SWANSEA UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ADDITIONAL SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS FOR DISABLED STUDENTS WHO ARE NOT ELIGIBLE OR EXCEED DISABLED STUDENTS ALLOWANCE (DSA) FUNDING.

1. Introduction

Swansea University is strongly committed to equality of opportunity in our provision for all students. For the purposes of this policy, disability is understood in the broadest sense and includes mental health difficulties, specific learning difficulties and medical conditions which may have an impact on day-to-day activities. This policy applies to all students including home, EU and international.

Swansea University welcomes all students, including those with disabilities and is committed to respond appropriately and effectively to their additional support requirements identified as far as is reasonably practical. Students are strongly encouraged to contact the Disability Office/Wellbeing Service to disclose a disability, mental health difficulty, medical condition or specific learning difficulty well in advance of their arrival at the University in order to outline any support requirements, so that any necessary planning can be undertaken. It is important that contact is made at the earliest opportunity to ensure that appropriate advice regarding the support, equipment and facilities available can be provided. Non disclosure may limit the scope of disability related adjustments available.

The University is committed to working towards the social model of disability, thereby not focussing on an individual's disability or medical condition, but instead identifying the impact of disability in the structural, organisational, physical and attitudinal barriers that prohibit disabled people from achieving equality and inclusion of their needs, rights and requirements.

2. Legislative Background

The Equality Act 2010 came into force on 1 October 2010, replacing the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Equality Act 2010 places a positive duty on all public bodies, to eliminate discrimination and harassment and to promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

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 disabled person is placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to non-disabled people. The University supports an anticipatory approach which requires pro-active consideration of disabled access to services and facilities to ensure adjustments are made in advance of individual disabled people attempting to use the service or access education. The University’s
Disability Policy can be viewed at http://www.swansea.ac.uk/media/Student%20Disability%20Policy%202012.pdf.

3. **Aims of Policy**

The Swansea university policy for students who are not eligible, or exceed the Disabled students allowance funding aim is to identify and reduce the impact of any barriers which exist for disabled people using our facilities and enable them to access as fully as possible all education, social and leisure opportunities.

Furthermore, the University regards this policy as a working document that will be reviewed and revised regularly.

4. **Definition of Disability**

In the UK disability is identified by the Equality Act (2010) which 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'. Listening, learning and examinations count as day to day. It is illegal in the UK, for disabled people to be discriminated against on the basis of their disability.

Under the Equality Act a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment or long term medical condition (e.g epilepsy) which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. People who have had a disability within the definition are protected from discrimination even if they have since recovered. Impairment covers physical or mental impairment which includes sensory impairment such as affecting sight or hearing.

- 'Substantial' is defined as 'more than minor or trivial'
- 'Long-term effect' is defined as lasting more than a year (12 months or more).
- Physical and sensory impairments, Specific learning differences, Autistic spectrum disorders, Mental health issues, Severe disfigurements, Anyone with an HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis, Progressive conditions that affect normal day-to-day activities, including long term physical health issues are all covered by the Act.

Many students do not see themselves as being ‘disabled’ and each person’s disability, medical condition or specific need can affect them in different ways so the support that is offered needs to be flexible and tailored to each individual. It is important that students disclose whether they have a specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia, an ongoing health condition or mental health condition which may have an impact on their studies that contact is made with the Disability Office/Wellbeing Service to ensure that appropriate support needs can be discussed.

4. **Disclosure**
Students applying to the University through UCAS, Erasmus, direct entry, postgraduate taught programme, research degree, postgraduate professional or part-time undergraduate programme or via an agent are strongly encouraged to disclose their disability, medical condition, specific learning difficulty or mental health difficulty on their application form.

Those courses that are externally regulated require students to complete a declaration of health questionnaire and be assessed by an Occupational Health Advisor. Students will be advised of this at the time of application.

Students do not have to disclose their disability to the university, however, by choosing not to disclose, they will only receive generic institutional level support. Students who do not disclose on their application can disclose at any stage during their academic career by contacting the Disability Office/Wellbeing Service. The purpose of disclosing is so that the university can discuss support entitlements and what personalised support can be reasonably provided.

**Personal care / Daily living support**

The University does not provide or fund support with daily living tasks, therefore students will need to think carefully about any non-academic, disability-related support requirements they may have, e.g. assistance with shopping, cooking, cleaning, laundry or personal care. Disability Office / Wellbeing Service staff may be able to give information about local agencies which provide care assistants. Home students are advised to contact their Social Services Department to discuss their eligibility for support. Support with day to day living can be very expensive, so this is an extra cost which international students must budget for.

**Accommodation**

Swansea University has a number of rooms in student residences that have been adapted to accommodate the needs of disabled students. It is our policy to make reasonable personal adaptations to bedrooms where required. Disabled students or prospective students are encouraged to contact the Disability Office to discuss their accommodation requirements. All students will be asked to provide information from an Occupational Therapist (or equivalent) to advise on any room adaptations that may be required.

5. **Funding**

Students and prospective students from outside the UK should be aware that they will not be eligible for the financial support that the UK Government provides for students who are residents of the United Kingdom (Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)). As non UK students do not have access to DSA it is essential that students identify funding or bursaries that may be available via their home country, sponsors or charitable organisations.

Some home students studying short programmes of study may not be eligible to apply for the Disabled Students Allowance.
The Disability Office/Wellbeing Service strongly advise non UK students and UK students studying short programmes of study which do not attract DSA funding to contact the Disability Office or Wellbeing Service before making a formal application to the University. This will give students the time to discuss the support needed and the extent to which the University can provide it.

It is expected that non UK students will have secured funding to cover disability related expenses whilst at University. Students should:

- Contact their home government for information about accessing appropriate funding.
- Sponsors may also be able to provide students with an additional grant to cover any extra expenses due to a disability. For example, people on the EU/Socrates/Erasmus exchange programs can apply for grants, which are higher than normal study grants to offset additional costs incurred by specific difficulties. Please contact your Erasmus coordinator within your home university.
- There may also be charitable trusts, organizations and scholarships to which students can apply for additional funding such as The Snowdon Award Scheme who have grants to support students with physical or sensory impairments. For more information please visit their website at [www.snowdonawardscheme.org.uk](http://www.snowdonawardscheme.org.uk)
- The British Council also provides more information please read [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org)

Home students on short programmes of study are also advised to contact the Snowdon Award Scheme to determine their eligibility for funding.

Swansea University has established a small fund for non UK disabled students and home students who are not eligible for DSA to assist with the costs of academic-related disability support.

To apply to this fund, international and home students will need to complete an application form and return this to the Disability Office/Wellbeing Service. Students will be asked to provide evidence of their disability, medical condition, specific learning difficulty or mental health difficulty and evidence of any support or software they have previously required or accessed and/or have available to bring with them. Students will also be asked to provide evidence that they have exhausted all possible avenues of funding from their Government, Sponsor and/or charitable organisations.

On receipt of the application the case will be referred to a University Panel comprising representatives from:-

Equal Opportunities, Money Advice & Support Office, International Students Advisory Service, Finance Department, Assessment Centre, Wellbeing and the Disability Office
The Panel will consider application on its own merits taking into consideration:

- Students applying to this fund must be ineligible for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). Students must provide documentation of a diagnosed disability according to the Equality Act 2010
- The appropriateness of the support proposed and any alternatives that may be available
- Support is based on individual need and compared to current good practice.
- All applications will be treated equally on a case by case basis reviewing a range of factors including the level, type, availability of support required and based on individual need
- All other sources of support and funding have been exhausted
- Student may be asked to undergo an independent assessment of need if required

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