Guidance for GPs and other health professionals writing letters of evidence to support an application for:

- Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSAs)
- alternative exams arrangements (AEAs)

The University of Bristol supports students with disabilities, including long-term health and mental health conditions, to apply for Disabled Students’ Allowances. The student’s funding body will determine whether an award will be made. The funding body requires medical evidence from a health professional as part of this process.

Additionally, the University may allow alternative exams arrangements in response to medical evidence of a disability, including long-term health and mental health conditions.

In order to have the best chance of being effective, letters of evidence must meet the following six criteria:

1. Be dated and signed on headed paper; the identity and position (e.g., GP) of the signatory must be discernable from the letter; please sign and type/ print your name;
2. State a diagnosis (or working diagnosis where a firm diagnosis is not available);
3. State that the difficulty has lasted 12 months or more – or can reasonably be predicted to last (i.e., ‘may well last’) 12 months or more;
4. State that in the professional opinion of the author of the evidence that the student’s disability (including long-term health and mental health conditions) has a substantial (non-trivial) negative impact on their ability to undertake normal daily activities; evidence will be strengthened if examples of negative effects on normal day-to-day activities can be provided;
5. Indicate if or not the condition fluctuates, indicating any known triggers;
6. Outline the effect that the condition may have on learning and/ or attendance at University; how will the condition (or the side effects of any prescribed medication) affect a University student in particular? For example, does the condition impact on:
   - Concentration/ motivation?
   - Sleep/ energy levels?
   - Time-management/ self-direction?
   - Short- and/ or long-term memory?
   - Ability to mix in groups; would group work be a source of anxiety?
   - Ability to travel on public transport?
   - Ability to live in community (e.g., in halls of residence)?

Medical evidence letters, once completed, can be passed directly to the student or can be forwarded to:

Disability Services
LGF Hampton House
Cotham Hill, Bristol BS6 6JS