

# The London Interdisciplinary School

## Disability Policy

### Introduction

This policy forms part of the School's overall commitment to ensuring equality for its diverse staff and student body. It outlines the School's duties and the options available to both students and staff with disabilities, including mental health disabilities, in seeking support or adjustments to their studying and working environment; and it provides a framework to support the ongoing development of an inclusive, safe, enabling and supportive environment for all of the School's staff, students, and visitors, regardless of disability. This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#).

### Scope

This policy applies to all LIS staff and students. Where relevant, the policy also applies to prospective staff, prospective students, and visitors.

### Legislative context: Equality Act 2010

As a disability is a protected characteristic under the [Equality Act 2010](#), public bodies such as the London Interdisciplinary School must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimization, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Public bodies are required to integrate consideration of equality and good relations into their day-to-day business and to consider how a function can affect different groups in different ways. This enables the School to reasonably anticipate the needs of disabled staff, students and visitors, and to address the potential impacts of any proposed changes to ensure they do not have an adverse effect.

### Development of this Policy

This Policy has been developed in line with sector best practice ([JISC](#), [Advance HE](#), Disabled Students Sector Leadership Group) and in consultation with School staff. When we have students enrolled in our programme, we will consult them on this policy so that we can evolve it in line with their feedback.

### Definitions

#### Disability

For the purpose of this policy, the term “disability” has the same meaning as that given in the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 \(SENDA\)](#) : “A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

While understanding the Medical Model nature of the definition used in the [Equality Act 2010](#), the School recognizes the Social Model of Disability, which views disability as being created by barriers within society rather than locating the disability within the individual. Barriers can be: in the physical environment, such as inaccessible buildings or services; attitudinal, resulting in stereotypes, prejudices and assumptions about the capabilities of disabled people; or organisational, such as having inflexible policies and procedures. The School aims to address all of these barriers to ensure that disabled people are able to participate in all aspects of School life.

## Reasonable Adjustment

A Reasonable Adjustment is defined as a decision taken by the School to allow changes to be made to standard arrangements for individual disabled staff and students, so that they may continue in their employment or studies at School.

Reasonable adjustments will also apply to prospective employees, prospective students, and visitors to the School.

## Principles

The School is committed to addressing the barriers to inclusion (structural, cultural, organizational and attitudinal) that adversely impact upon people with disabilities, and views accessible, appropriate and inclusive provision as a core element of the School's provision. The School is committed to complying with the disability provisions of the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the preceding legislation including [SENDA 2001](#) by:

- Making its provision as accessible as possible, aiming to do this by using inclusive approaches, or by ensuring that anticipatory action is taken as far as is reasonably practicable to provide inclusive working, learning and teaching and access to the School's facilities and services. Where this is not possible and/or additional needs are identified, the School will seek to implement appropriate individual reasonable adjustments.
- Ensuring that any reasonable adjustments are evidence-based and are determined through an assessment of the individual's disability-related requirements, taking into consideration additional factors such as the environment, health and safety, academic standards, and principles of employment law to prevent substantial disadvantage.

- Taking all steps to ensure that nobody—whether prospective or current staff, prospective or current student or visitor—is treated less favourably on the grounds of disability.
- Promoting a positive working and studying environment for disabled staff and students.
- Providing training, support and guidance for all academic and professional staff to ensure that they are equipped to provide the necessary support and can respond appropriately to the needs of staff and students with disabilities.
- Encouraging a climate of openness and positive disclosure for staff and students with disabilities, including mental health disabilities. The Student Experience Department offers a safe and supportive environment for students to disclose their disability-related requirements; and Human Resources will be given guidance on facilitating discussions around disclosure and appropriate support for staff. In keeping with data protection legislation, any information disclosed by a student or member of staff relating to a disability shall only be passed on with consent and where there is a legal basis to do so.
- Regularly reviewing, monitoring and revising, as appropriate, all School systems, procedures, facilities, services and buildings in compliance with the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the [SENDA 2001](#) in addition to the [Human Rights Act 1998](#), which includes the right not be denied access to education.
- Creating, maintaining and disseminating information about services and facilities available for disabled staff, students, alumni, visitors and prospective staff and students.

## Policies

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group plays a key role in contributing to and monitoring the work of the School in respect of disability-related matters. This Group will meet at least quarterly to discuss all matters relating to equality, diversity and inclusion.

The School will ensure that in all policies, procedures, regulations, functions and activities, including strategic planning and resource allocation, consideration is given to reasonable means of enabling disabled staff and students' full participation in all aspects of the academic and social life of the School.

The School will ensure that the requirements of disabled students are considered during programme validation and review and that appropriate amendments are made. Programme specifications that raise barriers to access by disabled people will be reconsidered and reasonable adjustments made to minimise such barriers.

The School will ensure that its publicity, programme details and general information is accessible to people with disabilities.

The School website will contain information on disabled access and support for staff, students and visitors.

### **Disclosing a disability**

The School will give encouragement and opportunities to staff and students to disclose any disability that may have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to undertake normal day-to-day activities. A discussion can then take place about disability-related reasonable adjustments or other support that may be required. Individuals can choose to bring someone to accompany them at meetings to provide extra support if required. Staff are encouraged to discuss their needs with their line manager or seek support from their HR representative. Students can seek advice via their personal tutor or the Student Experience Department.

Disclosing a disability to the School is a personal matter of which it is an individual's choice if and when they do so. Disclosing a disability will enable the School to inform staff and

students about the options available to them. If individuals choose not to disclose their disability, this may have implications for the provision available to them. Whilst it is beneficial to disclose as early as possible, disclosure can be done at any time.

### *Reasonable adjustments for assessments and examinations*

Where a student requires reasonable adjustments to support them during assessments or examinations, they must notify the Student Experience Department at least one calendar month before the examination sitting or submission of assessment. Adjustments that the Director of Admissions and Student Experience may agree on include:

- A separate room;
- A scribe;
- A reader;
- A BSL interpreter;
- Assessment materials in a different format (e.g., coloured/enlarged paper, braille, transcripts)
- Coloured overlays;
- A computer;
- Assistive technology;
- Alternative assessment forms which meet the required programme objectives and learning outcomes.

An adjustment may be granted for the duration of the student's programme where the disability, learning difficulty or medical condition and their impact upon assessments are unlikely to change. In some instances, alternative forms of assessment may be required to accommodate a student. In applying for reasonable adjustments for examinations and assessments, the student may be asked to must submit evidence to the Director of Admissions and Student Experience as to why they are unable to sit their examination under the normal School conditions with the range of reasonable adjustments already available to them.

The Director of Admissions and Student Experience will have routine parameters in place within which they can make a determination on applications for reasonable adjustments for

examinations and assessments. Where the application does not fit within these parameters, the Director of Admissions and Student Experience will consult with the Director of Teaching and Learning to determine whether the student may undertake an alternative assessment, or whether they must undertake the standard assessment with reasonable adjustments (which may already be available to them), or whether the student must undertake the assessment as normal in line with the rest of their cohort.

An alternative form of assessment must assess the same intended learning outcomes as the standard examination, must be conducted under conditions that are as far as possible equivalent to those of standard assessments, including, where relevant, pressure of time. In most cases, the format of the alternative assessment will be an assessment paper similar in style to coursework, to be completed over a specified period of time. Each piece of assessment will be followed by a short 15-minute question and answer session, to verify that the assessment piece is the student's own work. The outcome of the assessment will be communicated to the student in the normal way and the student will have the same entitlement to feedback.

Students may appeal the decision of the Director of Admissions and Student Experience in relation to reasonable adjustments under the [Academic Appeals Procedure](#). In these cases, the Director of Admissions and Student Experience will absent themselves as Chair of the Academic Appeals Board and send a nominee in his/her place. The Director of Teaching and Learning, if previously involved in the case, will also hand his/her responsibilities as member of the Academic Appeals Board to a nominee.

#### *Reasonable adjustments for Placements*

Where a student requires reasonable adjustments to support them during a Placement, they must notify the Student Experience Department at least six weeks before the beginning of the Placement. In order for the Student Experience Department to progress discussions with the relevant Employer Partner on reasonable adjustments, the student will be required to give consent for information on their disability, learning difficulty or medical condition to be shared. Further information can be found in the [Student Placements Handbook](#).

If students have concerns about disclosure and would like to discuss these confidentially, they can contact the Student Experience Department.

#### **Reasonable Adjustments**

Where the Human Resources Department determines that reasonable adjustments for individual disabled staff are required, these might include, where appropriate:

- Reasonable adjustments such as reallocation of duties;
- Altering working hours;
- Changing work location;
- Modifying equipment; and
- Consideration of other roles.

Where the Student Experience Department determines that reasonable adjustments for individual disabled students are required, these might include, where appropriate:

- Additional support and assistance for assessments (e.g., a separate room, a scribe, a reader, a BSL interpreter, assessment materials in a different format, coloured overlays, a computer, assistive technology)
- Additional support for learning;
- Adjustments to learning environment;
- Provision of lecture notes in advance; and
- Consideration of alternative forms of assessment.

Example reasonable adjustments for examinations and assessments are set out in the section above.

Where the Student Experience Department and Employer Partner determines that reasonable adjustments for individual disabled students are required, these might include, where appropriate:

- Altered working hours;
- Changed work location;
- Modified equipment.

In all cases, reasonable adjustments will be made within the parameters of the following factors:

- The nature of student or staff circumstances following consultation with the individual and examination of available evidence and relevant assessments.
- The nature of the work or academic programme of study.
- The likely effectiveness of the adjustment in removing the disadvantage.
- The practicality of the adjustment, taking into account disruption, health and safety issues, the reasonable expectations of others and external factors (for example, factors in relation to student placements).

- The costs, including the availability of external funding sources to assist in the adjustment.
- Legal precedent.
- The possibility of using inclusive measures, which is the School's preferred method of ensuring accessibility, rather than a reasonable adjustment.

## **Financial Support**

If a disability is disclosed to the School, a wide range of financial support can be accessed, namely:

- Government financial assistance is available to support people with disabilities in the workplace.
- External resources such as the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). DSAs are Government grants available to eligible disabled students on higher education courses in the UK to help with extra course costs they may incur by attending their course, as a direct result of their disability. The allowances can help to pay for a non-medical personal helper, items of specialist equipment, assistive software, travel or other course-related costs. The allowance is not means-tested and is not repayable. DSAs are not available to all students, but are subject to eligibility criteria, which are stated on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk), together with the amounts payable.

If a disabled student or staff member has special requirements in relation to fire or general evacuation, the School encourages them to bring this to the attention of their personal tutor or line manager so that appropriate plans and arrangements can be made. Further information can be found in the School's [Health and Safety Policy](#).

## **Prospective Students**

All applications to the School will be assessed on the basis of academic suitability for the School programme. Discussions about the support requirements of students will be separate from any academic decision.

Prospective students who may have additional requirements (e.g., assistance or equipment) and have been selected for a School Open Day or Selection Day will be asked to notify the School in advance of their visit so that reasonable adjustments can be made as necessary and appropriate.

On being called to a Selection Day, or on being made an offer, a student who has disclosed a disability, learning difficulty or medical condition shall be invited to discuss the support

required to complete the programme with a trained and specially designated member of staff in the Student Experience Department to:

- Ensure that the student is fully aware of the demands of the programme;
- Identify any resources or arrangements that the student requires;
- Determine whether the School can reasonably provide these.

Where adjustments are reasonable, the School shall deal with the student efficiently and fairly, in line with this Policy.

Where reasonable adjustments have been agreed with an applicant who has accepted an offer of a place on the programme, the School will provide the student with a clear record of the adjustments to be made in the form of an accessible learning contract. The learning contract shall set out as a minimum:

- A clear, precise and accurate listing of adjustments to be provided by the School;
- An agreed clear contact point for the student during their studies;
- A clear statement as to the expectations of the School that the student will keep the School reasonably and expeditiously informed as to any alterations in their disability and resulting effects on their study.

Further information can be found in the [Admissions Regulations and Procedures for Students](#).

### **Prospective Staff**

All prospective staff who accept the offer of an interview will be asked in advance if they require any special arrangements to be made for them at the interview and adjustments may be made as necessary and appropriate.

All school vacancies will be open to suitably qualified people irrespective of disability.

### **Student Placements**

Where a student has disclosed a disability, learning difficulty or medical condition and requires reasonable adjustments during their Placement, they must notify the Student Experience Department at least one month before their Placement begins. The Student Experience Department requires consent from the student for information about their disability, learning difficulty or medical condition to be shared with the relevant Employer Partner in order to begin discussions of reasonable adjustments on a Placement.

Where a student has disclosed a disability, learning difficulty or medical condition and has given consent for the School to share this information with employer partners, the Student Experience Department will work with the relevant Employer Partner to ensure that, where appropriate, reasonable adjustments are in place to support the student at the workplace during their allocated Placement. These reasonable adjustments may include:

- Altering working hours;
- Changing work location; and
- Modifying equipment.

The Student Experience Department and Employer Partner will agree clear record of adjustments to be made in the form of a Placement learning contract, which shall set out as a minimum:

- A clear, precise and accurate listing of adjustments to be provided by the employer partner for the duration of the placement;
- An agreed clear contact point at the employer for the student during their placement;
- A clear statement as to the expectations of the School that the student will keep the School reasonably and expeditiously informed as to any alterations in their disability and resulting effects on their ability to fulfil their work placement.

This record of adjustments will be agreed between the School's Student Experience Department and the Employer Partner one month before the beginning of the Placement.

Where the student experiences any disability-related issues at their Placement, they should contact their Placement Supervisor at the Employer Partner in the first instance, drawing on the support of the Director of Admissions and Student Experience or their Placement Mentor as required. Where the student feels that the issue is not resolved by the Placement Supervisor, they should contact their Placement Mentor, who will liaise with the Director of Admissions and Student Experience and the Employer Partner to find a solution.

Further information can be found in the [Student Placements Handbook](#).

## Roles and Responsibilities

**The Board of Directors** is responsible for ensuring compliance by the School with equality law.

**All School staff** are expected to be aware of this Policy and the legal framework, and to treat disabled people, whether staff, students or visitors, in accordance with these provisions.

In particular, **Heads of Departments and others in management positions** are responsible for ensuring that this Policy and the legal framework are communicated effectively through staff development programmes and are being implemented in their area.

**The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group** will monitor the implementation of this policy, including:

- Monitoring, analysing and reporting on data relating to disability and equality;
- Monitoring the School's performance against the delivery of its equality objectives in relation to disability and recommending changes where improvements are required;
- Evaluating and monitoring the School's performance against its Access and Participation Plan disability objectives, and recommending changes where improvements are required;
- Considering staff and student feedback on the School's Disability Policy as collated by the Director of Admissions and Student Experience, and recommending changes as appropriate to the Board of Directors.

The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group has representatives from the Recruitment and Admissions, Student Experience, Learning, and Human Resources departments, as well as a student representative elected by the student body, and it will meet at least quarterly. It is chaired by the Director of Admissions and Student Experience.

**The Student Experience Department** will determine any reasonable adjustments to be made for disabled students to support their learning and assessment. This assessment will be made by a trained assessor. The Student Experience Department will also liaise with Employer Partners in ensuring that reasonable adjustments are put in place for students on work Placements. **The Director of Admissions and Student Experience** will ensure that

disability training and support will be made available for managers, and that disability equality guidance and information on good practice will be available on the School website.

**The Human Resources Department** will determine any reasonable adjustments to be made for disabled staff to support their ability to perform at work. This assessment will be made by a trained, designated individual reporting into the Head of HR.

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

### Complaints or Feedback about the Disability Policy

Where a member of staff, student or prospective student has a complaint or feedback about the School's Disability Policy, they should contact the Director of Admissions and Student Experience in writing (by letter or email) at their earliest convenience, setting out:

- The nature of their complaint, feedback or issue;
- The action, mitigation or changes they expect to see.

The Director of Admissions and Student Experience can be contacted by email at [studentexperience@t-lis.org](mailto:studentexperience@t-lis.org) or by post at:

Director of Admissions and Student Experience  
The London Interdisciplinary School  
X + Why  
20-30 Whitechapel Road  
London  
E1 1EW  
United Kingdom.

The Director of Admissions and Student Experience will acknowledge receipt of the complaint, feedback or issue within 5 working days.

The Director of Admissions and Student Experience may seek further information from the individual who has submitted a complaint or feedback, and will conduct an investigation to determine further information relating to the complaint, feedback or issue.

Where the complaint or issue relates to a specific individual of group of individuals, the complainant will be advised to continue their complaint under the [Dignity at Work and Study Policy and Procedure](#).

Having investigated the complaint, feedback or issue, the Director of Admissions and Student Experience will table it for discussion at a specially convened meeting of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group. The Group will determine:

- Whether the complaint, issue or feedback is upheld given the information collated by the Director of Admissions and Student Experience;
- Whether further information is required on the complaint, issue or feedback to come to a view. In this case the Director of Admissions and Student Experience will gather the required information and the Steering Group will be reconvened at the earliest opportunity.
- Actions to address the complaint, issue or feedback. Where actions include a policy change, the Steering Group will recommend changes to the Board of Directors for sign-off.

The Director of Admissions and Student Experience will give the Steering Committee's response to the individual who brought the complaint/feedback/issue to the School's attention within twenty working days of the raising of the complaint/feedback/issue. Should the individual be dissatisfied with the Steering Committee's response, they have a right of appeal to the Chief Executive.

The individual must submit their appeal in writing (by email or letter) to the Chief Executive within 10 working days of the notification of the Steering Committee's response. The Chief Executive will review the appeal and notify the individual of the outcome within 25 working days of receiving it. The outcome may be:

- To confirm the response of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group; or
- To revise the response to the complaint, feedback or issue. Where this response entails a change to policy, the Chief Executive will recommend the required changes at the next Board of Directors meeting; or
- To order a new investigation by the Director of Admissions and Student Experience and a reconvening of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group on the matter.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The School's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Steering Group will provide ongoing monitoring and review of the effectiveness of provision for staff and students with disabilities, as well as evaluate progress and identify opportunities for enhancement to advance disability equality at the School. The Group will make an annual report to the Board of Directors on the effectiveness of this Policy. The Group will also review this Policy annually in the light of possible government/legislation changes or any feedback or complaints brought by staff or students, and will recommend any amendments for authorisation by the Board of Directors.

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<b>Document owner:</b>	<b>Hannah Kohler, Director of Admissions and Student Experience</b>
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<b>Date of next review:</b> (annually unless otherwise agreed)	<b>MM/YYYY</b>
<b>Related documents:</b> (eg associated forms, underpinning processes, related policies or overarching policies)	<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Student Placements Handbook Staff Training Programmes and Logs Examinations and Assessments Regulations and Procedures for Students Health and Safety Policy</b>

<b>Version Control</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Brief summary of changes</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Experience)</b>	<b>13/01/2019</b>	<b>Original draft</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Experience)</b>	<b>03/06/2019</b>	<b>Added section about complaints about the policy. Clarified the role of the Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Steering Group and the Director of Admissions and Student Experience. Included context for how the policy was developed; included reference to Placements. Expanded detail on reasonable adjustments for assessments and examinations.</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Experience)</b>	<b>14/08/2019</b>	<b>Minor wording changes</b>

