

University of Oxford
Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report

December 2008

*For copies of this report in alternative format including Braille, audio and large print please email
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University of Oxford

Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report 2008

1. Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the University of Oxford's second Annual Report on its Disability Equality Scheme. It describes the work that has been done in the last year, and I should like to thank everyone who has contributed to that. Progress has evidently been made, and we acknowledge that we have more to do. We are committed to achieving equality for all individuals in the University.

Dame Fiona Caldicott, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Personnel and Equality

1.1. Executive Summary

This second annual report outlines the continued monitoring and information gathering, updates 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:

- The rate of acceptances of undergraduate disabled students was higher than non-disabled applicants
- The success rate of postgraduate applicants was lower than in previous years overall, but more so for those with disabilities
- The total number of students disclosing a disability and the number of active case files have increased significantly but this is not reflected in applications for the Disabled Students Allowance which forms part of the HEFCE funding methodology as discussed in the DES.
- The OSS central student database implementation has provided a much more reliable data stream relating to student withdrawal which indicates a significant number of disabled students albeit in a small student sample.
- The numbers of current staff disclosing disabilities along with disabled applicants accepted for posts after shortlisting have fallen. It is desirable to establish the reason for this and further analysis to establish where and why this is occurring will be undertaken.

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. Areas highlighted by disabled students as part of the University's commitment to involving them are being taken forward by the Senior Tutors Committee (for colleges) and by the Education Committee, Student Health & Welfare Committee, and General Purposes Committee on behalf of the University's Council.

The DES working party will continue to evaluate and monitor the admissions / recruitment and retention statistics for staff and students to ensure that equality is embedded in new and existing policies, practices and procedures of the collegiate University.

The involvement of disabled staff and students in the working party with the range of senior management represented helps to facilitate completion of the action plan.

Disabled people and groups representing particular disabilities continue to be involved with the University. Examples include visually impaired staff, students and residents advising the Pitt Rivers Museum and History Faculty on signage projects, involvement in the development of the University's Human Resources Information Systems review, visually impaired staff and students and those with SpLDs advising the University on the preferred font for the central 'house style' and disabled students collaborating with the Oxford Domestic Bursars Training Committee to develop training courses for College and University staff.

1.2. Introduction

This is the second annual report on the University's Disability Equality Scheme (DES) which was published in December 2006. A review of the scheme will take place in 2009.

This report outlines the monitoring and information gathering that has been undertaken over the past twelve months 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 Equality 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. Following feedback from disabled staff in the University the range of disabilities represented is more varied and specifically includes staff and students with mental health difficulties. 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. Further to previous involvement events the University's Media Production Unit is assisting in producing podcasts of disabled people demonstrating the effect of careless parking of bikes as part of an information campaign with the Students Union and Junior and Middle Common Rooms.

Further involvement with local groups is planned in the New Year with Disability being one organisation we are seeking to involve.

Monitoring and Information Gathering

2.0 Undergraduate Admission Data

In the academic year 2006-7 applications from students for undergraduate courses by disabled students were 4.4% of total applicants. The rate of acceptances of disabled students was higher than non-disabled applicants as illustrated in Table 1 (overleaf).

Table 1: Undergraduate Applications

Year of Entry	2005	2006	2007
Total number of undergraduate applications	12,496	12,614	13,639
Applications from disabled students	520 (4% of total)	490 (3.9% of total)	594 (4.4% of total)
Acceptances of disabled applicants	134	137	151
Success rate of disabled applicants (vs non-disabled applicants)	25.8% (25.7%)	28% (25.3%)	25.4% (23%)

Source: Oxford Colleges Admissions Office Statistics 2005~2007

2.1. Graduate Admissions Data

In 2006-7 7380 of the total Oxford University student population of just under 20,000 students were postgraduate. Graduate applications rose by over 950 for 2007-8 academic year, compared to 2006-7, with disabled applicants declaring on application representing 4% of all applicants. This data is outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Graduate Applications

Year of Entry	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8
Total number of graduate applications	10,016	11,536	12492
Applications for disabled students	327	387	457
Acceptances of disabled applicants	164	199	161
Success rate of disabled applicants (vs non-disabled applicants)	50.2% (45.63%)	51.4% (51.06%)	33% (44%)

Source: Oxford University Graduate Admissions Office 2007

2.2. Current Students Declaring a Disability

Table 3 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 the Disabled Students Allowance which forms part of the HEFCE funding methodology as discussed in the DES.

Table 3. Matriculated Students Declaring a Disability

Academic Year	2005-6	2006-7	2007-8
Total known students with a disability (vs Disability Office active case files)	1095 (564)	1079 (836)	1223 (988)
HESA return (students in receipt of DSA)	305	329	373

Source: Disability Office Database 2005-2007 / Oxford University HESA Return 2005-2007

2.3. Current Students Disability by Category

Dyslexia, dyspraxia and other Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) remain the largest group of students with 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 year's DES figures.

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

Disability Category	Number disclosed	Disability Category	Number disclosed
1. Dyslexia*	702	6. Mental health difficulties	65
2. Blind / partially sighted	50	7. An unseen disability e.g. diabetes, epilepsy	118
3. Deaf / hearing impairment	56	8. Two or more disabilities	68
4. Wheelchair user/ mobility difficulties	66	9. Other disability / health condition	76
5. Personal care support	0	10. ASD / Asperger's syndrome	22

* Including students with dyspraxia and other SpLDs

Source: Disability Office Database 2007 figures

2.4. Student Retention

The OSS central student database implementation provides a much more reliable data stream relating to student withdrawal demonstrated in Table 5¹ (below).

Table 5: Student Withdrawals. Disabled vs Non Disabled

2007-2008	Undergraduate	Postgraduate
Total Students	11,917	7580
Total Student Withdrawals	12	35
Total Disabled Student Withdrawals	4	6
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

Source: University of Oxford Central Records

¹ Previous figures for withdrawals included those students who have 'suspended' from their course with the intention of returning at a point in the near future. OSS data capture distinguishes between these categories to give a clearer description of a student's status.

3.0. Staff Recruitment Monitoring Data

The number of disabled applicants being appointed appears to have dropped as outlined in Table 6 (below). The reason for this should be understood and further analysis to establish where and why this is occurring will be undertaken.

Table 6: Recruitment Monitoring Statistics for 2004-2007

	Not Disabled	Declined to Specify	Disabled	Unknown	Grand Total
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%)
2006-2007					
Total Applied	5572	89	177	0	5838
Total Shortlisted	1356 (24.33%)	19 (21.35%)	46 (26%)	0 (0%)	1421 (24.34%)
Total Appointed	363 (6.51%)	6 (6.74%)	6 (3.39%)	0 (0%)	375 (6.42%)

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 shows a decrease in the number of disabled staff and a slight increase in the 'Not Known' category. Analysis to establish where and why this is occurring will be undertaken.

Table 7: Breakdown of University Staff by Information on Disability

Staff in Post 31 July 2007					
	Disabled	Not disabled	Decline to specify	Not known	Grand total
	360	7370	n/a	1259	8989
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

Source: University of Oxford Personnel Services / Opendoor

3.2 Harassment Information

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

4.0 Action Plan Progress

General

Action Area	Action	Responsible	Review Date	Success indicator
General	The University seeks to ensure all its existing committee structures are not discriminatory, and promote positive attitudes towards, and encourage participation by, disabled people. This will be done using impact assessments.	Pro-Vice Chancellor Personnel & Equality	HT2009	An effective policy and practice in place to monitor committee appointments.

Student / Staff

Action Area	Action	Responsible	Review Date	Success indicator
Student / Staff	The Disability Office ensures that Disability Contacts in both Colleges and Departments understand their role by providing guidance notes. Further development: Following the NIACE report by the Commission for Disabled Staff in Lifelong Learning a recent report by a consultant for the Equality and Diversity Unit about staff at the University raised awareness of the need for Disability Contacts for staff and a parallel system for staff will be considered.	Senior Disability Officer	TT2009	Disability Contact Guidance has been distributed and gaps in contacts in Departments and Colleges. Work now needed on a parallel staff disability contact system.
Student / Staff	The DES Working Party endorsed the work of the BESC Sub-Committee on access and its continued involvement of disabled staff and students in consultation over plans for new and existing buildings.	Pro-Vice Chancellor Personnel & Equality	Termly (Review MT08)	Termly meetings taking place and positive feedback from students about physical adjustments implemented. Currently applying for £250k for further work.

Student

Action Area	Action	Responsible	Review Date	Success indicator
Student	<p>The DES Working Party endorsed the review by the Director of Admissions of the possible barriers that arise from the 'pooling' of disabled students.</p> <p>Further development: No reported difficulties regarding 'pooling' in recent undergraduate admissions but some areas of concern with Graduate applications. En suite accommodation is a particular area where information about the facilities available is needed.</p>	Director of Admissions	HT09	Information on en suite accommodation available with Access Guide. No reported difficulties with graduates securing clear information on accessible or appropriate accommodation.
Student	<p>The DES Working Party endorses the formal development of the proposed support systems for students with mental health difficulties and Asperger's syndrome.</p> <p>In reviewing both schemes recently some further work is required to ensure that administrative systems and protocols are clear and in place.</p>	Pro-Vice Chancellor Personnel & Equality / Head of Counselling / Professor Bailey / Senior Disability Officer	TT09	<p>Mentoring schemes for AS and students with MH difficulties established, with 10 AS mentors and 5 Mentors for students with MH difficulties, overseeing between 15-20 students each.</p> <p>By TT09 a care plan template to be developed with regard to mental health mentoring support.</p>
Student	<p>The DES Working Party encouraged the Oxford Learning Institute, Personnel Services and the Disability Office to raise awareness of academic staff in briefing sessions on teaching students with dyslexia / dyspraxia currently offered on request via Disability Office.</p> <p>Further discussions have taken place and a seminar proposal is in place for one of the SpLD tutors to deliver a course relating to teaching SpLD students. Seminars for the History faculty and study skills seminars for students have also been delivered</p>	<p>Senior Disability Officer /</p> <p>OLI Head of Professional Development/</p> <p>Personnel Services</p>	Termly (Review MT08)	An increase in the uptake of training offered to academic staff and positive feedback from existing students via Dyslexia Forum or similar

Student	The DES working party, in response to student feedback regarding disabled students and their recording of lectures, endorsed the clarification of procedure for the recording of lectures by students with disabilities by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education.	Pro-Vice Chancellor Education	HT08	Positive feedback from disabled students who require the recording of lectures via the disability office Further development: No difficulties reported by students during this academic year.
Student	The DES working party advised that examination adjustments be monitored and reviewed regularly, following student feedback about the process of applying for adjustments, and the implementation of these adjustments, to ensure that the procedures and practices in place for students to apply for reasonable adjustments are not a barrier for disabled students. Further development: The OSS information on adjustments made is being linked to Disability Office database to enable monitoring. Proctors' briefing now includes aspects of adjustments and the Education Committee has been working to ensure examiners are clear on reasonable adjustments.	Pro-Vice-Chancellor Education / Junior Proctor	MT08	Procedures for adjustment, regularly reviews and specific feedback sought from both disabled candidates and examiners.

Staff

Action Area	Action	Responsible	Review Date	Success indicator
Staff	The DES working party endorsed the current work by the Equality & Diversity Unit to ensure participation in the recruitment monitoring scheme in order to monitor recruitment more effectively.	Pro-Vice-Chancellor Personnel & Equality	MT2009	An increase on the current 60% participation

Staff	The University's DES Working Party endorsed the proposal that Staff Disability Disclosure Forms be reviewed regularly to target specific training for departments. Further development: Seminars delivered on 'Depression, Anxiety and Stress' to a College and University staff audience with repeats planned	Senior Disability Officer / OLI Head of Professional Development	Termly (Review MT08)	Termly meeting / discussion on training for departments
Staff	The University's DES Working Party endorsed further engagement with local disability groups to explore their experiences of applying for employment at the University in order to remove any real or perceived barriers. Further development: e.g. Collaboration with Brookes on engaging local groups for feedback.	Senior Disability Officer / Personnel Services	TT09	Meeting between local groups and relevant working party members to explore perceived barriers to employment

4.1 Eliminating Discrimination

For frontline staff in departments, a welcome pack for disabled staff, students and visitors has been developed that will provide information on good practice as well as practical equipment, including aids such as magnifying glasses, to enable disabled visitors to visit departments easily and effectively.

For student recruitment the compulsory online training provided to new tutors involved in the admissions process and the University's Education Committee's framework for supporting students with disabilities are geared to eliminating any potential discriminatory practice. The University's Disability Advisory Service and other support services such as the Assistive Resources Acquisition and Creation Unit deliver information sessions to make staff aware of particular disabilities.

The sub-committee of the Senior Tutors' Committee which was reviewing the consistency of current practice with regard to students who are unable to participate in study, through mental health difficulties, but ensuring that these students are not discriminated against if a particular level of academic achievement is expected on their return to study, have fed back to the Education Committee who are currently consulting the University's Divisions.

4.2 Promoting Equality of Opportunity

The DES working party continues 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 Advisory Team continues to attend the University's undergraduate recruitment fairs throughout the UK in order to ensure that awareness of the opportunities for disabled students at the University is raised. Members have also been working with Graduate Studies and Undergraduate admissions on getting feedback from disabled applicants, and seeking to improve knowledge of the support available at the University.

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 appropriate and achievable.

Commitment to Disability Equality and development of the DES

5.1 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 sought by the disability advisory service at the end of each term from which relevant feedback is passed on to the working party.

Involvement has been sought as part of the University's tendering for Groupware Solutions, the new Graduate Supervision System, the Staff Gateway web project, the Human Resources Information System Project, numerous building projects via the BESC sub-committee on access, the University's Teaching and Learning Space Review, the redesign of the Graduate Studies Prospectus and the Oxford Bursars Training Committee to develop training courses for College and University staff. The University is currently reviewing the name of the Disability Advisory Service as some students and staff feel its current name is a barrier.

The University undertakes impact assessment on a range of policies, practices and procedures, including admissions and staff recruitment. In order to establish a comprehensive mechanism and standard methodology for equality impact assessments (EIA), including for disability, a project is underway to test and roll out proportionate and relevant EIA in for all equality relevant policy areas in the University. The project is expected to be completed during 2009-10.

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