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## **Purpose and aim**

The purpose of this Code is to address the process for supporting students with access needs.

<u>Table of Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	4
Scope	4
General principles	5
Information for prospective students, current students and staff	5
Curriculum design	6
Admission process and policies	6
Academic assessment	6
Support for students with access needs	6
The physical environment	7
Institutional procedures	7

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The *Code of Practice for Students with Access Needs* is intended to reflect the QAA UK Quality Code, and where applicable the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Apprenticeship Funding and Performance Management Rules for Training Providers.
- 1.2. It should be read with reference to other University Codes of Practice (e.g. Code of Practice for Admissions, and the Diversity & Equality Policies).
- 1.3. The Code of Practice for Students with Access Needs is designed to ensure the University's procedures are in accordance with the precepts set out by the QAA and ESFA (where applicable), and satisfy the requirements set out in the, Equality Act 2010.
- 1.4. The University aims to provide equal opportunity for all individuals, regardless of their background, to gain admission to a programme suited to their ability and aspirations. The University recognises students with access needs have been under-represented in the higher education sector and, further, that these students are an integral part of the academic community. Ensuring access and inclusivity for students with additional needs through the Code is a strategic function of the institution.
- 1.5. Through this Code, the University acknowledges its duty to take account of the full and diverse range of access needs applicable to students. The University recognises that policies and procedures must incorporate a degree of flexibility in order to ensure that the requirements of students with access needs are taken into account, and to ensure that the University is maximising the inclusivity of its programmes of study.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1. The University has adopted the social model of disability and recognises that consultation on an individual basis is necessary in order to determine the access needs and requirements of students. Disability, as defined by the relevant legislation, is a term covering a wide range of impairments including physical and mobility difficulties, hearing impairments, visual impairments, and specific learning differences (e.g. dyslexia, medical conditions and mental health problems).
- 2.2. The University recognises its duty to anticipate the needs of students with access needs, and to provide opportunities for students to disclose information about their circumstances in an environment that encourages such disclosure.
- 2.3. In order that an appropriate and flexible response can be made to an individual's declared needs, throughout the duration of their programme of study, the University will ensure that its procedures and policies are capable of a reasonable amount of flexibility so that

the full range of access needs that may be demonstrated by students can be taken into account.

### **3. General Principles**

- 3.1. The University will, through its Council and Committee structures, strategies, policies, and procedures, embed its commitment to the fair and equitable treatment of students with access needs.
- 3.2. The University acknowledges that the access needs of students must be considered when planning and revising, its strategies, policies, procedures, both for academic and non-academic services. Where a policy or procedure is introduced, or reviewed, an equality impact assessment will be undertaken to ensure due consideration of the requirements of students with access needs are taken into account.
- 3.3. Regular consultation will be undertaken with prospective, current and former students with access needs. The resulting detailed information will contribute to the provision of individualised responses to the requirements of students with access needs.
- 3.4. Consultation outcomes are summarised, as appropriate, to senior management through the annual monitoring process to ensure the University responds effectively and systematically to its duty to take account of the access needs of students.
- 3.5. Information about the action taken by the University will be published annually in the Diversity and Equality Objective Action plan, and Diversity and Equality annual report; these documents will be made available to the public via the University website.
- 3.6. Any discriminatory behaviour will be challenged, and reported through the appropriate disciplinary procedures.
- 3.7. The University is committed to providing an ongoing programme of awareness training in all agendas relating to the promotion of equality of opportunity, including accessibility. Senior managers and other key staff will be required to have an adequate understanding of the relevant legal framework relating to students with access needs in Higher Education.

### **4. Information for prospective students, current students and staff**

- 4.1. The University will ensure that information relating to its programmes and services is available in accessible formats.
- 4.2. Programme information, is available to students at an early stage –via the University’s website and further information can be requested by e-mail.

4.3. The University will ensure enquiries from students with access needs will be handled promptly and professionally, with appropriate staff providing full and accurate information to the student.

## **5. Curriculum design**

5.1 The University's procedures ensure the validation and re-validation of programmes include well-informed consideration of the requirements of students with access needs.

5.2 Where an externally awarded qualification is offered, the University will ensure consideration is given to the requirements of students with access needs.

## **6. Admissions processes and policies**

6.1. The University, through its Code of Practice for Admissions, will ensure its criteria and procedures for selecting students are relevant to the programme of study and, where applicable, will take into account the requirements of professional bodies and employers (as appropriate). Selection criteria and procedures will not unjustifiably disadvantage or create barriers for disabled applicants and, where appropriate, students with access needs will be given an opportunity to demonstrate alternative ways they can meet programme requirements. Please see the University's Access Needs Disclosure and Support Procedure/Access Needs Disclosure and Support Procedure for Externally Awarded Qualifications for further information.

## **7. Academic assessment**

7.1. The University will ensure its assessment and progression policies, practices and procedures provide students with access needs with the same opportunity as their peers to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes. Reference should also be made to the University's Procedures Governing the Administration and Conduct of Examinations or JCQ guidelines if applicable.

7.2. Provision of alternative assessment and examination arrangements for disabled students will be well publicised and procedures will be easy to follow. Adjustments in assessments and examinations will allow for flexibility in the conduct of the assessment.

## **8. Support for students with access needs.**

8.1. The University will provide academic, pastoral and social campus-based services which are accessible and appropriate to the requirements of students with access needs.

8.2. Detailed information and guidance will be available to students with access needs at all stages of their engagement with the University, from admissions to graduation and

beyond. This includes the requirements of their programme of study, together with what can be expected from the progression route they aim to follow.

- 8.3. Information will be gathered from placement providers and employers (as applicable), in order to ensure an anticipatory approach to placing students with access needs.
- 8.4. Due regard will be made to fitness to practise requirements of external professional bodies, and alternative means of demonstrating a required standard will be discussed with individual students.
- 8.5. The University will ensure details of a full range of graduate opportunities, including postgraduate taught and research based programmes, are made readily available to students with access needs.
- 8.6. The University's IT strategic Plan and related procedures will give full consideration, if necessary, to the development of responding to the needs of students with access needs, ensuring course and electronic information and learning materials are accessible to students. If necessary, alternative hardware or software will be provided to ensure inclusivity of academic resources.

## **9. The physical environment**

- 9.1. The University has undertaken an audit of the physical accessibility of campus facilities, and will continue to monitor issues relating to physical access and health and safety throughout the campus. All University buildings, including Halls of Residences, teaching and learning accommodation and resources, and leisure and recreational facilities, and any new build projects are subject to impact assessment and the access audit process.
- 9.2. The University will consider the accessibility of physical learning environments so that individual students with access needs are not disadvantaged.
- 9.3. Where physical access is unreasonably difficult or impossible, the University will endeavour to ensure that a flexible approach is taken which will allow students with access needs to participate in their programme of study, e.g. by identifying alternative venues where classes have been timetabled to take place in an inaccessible environment.

## **10. Institutional procedures**

- 10.1. The University's Board of Examiners will consider reasonable adjustments to its procedures in cases where a student's access needs make it difficult for them to meet specific criteria (e.g. time limits). The conduct of any panels for which attendance by the student is either desirable or mandatory should make appropriate allowances for that

student's requirements, (e.g. accessible locations or in the length of time allocated to proceedings).

10.2. For students undertaking programmes with externally awarded qualifications, considerations of adjustments will be made in line with JCQ and awarding body guidance.

10.3. The University's Student Advice team will be available as a source of advice to students preparing submissions relating to policies and procedures. The Student Advice team will receive appropriate training in order to ensure they provide students with access needs with information and advice regarding their entitlements.