

Student Disability Policy

DISABILITY POLICY STATEMENT

It is University policy to make all programmes and constituent modules available to persons who have an impairment, dyslexia or other disability (as defined under the terms of the Equality Act 2010) wherever possible. The University will ensure that the programme curriculum and the teaching and learning methods employed to deliver it are accessible in line with the provisions of our Teaching Quality Handbook Section 10. However, it will help us to ensure that any special adaptation is in place, if the nature of the disability is fully disclosed to the Disability Officer as early as possible, for example, there can be a considerable delay in obtaining materials in Braille or in audio format.

Introduction

The Royal Agricultural University is firmly committed to offering a first class education to all students. This policy outlines the ways in which RAU addresses the needs of disabled students.

It is our intention to take account of individual need and to work with disabled students to find appropriate and practical solutions to problems that might arise.

The Equality Act (2010) requires us to promote disability equality and makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled students either directly or indirectly. The RAU recognises its responsibility to make anticipatory adjustments to all policies, procedures and provision of services, including teaching and learning, and the campus.

Definition of Disability

Disability is defined by the Equality Act "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities".

By 'disability' we mean dyslexia or any impairment [e.g. sight, hearing, mobility], medical condition [long term], mental health difficulty or specific learning difficulty that has an impact on study or on any other aspect of University life.

If you are unsure whether a particular difficulty would be considered a disability please discuss this in complete confidence with the Disability Officer.

Disability / Dyslexia Service

The RAU Disability Service comprises the **Disability Officer, Dr John Conway** and a Dyslexia Tutor both based in Cedar Lodge. The Disability Officer provides information, advice and support on dyslexia and disability issues to all RAU students and potential students. The Disability Officer also advises staff on improving the accessibility of the curriculum and teaching as well as buildings and facilities.

The Disability Officer will provide an information session during student Induction Week, including dyslexia screening and invite all potential dyslexic / disabled students for an informal discussion of the results. Students deemed likely to be dyslexic will be advised about the benefits of being formally assessed and therefore eligible for support from University and access to the Disabled Student Allowance.

Dyslexic / Disabled students are requested to register with the Disability Officer as soon as possible in order to discuss support needs and funding such as the Disabled Students Allowances and find out about facilities that may be available.

Students can seek confidential advice and support from the Disability Officer who will not pass any information to academic departments or other parts of the University without your permission. However if information is not passed on this may restrict the adjustments that are able to be made.

Pre application information

All dyslexic / disabled students considering whether to apply to RAU are encouraged to contact the Disability Officer to find out about the range of services for disabled students.

Admissions

Offers of places to study at RAU are made on academic merit. You are requested to declare any disability on the application form and to contact the Disability Officer to discuss your situation and ensure that everything possible is done to accommodate you.

Admissions tutors are expected to seek advice from the Disability Officer whenever there is a concern about the impact of a disability on a student's ability to follow a course.

Learning and Teaching

The Disability Officer is empowered by the RAU's Academic Board to make all necessary adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment practices for each

dyslexic / disabled student. He will liaise with academic staff on a student's behalf if requested.

Assessment and Examinations

The RAU has a policy of providing special examination arrangements, where necessary, for disabled students. These arrangements may include additional time in examinations, the use of computers, readers or scribes or the provision of examinations in appropriate formats e.g. large print. Students are advised to contact the Disability Officer as soon as possible, and **certainly not later than 3 weeks before any examination.**

Student residences

RAU has a number of rooms in student residences that have been adapted to accommodate the needs of disabled students including wheelchair users. Carers can be accommodated where appropriate. Disabled students or prospective students are encouraged to contact the Disability Officer or the Accommodation Officer to discuss their accommodation needs.

Staff Development and Dissemination of Good Practice

The Intranet site provides information about dyslexia / disability to staff and students. Staff are particularly required to abide by part 10 of the Teaching Quality Handbook and the related style guide for documents which form part of the University's regulation.

Contacts

The Disability Officer, Dr John Conway, is in Room 1, Cedar Lodge: phone extension 2234 or email john.conway@rau.ac.uk

Information for dyslexic and disabled students

Please come and see me, John Conway, (Room 1 in Cedar Lodge, ext 2234 or email john.conway@rau.ac.uk as soon as possible to talk about dyslexia or related specific learning difficulties or any disability such as physical or mobility impairment, hearing or sight impairment, medical conditions (e.g. epilepsy, diabetes, MS, ME, etc.) or mental health difficulties (e.g. severe anxiety or depression) that might affect your studies, so that I can discuss with you how we can best adjust the teaching, learning and living environment to suit your needs.

I will, of course, require evidence of any disability and its impact upon your studies. In the case of specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) this must be an assessment by an educational psychologist [or appropriately qualified specialist] after your 16th birthday, or a recent letter from an appropriate medical expert in other cases. Everything you disclose is treated in total confidence.

I will provide a briefing at Induction and ask all new students to complete a short questionnaire about learning styles, which helps us to identify possible dyslexia. There is also a computer-based screening tool, and our dyslexia specialist, Cathy Conway, is available for an informal discussion anytime on Monday or in the afternoon only on Tuesdays.

Support available for students with Dyslexia and other Disabilities

We offer individual support during your time at the University and can help with:

- Advice about higher education in general and University courses in particular
- Advice on Diagnostic and Needs Assessments
- Assistance with application for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)
- Recommendations about learning aids and enabling technology
- Links with outside agencies concerned with disability issues
- Advice about disabled access
- Arrangements for the provision of study skills tutors, note takers and communicators
- Documentation in accessible formats (e.g. large print, Braille, electronic or audio)
- Lecture notes and presentations in advance
- Library assistance, e.g. finding books, additional borrowing rights, etc.
- Help with specialist computer software
- Counselling on learning styles
- Permission to record lectures (for your personal use only)
- Adjusted examination arrangements (e.g. extra time, use of word processor, amanuensis, vivas etc.)

- Adjusted assessment arrangements (e.g. restructured coursework briefs or submissions dates, different modes of assessment e.g. by viva, audio or video etc.)

Disabled Students' Allowance

The DSA is available to help with certain extra costs incurred as the direct result of a disability or specific learning difficulty. It is NOT a loan, nor is it means-tested.

Please feel free to discuss this with me before you apply.

To qualify for the DSA, you must be:

- UK citizen or resident in the UK for at least 3 years
- Studying full-time or at least 30% of the full-time course
- Be enrolled on a foundation, bachelors or taught masters degree

DSAs can fund:

- 1) Specialist equipment allowance:
 - computer with software specifically designed for people with disabilities, scanner, printer, recording devices, etc.
 - enabling technology for hearing / sight / mobility impairment
- 2) Non-medical helpers' allowance to fund sign language interpreters, note takers, proof readers, exam support workers, etc.
- 3) General allowance to reimburse you for extra costs, e.g. computer consumables, discs, Braille paper, photocopying, book allowance, etc.

If you would like any further information please don't hesitate to contact me on 01285 652531 ext 2234 or by email john.conway@rau.ac.uk