

Support for Disabled Students: A written statement and examples of practice and procedures within the school of Music and Fine Art

The School of Music and Fine Art is committed in its support of all students, including those with a disability. We provide prospective and current students registered with a disability with clear and comprehensive information that sets out the support that is available to them.

We expect students to familiarise themselves with this information and take up all the support opportunities on offer, where applicable, so as to enable them to make the most of their time at University and achieve to their full potential. We also encourage students to actively seek out the answers to any questions they may have about the support we provide, and be partners with us in this enterprise.

The support the University provides follows the 'student journey', from enquiry and application through to enrolment, on-programme support (reasonable adjustments in respect of learning and teaching and assessment), through to completion of studies and graduation. The School of Music and Fine Art is central to the provision of this support, and we will work together with disabled students, and central support services, to seek to ensure that they are supported appropriately throughout their time at University.

(ii) The School's procedures and practices in support of disabled students

1. Information for applicants

Clear, comprehensive and up-to-date information is provided via online and hard copy, and sets out all the information agreed as necessary for students at this stage of the process. This information includes the policy statement on support for disabled students, and gives clear guidance to applicants as to the support they can expect and what they should do to inform the University as to their disability and their anticipated support needs.

2. Open Days and Visit Days etc.

Admissions Tutors, and other staff from the School, in close liaison with the University's Student Support and Wellbeing Service meet with disabled applicants prior to enrolment to discuss their anticipated support needs and advise potential undergraduate and post-graduate students as to the support they can reasonably expect prior to, and during, their studentship. [NB Admissions decisions are made on academic merit alone.]

Applicants have clear guidance as to what their own role is in ensuring they receive appropriate support, and have the necessary contact details of staff that can advise them with regards to their disability and anticipated support needs.

3. School, Departmental or Module Handbooks

There is clear advice and guidance to students with disabilities in any handbook (both paper and web-based) provided within the School. This reiterates the School's Policy Statement, makes obvious reference to the University's disability and dyslexia support service (now part of Student Support and Wellbeing, in Student Services) and its role (including the agreement of Inclusive Learning Plans – ILPs), and reinforces disabled students' own role in ensuring they fully engage with central services and receive all necessary agreed support.

4. Communication in relation to students, their disabilities and agreed support needs.

Students are fully apprised as to how all necessary and agreed information is to be shared across staff within the School, and can have confidence that ALL relevant staff (including all those who teach them and/or mark their assignments) are aware of their disability and their ILP, as well as the confidentiality issues that surround students with disabilities.

5. Agreement and Implementation of ILPs

All disabled students are referred to Student Support and Wellbeing at the earliest opportunity to ensure that they have an agreed ILP. This is done in accordance with agreed procedures. Once approved, the ILP is circulated to all relevant staff within the School, in keeping with the communication strategy/ procedure within the School. Disabled students are advised and have total confidence that their Academic Advisers, Lecturers and others have their ILP and know how to implement their agreed reasonable adjustments, and both students and staff know who to ask if they have any concerns in this regard.

Students are reassured that their reasonable adjustments will be implemented subtly and without fear that this will be brought to the attention of others (in keeping with the student's express wishes) or in a way that otherwise might cause them embarrassment.

Lecture outlines, and any necessary hand-outs etc., to facilitate disabled students' preparation for a taught session, are made available, where possible, in advance, ideally via a Virtual Learning Environment (e.g. Moodle). NB this is good practice for ALL students. Lecture notes are made available either before or after taught sessions in keeping with School policy; this policy is available and students are apprised of it through School Handbooks etc.

Students, whose ILP includes it, are normally able to record lectures and, with the agreement of all other student attendees, are able to record seminars/tutorials for the express purpose of enhancing their learning experience, having agreed this in writing beforehand with the seminar leader.

A list of essential reading is provided for each module and the School works with the library to ensure students have access to these resources.

6. Submission and Assessment of Assignments

Where students' ILPs have an agreed automatic extension on account of their particular disability and needs assessment, such an extension is given, and is conveyed clearly and in a timely fashion to the students' concerned, having due regard to the submission date for each assignment, or as a blanket agreement covering all assignment submission dates.

Disabled students whose ILPs do not include an automatic extension agreement, are clearly advised in all School Handbooks etc. that extensions to submission dates will only be given on the same basis as for all other students. .

Where agreed in a student's ILP, assignments are marked in accordance with any reasonable adjustment for their disability.

7. Arrangements for in-class assessment and examinations

The School ensures that all in-class assessments provide for the reasonable adjustment agreed in a disabled student's ILP. All staff are made fully aware of this and are clear where responsibility lies. Disabled students are advised (without having to ask) that appropriate arrangements have been put place,

and that no action in this respect is needed on their part

8. Staff Development

The School is committed to ensuring that all staff are made aware of equality legislation, and their role and responsibilities in relation to the law and University policy and procedures. In addition, the School should seek to ensure that its staff approach disability in a positive manner, are fully supportive of disabled students, and are mindful of their disability needs and agreed reasonable adjustments.

To this end the School has an agreed Staff Development Policy and seeks to ensure that all its staff are appropriately aware and have attended / undergone any necessary staff development and training events in respect of student disability.

The School's Management team show clear leadership in relation to support for disabled students through supporting appropriate staff development and training opportunities.

These commitments are made widely known to all staff and included in new staff induction (including that provided for sessional and part-time staff) and are accepted as part of the shared culture of the School. This is communicated to students by appropriate means and is clearly stated on School web pages.

9. Raising concerns and making complaints

All students are advised, through School Handbooks and web pages, of the need to raise their concerns at the earliest possible opportunity, via the established and publicised channels, and seek to resolve them informally in the first instance. It is expected that most concerns will be resolved in this way.

Where issues cannot be resolved informally, students are made aware of, and referred to, the University's complaints procedures and advised of appropriate sources of support (for e.g. Kent Union Advice Centre) should they wish to take this route.