

University of Oxford
Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report

December 2007

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University of Oxford

Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report 2007

1. Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the University of Oxford's Annual Report on its Disability Equality Scheme.

I should like to highlight the commitment shown by members of the DES Working Group, particularly our members with disabilities, and the staff of the Disability team during the last year.

We were all delighted that the University was highly commended in a report published by the Office of Public Management in September. This was undertaken for the Disability Rights Commission to examine the extent to which public bodies have fulfilled their duty under the Disability Act. This university's Scheme and its development was commended as an exemplar of good practice.

Dame Fiona Caldicott, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Personnel and Equal Opportunities

1.1. Executive Summary

The first annual report outlines the continued monitoring and information gathering, updates on the progress made by the University under the DES action plan and highlights the University's progress on eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity, meeting targets and the University's continued commitment to Disability Equality and the ongoing development of its DES.

The monitoring and information gathering section of the report indicates that:

- Acceptances of undergraduate disabled students in 2006 were slightly higher than non-disabled applicants.
- Applicants with disabilities for graduate courses declaring on application represented 3.4% of all applicants and 3.5% of acceptances.
- Although the total number of students declaring a disability has fallen very slightly from the previous year the number of active student case files that the Disability Office and College and Departmental disability contacts work on has increased significantly.
- Students with Specific Learning Difficulties represent the largest group of disabled students. Students on the autistic spectrum and with unseen disabilities are on the increase whilst students declaring mobility difficulties and two or more disabilities have fallen in number from last year
- Significant rises in postgraduate student numbers have not seen any rise in disabled students withdrawing. Undergraduates with a disability who withdraw have increased two fold in line with non-disabled students.
- It is encouraging to note that the 'unknown' category relating to applicants for jobs within the University has fallen to zero. Numbers of applicants who disclosed a disability rose slightly in 2005-2006
- Whilst monitoring data on University staff it is encouraging to see a decrease in the ' (disability) not known' category, the 'decline to specify' has increased but so too has the number of declared staff with disabilities.

The University continues to involve disabled people in the DES working party and to collaborate with other local public bodies to involve disabled people, a collaboration cited and commended by the Disability Rights Commission in its report, produced by OPM, 'Involvement for Real Equality. The benefits for public services of involving disabled people' published in September 2007.

Good progress is being made in the majority of areas of the Action Plan which is regularly reviewed at the termly DES working party meeting.

The University is working to eliminate any actual or perceived discrimination in recruitment of staff and students whilst areas highlighted by disabled students as part of the DES involvement events are now being tackled by University bodies such as the Senior Tutors Committee. The impact assessments that will be proposed under the Integrated Equality Policy currently under development will address further the mechanism of removing any identified discriminatory practices.

The DES working party will continue to evaluate and monitor the admissions / recruitment and retention statistics for staff and students to ensure that equality of opportunity is embedded in the policies, practices and procedures of the University along with other relevant bodies.

The involvement of disabled staff and students in the working party with the range of senior management represented should ensure that targets are achievable, worthwhile and can be met.

Following on from the involvement event held in June 2006 in collaboration with other local public bodies a 'one year on' event was held in Wadham College, one of Oxford University's Colleges. 140 disability groups were invited and representatives from thirty groups attended. The University's DES working party will receive an update from this event at its next meeting on Thursday 17 January 2008 and will review the action plan of the current DES to see whether feedback from the involvement event can be incorporated.

Disabled staff and students are currently involved in a variety of ways as the ethos of involvement continues to spread throughout the University. The university continues to show its commitment to disability equality in many areas and the working party will facilitate this where possible.

1.2. Introduction

This is the first annual report on the University's Disability Equality Scheme (DES) which was published in December 2006. This is not a review or a revision of the scheme which will take place in 2009.

This report outlines the monitoring and information gathering that has been undertaken over the past twelve months following on from the baseline data exercise undertaken in the DES and is an update on progress made under the action plan. This has been reviewed by the University's DES working party which has met on several occasions since publication of the DES and continues to be involved in overseeing the implementation of the action plan particularly through the Chair of the DES Working Party, Dame Fiona Caldicott who is Pro-Vice Chancellor for Personnel and Equal Opportunities and Principal of Somerville College.

The University's DES and minutes of the working party meetings are available from www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/des.shtml and in alternative formats including braille, audio and large print.

1.3. Continued Involvement of disabled people in Oxford's Disability Equality Scheme

The University's DES working party includes students and staff who have a wide range of disabilities in order that the experience and involvement of disabled people are reflected in the scheme. In addition to the working party the University has continued to collaborate with Oxford Brookes University and Oxford City and Oxford County Councils in order to involve local, regional and national disability groups and organisations, representative of a wide range of disabilities and long term health conditions.

This collaboration was cited and commended by the Disability Rights Commission in its report, produced by OPM, 'Involvement for Real Equality. The benefits for public services of involving disabled people' published in September 2007. The Chair of the DES working party was invited to speak about the, 'impact and benefit of involving disabled people in Oxford's Scheme and how senior leadership in this process played a valuable role,' at the launch event for this report.

Monitoring and Information Gathering

2.0 Undergraduate Admission Data

In the 2005-6 academic year applications from students from undergraduate courses by disabled students remained at 4% of total applicants. The rate of acceptances of disabled students were slightly higher than non-disabled applicants as illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Undergraduate Applications

Year of Entry	2004	2005	2006
Total number of undergraduate applications	12,278	12,496	12,614
Applications from disabled students	361 (2.9% of total)	520 (4% of total)	490 (3.9% of total)
Acceptances of disabled applicants	101	134	137
Success rate of disabled applicants (vs non-disabled applicants)	28% (25.8%)	25.8% (25.7%)	28% (25.3%)

Source: Oxford Colleges Admissions Office Statistics 2003~2006

2.1. Graduate Admissions Data

In the 2005-6 academic year 9,684 of the total Oxford University student population of over 20,000 students were postgraduate. Graduate applications rose by over 1500 for the 2006 academic year, compared to the 2005 academic year, with disabled applicants declaring on application representing 3.4% of all applicants and 3.5% of acceptances. This data is outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Graduate Applications

Year of Entry	2005	2006
Total number of graduate applications	10,016	11,536
Applications for disabled students	327	387
Acceptances of disabled applicants	164	199
Success rate of disabled applicants (vs non-disabled applicants)	50.2% (45.63%)	51.4% (51.06%)

Source: Oxford University Graduate Admissions Office 2006

2.2. Current Students Declaring a Disability

Table 3 (overleaf) demonstrates that whilst the total number of students declaring a disability has fallen very slightly from the previous year the number of active student case files that the Disability Office and College and Departmental disability contacts work on has increased significantly. This significant increase is not reflected in applications for Disabled Students Allowance which forms part of the HEFCE funding methodology as discussed in the DES.

Table 3. Matriculated Students Declaring a Disability (2004-2006)

Academic Year	2004	2005	2006
Total known students with a disability (vs Disability Office active case files)	958 (365)	1095 (564)	1079 (836)
HESA return (students in receipt of DSA)	260	305	329

Source: Disability Office Database 2003-2005 / Oxford University HESA Return 2003-2006

2.3. Current Students Disability by Category

Dyslexia, dyspraxia and other Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) are the largest group of disabled students as reflected in Table 4 (below). Students on the autistic spectrum and with unseen disabilities such as epilepsy and fatigue conditions are on the increase whilst students declaring mobility difficulties and two or more disabilities have fallen in number from last years DES figures.

Table 4. Matriculated Students by Disability Category (2006-07)

Disability Category	Number disclosed	Disability Category	Number disclosed
1. Dyslexia*	624	6. Mental health difficulties	57
2. Blind / partially sighted	42	7. An unseen disability e.g. diabetes, epilepsy	99
3. Deaf / hearing impairment	36	8. Two or more disabilities	66
4. Wheelchair user/ mobility difficulties	64	9. Other disability / health condition	64
5. Personal care support	0	10. ASD / Asperger's syndrome	27

* Including students with dyspraxia and other SpLDs

Source: Disability Office Database 2006 figures

2.4. Student Retention

Significant rises in postgraduate student numbers have not seen any rise in disabled students withdrawing from a course at the University. Undergraduates with a disability who withdraw have increased two fold in line with non-disabled students as demonstrated in Table 5 (overleaf).

Table 5: Student Withdrawals. Disabled vs Non Disabled

2006-2007	Undergraduate	Postgraduate
Total Students	11,716	9,684
Total Student Withdrawals	271	136
Total Disabled Student Withdrawals	13	7
2005-2006		
Total Students	11,654	6776
Total Student Withdrawals	126	108
Total Disabled Student Withdrawals	7	8
2004-2005		
Total Students	11,725	7143
Total Student Withdrawals	106	129
Total Disabled Student Withdrawals	3	6

Source: University of Oxford Central Records

3.0. Staff Recruitment Monitoring Data

It is encouraging to note that the 'unknown' category relating to applicants for jobs within the University has fallen to zero. Numbers of applicants who disclosed a disability rose slightly in 2005-2006 as outlined in Table 6 (below).

Table 6: Recruitment Monitoring Statistics for 2003-2006

	Not Disabled	Declined to Specify (Introduced 2004)	Disabled	Unknown	Grand Total
2003-2004					
Total Applied	10888	n/a	397	87	11372
Total Shortlisted	2582 (23.71%)	n/a	92 (23.17%)	17 (19.54%)	2691 (23.66%)
Total Appointed	706 (6.48%)	n/a	26 (6.55%)	4 (4.60%)	736 (6.47%)
2004-2005					
Total Applied	7644	194	293	12	8143
Total Shortlisted	2036 (26.63%)	53 (27.32%)	80 (27.3%)	4 (33.33%)	2173 (26.69%)
Total Appointed	591 (7.73%)	12 (6.19%)	17 (5.80%)	0 (0%)	620 (7.61%)
2005-2006					
Total Applied	7391	261	300	0	7952
Total Shortlisted	2017 (27.28%)	64 (24.52%)	94 (31.33%)	0 (0%)	2175 (27.35%)
Total Appointed	540 (7.30%)	15 (5.74%)	20 (6.67%)	0 (0%)	575 (7.23%)

Source: Diversity & Equal Opportunities Unit Recruitment Monitoring / Opendoor

3.1. Current Staff in post Data

Table 7 (below) displays figures for current University staff and whilst it is encouraging to see a decrease in the 'not known' category, the 'decline to specify' has increased but so too has the number of declared staff with disabilities.

Table 7: Breakdown of University Staff by Information on Disability

Staff in Post 31 July 2006					
	Disabled	Not disabled	Decline to specify	Not known	Grand total
Grand Total	375	6883	114	1221	8593
Staff in Post 31 July 2005					
	Disabled	Not disabled	Decline to specify	Not known	Grand total
Grand Total	320	6388	56	1355	8119
Staff in Post 31 July 2004					
	Disabled	Not disabled	Decline to specify	Not known	Grand total
Grand Total	277	5876	20	1658	7831

Source: University of Oxford Personnel Services / Opendoor

3.2 Harassment Information

The Audit of the Harassment Advisers throughout the University indicated no reported cases of harassment relating to a disability.

4.0 Action Plan Progress

Page numbers refer to the original DES available from www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/des.shtml

General (p20)

- The University is currently finalising its plans for impact assessments as part of an Integrated Equality Policy and anticipates that impact assessments will cover the following committees Educational Policy and Standards Committee (particularly relating to course construction) Personnel Committee (including the Staff Consultative Forum and Joint Committees), General Purposes (which recommends nominations to other committees) Building and Estates (for access), and Planning and Resource Allocation Committee. OUSU would be expected to impact assess their own committees.

Student /Staff (p21)

- Action area 1: Disability Contact Guidance has been distributed and used as an opportunity to identify any gaps in contacts in Departments and Colleges. Discussions have begun with the University's Learning Institute who develop the student feedback questionnaire.
- Action area 2: Web Strategy Group have agreed to use the ethos of PAS 78: 6.2.4 in reviewing current web statements and guidelines and Dame Fiona has agreed to ensure that this momentum continues.
- Action area 3: Termly meetings for the Buildings and Estates sub-committee on access are underway and the pool of staff and students widened to include more staff and students with disabilities and a wider range of specific disability experience.

Student (p22~23)

- Action area 1: Admissions Executive Committee have reviewed 'pooling' and difficulties when adapted accommodation in colleges is full. The Steward of Christ Church (via

Bursars Committee) has commenced a mapping exercise to identify adapted accommodation across colleges as well as non-adapted accessible accommodation, to help colleges to plan effectively for the number and type of additional rooms required in their future accommodation plans.

- Action area 2: Discussions underway with Head of Counselling Service and Professor (of Autism) Tony Bailey to formalise support systems for students with mental health difficulties and Asperger's Syndrome. During the admissions round for 2007 entry case conferences were held both with Head of Counselling and Professor of Autism for relevant students holding offers to assist in planning for admission and ongoing study related support.
- Action area 3: Preliminary discussions with the Learning Institute about adapting current courses (delivered online) offered to academic staff and tutors to include specific guidance on students with SpLDs.
- Action area 4: Preliminary discussions with the Learning Institute but no progress to date.
- Action area 5: Pro-Vice Chancellor for education raised the issue of recording lectures at the EPSC Undergraduate Panel who, "...noted the concerns expressed...and the extensive informal recording of lectures which was already taking place. It agreed to confirm and underline the importance which it attached to disabled students being able to record lectures while continuing to underline the individual lecturer's intellectual property rights. Given the range of individual resources available, it was not convinced *pace* the agenda paper that best practice was for the lecturer to record the lecture and make copies available for the student."
- Action area 6: (top of table on page 24) formed part of the University Proctors briefing session and with Oxford Student Questionnaire authors but work ongoing.

Staff (p24)

- Action area 1: (second down on table on p24) Trial scheme to encourage more individuals to return monitoring information and recruitment monitoring returns for this period is currently being assessed.
- Action area 2: Seminar held and guidance distributed widely with a targeted follow up planned to ensure all Colleges and departments clear on responsibility for staff although more work is required on this and departments may need to review current disability contacts to ensure there is a suitable staff facing person or that the contact is aware of their remit vis a vis staff.
- Action area 3: Guidance disseminated via all the routes outlined and seminar for Departmental Administrators has taken place.
- Action area 4: As a result of reviewing current staff disclosures information sessions on Epilepsy and Hearing Impairment Awareness have been planned and delivered / are being delivered in Michaelmas Term 2007.
- Action area 5: Senior Disability Officer ensuring collaboration with Brookes and local government / councils continues for this 'involvement' and has resulted in a One Year On event (see section 5.1)

4.1 Eliminating Discrimination

With regular information and training sessions the University is working to eliminate any actual or perceived discrimination in recruitment of staff and students.

For staff recruitment the guidance produced and disseminated on the management of disabled employees covers recruitment, retention and redeployment. The University also works to remove possible discrimination by making reasonable adjustments to both working practices and physical environment, in some cases utilising the Access to Work scheme.

For student recruitment the compulsory online training provided to new tutors involved in the admissions process and the University's Educational Policy and Standards Committee's framework for supporting students with disabilities are both geared to eliminating any potential discriminatory practice. The University's Student Support Document process which identifies reasonable adjustments enables Colleges, Departments and the University's Disability Team and other support services such as the Assistive Resources Acquisition and Creation Unit to identify and eliminate and difficulties that arise.

Areas raised by disabled students as part of the DES involvement events are now being tackled by University bodies such as the Senior Tutors Committee, a sub-committee of which is reviewing the consistency of current practices with regard to students who are unable to participate in study, through mental health difficulties, and ensuring that these students are not discriminated against if a particular level of academic achievement is expected on their return to study.

The impact assessments that will be proposed under the Integrated Equality Policy currently under development will address further the mechanism of removing any identified discriminatory practices.

4.2 Promoting Equality of Opportunity

The DES working party will continue to evaluate and monitor the admissions / recruitment and retention statistics for staff and students to ensure that equality of opportunity is embedded in the policies, practices and procedures of the University along with other relevant bodies. The Disability Team attended the University's undergraduate recruitment fairs throughout the UK this year in order to ensure that awareness of the opportunities for disabled students at the University was raised.

4.3 Meeting Targets

The DES working party will continue to monitor and review targets set within the current action plan, and any future action plans, to ensure that targets are met. The involvement of disabled staff and students in the working party with the range of senior management represented should ensure that targets are achievable, worthwhile and can be met.

Commitment to Disability Equality and development of the DES

5.0 Review of Oxford's DES by the Disability Rights Commission

The University were pleased to receive positive feedback from the Disability Rights Commission on the DES which congratulated the University on the scheme. This followed the Equality Challenge Unit's recognition of the University's collaboration with other public bodies to involve disabled people in its scheme as being an example of best practice.

5.1 One Year on Event

Following on from the involvement event held in June 2006 in collaboration with Oxford Brookes University, Oxford City Council, South Oxfordshire District Council (which decided not to continue with the 'one year on' event) and Oxfordshire County Council a follow up 'one year on' event was held in Wadham College, one of Oxford University's Colleges. All the University's Colleges were approached to host this event via the Oxford College Conference Service and Wadham College had the capacity and availability to host this event on 26 September 2007.

140 disability groups were invited and representatives from thirty groups attended, with many others indicating they wished to receive a summary of the day.

The groups received a presentation on the progress to date from both Universities and local government organisations. This was followed by group discussions to identify policies, practices

and procedures that are real or perceived barriers to the groups concerned. Participants continued informal discussions over lunch.

The University's DES working party will receive an update from this event at its next meeting on Thursday 17 January 2008 and will review the action plan of the current DES to see whether feedback from the involvement event can be incorporated.

This feedback will also be passed on to Colleges within the University for their own Disability Equality Schemes.

5.2 Continued Involvement from Staff and Students

Disabled students are currently involved in a variety of ways as the ethos of involvement continues to spread throughout the University. Feedback is also submitted to the disability office at the end of each term which is passed on to the working party.

Involvement has been sought as part of the University's implementation of a new virtual learning environment, the university's websites and also via the BESC sub-committee on access, and the staff consultative forum as well as input from visually impaired students and staff in to signage projects in university departments and museums.

The university continues to show its commitment to disability equality in many areas and the working party will facilitate this where possible.