to the Disability Support Fund.

5.1 Application process

Applications can be made between 1 November and 30 May 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 Disability Support Fund and upload supporting documents to confirm their circumstances.

¹⁷ Check if you are eligible for the Disabled Students Allowance <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa/eligibility>

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/diabetes¹⁸.

Upon receipt of the application, staff within the Disability 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 Disability 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 Office will be able to provide assistance 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 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.

¹⁸ The Equality Act (2010) defines a 'disabled person' as, 'someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term (over 12 months) adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.' <https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>