University for the Creative Arts

Need Assessment Statement

Introduction

As a specialist institution, it's important to University for the Creative Arts (UCA) that Disabled Support Allowance (DSA) study Needs Assessors are able to make informed assessments which are fully in the context of our specialised, non-traditional teaching practices.

Contained in this statement are the reasonable adjustments that we have made across our campuses **to date**, as part of our duty to meet the needs of our disabled students. As this an ongoing process requiring investment in resource and staff training, this statement will be updated **at least** annually.

Purpose and scope

> ❯ The statement is to assist Needs Assessors when determining recommendations for our students.

> ❯ It is intended as a guide and may not contain specific course level detail of provision. Needs Assessors are therefore recommended to continue to contact our campus Learning Support Managers with more detailed queries.

> ❯ The statement articulates the **minimum level** of reasonable adjustment we are currently offering and is subject to regular updates and amendments.

The service sits within Library & Student Services, which covers our four campuses in Canterbury, Epsom, Farnham and Rochester. We have some satellite provision based at Maidstone Studios and the Royal School of Needlework, Hampton Court Palace.

Our aim is to support individual students, reducing the need for support by collaborating with academic staff to remove barriers to learning that some disabled students may encounter.

Students can expect

> ❯ A named Learning Support Manager at each campus who will be the point of contact pre-entry and throughout the course.

> ❯ Meetings with the Learning Support Manger both pre and post-entry to establish any learning needs to address at course level (including where alternative forms of assessment may be beneficial).

> ❯ Provision of confidential meeting spaces for work with specialist tutors.

> ❯ Access to non-medical helper (NMH) services on our UCA premises.

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❯ Access to Dyslexia Advisers who are employed by us and who will undertake dyslexia screenings for individuals upon referral or request, provide individual support and assist in the co-ordination of specialist support tutors.

❯ Although not registered as an NMH provider, we continue to support pre-16/17 assessed students with UCA contracted staff. This includes:

- o Dyslexia Tutors

- o Learning Mentors

- o Learning Support Assistants

- o Teachers of the deaf/BSL interpreters, CSW (Kent campuses)

- o We have also engaged the specialist services of external agencies on the Surrey campuses for D/deaf and hearing impaired students via Surrey Physical & Sensory Services.

Students newly assessed for 16/17 entry will be subject to the two quotes system and will not be provided with UCA staff for Bands 3 and 4.

We will continue to provide Learning Support Assistants under the former bands 1 and 2. However, we are not able to provide a like for like solution for newly assessed students and will be developing different models of support for 16/17 entrants wherever this is reasonable – for example, shared support workers, peer support schemes, use of assistive technology. We do, however, recognise that some students will have complex and high needs and continue to require intensive support and we will of course provide this wherever reasonable and practicable.

Reasonable adjustments typically provided for our students

With their Learning Support Manager, the student completes a Learning and Teaching Support Agreement, which is communicated to key staff who need to know about the student's access and learning needs. These agreements can cover a range of adjustments including:

- Accessible course materials

- Recording taught sessions

- Adjustments required in the teaching and learning setting (for example group work, presentations or crits)

- Adjustments to assessment methods

- Extended library loans

- Facilitated access to the library via our Learning & Teaching Librarians

- Access to alternative formats of course reading list materials.

Access to IT and assistive technology

We deliver our courses on both Mac and PC. We have open access suites at each campus which run occasional extended access and weekend openings. Access is not 24/7.

Free Wi-Fi is available on all campuses.

At the time of writing we have limited availability of assistive software, which currently includes:

- Inspiration

- Mind View

- Text Help

- Dragon

- Audio note taker

- Zoomtext

We are actively engaged in a project to improve access to learning enabling technologies, and aim to have an improved provision for the 16-17 academic year.

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Access to course information

All our students are provided with a course handbook in print and digital formats, with accessible formats available on request.

The handbook contains information on;

> ❯ Course structure and assessment points

> ❯ Learning and teaching methods, learning outcomes and assessment criteria

> ❯ Reading Lists.

Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)

We use Blackboard as our VLE and courses are strongly encouraged to make course material available in advance. This work is ongoing and course are at varying stages of digital development (for example, not all courses provide lecture notes in advance).

Our VLE can be used for -

> ❯ Accessing timetables (**Note**: it is not always possible to timetable all taught sessions in advance and there are occasional requirements for timetable changes. In such cases, students have their Learning Support Manager as point of contact to co-ordinate the re-allocation of support).

> ❯ Accessing assignment briefs.

> ❯ Course materials are available in a range of formats wherever possible.

Recording taught sessions

Students are permitted to make notes in a way that is appropriate to their learning, although there are rules governing the use of recordings to prevent sharing or distribution.

The practical nature of our courses means that voice recording may not offer the best solution, however – for example in workshop delivery. In these situations a Learning Support Assistant may be requested to takes notes.

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Alternative forms of assessment

Currently we support the use of alternative forms of assessment, where necessary. The Disability & SpLD team is supporting the development of inclusive practice through course validation and review processes, advising on the accessibility of units and assessment criteria.

In the meantime individual arrangements can be made according to the student's learning and teaching support agreement and may include:

> Submitting in alternative formats (for example, audio or film)

> Reduced written components

> Viva or interview.

General information about assessment practices

Assessment practice can take a range of forms – written assignments, reflective journals, reviews, presentations, group work and practical projects.

The final year is often the first time that some students are required to undertake extended research or writing, and therefore take-up for NMH support is particularly high during this period. We feel that "tapering off" of support will not be appropriate for our students.

Extensions policy

Disabled or SpLD students do not have an automatic right to request extensions other than those due to genuine mitigating circumstances.

The exceptions are:

> Students who have fluctuating or episodic conditions that are unpredictable.

> Students who have been recently diagnosed and have not had sufficient time to access support sessions.

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Library access and support

There is a Library on each campus staffed by fully qualified Learning & Teaching Librarians, who help our students learn how to use information sources effectively and develop good research strategies.

The Learning & Teaching Librarians work within the Learning Enhancement & Support service and have a good understanding of the learning preferences and barriers to learning for disabled/SpLD students. This also includes collaborative work to produce inclusive and accessible learning and teaching materials such as referencing guides.

Gateway Advisers are available throughout opening hours and provide assistance in finding and fetching books. Our library catalogue is available online together with online journal collections, e-books and other research tools.

Our Collections & Development team have a policy whereby accessible copies are digitised as priority. In addition, validation teams are advised on compiling accessible booklists.

The Library also provides:

- Extended loans
- 1 to 1 induction or research sessions
- Workshops that are embedded into curriculum delivery
- Request service for publications in accessible formats
- Access to assistive software.

Physical access

All of our campuses have good levels of accessibility, with lift access in all buildings and disabled toilet facilities including specialist provision at the Farnham campus. We subscribe to DisabledGo with detailed information available on their website.

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Accommodation

Disabled applicants are invited to comment to us on any accommodation requirements and wherever reasonable and practical, adaptations to student housing is made. Students are offered an access tour prior to joining UCA to establish if any building adaptations may be required.

Travel and parking

Disabled Parking is limited on some sites (particularly Rochester), however there are disabled parking bays available on all campuses.

Updated May 2016.