



DISABILITY POLICY STATEMENT AND GUIDELINES

Part 1. POLICY STATEMENT

1. Introduction

The University's values as a Catholic institution include ensuring that equality and fair treatment for all is embedded into everything we do, and that the differences between people are recognised, respected and celebrated. At Newman University, we are continually working for excellence in developing and implementing good practice in equality and diversity. We believe that excellence will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual. In accordance with Equality Legislation we are committed to promoting equality for disabled students, staff and visitors, and to working pro-actively to eliminate all forms of discrimination, so that disabled people are fully able to participate in the life and work of the institution.

In accordance with the Social Model of Disability (Oliver 1983), we will seek to identify and remove barriers which prevent full participation by disabled people, in any aspect of University life, prior to admission through to graduation and alumni, and in all aspects of staff application and employment.

Our commitment to disability equality is supported by the University's Equality and Diversity Policy, which makes specific reference to disabled students and staff and provides that no student, job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of a protected characteristic.

2. Definition

For the purpose of this policy the following definition of a disabled person will apply, as set out in the Equality Act (2010):

'A disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has an effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. That effect must be:

- Substantial (that is, more than minor or trivial), and
- Adverse, and
- Long-term (that is, it has or is likely to last for at least a year or the rest of the life of the person affected).'

Physical or mental impairment includes hidden impairments such as mental illness, dyslexia, diabetes and epilepsy. A person with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis is automatically treated as disabled under the Act from the point of diagnosis.

3.0 Inclusive practice

Current government policy expects that institutions should meet the majority of students' needs through inclusive practice and anticipatory arrangements and not by individual reasonable adjustments, although this will still be necessary in some cases.

The University will seek to develop an inclusive environment for disabled staff, students and visitors, by regularly reviewing its policies, practices and procedures and anticipating adjustments and arrangements that will help to make its physical environment and services more accessible and inclusive to all. University curriculum and related materials will endeavour to address and meet the needs of equal opportunities and access.

3.1 Reasonable adjustments

Where it is not possible to be fully inclusive, Newman University aims to support disabled students and staff by making reasonable adjustments wherever practicable to do so, to prevent any disadvantage. Under the Equality Act 2010 people caring for a disabled child, partner or dependent are also protected from discrimination and reasonable adjustments will also be considered in these circumstances.

Although a disabled person will be asked to indicate the types of adjustment that may be helpful, what constitutes a reasonable adjustment is ultimately a managerial decision and will be made within the parameters of the following factors:

- The effectiveness of the adjustment in preventing any disadvantage
- What is practicable, taking account of the financial and other costs of the adjustment and the extent of any disruption caused
- The extent of the University's financial or other resources
- The availability to the University of financial or other assistance to help make an adjustment.
- Legal precedent and developing case law.

4. Responsibilities

The University Council of Governors has overall responsibility for ensuring that Newman University complies with the requirements of disability legislation, as incorporated into the Equality Act 2010, including the general duty to have due regard to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between disabled people and non-disabled people.
- Foster good relations between disabled people and those with other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

The University Leadership Team (ULT) will take a leadership role in promoting the principles of equality for disabled people, ensuring that the institution is committed to achieving more than the minimum standards required by law. It will uphold the principles of regular review and improvement through promoting impact assessment processes. It will identify institutional barriers to full inclusion of disabled people and develop strategies to address them, in consultation with disabled students and staff.

The Equality and Diversity Committee receives regular reports in relation to staff employment and promotion, and to student retention and progression. It is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of equality and diversity policies in promoting equality of opportunity for disabled people and those with other protected characteristics.

The Director of Human Resources is responsible for monitoring recruitment and employment, and development policies, as they affect disabled staff.

Directors, Deans of Faculty, Heads of Department, Managers and Programme Leaders are responsible for ensuring that their service/subject is accessible to disabled staff, students, staff or visitors (as applicable) and that where necessary and practicable, reasonable adjustments are put in place. They are responsible for regularly reviewing their own services and ensuring that new policies, procedures and activities introduced do not discriminate against disabled people and to ensure that their own services are free from all forms of discrimination.

The Inclusion Co-ordinator is responsible for promoting inclusive practice and co-ordinating arrangements in relation to disabled students.

5. Confidentiality and Data Protection.

Information relating to an individual's health issues or disability (as defined under the Equality Act 2010), is regarded as personal sensitive information under the Data Protection Act. Any information of this nature disclosed to a staff member is confidential and must only be used and stored for the purposes for which it was intended.

When a student or staff member discloses a disability or health issue the person receiving that disclosure should have an initial conversation to establish whether any reasonable adjustments can be made, and encourage them to seek further support, signposting them to the relevant services. This may of necessity involve liaising with other departments, such as the individual's manager, or Inclusion Co-ordinator. Before this can be done the individual's permission must be obtained, using the relevant disclosure form (available on the intranet). If an individual wishes information to remain confidential between themselves and the person to whom the disclosure has been made, they may do so on the understanding that this may restrict the ability to make appropriate arrangements. A record of this should be kept.

6. Dealing with Discrimination

Newman University is committed to creating and sustaining a positive and mutually supportive working environment for staff and an excellent teaching and learning experience for students, where individuals are equally valued and respected. Any form of bullying, harassment, victimisation or discrimination of any individual will not be tolerated and any allegations will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately under the relevant procedure. For appropriate definitions, please see appendix 1.

7. Students and Staff with caring responsibilities for a disabled person.

The Equality Act (2010) also gives protection to people with a caring responsibility for a disabled dependent. Newman University will uphold this principle and seek to ensure that students or staff who have caring responsibilities of this nature are not discriminated against, either directly through the application of particular practices or procedures, or indirectly.

8. Representation

In seeking representation on University committees, boards and panels, particular effort will be made to include representatives with different protected characteristics under the Equality Act (2010) and other under-represented

groups. Consultative processes, such as the Student and Staff Consultative Committee (SSCC) and other processes will encourage disabled students and staff to stand for nomination and to influence practice.

9. Monitoring and Review

The Equality and Diversity Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation and development of this policy. The policy is subject to review and amendment every three years.

Part 2: Disability Guidelines for students and staff

1. Disabled students

1.1 Access, Admissions and interviews.

Newman University holds regular open days and applicant visit days. Prospective students are invited to state whether they or those attending with them will require any particular arrangements to be made, so that reasonable adjustments can be put in place prior to the visit.

Disabled students have the right to equal access to courses and facilities provided by Newman University and its Partner Institutions and are selected on the same academic criteria as other candidates. All relevant factors are taken into consideration when assessing an application. Adjustment may be made where it can be shown that a disabled applicant will be capable of meeting the programme's learning outcomes. It is recognised that Professional Bodies may impose certain Fitness to Practice regulations, which in some cases restrict access to certain courses.

University prospectuses refer to the Disability Policy and encourage prospective disabled students to contact the Inclusion Co-ordinator or course tutor to discuss particular requirements regarding access to teaching, study materials and campus facilities. On application, students disclosing a health issue or disability are sent a questionnaire to assess any adjustments or arrangements they may require.

Admission to some courses requires students to attend an interview and/or undergo certain selection tests. On being invited to attend for interview or selection, students are asked if they need any particular arrangements to be made.

1.2 Information

Specific information for disabled students is available through Newman University's website, on the Student Support/Inclusion and Disability Services webpages. Additional information is provided through the Student Support section of SharePoint, and in the General Academic Regulations (also accessible via SharePoint). The e-learning Moodle pages provide guidance to students and staff on creating hard copy and electronic materials in accessible formats.

1.3 Learning and Teaching

Newman University Learning, Teaching and Assessment Committee has adopted an Accessible and Inclusive learning policy setting out parameters for inclusive practice at Newman. An inclusive practice checklist has been incorporated into the paperwork for validation/re-validation of programmes, which must be completed before paperwork for validation/re-validation and has to be formally approved by the validation panel as part of its considerations.

Recording of lectures at source is encouraged as an inclusive practice measure for students who may on occasion have difficulty in attending due to disability or family issues.

The Learning and Teaching Strategy of Newman University ensures that teaching and assessment methods accommodate the learning needs of all students. A range of delivery methods are used across subjects, with extensive use of Moodle, our virtual learning environment, to make delivery more interactive and accessible. Where audio-visual material is used, academic staff are asked to provide subtitles or captioning, and to provide a text version.

The use of Moodle enables academic staff to make notes and hand-outs of sessions available to students in advance of lectures and all academic staff are asked to do this as a matter of good practice. Certain subject areas have introduced audio feedback, which has been well received and the e-learning department regularly reviews the use of new technology and introduces ways of making on-line learning and teaching more accessible.

In addition, students with disabilities or health issues may need individual arrangements or reasonable adjustments to be made. Subject to the agreement by the individual student, the Inclusion Co-ordinator notifies programme, and or module leaders, of the necessary support requirements so that appropriate arrangements can be put in place.

1.4 Examinations and assessments.

All modules have a range of assessment methods. Reasonable adjustments or alternative assessment arrangements are considered for disabled students who would otherwise have difficulty meeting particular assessment criteria. Adjustments and alternative arrangements are agreed in discussion with the Programme Leader and where applicable Assessments and Graduation. Reference is made to this provision in the General Academic Regulations.

Reasonable adjustments may include:

- The use of a quiet room with individual supervision.
- Stop the clock rest breaks
- The use of a computer for written examinations.
- Extra time for candidates to read the examination questions, or for those students with a physical impairment that impedes their writing speed.
- Facilities for a student to access the examination paper in auditory format, for example through a reading pen, or for scribing using text to speech software.
- Presentation to a smaller group or to a tutor.

1.5 Special marking provision.

A 'flagging system' using red dots, is used to notify academic and Assessments and graduation staff of students who have specific learning difficulties or other cognitive difficulties, for example, as a result of brain injury, and account of this is taken when marking assignments. This applies both to manual and to electronic submission of assignments. Examination and assignment scripts are anonymous and are marked primarily on content, evidence of knowledge, understanding and application. Staff are asked to provide categoric feedback as a means of formative assessment. Training can be provided as required.

1.6 Support for placement students.

Where a student is on a placement as part of their degree programme, relevant information may be shared with the placement, with the consent of the student, to ensure reasonable adjustments will be considered by the host organisation, to ensure no disadvantage is experienced by disabled students on placements. Students arranging their own placements are encouraged to disclose their needs to their prospective placement in order for any reasonable adjustments to be considered. Where necessary the Inclusion Co-ordinator, or placement supervisor, will assist students in negotiating appropriate arrangements with the work placement. The Ability for the work placement to make suitable adjustments may be affected by various factors including cost and practicality, health and safety considerations, the need to maintain professional and academic standards, and considerations involving risk to children within a school

environment or other similar setting. In certain situations, where placements may pose issues of health and safety, it may be necessary for a risk assessment to be carried out before the student attends their work placement. This would normally be carried out by the placement supervisor and student together, with advice from the Health and Safety Officer and Inclusion Co-ordinator.

1.7 Preparation for placement overseas.

The Inclusion Coordinator, Mental Health Adviser, or Dyslexia Adviser can support disabled students in making appropriate plans for work placement or study abroad. It is advised that students get in touch with student support services at least one semester in advance of the planned visit, because it can take some time to establish suitable arrangements.

1.8 E-learning and Information Technology

Newman University has an established e-learning team which is responsible for developing the virtual learning environment and also accessible blended learning solutions.

Newman University IT systems are fully networked and accessible to all students, via computer terminals across the campus. A wireless network connection is available in various areas on campus. Inspiration 'mind mapping' software is networked and accessible to all students. Specialist assistive technology (JAWs, zoom text, Text-help Read and Write) is available on dedicated computers in the Library, and Careers Centre. An IT helpdesk is situated in 'the Hub' during semester time to assist students with any IT related difficulties.

1.9 Library and resources

Assistive technology is available in the Library to assist students in accessing written material. Increasingly resources are available as e-books or on-line journals, and in many cases can be accessed audibly as well as on-screen. Specific designated staff have the responsibility for developing the accessibility of Library services and supporting disabled students, and are happy to provide advice or assistance as required. A bank of short term loan lap tops is available in the library, for use by all students, subject to availability.

1.10 Student Support Services

1.10.1 Study support and advice

Academic Development Tutors provide workshops and advice sessions on

various aspects of academic work.

1.10.2 Inclusion Services (Disability and Mental Health)

The Inclusion Co-ordinator and Mental Health Adviser offer advice and practical support for students with a wide range of disabilities liaising with other university staff and external agencies on behalf of students, giving advice on additional funding, assistive technology and equipment, requesting individual reasonable adjustments and exam arrangements and making provision for support workers such as specialist mentors and BSL interpreters .

1.10.3 Dyslexia services

Services for students with Dyslexia are co-ordinated by the Dyslexia Services Team Leader. The Dyslexia Adviser provides dyslexia screening services for students who think they may have dyslexia, and advises students on obtaining a full dyslexia assessment and accessing support. Services will be provided as quickly as resources will allow.

1.10.4 Counselling.

Newman University has a confidential and professional Counselling Service, offering one to one therapy to students experiencing social or emotional difficulties. Up to six sessions can be offered, usually on a weekly basis and the service is available during term time.

1.10.5 Careers Services

The Careers Service is accessible to disabled students. As well as general information and advice on careers, employment and volunteering opportunities, staff are able to provide information and advice on disclosure of disability to employers and accessible employment. The service offers one to one sessions and a range of workshops for all students, as well as offering workshops targeted at disabled students, from time to time. Contact with the service can be made in person, by email or telephone. Outside of normal working hours the service is open on selected evenings and Saturdays. The service can provide information in alternative formats and has assistive technology for students with visual loss.

1.10.6 Welfare Adviser

The Welfare Adviser assists with a wide range of issues which impact on a student's study. This includes: benefits advice, dealing with debt, housing issues,

advice for young people leaving care, alcohol and substance misuse, sexual health and pregnancy, sexual harassment, concerns over domestic violence and forced marriage.

1.10.7 Other points of contact for disability matters.

- Subject Leaders and Module Tutors
- Academic Support Advisers (ASAs),
- Academic Professional Tutors (APTs) for Teacher Training Students,
- Student Finance, Access to Learning Fund.
- Head of Estates, Paul Dean, for Physical Environment.
- Karen Carter, Accommodation

1.11 Financial assistance for disabled students.

The majority of disabled students are eligible to apply for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), which funds personal assistance and assistive equipment. In cases where a student is not eligible to apply for DSA, as in the case of International Students, Newman University will seek to develop appropriate support strategies.

1.12 The physical environment.

Newman University is a multi-level site, with wheelchair access. We are continually working to improve access and welcome feedback from students. Some of the academic staff are located on the ground and first floors of Oxford Hall, which is not wheelchair accessible. Wheelchair users who need to see a tutor located in this area are advised to contact their tutor by email and arrangements will be made to meet them in an accessible location. Residential accommodation on the ground floor is wheelchair accessible, as are catering and bar facilities on campus.

Accessible parking is available in each of the parking areas on site. 'Blue Badge' holders are welcome to use any of the accessible parking spaces. Where there is medical evidence to support this we may also be able to provide use of accessible parking spaces by other students with mobility difficulties. Whilst students in accommodation are not generally entitled to park a vehicle on campus, arrangements to do so can sometimes be made for students who need a vehicle for reasons relating to health or mobility.

Hearing loops are installed in a number of teaching rooms. Where possible, timetabling arrangements will take account of the requirements of disabled students and allocate groups to rooms with appropriate facilities.

1.13 Award ceremonies.

All graduands have an entitlement to attend and participate in the University award ceremonies. Venues are wheelchair accessible and arrangements are made for signers or other support arrangements, as necessary.

1.14 Students' Union.

The Students' Union has a commitment to Equality & Diversity through its work with Newman University and its affiliations with the National Union of Students (NUS). Through this, the Students' Union makes sure that all of its activities, services, and representation structures are accessible for disabled students to get involved. Also, the Students' Union makes sure that disabled students interests are heard through the Equality & Campaigns Committee and the Equality & Campaigns Officer. The Students' Union strives to erase all barriers so that any student can be a representative of the student body through Academic Representation, Societies, and Democratic Structures. The Students' Union encourages disabled students to take part in the activities and leadership opportunities it offers.

1.15 Disability and mental health awareness training

Regular awareness training is organised by Student Support Services, where appropriate drawing on the expertise of academic staff members.

1.16 Quality assessment, and monitoring and evaluation.

Inclusion and Dyslexia Services carry out an annual review of their services including a student satisfaction survey. Student Support services produce an annual monitoring report on provision of all its services. Review of Non-medical helper provision is subject to audit through DSA-QAG (Disabled students Allowances Quality Assurance Group).

This is in addition to generic monitoring of student satisfaction and quality assurance exercised through the National Student Survey, the Internal Student Satisfaction Survey and through regular external quality audits.

2. Disabled staff

Newman University believes that excellence will be achieved through recognising the value of every individual. We aim to create an environment that respects the diversity of staff and enables them to achieve their full potential, contribute fully, and derive maximum benefit and enjoyment from their time at Newman. To this

end we seek to operate by principles of equality and inclusion in all aspects of employment, encompassing: application and recruitment processes, employment, induction, staff development and promotion. We seek to develop a working environment which is representative of communities from which it recruits and of our own student population.

2.1 Application and Recruitment

Application and recruitment will be conducted in accordance with Newman University recruitment Policies and with current Equality Legislation (Equality Act 2010). Selection criteria will be applied equally to all candidates to ensure that those shortlisted are equally capable of doing the job. Newman University 's a 'Disability Confident' employer, The Disability Confident scheme supports employers to make the most of the talents disabled people can bring to your workplace.

2.2 Employment

Employment policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to ensure that they do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, against disabled people or those with other protected characteristics. Where appropriate reasonable adjustments will be made to the application of employment policies, such as disciplinary and conduct procedures, to ensure they do not impact disproportionately against disabled staff.

2.3 Staff development and promotion

Promotion and training opportunities will be advertised to all staff. Disabled staff will have equal access with other staff to opportunities for promotion and staff development.

2.4 Selection for Redundancy

Criteria for selection for redundancy will be applied equally to all staff. In agreeing appropriate criteria, an impact assessment will be carried out to ensure that criteria for selection for redundancy do not discriminate against or impact unfairly or disproportionately on disabled staff.

2.5 Training and Awareness Programmes.

Equality training should be an integral part of all Corporate Training arranged by Newman University, such as training for recruitment, appraisal, management and supervision. Disability and mental health awareness training is offered as part of the corporate training programme.

2.6 Adapting working practices

Under the Equality Act 2010 employers are required to anticipate the needs of disabled people and to make reasonable adjustments to the working environment to give disabled employees or potential employees, equal opportunity with other staff. Where an employee discloses a disability or health issue, managers are responsible for asking staff what arrangements they need and for implementing reasonable adjustments, where practicable, within their own work areas. Such adjustments might include:

- An ergonomic chair
- Power assisted equipment
- Assistive software
- Changing hours to make travelling to and from work easier.
- Considering different forms of flexible working, such as job share, part time working, use of flexi-time, working from home.

Disabled employees may be eligible to apply for the **Access to work** scheme, which is a government assisted scheme which pays for some of the costs of making appropriate arrangements for employees.

2.7 Disclosure

Employees are encouraged to disclose a disability or health issue. The benefits of this are:

- In order that appropriate reasonable adjustments can be considered.
- to provide legal protection against discrimination on the grounds of disability.
- disclosure enables us to monitor our employment practices and to ensure that we are becoming more representative.

2.8 Staff who become disabled or develop a long-term health issue.

A separate procedure provides guidance to managers and staff in the situation where an employee becomes disabled or develops a long-term health issue, which potentially impacts on his/her ability to do the job.

Appendix 1

Equality Act 2010 – Terms used.

Protected characteristics

These are the grounds upon which discrimination is unlawful. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are Age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage, civil partnership, pregnancy, maternity, race, religion or belief (including lack of belief), sex and sexual orientation

Direct Discrimination

Direct discrimination occurs when someone is treated less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic they have or are thought to have (see 'perceptive discrimination' below) or because they associate with someone who has a protected characteristic (see 'associative discrimination' below).

Associative Discrimination

Associative discrimination applies to race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment and sex. It means direct discrimination against someone because they associate with another person with a protected characteristic.

Perceptive Discrimination

Perceptive discrimination applies to age, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, disability, gender reassignment and sex. It means direct discrimination against an individual because others think they possess a particular protected characteristic. It applies even if the person doesn't actually possess that characteristic.

Indirect Discrimination

This applies to age, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage and civil partnership, disability and gender reassignment. Indirect discrimination can occur when the University has a condition, rule, policy or practice, that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages people who share a protected characteristic.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'. Harassment applies to all protected characteristics except for pregnancy, maternity, marriage and civil partnership. Employees will be able to

complain of behaviour they find offensive – even if it is not directed at them. Employees do not need to possess the relevant characteristic themselves and are also protected from harassment because of perception and association.

Third Party Harassment

This applies to sex, age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation. The Equality Act makes the University potentially liable for harassment of employees and students by people (third parties) who are not Newman University employees or students, such as customers, clients and visitors. The University will only be liable when harassment has occurred on at least two previous occasions, they are aware it has taken place, and have not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again.

Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when an employee is treated badly because they have made or supported a complaint or raised a grievance under the Equality Act, or because they are suspected of doing so. An employee is not protected from victimisation if they have maliciously made or supported an untrue complaint.

Discrimination arising from Disability

The Act includes a protection from discrimination arising from disability. A disabled person should not be treated unfavourably because of something connected with their disability (e.g. spelling mistakes due to dyslexia). This is unlawful where the University or other persons acting on behalf of the University knows, or could reasonably be expected to know that the person has a disability. This type of discrimination is only justifiable if the University can show that it is a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

(Adapted from www.Brunel.ac.uk/August 2010)