

Disability Services – Quick Guide to:

Who has a disability?

A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a long-term and substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities¹.

Physical or mental impairment includes sensory impairments such as those affecting sight or hearing.

Long-term means that the impairment has lasted or is likely to last (may well last) for 12 months or more.

Substantial means more than minor or trivial.

Case law has established that *day-to-day* includes attending university and sitting examinations, which are not regarded as specialised activities.

Unseen impairments are also covered (such as mental ill health and conditions such as diabetes and epilepsy).

Cancer, HIV infection and multiple sclerosis are considered disabilities from the point of diagnosis.

Progressive conditions (such as lupus, multiple sclerosis) and fluctuating conditions (such as CFS/ ME, chronic pain) and conditions which may reoccur (such as depression) will amount to disabilities in most cases.

At any given time, disabled students at the University may include those with:

- Specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD
- Mental health difficulties, such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, OCD, bipolar affective disorder, or psychosis
- Autism
- Sensory impairments, such as a visual or hearing impairment, blindness, or deafness (with or without British Sign Language as a first or preferred language)
- Mobility difficulties, such as para- and tetraplegia, scoliosis, chronic pain
- Long-term health conditions, such as arthritis, cystic fibrosis, narcolepsy, repetitive strain injury (RSI), cancer, HIV, hepatitis, multiple sclerosis, Crohn's disease, chronic pain, lupus, CFS/ ME

Students with any of the conditions listed above are regarded as disabled because they meet the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010. This list is not exhaustive. A person with a long-term health condition or mental health difficulty continues to be regarded as disabled despite fluctuations in the severity of their condition or, in the case of cancer, after recovery.

Students with disabilities are entitled to reasonable adjustments to teaching and assessment. Reasonable adjustments include: receiving lecture materials in advance via Blackboard, recording teaching sessions using a digital voice recorder, using a sign language interpreter, and being offered extra working time in exams. This list is not exhaustive.

Many disabled students receive funding for study support via Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs). However, **a student need not be in receipt of DSAs to be supported as a disabled student at the University**; they need only be disabled as described by the Act. Likewise, many disabled students receive advice and support from Disability Services; however, **a student need not be known to Disability Services before they can be supported by staff at the University**, such as their tutors, their School Disability Coordinator, and the Library's disability/ dyslexia support team.

Disability Services can advise on all aspects of study support for disabled students, including advising on reasonable adjustments to teaching and assessment. For advice and guidance, please contact Disability Services and ask to speak to a Disability Adviser.

Disability Services
Lower Ground Floor, Hampton House
Cotham Hill, Bristol BS6 6JS

0117 331 0444
disability-services@bristol.ac.uk
bristol.ac.uk/disability-services/staff-professionals/guidance

ⁱ Equality Act 2010 (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/6>)