



# **Disability and SENDA** **What you need to know**

Royal Holloway  
University of London



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Royal Holloway has a strong and proud tradition in the development of equal opportunities policies and practices. It is recognised that staff have always been committed to providing the best possible support for students with special needs.

The College's Educational Support Office compiled these guidelines for all staff, to help increase awareness of responsibilities under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and encourage the further development of good practice in the area of supporting students with special needs.

I encourage you to read these guidelines carefully and use them both to support and improve current practice. Please do feel free to contact the Educational Support Office if you would like more information.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Mayfield'.

## When is a person 'disabled'?

"A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities." (*Disability Discrimination Act 2005: Section 18*)

Also: "A person who has cancer, HIV infection or multiple sclerosis is to be deemed to have a disability." (*Disability Discrimination Act 2005: Section 18*)

## What is considered 'substantial'?

A limitation that goes beyond normal differences in ability, which exist in people.

## What is considered 'long-term'?

Lasting at least 12 months or likely to recur within 12 months.

## Examples of types of disabilities

### Medical Condition

diabetes, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, ME, asthma, cystic fibrosis

### Physical Difficulty

wheelchair user, amputee, visually/hearing impaired

### Special Psychological Need

social phobia, depression, Asperger syndrome, anorexia/bulimia

### Specific Learning Difficulty

dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia

## Disability at Royal Holloway

Royal Holloway has approximately 681 disabled students (8% of the student population); around a 4% of these have one or more Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD).

## Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA)

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995: Part 4, or SENDA, came into force in September 2002 and brings universities in line with schools and further education institutions. We now have a legal obligation to abide by SENDA.

### What are we required to do?

- Make 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that disabled students are not at a 'substantial disadvantage' – in relation to time, inconvenience, effort and discomfort
- Ensure that we are not treating disabled students 'less favourably'
- Create an enabling and inclusive environment
- Anticipate requirements for future students by putting into place appropriate support and adjustments
- Provide support at the earliest opportunity for existing students

### What does SENDA cover?

- College procedures, teaching practices and course requirements
- Provision of auxiliary aids and services such as interpreters or course materials in alternative formats
- Adjustments of physical features of buildings

### Which student facilities and services?

- Admissions, accommodation, open days, inductions
- Teaching – course units and voluntary seminars
- Lab work/Practicals
- Field trips
- Work Placements
- Year Abroad/in Industry
- Exams and assessments
- Careers Centre, Library services, Health services
- In summary, all student facilities and services

## Which types of students?

- Full time and part time
- Undergraduate and Postgraduate
- Home students and International students
- Short or taster courses
- Day and evening courses
- Distance learning students
- Students taking part of a course or visiting from another HE institution
- In summary, all students at Royal Holloway

This must apply to all types of students throughout their contact with the College, from the enquiry stage, admission and enrolment, accommodation, the course itself, through to graduation and provision for alumni.

## College literature and communications

All course brochures, college prospectuses, leaflets and learning materials are required to be available in alternative formats (such as in large print, on coloured paper, Braille, CD ROM).

Course brochures and literature are required to be accurate and representative: detailing the physical environment, what is covered in the syllabus and what is required from the students.

Notes and notices should also be as accessible as possible to as many students as possible. Coloured paper and text in 16+ point size is accessible to most students. A clear font is also helpful. It is also advisable to hold all material electronically for ease and speed of modification into an alternative format.

## Suggested text format

To make text clear and easy to read for students with Specific Learning Difficulties and visual impairments, please bear in mind the following:

- Have 1.5 spacing between lines
- Left align text
- Use colours on PowerPoint presentations/OHPs
- Keep titles and subtitles in consistent colours
- Use numbers or bullets for lists or individual lines of text
- Use bullet points where possible rather than dense text
- Avoid using *italics* or underlining text
- Use fonts that have clearly shaped letters – for example, some fonts have ‘a’ and ‘g’ that can be confused with the figure ‘8’
- Avoid sentences in capital letters
- Avoid pdfs (not as easily modifiable by some adaptive software used by students)
- Hold copies of teaching material electronically



## Example Fonts

Century Gothic	Clear, good ‘a’ and ‘g’
Comic Sans MS	Clear, good ‘a’ and ‘g’
Arial	Clear, good ‘g’ but not a good ‘a’
Univers	Clear, good ‘g’ but not a good ‘a’
Verdana	Clear, good ‘g’ but not a good ‘a’
Tahoma	Clear, good ‘g’ but not a good ‘a’
Times New Roman	Common, fairly clear, but not a good ‘a’ and ‘g’
<i>Monotype Corsiva</i>	<i>Unclear, good ‘a’ but not a good ‘g’</i>

## Barriers to effective learning

- Physical barriers – print size, audibility, building access
- Institutional barriers – course requirements, time constraints, regulation, traditional assessment methods
- Attitudinal barriers – staff, other students, general public

## Who is liable as a ‘responsible body’?

- The institution as a whole
- Actions of individuals in the course of employment
- Agents’ actions (e.g. contracted staff, cleaners)

## What may override the obligation to make adjustments?

- Maintenance of competence standards
- Health and Safety implications
- The interests of the other students
- Unreasonable cost of making adjustments

If there is any doubt as to what might constitute a ‘reasonable adjustment’ in respect of academic standards or provision, contact the ESO and EDC.

## Educational Support Office (ESO)

The ESO is Royal Holloway's central office for co-ordinating the support of students with special needs. We work closely with students, to offer confidential advice and support throughout their time at Royal Holloway. We also represent the needs of students by attending a variety of relevant College committees.

The Senior Educational Support Officer is available to meet with students who want to register, ask questions, or raise a concern. The ESO team provides three types of support: academic, personal and financial.

### Academic support

#### Educational Support Officer (Study Skills)

This officer is available to all undergraduate students who would like to improve their learning and study skills, in seminars or in small group workshops.

#### Education Support Officer (SpLD)

This officer assists students with Specific Learning Difficulties (such as dyslexia or dyspraxia) in finding effective learning strategies for their particular needs via one-to-one and group sessions. She also carries out diagnostic assessments for those students who suspect that they have an SpLD.

#### Liasing with Academic Departments

There is a special needs co-ordinator in every Academic Department – the ESO staff voice students' concerns to the departments by communicating with these ESO Network members and through staff training. The ESO co-ordinates the provision of academic assistance such as advance access to teaching materials, and special deadline and examination arrangements.

### Personal support

- Advice and assistance in applying for Priority to Accommodation
- Advice and assistance in applying for Special Examination Arrangements
- Coordinating assistance around campus and in lectures, eg via note-takers, personal helpers and fetching and carrying books
- Advice on Library support, Facilities Management, Computer Centre, Counselling, the Health Centre, Careers, Chaplaincy, Accommodation and other services



### Financial support

We provide advice and assistance for students in applying for support and funding. For example:

- For Home students – Disabled Students' Allowance and Access to the Learning Fund
- For International students – access to alternative modes of funding

### Other Royal Holloway links

- ESO Network Members – point of contact for students, other staff and ESO within every Academic Department and including the Residential Support Team, Support and Advisory Services, Students' Union and Student Finance. For ESO Network Members' contact details, please check the College website
- Curriculum Development Officer, Educational Development Centre – can advise academic staff on developing inclusive curricula
- Remember ALL staff are legally responsible – we need a proactive, holistic approach

## Disclosure, Confidentiality and Support

'Not knowing' is not a defence against lack of provision – we all have to give students numerous opportunities to disclose. These include:

- On UCAS form
- At enrolment
- At Residence Hall induction
- At course induction
- At regular intervals throughout the course
- Prior to assessment

We need to provide a safe and supportive environment to all students and, in particular, to students with disabilities. If a student discloses any information to you, encourage them to register with the ESO. Always tell the student if you need to tell anyone else about his or her Special Need. If they do not want to register with the ESO, or do not want you to disclose to the ESO, explain to them that they will not be able to receive any specific educational support from Royal Holloway.

Be pro-active; consider following up after you have had contact with a student.

### Practical support

- Always face the student when you are talking to them
- Even if the student has a guide or helper, always speak to the student
- When giving information of any kind, give it in a multi-sensory way. For example, say it clearly and concisely, write it down, and use gestures to reinforce the message.
- Allow extra time for whatever you are doing with the student
- Be sensitive – put any special correspondence in pigeon holes or send via email; not in front of others
- Be aware of your nearest first aider or Security Number (x444) in case of emergencies
- Be aware of mobility impaired routes across campus and other disabled-adapted facilities such as disabled toilets, lifts, disabled parking spaces, automatic doors, ramps, lowered phones, disabled-adapted rooms and so on. For more information around campus, please refer to the *Access Guide*
- Be aware of students' special needs and how to support them

### Creating the right balance

- Students need to be encouraged to be independent and take responsibility for themselves – their own learning and disability needs
- The student should not feel patronised
- The student must feel fully supported

### Please contact the ESO if:

1. A student needs to know where to get help or advice
2. You need advice about a particular student
3. You need advice or resources about a general disability
4. You need advice regarding inclusive teaching methods and practices
5. A student needs a copy of the *Handbook for Students with Special Needs* or the *Access Guide* (which shows wheelchair access routes and disabled facilities throughout campus and across Kingswood)

### ESO Staff

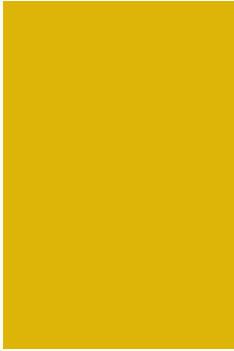
- Senior Educational Support Officer
- Assistant Educational Support Officer
- Educational Support Officer – SpLD (for students with Specific Learning Difficulties)
- Student Helper Administrator and Administrative Assistant
- Study Skills and ESO Administrator
- Student Helper's Administration



**Contact Details:**

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