

Student Disability Policy

INTRODUCTION

1. New College of the Humanities (the College) positively welcomes applications from students with disabilities and is committed to ensuring every effort is made to allow all students to fully experience life at the College. Students with the relevant supporting documentation (e.g. medical notes and/or reports from educational psychologists) are eligible to apply for appropriate support without compromising academic standards.

DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

2. For the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Disability in this context can include a wide range of issues and conditions. Typically, this would be one or a combination of the following categories:
 - Specific learning difficulty (SpLD) (e.g. dyslexia)
 - Visual impairment - partial sight or blind
 - Hearing loss - partial hearing or profoundly deaf
 - Mobility difficulties or wheelchair use
 - Restricted use of upper limbs (incl. RSI)
 - Mental health illnesses
 - Condition that is not visible (e.g. epilepsy, sickle cell anaemia, HIV)
 - Condition not listed above (e.g. back injury)
 - HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis
3. The above list should not be seen as exhaustive. If a student feels that they have a condition that is affecting their ability to study effectively, the student should contact a member of the Student Wellbeing Team (SWT) as soon as possible, to enable reasonable adjustments to be implemented. The Mental Health Adviser (MHA) is the first point of contact for mental health illnesses and the Learning and Assessment Support Officer (LASO) is the first point of contact for learning and physical disabilities.
4. The College is committed to ensuring reasonable adjustments are made where possible to break down any barriers which might prevent students with disabilities from actively participating in the life of the College.

RESPONSIBILITIES

5. Students are responsible for disclosing their disabilities to the College.
6. Students have the right not to disclose a disability or to request that the existence or nature of their disability be treated as strictly confidential and therefore not shared with relevant staff across the College. Requests for strict confidentiality may mean that a less satisfactory adjustment is provided or that no adjustment can be provided.
7. The College will manage the process of information sharing and will treat all personal data in accordance with the GDPR; access to disability-related information will be provided on a need-to-know basis only, in order for reasonable adjustments to be implemented.
8. Students are responsible for requesting any review of implemented reasonable adjustments, if such adjustments are not proving to be effective in meeting their entitlements.
9. The College cannot be held liable for not implementing reasonable adjustments prior to the disclosure of a disability. It is vital that the College has all relevant information and evidence before staff can assess whether the reasonable adjustments are possible.

DISCLOSURE OF DISABILITY

10. All students with a diagnosed disability are advised to disclose it to the College at the earliest opportunity by completing the Student Disclosure Form.¹
11. Students may develop a disability, or begin to suspect that they have a disability, after their studies have begun. In these circumstances, students are advised to meet with the SWT as soon as possible to discuss their next steps.
12. Students are advised to submit disclosures even if they do not believe that additional support is required.
13. The Student Disclosure Form will be shared with the members of staff selected by the student to ensure they are aware of the reasonable adjustments that may need to be implemented.

APPLYING FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT IN EXAMINATIONS

14. Students who feel they need extra support in their examinations (e.g. extra time) must make an application via the Specific Examination Requirements Disclosure Form.² Students must submit their application by **the last Friday in November** to allow appropriate arrangements to be put in place.

¹ <https://www.nchlondon.ac.uk/about-us/nch-academic-handbook/>*

* From the webpage>policies and procedures>general>student disclosure form. Please download the form and complete electronically.

² <https://www.nchlondon.ac.uk/about-us/nch-academic-handbook/>**

**From the webpage>policies and procedures>general>specific examination requirements disclosure form. Please download the form and complete electronically.

15. In circumstances where students are diagnosed with a disability after this date, applications can still be made but adjustments cannot be guaranteed.
16. For advice and guidance on applying for additional support, students should contact the LASO.

DISABLED STUDENTS' ALLOWANCES

17. The **Disabled Students' Allowance** is a non-means tested grant which helps to fund the extra costs a student with a disability, long-term medical condition, sensory impairment, physical difficulty, or specific learning difficulty (e.g. dyslexia) may have when attending their programme of study. DSA is currently only available to those studying for an NCH degree. To apply, students must complete the **DSA online form** via Gov.UK.

RECORDING LECTURES

18. Many students with a SpLD have difficulty writing by hand or writing and listening at the same time. As such, recording lectures is considered a reasonable adjustment under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act in respect of providing equal treatment and equal access to educational opportunities for all students regardless of their disabilities.
19. Any such recording is for private use only, and shall remain the property of the lecturer. The recording must be used for the purposes of the students' own personal study and should not be replayed to others or reproduced without the permission of the lecturer.
20. Students who wish to apply for permission to record lectures on disability-related grounds must inform the LASO of their particular needs. Upon being granted permission to record lectures, as a reasonable adjustment, such students do not need to ask permission to record from individual faculty. Faculty will be informed of the recording, but not of the specific reasons, unless the student has given permission for this information to be disclosed.
21. Students may request permission to record any lecture or other teaching sessions outside of the reasonable adjustments entitlement. In these cases, the decision as to whether to grant permission is at the discretion of faculty. This must be obtained in writing prior to the start of the lecture. If permission is granted to the student, in writing, to record the teaching session, the student should check at the start of the session that there are no objections from all those present, to a recording being made.
22. Any recording may be stored for the duration of the student's programme of study, and all recordings should be destroyed on completion of their programme. For these purposes, completion of the student's programme will be no later than their expected end date.
23. Breaches of this policy will be regarded as a disciplinary offence and will be subject to the **Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures**.

SCRIBES AND READERS

24. It is possible for students to request a scribe and/or reader for their examinations. A scribe will write the student's dictated answer to the questions on their paper(s). A scribe can also act as a reader in some cases,

in which they must read the questions aloud to the student. Please see [ANNEX A](#) NCH Scribe and Reader Guidelines for full details.

DYSLEXIA AND PRELINGUAL DEAFNESS

DYSLEXIA

25. Dyslexia can be regarded as an unusual balance of skills: a dyslexic person may be very gifted in some areas, but have incongruous weaknesses in others. Dyslexic people often think in a holistic, non-linear way that does not lend itself to the linear nature of words. Dyslexia is known to have a physical basis, and is characterised by a variety of symptoms, most of which stem from weakness in short-term memory.
26. Typical problems for students:
 - 26.1. Having difficulty remembering and following complex instructions.
 - 26.2. Being slow at reading and misreading words.
 - 26.3. Having difficulty getting ideas down on paper in a structured form.
 - 26.4. Making errors in writing - omitting words or parts of words, transposing words or letters.
 - 26.5. Spelling - being unable to spell a word 'spoils the flow' and may restrict the vocabulary used.
 - 26.6. Handwriting - the handwriting process may be arduous and the script may be hard to read.
 - 26.7. Being unable to learn by rote (facts, names).

PRE-LINGUAL DEAFNESS

27. For any student that is pre-lingually deaf, faculty need to be aware of the impact that this disability can have on language development. Without hearing, the deaf person develops language, both spoken and written, at a slower rate. Many words seem 'foreign' in written form, since they have nothing auditory on which to base them. This often leads to similar difficulties with written English as those experienced by students with dyslexia:
 - 27.1. Mis-reading words
 - 27.2. Poor spelling and grammar
 - 27.3. Having a limited vocabulary
28. Students with specific learning difficulties and those who are pre-lingually deaf are at considerable disadvantage in a text-based environment, in particular where writing is the medium of assessment. They have difficulty both with the expression of their ideas in written form and with the correct use of language. To remedy this, it is recommended that where possible, assessors award marks that reflect the candidate's understanding of the subject, rather than the level of their linguistic skills. However, it is not

intended that academic rigour be sacrificed and, where marks are allocated for presentation or language, no consideration should be allowed.

29. Applying this guideline to all students is intended to help faculty to:
 - 29.1. Provide helpful feedback to students.
 - 29.2. Refer students who need help with the preparation of written work to the SWC for external referrals.
 - 29.3. Award grades that reflect knowledge, understanding and skills in the areas that are being assessed, rather than linguistic skills.

MARKING OF WRITTEN WORK

30. It is important for the marker to bear in mind the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for a piece of work.
31. If knowledge is being assessed then marks should be awarded for core information and not deducted for spelling/grammar and punctuation errors.
32. Similarly, numbers can be written incorrectly when copied or when a calculation spans more than one page and this should be taken into consideration.
33. If a piece of work is not well presented, it should be marked for content only, unless the layout of the work is being assessed.
34. Students can request to have teaching materials and examination papers supplied on coloured paper and/or in a larger font.

PROCESS FOR ILLEGIBLE SCRIPTS

35. If a marker is unable to read a script, the script must be sent to the Head of Faculty (HoF) to confirm that the script is illegible. If the HoF is the marker, the script must be sent to the Registrar.
36. If it is confirmed that the script is illegible, the HoF will contact the student in question, in writing, and ask them to attend the College in order to dictate their exam script for transcription. If the student refuses to attend, they will be awarded a mark of zero.
37. The person appointed to type the script must not be a registered student of the College (undergraduate or postgraduate). The costs associated with producing the transcript will fall to the student and the cost will be agreed between the College and the scribe.
38. The content of the original script cannot be amended in any way, including spelling or grammatical errors or altering any figures or diagrams. The student will be informed that the purpose of attendance is to transcribe the existing script and that any addition or omission of material will constitute a breach of academic integrity.
39. If any text cannot be transcribed (including by the student), it will be highlighted on the original script.
40. Following transcription, the student must sign a form to confirm that the transcript is a true copy of the original. The form should be kept separately

from the transcript, to preserve the student's anonymity during the marking process.

41. The transcript should then be returned to the marker along with the original script.

SUGGESTIONS FOR AN ACCESSIBLE CURRICULUM

42. Provide material in electronic form and in advance. This enables students to access it in their preferred format e.g. speech output, large font.
43. Provide summaries in bullet-point form.
44. Encourage use of audio recording devices.
45. Employ a variety of teaching methods supported by written and audio visual materials.
46. When designing assessments think of reasonable alternative methods that will allow all students to demonstrate achievement of learning outcomes.
47. Where there are time constrained assessments during the year, remember that disabled students may need the same provision as for formal examinations, e.g. additional time, use of PC. Discuss with individual students what provision is appropriate.
48. If you are teaching deaf students, bear in mind that they will find watching a speaker and looking at information on a screen difficult. Providing written, back-up notes could be a solution to this.
49. Deaf students will need a clear view of the person speaking, ensure that you face them whilst talking to them and in group discussions ensure that only one person speaks at a time.
50. Use a microphone where induction loops are fitted so that anyone with a hearing aid can benefit.

TEXTS SUITABLE FOR DYSLEXIC STUDENTS

PRINTED MATERIALS:

- 10 point minimum; a clear, Verdana
- Avoid italics and underlining
- Avoid use of upper case for whole words or sentences
- Left-justify only
- Avoid dense blocks of text - use headings, short paragraphs, line spacing and wide margins to break up text
- Use bullet points where possible
- Check the print quality of any photocopies used - poor quality presents more difficulties to those for whom reading is already difficult

POWERPOINT SLIDES:

- Use a plain (non-white) background
- Check with your student(s) that colours are suitable
- Maximum of six lines per slide (excluding title) with six words per line

Title: Student Disability Policy					
Approved by: Academic Board					
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3.1	September 2019	September 2019	Registrar	NCH Academic Handbook/policies and procedures/general	April 2021
3.0	November 2018	January 2019	Student Wellbeing Coordinator	NCH Academic Handbook/policies and procedures/general	April 2021
Referenced documents	Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures; Data Protection Policy; Student Disclosure Form; Specific Examination Requirements Disclosure Form				
External Reference Point(s)	UK Quality Code Theme: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access Equality Act 2010; UK Quality Code Enabling Student Achievement; GDPR; Disabled Students' Allowance; DSA online form				

ANNEX A

SCRIBE AND READER GUIDELINES

PURPOSE OF SCRIBE

1. A scribe may be arranged to transcribe the answers on behalf of a student who has difficulty producing handwritten or typed script. The scribe's role is to produce from dictation a handwritten or typed answer. It is most commonly required for students who are unable to write due to a physical difficulty, some visually impaired students, and some students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dysgraphia or dyspraxia.
2. For a visually impaired or dyslexic student, the same individual may act as a reader and as a scribe.
3. Students eligible to use a scribe/reader will normally be in receipt of a Disabled Students Allowance, funded by Student Finance England (SFE). SFE have the final decision on who can provide these services. They cannot be provided by a friend, relative, NCH student or a member of faculty for summative assessments.
4. For formative assessments there is more flexibility and NCH students can be used. If an NCH student is used, they should normally be in a different cohort and faculty (major and minor subjects) to the student sitting the assessment.

PURPOSE OF A READER

5. A reader may be arranged to read out questions for a student whose condition affects their reading ability. The purpose of using a reader is to remove barriers that are imposed by the student's disability or SpLD. Generally this service will be provided for students who are blind or have a learning difficulty which affects their ability to process information.

SUITABILITY

6. Scribes should have legible handwriting and be able to write at a speed that will allow them to keep pace with a student's dictation. Where a scribe is working electronically they should be able to type at a reasonable speed and to maintain this pace throughout the exam. The use of a spellchecker is not permitted. All attempts should be made to spell the words correctly or at least phonetically in order to allow the script to make sense for the marker.
7. Ideally the student would have the same scribe for each exam in the same assessment period.

PREPARATION PRIOR TO THE EXAM – STUDENT GUIDELINES

8. Preparation for the use of a scribe/reader prior to an exam is the responsibility of the student. It is strongly recommended to have a preparation/practice session with the scribe/reader in advance of the exam period as this is **not grounds for appeal** should anything go wrong with the scribe/reader. A preparation/practice session will be essential if the scribe is expected to produce graphs or diagrams on your behalf and will ensure that you can work together effectively and efficiently.

9. Students are asked to provide the scribe/reader with some practice material to review prior to the exam so that they can familiarise themselves with any subject specific words and terminology.
10. Before the exam it will be necessary to agree the following with the scribe/reader and make a note of the outcome:

Scribe/Reader & Student: Where will you both sit in the exam in relation to each other?
Note:
Scribe/Reader & Student: Establish a pace with which you are both comfortable.
Note:
Scribe: How are notes, on the questions and essay plans, to be made? Will you make these?
Note:
Student: Will you dictate all punctuation and spelling or do you want to give only the main punctuation and leave the rest to the scribe's discretion? The scribe may not be able to spell complex subject-specific words.
Note:
Student: What should the scribe do if they are unsure of a word while you are in mid flow? Should the scribe ask you to repeat it there and then or would you prefer to come back to it at the end of the sentence or paragraph?
Note:
Student: How will the scribe indicate to you when they have finished writing what you have just dictated?
Note:
Student: Do you want the scribe to read out the script for you for checking?
Note:
Student: Find out where the examination is taking place and arrange to meet the scribe in good time before the exam.

The above questions are meant as a guide only and are available in a word document upon request. You may have other questions that will need to be addressed before the exam; your one-hour practice session will enable you to do this.