AHEAD

DAWN
Disability Advisors Working Network

The Educational Support Worker
HANDBOOK

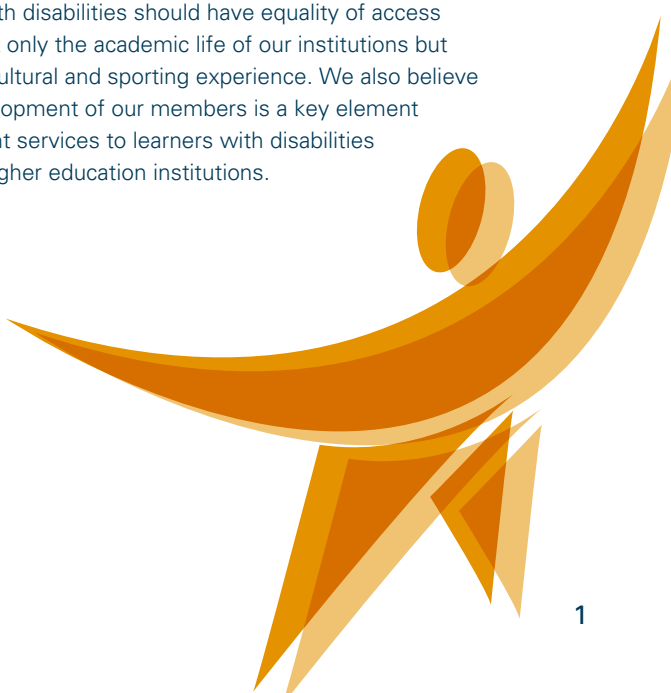
The Educational Support Worker Handbook has been funded by the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD).

DAWN (Disability Advisors Working Network)

The Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN) is the professional organisation for Disability Officers who are primarily responsible for supporting learners with disabilities in Higher Education in Ireland. We provide a forum for the sharing of expertise and the development of knowledge and skills in this area. We work towards the development of professional standards and best practice and collaborate on the development of policies and procedures for the inclusion of learners and staff with disabilities in Higher Education Institutions.

We play an important role in influencing Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) through the continuing development of disability related policy and practice and have a national voice through our members' participation on advisory committees and national forums. We have led change through the development of the HEIs National Supplementary Admissions Procedure for Students with Disabilities and have advised on key elements as diverse as the collection of student data, state funding for learners with disabilities and Universal Design.

We believe that people with disabilities should have equality of access to, and participation in, not only the academic life of our institutions but importantly in the social, cultural and sporting experience. We also believe that the professional development of our members is a key element in the provision of excellent services to learners with disabilities on the campuses of our higher education institutions.



The following institutions are members of DAWN

Athlone Institute of Technology

Cork Institute of Technology

Dublin City University

Dublin Institute of Technology

National College of Art & Design

National College of Ireland

NUI Galway

NUI Maynooth

Queens University

Tallaght Institute of Technology

Trinity College Dublin

University College Cork

University College Dublin

University of Limerick

University of Ulster

Waterford Institute of Technology

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What is an Educational Support Worker?

Educational Support Workers provide individual assistance to students with disabilities to support the student's learning and to help eliminate the disadvantage caused by a student's disability.

Examples of Educational Support Workers include: Notetakers, Academic Tutors, Sign Language Interpreters, Library Assistants, Academic Assistants, Essay Support, Exam Scribes and Reading Support for Deaf students.

Some institutions maintain a register of Educational Support Workers. This list mainly comprises of postgraduate students.

How to Register as an Educational Support Worker

You do not necessarily have to be fully trained in a particular area of support in order to apply for a position as an Educational Support Worker (except Sign Language Interpreters, communication support and specialist Tutors). The Disability Support Service should provide full training prior to your start date.

Please complete the application form attached to this handbook and return with your CV to the Disability Support Office.

All persons who complete and return the attached application form will be interviewed by personnel from the Disability Support Office.

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Induction Programme for Educational Support Workers

All successful applicants will be required to attend an induction programme which will address the following:

- Guidance on roles and responsibilities
- Basic disability awareness training

Terms of Registration for Educational Support Workers

Educational Support Workers for students with disabilities must agree to the following terms of registration:

- Must be eligible to undertake paid employment in the European Union.
- Must be able to demonstrate an understanding of the needs of students with disabilities in higher education.
- A position on this register does not guarantee employment.
- Arrive promptly at the agreed location for sessions with the student, having adequately prepared for the session in your own time.
- Complete the session to the satisfaction of the student within the pre-agreed time.
- Respect professional boundaries and maintain a professional relationship with the student while undertaking work.

- Do not divulge any confidential information about the student to anyone outside the Disability Support Service without the agreement of the student, except in cases where there is justifiable concern regarding the personal safety of the student or others. Even then, only consult with appropriate professional agencies.
- Maintain accurate signed records of the nature and amount of support provided to the student and provide these records to the Disability Support Service or relevant funding authority when requested.

Disability Support Service will advise registered Educational Support Workers on meeting the above criteria.

Failure to meet any one or more of the above terms may result in loss of registration with the College as an Educational Support Worker.

Claiming Payment

To claim payment you must complete a **timesheet** and return it to the Disability Support Service before the required date each month (different institutions will have different deadlines for return of timesheets). The timesheet must contain the following:

- Signature of the Educational Support Worker
- Signature of the student receiving support (confirms that the work has been completed)
- Name of the student for whom the work has been done
- Rate of pay
- Total hours must be tallied
- Gross pay must be tallied

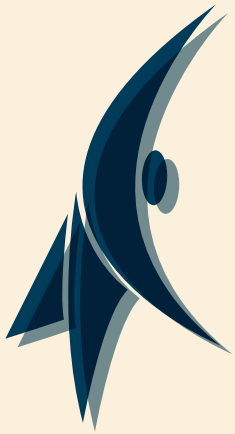
Guidelines for Students who are availing of Educational Support Services

Educational Support Workers provide individual assistance to students with disabilities to support the student's learning and to help eliminate the disadvantage caused by a student's disability.

Students availing of Educational Support Services are expected to agree and adhere to the following terms:

Student Responsibilities for all Educational Support Services

- Educational Support Workers will be given contact details (mobile and email) for the student they are supporting and will arrange to meet the student prior to the delivery of support. This is an introductory meeting which allows the student to familiarise him/herself with the Educational Support Worker and to discuss his/her individual needs.
- Students must inform Disability Support Services and the Educational Support Worker of any changes to contact details/course changes.
- Students must ensure that they have contact details for their Educational Support Workers.
- Students should negotiate mutually convenient times to meet with their Educational Support Workers while always adhering to the number of hours approved by Disability Support Services. Educational Support Workers are not paid for additional hours that have not been pre-approved by Disability Support Services.
- The student MUST provide 24 hours' notice to the Educational Support Worker if unable to attend an assigned session or if there is a change or cancellation to lectures or tutorials. All Educational Support Workers are paid for the full booking unless 24 hours' cancellation notice is given.



- If a student fails to advise and substantiate to Disability Support Services his/her failure to attend 3 consecutive appointments the College/University reserves the right to withdraw the service.
- Students must attend all lectures/tutorials where an Educational Support Worker is assigned. Should a student not arrive within the first 20 minutes of a lecture/tutorial the Educational Support Worker is required to forward any work undertaken in the lecture/tutorial to Disability Support Services and NOT the student. In exceptional circumstances, such as absence from College due to long term serious illness related to the disability, the Educational Support Worker may be permitted to attend lectures on the student's behalf. This level of support must be pre-approved by the Disability Support Officer.
- Students should adequately prepare in their own time for any sessions with Educational Support Workers.
- Students should give constructive feedback to the Educational Support Worker to ensure that the most beneficial service is provided.
- The student should first discuss with the Educational Support Worker if they are not satisfied with the support being delivered, and if it cannot be resolved, Disability Support Services should be contacted.
- Students must sign and verify the accuracy of Educational Support Worker timesheets to confirm that the support has been delivered.
- Failure to meet any one or more of the above terms may result in withdrawal of service.

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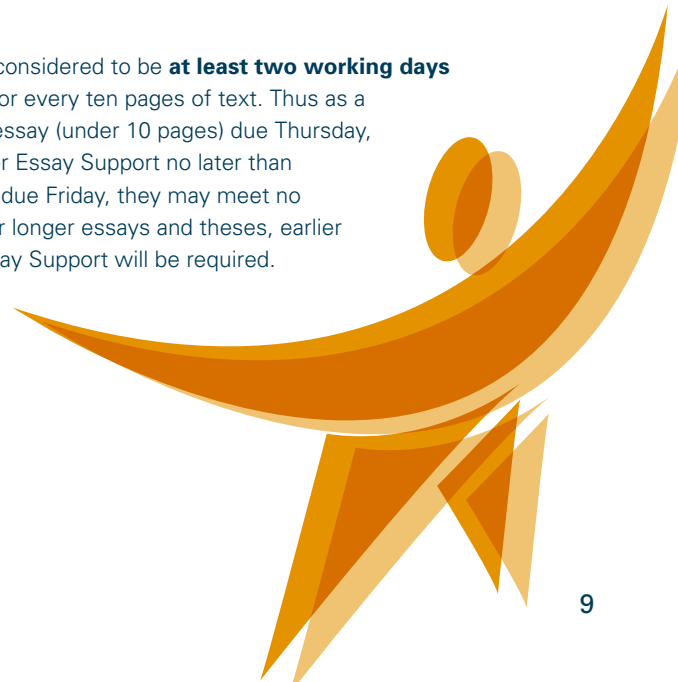
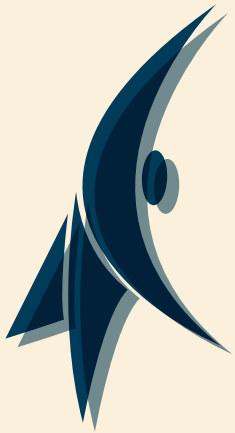
Student Responsibilities for Specific Educational Support Services

Essay Support

- Student must create all written work and content, take responsibility for research, and provide own departmental guidelines (handbook) for referencing and style.
- It is permissible to email the essay to the tutor prior to the meeting but the student must be present to receive feedback on the marked essay.
- In exceptional circumstances, such as mobility difficulties or Deafness, Essay Support may take place over email. This level of support must be pre-approved by the Disability Support Officer.
- Essay Support is not an editing service which can make corrections and return 'perfect' essays to a student. Rather, clear indications of mistakes or rule violations are given, and the actual corrections made by the student (in the case of on-paper proofreading) or at the request of the student (if working together on a computer).
- Make and keep all appointments with the tutor, and allow SUFFICIENT TIME before due dates to make corrections. Essay Support is not a last minute service.
- SUFFICIENT TIME is considered to be **at least two working days** before the due date, for every ten pages of text. Thus as a guideline, for a short essay (under 10 pages) due Thursday, students may meet for Essay Support no later than Monday; for an essay due Friday, they may meet no later than Tuesday. For longer essays and theses, earlier arrangement with Essay Support will be required.





- Please note that Essay Support is delivered according to tutor availability. In some instances tutors will be unable to deliver Essay Support within the stated timeframes due to volume of outstanding work. Students are advised to liaise with tutors well in advance of due dates to ensure tutor availability.
- Failure to meet any one or more of the above terms may result in withdrawal of service.

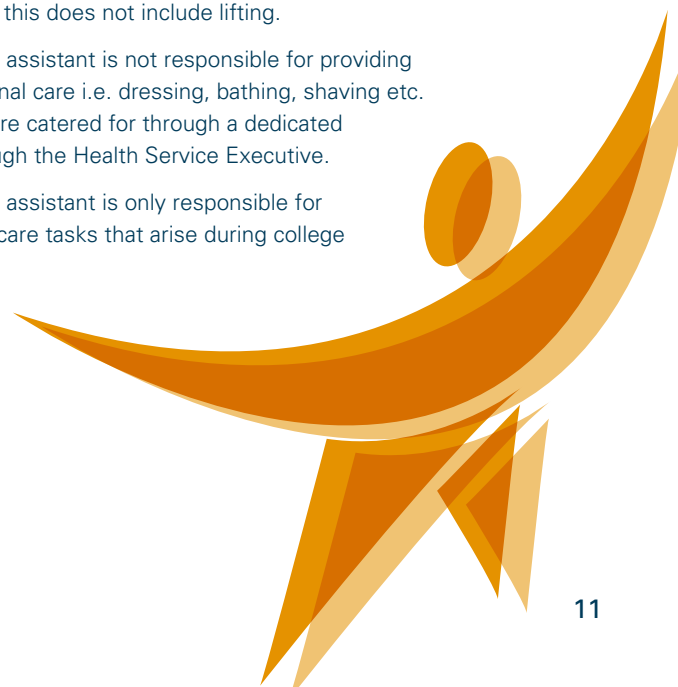
Notetaker

- Note taking services are provided on the condition that students receiving the service MUST attend all sessions for which they receive the service. Attendance in this instance is defined as being present for the entire session.
- You should arrange to meet your Notetaker at the beginning of each class to indicate your attendance. Such meetings are very informal, and by arrangement with you and your Notetaker. Notetakers are instructed to wait for 20 minutes and if you do not arrive they are required to forward the notes only to Disability Support Services and NOT the student.
- In exceptional circumstances, such as absence from college due to long term serious illness related to the disability, a student may be permitted to receive lecture notes while absent. This level of support must be pre-approved by the Disability Support Officer.
- Students should discuss the type of notes required (i.e. enlarged font, 1.5 spacing) and how to set out etc. It is the student's responsibility to provide feedback to the Notetaker so that they may adjust their style to suit.
- If possible the student should discuss first with the Notetaker if they are not satisfied with the notes, and if it cannot be resolved, Disability Support Services should be contacted.
- The student should negotiate with the Notetaker before the lecture about seating arrangements and where and when to provide the notes after class (if handwritten notes are provided/notes are given to student on a memory key).
- The note taking service does not include extra information, explanation, coaching or tutoring assistance.

- Note taking services are provided on the condition that students receiving the service DO NOT offer the notes for sale, favour or free to another person unless authorised to do so by the Disability Support Service.
- Failure to meet any one or more of the above terms may result in withdrawal of service.

Academic Personal Assistant

- The primary responsibility of an academic personal assistant is to assist a student with a disability with educational support requirements that the student cannot complete independently.
- An academic personal assistant may be required to assist with mobility and orientation around the College.
- An academic personal assistant may be required to assist with educational tasks, sourcing library books, photocopying etc.
- An academic personal assistant may be required to assist with carrying personal belongings, books, folders, materials for the student.
- An academic personal assistant may be required to assist the student during meal times during college contact hours.
- An academic personal assistant may be required to assist the student when using the toilet; this does not include lifting.
- An academic personal assistant is not responsible for providing assistance with personal care i.e. dressing, bathing, shaving etc. Personal care needs are catered for through a dedicated support provider through the Health Service Executive.
- An academic personal assistant is only responsible for personal or domestic care tasks that arise during college contact hours.



- An academic personal assistant will facilitate the student's participation in a course of study but will not assist with, or complete, any of the work associated with that course of study. For example, it is fine to be asked to retrieve books on particular topics but it is not acceptable to be asked to research which articles or chapters should be chosen to fulfil an assignment.
- Failure to meet any one or more of the above terms may result in withdrawal of service.

Guidelines for Educational Support Workers

Academic Personal Assistant

Job Description

An academic personal assistant assists a student with a disability with educational support requirements that the student cannot complete independently. The role involves supporting the student to participate and be actively involved in the course of study.

Person Specification

- Academic personal assistants are expected to work in accordance with the 'Terms of Registration for Educational Support Workers'.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills are essential.
- Sensitivity, confidentiality and respect for the privacy of the student at all times are paramount for the role of academic personal assistant.

Guidelines for Academic Personal Assistants

- Assisting the student when with friends requires particular skill and sensitivity. It is important that you keep a low profile.
- Ensure communication exists between the student you are supporting and peers and staff. Do not speak on behalf of the student.
- Assisting with mobility and orientation around the College.
- Assisting with educational tasks, sourcing library books, photocopying etc.
- Carrying personal belongings, books, folders, materials for the student.
- Academic personal assistants should strive to be as unobtrusive as possible.

- Academic personal assistants should not 'do the work' but simply facilitate the student's ability to participate.
- Arrive punctually at agreed times ready for work.
- Communicate and discuss any problems that arise as soon as possible.
- Are catered for through a dedicated support provider through the Health Service Executive.

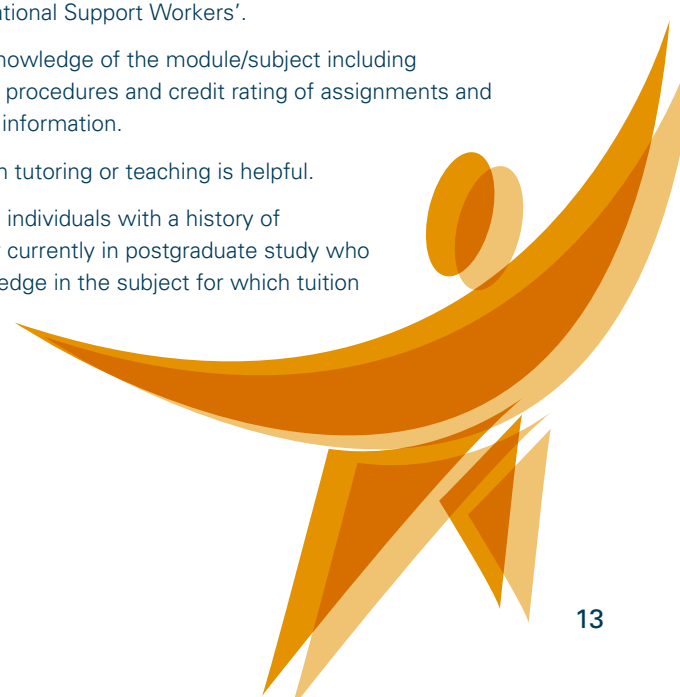
Academic Tutor

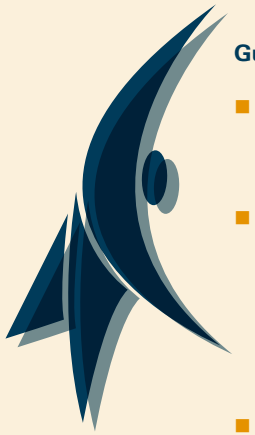
Job Description

Subject specific recapping is provided to replace or supplement taught material, usually in a one-to-one situation. Academic Tutors instruct students on a one-to-one basis in order to further explain material covered in a specific class and subject. Academic Tutors typically work with a student through the progression of a course and dedicate a few hours each week to meet with the student and explain any course material which the student is having difficulty with.

Person Specification

- Tutors are expected to work in accordance with the 'Terms of Registration for Educational Support Workers'.
- A tutor should have knowledge of the module/subject including changes, assessment procedures and credit rating of assignments and other subject specific information.
- Previous experience in tutoring or teaching is helpful.
- Preference is given to individuals with a history of postgraduate study or currently in postgraduate study who have advanced knowledge in the subject for which tuition is provided.





Guideline for Academic Tutors

- Each student is the expert on their own disability so on first meeting the student, discuss with the student what difficulties they have and what learning/teaching methods suit them best.
- It is paramount that the tutor takes sufficient time to get to know the student in the initial meeting. Personal information can help give you an impression of the student quickly, while establishing a comfortable rapport from the beginning. Explain your own academic career, what you've studied and why, before asking the student about their goals and hopes for the coming academic year.
- The number of hours of tuition must be approved by the Disability Support Service prior to support being delivered.
- Academic Tutors should prepare a tutorial plan with clear objective for each semester. A tutor evaluation form should be completed by the tutor and the student at the end of each semester.
- Work towards having an open rapport so a student can say if they do not understand something or need it explained in a different way. The key to effective one-to-one tutoring is to be adaptable and to respond to a student's individual needs.
- When necessary, prepare material, pre-read, photocopy or retrieve books before the tutorial. This saves time and allows you to focus on the substantive issues at hand.
- During the tutorial prompt the student for responses, present questions and help the student answer the questions in a structured, academic manner. Verbalisation can be a key to rapid progress and the student should be encouraged to 'explore' as much as is usefully possible.
- At the end of each session ask the student how they felt it went, what they enjoyed, what they found difficult and what they would like to cover in the next session.
- The tutor is expected to facilitate the student's learning but is not responsible for the student's performance – you should encourage and enable the student to take responsibility for his/her own learning and academic development.

- The tutor is advised to liaise with the Disability Support Service and nominated staff (e.g. Dyslexia Adviser) for information and guidance on the educational impacts of the student's disability, the specific difficulties associated with the disability, and strategies for combating these.
- The tutor can also liaise with the staff of the relevant Academic Department for clarification and direction on subject requirements.
- The tutor is expected to observe and adhere to departmental rules.
- Any interventions on behalf of the student should go through the Disability Support Service in the first instance.
- The tutor is expected to respect the student's right to confidentiality. However, in the case of perceived acute stress or where it is felt there is potential risk to the student, the tutor should bring this to the attention of the Disability Support Officer immediately.
- The tutor is expected to give adequate notice to the student if he/she is unable to fulfil an appointment.

Background Information for Supporting Students with Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a language based learning disability and refers to a cluster of symptoms which result in people having difficulties with specific language skills. Although individual cases vary, many people with dyslexia can experience difficulties in at least one of the following areas:

- Memory
- Reading
- Writing
- Spelling
- Handwriting
- Maths
- Organisation
- Speech

While many people with dyslexia share the above difficulties, it is worth remembering that the syndrome can vary greatly in its symptoms and severity between one person and another. Hence, make no assumptions about a student's requirements – ask them what support they need.

Many students with dyslexia have developed compensatory strategies to cover their difficulties. This allows many to cope well with their coursework. For others, however, the demands placed on them at third level mean they may have to abandon old habits and develop new coping and learning strategies.

Dyslexia can also affect a person's self-image. Students with dyslexia often end up feeling less capable than they actually are. After experiencing a great deal of stress due to academic problems a student may become discouraged about continuing in education.

The Impacts of Dyslexia on Learning at Third Level may include:

- Limitations in short-term memory and cognitive processing means they have difficulty following sequences or complicated directions and with integrating material from a number of sources.
- Information overload leads to confusion resulting from having more ideas than they can translate into acceptable words or structures.
- Difficulties with 'search and locate' strategies and in independent learning generally.
- Slow reading rate and comprehension creates difficulties where students must deal with a large amount of material in a short space of time, or when many new words or concepts must be learned and incorporated into understanding.
- Heightened anxiety levels are common in test or performance situations – anxiety about performing in front of others may affect participation in tutorials.
- First year students in particular may find the unstructured freedom of third level uncomfortable in comparison to the structured, controlled environment of the school system and will need input to help them plan and manage their time effectively.

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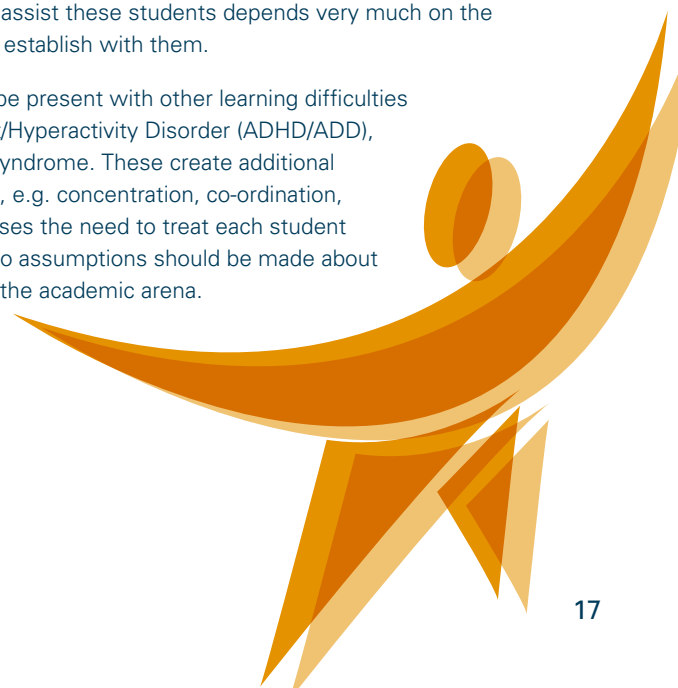
Despite their individual characteristics, students with dyslexia are known to share a common learning style, which is characterised by:

- A tendency towards holistic thinking (looking for overall patterns and relationships and different sides to a situation or task).
- Original and lateral problem-solving skills.
- Developed visual or spatial skills.
- A preference for intuitive non-rational thought rather than rational explanations.
- A reliance on long-term memory and a need to associate ideas in order to fit them into memory.
- A need to compensate for poor short-term memory by over-learning facts.
- Difficulty in tracking direction and time and using numbers.

Being labelled 'learning disabled' has a considerable impact on emotions and confidence. Students may have behind them years of negative attitudes and dismissive feedback about their abilities and this will have an impact on their learning. Interacting with students with a learning disability should be characterised by respect for their rights to dignity, confidentiality and equity. How well one can assist these students depends very much on the relationship one is able to establish with them.

Dyslexia may or may not be present with other learning difficulties including Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD/ADD), Dyspraxia or Asperger's Syndrome. These create additional difficulties for the student, e.g. concentration, co-ordination, social skills. This emphasises the need to treat each student as an individual and that no assumptions should be made about their ability or potential in the academic arena.



Background Information for Supporting Students who are Deaf/Hearing Impaired

- A sign language interpreter should be present for all sessions if the student communicates through Irish Sign Language. It is the responsibility of the Disability Support Service to book interpreters for sessions.
- Students who are Deaf will need to revise their lecture notes as they have not taken them themselves and will need to make up the deficit through tutorials because they do not hear all of the discussions.
- English is a second language for most Deaf students and this can have consequences for written work. Errors found in Deaf students' work are often similar to those found in written work presented by other non-native speakers. Difficulties manifest themselves most obviously in written work, where mistakes may be found with sentence structure, verb tenses, word omissions etc.
- Deaf students in higher education may exhibit some or all of the following traits and will require specific tutoring to remedy:

1. Difficulty reading for meaning, including lecture notes, assignments and referencing texts.
2. Difficulty in producing discussion in depth, or discursive elements of an assignment, particularly where they depend upon abstract thinking rather practical observation. Many would be more confident in Irish Sign Language rather than English.
3. Restricted vocabulary shown by:
    a) Acceptance of particular words as having fixed meanings relating only to previous experiences.
    b) Understanding and use of a more limited range of words.
    c) Difficulty and/or delay in absorbing and using 'new' technical terminology or the application of everyday words in specific technical contexts.
4. Misinterpretation of information presented, particularly where there is possible ambiguity in terminology or phraseology.
5. Incorrect verb endings and spelling mistakes in written work.

6. Errors in syntax – incorrect word order, words missed out or included unnecessarily, and other abnormalities in the use of English.
7. Inappropriate or what appears to be immature styles of writing in assignments.

Essay Support

Job Description

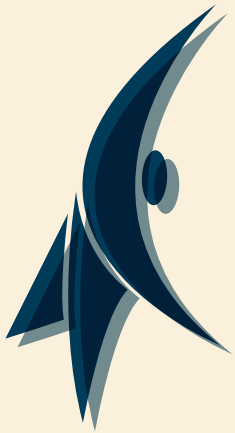
Essay Support is the review of a student's work prior to submission to assist with structure and presentation and to highlight errors in spelling and grammar. Essay Support is not a tutoring service and does not assist with any issues relating to content.

Person Specification

- Individuals delivering Essay Support are expected to work in accordance with the 'Terms of Registration for Educational Support Workers'.
- Key skills include the ability to identify problems the student may be experiencing, provide guidelines for essay planning and maintain a professional attitude at all times.
- To provide Essay Support you should ideally be an experienced learning support tutor.

Guidelines for the Provision of Essay Support

- Because the student must be the sole author of written academic work, Essay Support during the process of writing (i.e. before the paper has begun or while working in draft format) will not cover questions of content, respond to an argument's validity, or suggest sources…



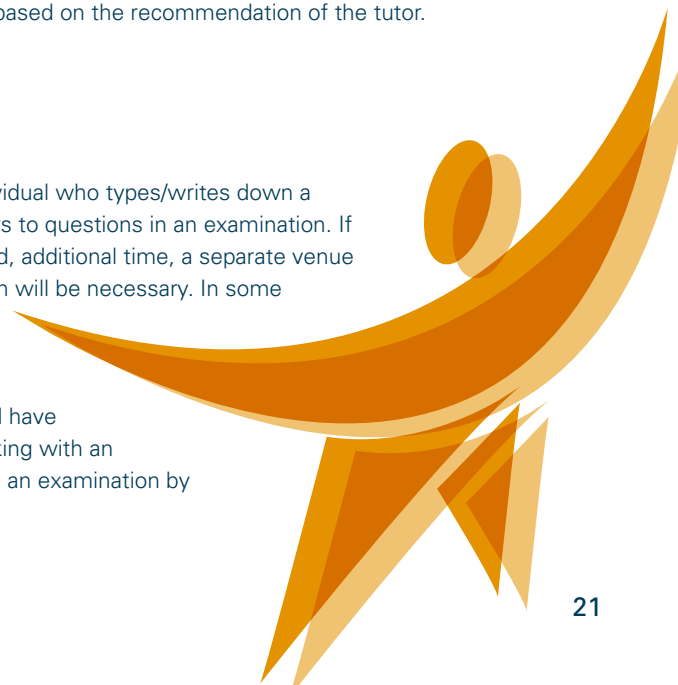
- Essay Support granted for work in progress will deal with paragraph or essay structure techniques in general, proper referencing techniques, and the mechanics of writing.
- Essay Support after a student's work is complete must take place with the student present in a meeting with the tutor.
- It is permissible for a tutor to read and highlight queries in an essay before the meeting, and advisable to do so for longer papers and theses, but the student must be present to make corrections, if required, in the reviewed essay.
- In exceptional circumstances, such as mobility difficulties or Deafness, Essay Support may take place over email; in these cases, extra care must be taken to explain full rules and to make comments for the student, while leaving any choices which impact content up to the student.
- Essay Support is not an editing service which can make corrections and return 'perfect' essays to a student. Rather, clear indications of mistakes or rule violations must be given, a mutually acceptable solution worked out in the presence of the student, and the actual corrections made by the student (in the case of on-paper Essay Support) or at the request of the student (if working together on a computer).
- The tutor is not expected to get through more than ten pages of text in a one-hour session.
- The tutor may deny a request for Essay Support if not given sufficient time (see below for guidelines regarding sufficient time).
- The student should make corrections following a completed session of Essay Support.
- The student should maintain a paper trail of pre- and post-Essay Support versions, so that the department can trace the student's work or Disability Support Service can track performance of individuals delivering Essay Support.
- Essay Support does not offer remedial grammar tuition independently of student essays in progress or in finished form, but the student should leave each Essay Support session, where possible, with a new understanding of at least one grammatical or spelling rule. This will empower students to become independent learners through repetition and committed engagement with tuition.

- In order to avail of Essay Support students are expected to:
  - Create all written work and content, take responsibility for research, and provide own departmental guidelines (handbook) for referencing and style.
  - Make and keep all appointments with the tutor, and allow SUFFICIENT TIME before due dates to make corrections. Essay Support is not a last minute service.
  - SUFFICIENT TIME is considered to be **at least two working days** before the due date, for every ten pages of text. Thus as a guideline, for a short essay (under 10 pages) due Thursday, students may meet for Essay Support no later than Monday; for an essay due Friday, they may meet no later than Tuesday. For longer essays and theses, earlier arrangement with Essay Support will be required.
  - Please note that Essay Support is delivered according to tutor availability. In some instances tutors will be unable to deliver Essay Support within the stated timeframes due to volume of outstanding work. Students are advised to liaise with tutors well in advance of due dates to ensure tutor availability.
  - Any breakdown in one of these areas of student responsibility could result in the withdrawal of Essay Support services by the Disability Officer, based on the recommendation of the tutor.

Exam Scribe

Job Description

An exam scribe is an individual who types/writes down a student's dictated answers to questions in an examination. If an exam scribe is provided, additional time, a separate venue and appropriate invigilation will be necessary. In some instances the exam scribe may also act as the invigilator for the exam. The student should have adequate practice of working with an exam scribe before taking an examination by this method.



Person Specification

- Exam Scribes, when sourced and managed through Disability Support Services, are expected to work in accordance with the 'Terms of Registration for Educational Support Workers'.
- An exam scribe should be able to produce an accurate record of the student's answers, write legibly and at an average speed.
- An exam scribe must have proficient typing skills if typing a student's dictated answers.
- Where possible an exam scribe should have a good working knowledge of the subject matter being examined.

Guidelines for Exam Scribes

- Be punctual – you should arrive a minimum of 30 minutes before the beginning of the exam. This time should be used to establish and discuss guidelines for:
  - Presentation
  - Spellings
  - Punctuation
  - New paragraphs
- Be relaxed – the student will have the normal anxieties that every student has before an exam so it is important to present yourself as relaxed and comfortable as possible.
- Students are individuals – most of them will have worked with scribes before and will have their own approach.
- Seating – encourage the student to decide the seating arrangements.
- At the beginning advise students of the duration of the exam, the number of questions to be answered and any additional instructions. Announce clearly the starting time and the finishing time, emphasising that time limits must be respected to ensure equity.
- Students may elect to write some/most of the paper themselves.
- Word processed examinations are preferred. Depending on the institution it may be necessary to complete the exam on a College computer and not the student's or scribe's own laptop.

- If using a computer, ensure that the computer is set to save work regularly (every 3 to 5 minutes). Go to Tools/Options/Save and select the required time.
- If the student needs a rest/toilet break the scribe/invigilator must accompany them.
- Many students will write their own essay plans or mind maps. These should of course be included in the answer books.
- Many students will draw their diagrams in rough and the exam scribe will draw a final version of the diagram. Include both copies in the answer book.

Laboratory/Classroom Assistant

Job Description

The role of laboratory/classroom assistants is to provide support to the student in the performance of duties within a laboratory/classroom/studio environment while always respecting health & safety procedures.

Person Specification

- Laboratory/classroom assistants are expected to work in accordance with the 'Terms of Registration for Educational Support Workers'.
- Must have sound understanding of the use of relevant classroom and laboratory equipment.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills are essential.

Guidelines for Laboratory/Classroom Assistants

- Attend the safety lecture at the beginning of the year with the student you will work with. The two of you should also meet the laboratory supervisor to discuss safety issues.
- Identify hazards in the laboratory – flammable, toxic, electrical or dangerous moving parts. Acquaint yourself with alarms, evacuation procedures, location of eye wash etc. and variations to these which may be necessary for the student with disability.

- In consultation with the Disability Officer discuss personal protection with the student, who may need assistance or variations in choice of lab coat, glasses, gloves etc.
- Assist the student with general mobility around the laboratory and campus if and when required.

Library Assistant

Job Description

The role of a library assistant is to help the student search, retrieve, borrow, return and photocopy materials from the library.

Person Specification

- Library Assistants are expected to work in accordance with the 'Terms of Registration for Educational Support Workers'.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills are essential.

Guidelines for Library Assistants

- Agree a time(s) that you will go to the library each week.
- Allow the student to plan their study regime around the routine of accessing the library in your weekly session/regular session.
- Assist the student in searching for references. Some students may find the library disconcertingly large and may not be at ease using it.
- Assist with borrowing, retrieving, returning and carrying of books.
- It is often more convenient to photocopy or scan text rather than carry books. The student will have a supply of photocopy cards/photocopy credit for this purpose.
- A library assistant for a student with a visual impairment will have to read chapter summaries and introductions to tape so the student can then decide which ones are to be scanned and stored electronically.

Notetaker

Job Description

A Notetaker should provide accurate, comprehensive and unbiased notes in lectures or any other spoken presentations for any student who has been assessed as requiring them. There are three types of note-taker:

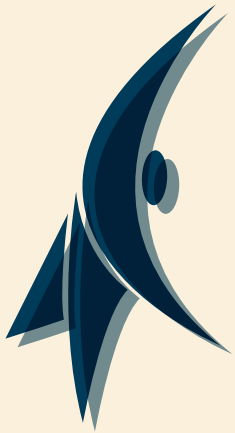
- Laptop Notetaker takes notes on a laptop during the lecture and e-mails the notes to the student that evening.
- Handwriting Notetaker takes written notes during the lecture and these are then given to the student at the end of the day/end of the lecture.
- Speed text operator takes notes on a laptop during the lecture which appears simultaneously on the screen of the student's laptop.

Person Specification

- Notetakers are expected to work in accordance with the 'Terms of Registration for Educational Support Workers'.
- Notetakers must have legible writing, proficient typing skills, speed, organisation, good spelling and a professional attitude.
- Notetakers may be expected to cover all classes for an assigned student(s) across the entire academic year.
- Handwriting Notetakers must provide a sample of their writing when applying for the position of Notetaker.

Guidelines for Notetakers

- At the commencement of the note-taking service, please make contact with the student by e-mail, introduce yourself and arrange a meeting at the first lecture.
- You should write/type as much as possible, although we understand that often it is not possible to note everything that is said.



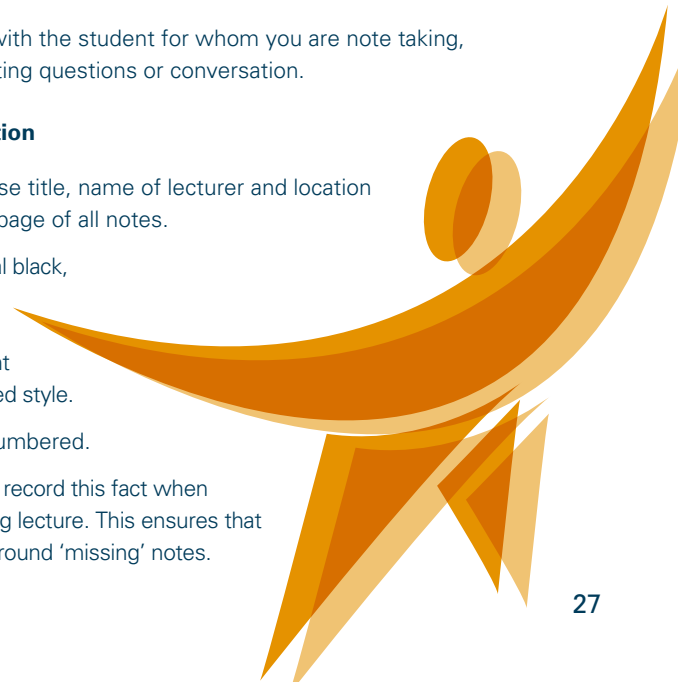
- When typing notes for a student in a class, be sure to sit close to a power outlet so that the laptop can be charged if necessary.
- When typing notes for a student in a class, be sure to save your work on a regular basis.
- If a student is Deaf, or not there for a legitimate reason, the Notetaker needs to note information such as room/ timetable changes that may be announced.
- All notes should be typed and emailed to the student within the agreed timeframe i.e. within 24 hours of the lecture. Notes should be proofread, should include references, key names and terminologies, and should also include the recap at the beginning and end of the lecture.
- All notes should be forwarded by email to Disability Support Services within 24 hours of the lecture. This will facilitate archiving of notes.
- Do not add or subtract any material from the content of a lecture delivered i.e. you must not allow your personal knowledge of a subject area to enter into the content of your notes.
- Get regular feedback from the student and be willing to be corrected. Try not to take this as criticism, it will help you to better support the student and will help to improve your own skills.
- You must introduce yourself to lecturers at the beginning of each lecture series as this is both courteous and facilitates the receipt of copies of any overheads used by the lecturer. In smaller classes, it also avoids awkward situations where a Notetaker may be inadvertently involved in class discussion. You must refrain from class discussion at all times!
- Please do not give copies of the notes to anyone, unless directed to do so by the Disability Support Service.
- Please advise the staff of the Disability Support Service if you are unable to attend a lecture, so that an alternative Notetaker can be arranged in sufficient time.
- Should the student not require you for a particular lecture they should give 24 hours' notice, otherwise you are entitled to book the session for payment purposes.
- Note taking services are provided on the condition that students receiving the service MUST attend all sessions for which they receive

the service. Students should arrange to meet their Notetakers at the beginning of each class for which notes are being taken. If the student has not arrived within the first 20 minutes the notes should be forwarded only to Disability Support Services and NOT the student.

- In exceptional circumstances, such as absence from college due to long term serious illness related to the disability, a student may be permitted to receive lecture notes while absent. This level of support must be pre-approved by the Disability Support Officer.
- Please take note of the following:
  - **Do** proofread and spell check notes.
  - **Do** record any references, key names and terminologies as accurately as possible.
  - **Do** record the recap at the beginning and end of the lecture.
  - **Do not** use abbreviations unless agreed with the student in advance.
  - **Do not** select 'relevant' or 'important' material. It is up to the student to decide this for themselves.
  - **Do not** take down a point of which you are not clear. Please clarify with the lecturer – at the end of the lecture.
  - **Do not**, if sitting with the student for whom you are note taking, encourage distracting questions or conversation.

Guidelines for Presentation

- Include the date, course title, name of lecturer and location of lecture on the first page of all notes.
- Notes should be in Arial black, font size 12, with 1.5 spacing. This can be agreed with the student but is the recommended style.
- All pages should be numbered.
- If a lecture is cancelled record this fact when submitting the following lecture. This ensures that there is no confusion around 'missing' notes.



Reader for Exams

Job Description

A Reader is a person who, on request, will read to the student (a) all, or any part, of the examination paper and (b) any part of the student's answers. In some instances the Reader may also act as the invigilator for the exam. The student should have adequate practice of working with a Reader before taking an examination by this method.

Person Specification

- Readers, when sourced and managed through Disability Support Services, are expected to work in accordance with the 'Terms of Registration for Educational Support Workers'.
- A Reader should be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate, and in the case of a foreign language, scientific, mathematical or technical subject, should ideally have a working knowledge of that subject.

Guidelines for Readers

- The Reader should be an independent person – s/he should not be the student's lecturer, personal tutor, personal assistant, fellow student or relative.
- Where possible the Reader should have access to training and practice sessions before the examination.
- A student should have had adequate practice with a Reader before sitting examinations.
- The Reader should read to the student the exact text of the examination question(s).
- The Reader should not give factual help to the student nor offer any suggestions.
- The Reader should not advise the student regarding which questions to attempt, when to move on to the next question, nor the order in which questions should be completed. Instructions given on the question paper can be repeated only when the Reader is specifically requested to do so by the student.

- The Reader should make no other comment or use any intonation which emphasises any part of the examination questions, nor make any interpretation of the examination question(s).
- The Reader should not discuss any matter with the student, during the examination, unless it relates to the re-reading of an examination question (e.g. if the student asks the Reader to repeat the examination question).
- Students using the service of a Reader should be accommodated separately to avoid disturbing other students. However, several such students attempting the same paper or assessment may be accommodated together with a single Reader, except in a case where one of the students is lip-reading.
- The Reader should be prepared for periods of inactivity during the examination.

Specifically for Students who are Visually Impaired:

- Should read, as often as requested, the questions and the answers already recorded.
- Must, if asked, give information regarding time elapsed and remaining.
- Is permitted to help a student using tactile maps, diagrams, graphs and tables to obtain the information which the print/amended print copy would give to a sighted student.
- Must give the spelling of a word only if requested.
- The Reader should immediately refer, to the invigilator, any problems in communication during the examination.
- The location and time of the examination should in all cases be approved, beforehand, by the Examinations Office.

Reading Support Worker

Job Description

To assist Deaf and other students who have difficulty accessing print material due to a disability or learning difficulty, by reading either directly to the student and/or onto audiotape or other recording media.

Person Specification

- Readers are expected to work in accordance with the 'Terms of Registration for Educational Support Workers'.
- A Reader should be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate, and in the case of a foreign language, scientific, mathematical or technical subject, should ideally have a working knowledge of that subject.
- Reading Support workers assisting non-Deaf students must be proficient in English.
- Reading Support workers assisting Deaf students must be proficient in both English and Irish Sign Language (ISL).

Guidelines for Reading Support Workers

- Arrive promptly and at the agreed location for sessions with your student, having adequately prepared for the session in your own time.
- Deaf students may want to record the session with the Reading Support worker for note-taking purposes. It is the student's responsibility to provide the camera and all necessary equipment. Non-Deaf students may choose to use audiotape, which they are also required to provide. Some students may prefer to take written notes.
- Where possible students should forward a copy of the text to be discussed with the Reading Support worker in advance of the meeting. This will allow you to prepare and thus maximise the time with the student.
- Exchange contact details with the student and contact the student if you are unable to make an appointment.

- Ask the student to prioritise material, so that you know where to start, and so that the student can start with the most important work first. Ask the student to specify exactly what they want from a book – there is no point in reading a whole book when only chapter 17 is relevant. This may mean sitting down with the student reading tables of contents and abstracts. It is the student, not the reader, who should decide what needs to be read.
- Complete the session to the satisfaction of the student within the pre-agreed time. Students will have different ways of accessing information and some students will want to work the sessions in different ways. The best way to ensure that you are producing the most useful and highest quality service is to ask the student you are assisting to give you feedback and specific instructions.
- Do not divulge any confidential information about the student to anyone outside the Disability Support Service without the agreement of the student, except in cases where there is justifiable concern regarding the personal safety of the student or others. Even then, only consult with appropriate professional agencies.

Sign Language Interpreter

Job Description

The primary function of a sign language interpreter is to facilitate communication among Deaf students, their hearing peers, College staff and faculty.

Person Specification

- Interpreters are expected to work in accordance with the 'Terms of Registration for Educational Support Workers'.
- Interpreters must hold a recognised professional accreditation and/or a diploma in ISL/English interpreting from Centre for Deaf Studies/Bristol University.

- Interpreters must adhere to the code of ethics from the Irish Association of Sign Language Interpreters (IASLI) or the Irish Association of Translators and Interpreters (ITIA).

Guidelines for Interpreters

- The interpreter is responsible for developing a professional relationship with faculty and part of this is making them aware of the role of the interpreter.
- Interpreters should introduce themselves to lecturers at the beginning of each lecture series as this is both courteous and facilitates the receipt of copies of any overheads used by the lecturer. In smaller classes, it also avoids awkward situations where an interpreter may be inadvertently involved in class discussion. Interpreters must refrain from class discussion at all times!
- The interpreter should be sufficiently inconspicuous to not stand out, yet to be visible to students and staff.
- The interpreter should behave in accordance with other professionals in school/college.
- The interpreter should take all reasonable steps to ensure complete and effective communication between the parties, including intervention to prevent misunderstanding and incorrect cultural reference.
- It is recognised that some Deaf students may not fully understand an interpreted message due to differences in culture, language or experience. It is appropriate for the interpreter to clarify information that fits into this category (e.g. hearing-culture jokes, certain English vocabulary that does not translate well).
- The interpreter should present a positive attitude towards the Deaf community and towards the Deaf student(s) in the mainstream situation. He/she is the means whereby relationships between Deaf and hearing students and adults are established: an approachable interpreter means approachable Deaf students. The interpreter should encourage the Deaf student(s) to address comments or questions for the lecturer (or others), and not to the interpreter.

- The interpreter should interpret all that is said within the class/lecture room including comments to and by hearing students or staff to each other. Deaf students should be made aware of classroom dynamics. However, care should be taken not to disrupt students engaged on a given task. Access to the curriculum includes access to jokes. Deaf students will want to know why the hearing pupils are laughing – even though many jokes do not translate across cultures.
- The interpreter will ensure that Deaf students are watching him/her when about to start interpreting. However, should the student deliberately not watch the signing, whether because of tiredness or disinterest, this is the student's choice. Where a Deaf student deliberately does not attend, it is the student's responsibility when information is missed. When the student is engaged on a task, it can be agreed with the student whether to leave them working, to interrupt or to précis any vital information at suitable pauses in their work.
- The interpreter may clarify his/her role to staff and students.
- The interpreter, as one of the few, or even the only, other adults with whom the student can freely express him/herself may be treated by the student as a counsellor, advocate or advisor. The interpreter should then refer the student to the designated person and, if the student wishes, support them as interpreter in that context.
- Interpreters should maintain confidentiality at all times by treating any information which may come to them in the course of their work, as privileged information, not to be communicated to any third party, without authority.
- The interpreter may discuss information relating to an assignment with other members of the team who are directly responsible for the educational programmes for the Deaf student.
- The interpreter may provide input for – or may attend – educational team meetings to answer questions and address concerns related to a student's communication abilities and needs.

- The interpreter should obtain and study all necessary materials to prepare for interpreting responsibilities.
- The interpreter should arrive punctually at all classes/interpreting assignments.
- The interpreter should contact the student if unable to attend an appointment.

Alternative Format (AF)/Assistive Technology (AT) Facilitator

Job Description

An AF or AT facilitator is a person who can cover some or all of the following:

- Assist students who have substantial difficulties accessing or producing print material by assisting the student in obtaining relevant documents in the Library, from departments, tutors or from other sources, and helping the student to arrange for these materials to be converted into an appropriate format (Braille, enlarged print, machine-readable format). And/or
- Assist students who need training with specialist equipment in order to access print or spoken material. And/or
- Assist students who have substantial difficulties accessing spoken presentations (lectures, seminars, films and videos) by providing typed transcription of audio or video recordings

In some colleges some of the above work is done by an Assistive Technology Support Officer. Where this exists, training in the above areas will be given by the officer. This session will be booked by the Disability Officer.

Person Specification

- AF/AT facilitators, when sourced and managed through Disability Support Services, are expected to work in accordance with the 'Terms of Registration for Educational Support Workers'.
- Ideally you must be able to demonstrate a clear understanding of mainstream packages and IT equipment and have experience of training others to use it.

- Scanning is generally used as the first step in the provision of material in alternative format. Training will be given in the use of this equipment.
- You should ideally have some understanding of specialist assistive technology packages (although training can and will be arranged).
- You must have an understanding of the format you are expected to work in (for example, Grade II English Braille) or be willing to develop an understanding. Access to appropriate equipment will usually be arranged through the Disability Service.
- You should be a competent typist and have access to appropriate equipment.

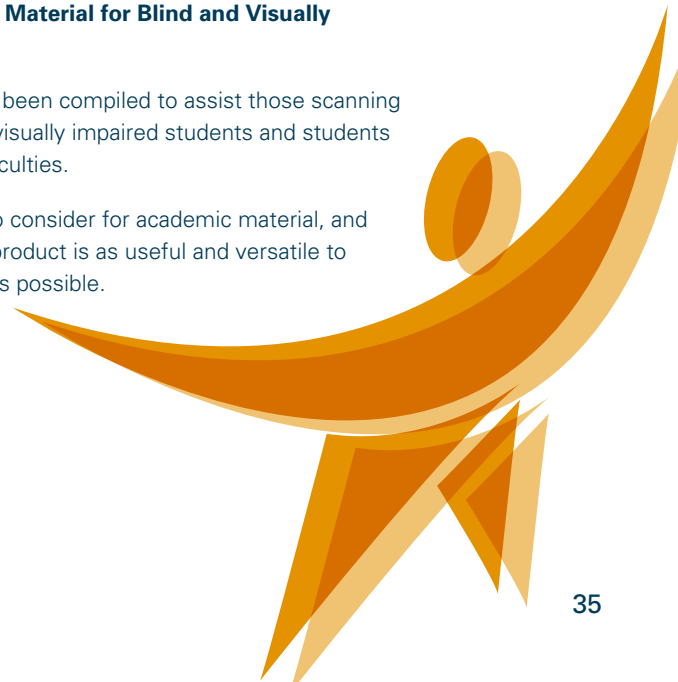
Guidelines for Alternative Formatting Facilitators

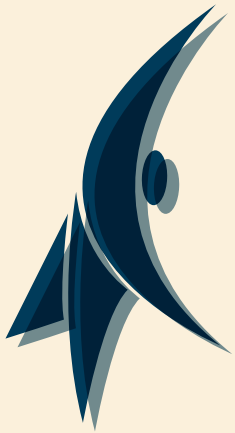
- Having assisted the student in obtaining relevant documents in the Library, from departments, tutors or from the student's academic assistant then the material must be scanned.
- The following is a guideline for the editing of scanned material. This will then allow the material to be used by screen-readers or be ready for converting to Braille.

Guidelines for Scanning Material for Blind and Visually Impaired Students

This set of guidelines has been compiled to assist those scanning printed material for blind/visually impaired students and students with specific learning difficulties.

It details specific points to consider for academic material, and so that the scanned end-product is as useful and versatile to the vision impaired user as possible.





Why Scan in the First Place?

If a person cannot access printed material, then an alternative format is needed. The most common formats used by blind and visually impaired people are large print, Braille, electronic formats (such as reading a Word document) and audio, such as tape or mini-disk. Scanning text means that it is available electronically, so that it can be read using assistive technology, such as screen readers or magnification, but it also means that the text can be manipulated and produced in another format – it can then be brailled out or printed in a font that the person can read. Scanning is therefore the key to producing information in almost any format, and if a little care is taken, a common text may only need to be scanned once and then accessed by several different people, using a variety of different formats.

These guidelines are designed to make scanning as efficient as possible, so that it is easy for the student to make best use of the material, and also that it can be formatted easily (in Braille, large print and so on).

Before Starting to Scan

Ask the student to prioritise material, so that you know where to start, and so that the student can start work with the most important things first. Ask the student to specify exactly what they want from a book - there is no point in scanning a whole book when only chapter 17 is relevant! The rest of the book can always be scanned at a later date, for the sake of completion. It is the student, not the assistant, who should decide what needs to be scanned.

Scanning Material

Make sure that you scan each page of the document, in order. The actual scanning is the easy part! The most important part of the assistant's role, from the vision impaired student's point of view is the accurate editing of the scanned piece. This, in reality, is also what takes the most time, and is what is impossible for the vision impaired user to do.

Before Beginning to Edit and Format

It's a good idea to save the "raw" scanned document before beginning any editing, and it's also a good idea to scan the whole document before editing. (That's where the scan repeatedly function becomes useful, as it speeds up the actual scanning.)

Some people prefer to edit text in the scanning programme itself, others prefer to use a common word processing programme such as Word. Either way, it doesn't matter too much.

Save each scanned piece as one document, with a title similar to the actual title of the article/chapter. Save onto disk for the student and into the folder to be archived for future use.

General Formating

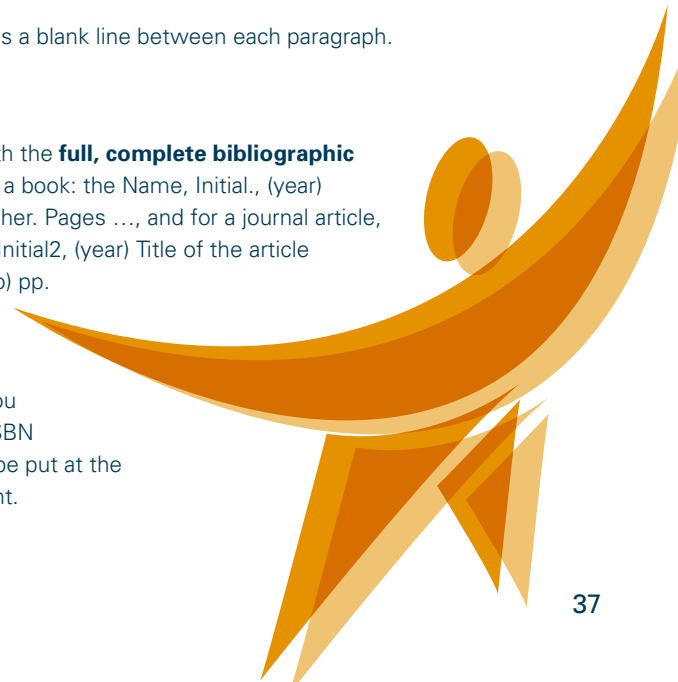
The standard format for font to be accessed by vision impaired people is Arial 14point. While the font does not matter to those who access the material through Braille, speech output or other non-visual ways, some people may be able to read the screen or a clear print document – some people can read a few words in large print but could not access a whole document this way. It's probably a good idea to select all the text and make it Arial 14 in the beginning, so that the document will be most versatile.

- Ensure that there is only ONE column of text per page.
- Always LEFT justify all text.
- Ensure that the paragraph widths and indentations are standard throughout the document, and that the page margins are appropriate.
- Make sure that there is a blank line between each paragraph.

The Title and Reference

Begin **each** document with the **full, complete bibliographic information**, such as, for a book: the Name, Initial., (year) *Title in italics* place: Publisher. Pages …, and for a journal article, Name1, Initial1., Name2, Initial2, (year) Title of the article *Title of The* Journal Vol (no) pp.

This should be done in the same format as the other references. If you have the library code or ISBN numbers, these can also be put at the beginning of the document.



It may be necessary to type out the full reference. Beautifully scanned and formatted text is useless unless it is properly referenced!

Page numbers

There is usually no need to insert page numbers into a document, but the original page numbers are vital. Insert p. and the number at the beginning of the text (after the reference), and each subsequent page should be numbered – even if this means breaking up a paragraph mid- sentence, it is important to leave one line, then write p. and the number, leave another line, and continue with the text. If a student is directly quoting from the work of an author, page numbers must be cited in the reference.

Italics and Bold text

Some, in fact most OCR software recognises bold and italicised text, and retains this formatting. Do not change the formatting if it has been correctly recognised.

Never put additional explanatory notes to users solely in bold or italics – always use square brackets [ ] to denote added comments.

Quotations

Quotations are important, so always check that the quotation marks have been correctly recognised. Occasionally ` rather than " or ' are incorrectly inserted, so it's best to check these.

Block quotations are best described with [block quote] and [end of block quote] before and at the end of the quote.

References

Academic literature is practically useless without complete references. The references should be fully cited at the end of the article, and **do** need to be checked carefully.

Footnotes

As with block quotes, insert a blank line, then [footnote 1] then another blank line, then the footnote, then another blank line, then [end of footnote 1].

Check if superscript numbers to denote footnotes have come out clearly. Often it is preferable to insert [see footnote 1] into the text instead of superscript numbers.

Tables

Tables that are well formatted in Word are usually not a problem for blind and visually impaired people to access.

Ensure that tables are correctly represented, and that tables are used rather than columns of text. This may mean inserting a table manually and copying the text into the table.

Diagrams

Diagrams are always difficult to describe. The first thing to ask is how important is this diagram, and what is it? There is a world of difference between a photograph, a flow-chart, a graph, a picture etc. As each diagram will be different, it is difficult to give guidelines of how best to deal with it, but in general, it is less likely that a visually impaired student will need to know things like the colour of arrows, the style of a picture, the artistic details or what the photograph of the famous author looks like. It is more likely that they will simply need or want to know what information it is trying to get across.

Many OCR programmes delete diagrams and pictures automatically. If this is not done, a description of the image will still be needed.

Type, in square brackets [ ]:

- A general description, e.g. [figure 1: flow chart labelled...] or [a photograph of...]
- In the case of flow charts, it can be useful to give an overall general description of the layout of the chart, before giving the precise details or words within boxes. It can be difficult to imagine the diagram and consequently make sense of the comments if a clear description of the overall appearance is not given. Insert something like, [there are three boxes in a row, interconnected with arrows. An arrow from the middle one points down into a box below it. The left box from the row contains…] You may need to re-type the contents of boxes.

- For a graph, type a general description first, e.g. [figure 2 pie chart…]
- State the names of the axes, the units, range and increments used. Then a general description of the shape.

If the diagram has already been (or will be) fully described in the text, no further description is needed (but it is useful to state that the diagram is fully described in the text).

Sometimes the best way to get around diagrams is to produce them in another format (e.g. tactile), as description can sometimes be very difficult to do, or to follow.

Headers and Footers

If headers and footers from the original page are retained, these should be deleted. Provided that an accurate reference Is given, there should be no need for further information, and it can be distracting.

Having Finished the Editing

Save the document both onto disk for the student's use, and in the central archive for scanned material.

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Appendix 1

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT WORKER APPLICATION FORM

Personal Details
Name
Address
Mobile
Email
Student number (if applicable)
Date of birth
First language

Subject Areas
Most recent qualification
Area of study
Subject areas in which you are competent 1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Availability		
Are you available at any time?	Yes	No
Are you attending classes and restricted to particular hours?	Yes	No

Please tick the relevant boxes to indicate the types of **Educational Support Work** which interest you and the subject areas in which you can deliver support. Please ensure that you have read the guidelines in the ESW booklet for the various educational support positions.

Type of Work	Yes/No	Courses	Subjects	Level
Laptop Notetaker				
Handwritten Notetaker				
Academic Tuition				
Essay Support				
Reading Support				
Reader for Exams				
Exam Scribe				
Lab/Classroom Asst.				
Library Assistant				
Academic PA				
Assistive Technology/ Alternative Format Facilitator				

Previous Experience		
Have you worked as an ESW before?	Yes	No
If yes, please give details		
Do you have teaching or tutoring experience?	Yes	No
If yes, please give details		

Availability – please place 'X's in the slots when you are **UNAVAILABLE** to work

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
09:00					
10:00					
11:00					
12:00					
13:00					
14:00					
15:00					
16:00					
17:00					
After 17:00					

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Appendix 2

Educational Support Worker Timesheet																
Name of Educational Support Worker																
Name of Student																

Periods Worked	Enter Date	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	Description of Work	Total Hours	Hourly Rate	Gross Pay
Week Ended												
Week Ended												
Week Ended												
Week Ended												
Week Ended												
MONTHLY TOTALS												

Signature of Educational Support Worker		
Signature of Educational Support Worker		
Signature of Disability Support Officer		

FOR YOUR TIMESHEET TO BE PROCESSED PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE FOLLOWING HAS BEEN COMPLETED			
The student you are supporting has signed the timesheet to confirm that the support has been delivered	Yes	Yes	Yes
You have signed the timesheet			
Total hours, hourly rate and gross pay have been completed			

The Educational Support Worker HANDBOOK

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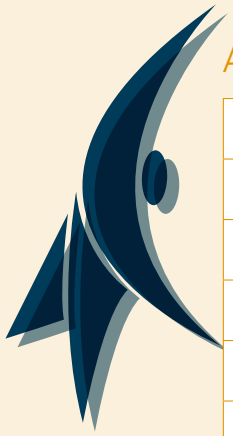
Appendix 3

End of Semester Tutor Evaluation Form			
	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3
Tutor Name			
Student Name			
Number of hours per week			
Cumulative hours for semester			

Please list the academic objectives which were set with the student
1.
2.
3.
4.
Please list the key areas where tuition has been effective
1.
2.
3.
4.
Please list the key areas where further support is required
1.
2.
3.
4.



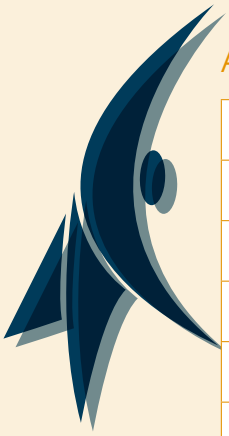
Appendix 3 (continued)

What strategies did you find most useful with this student?
1.
2.
3.
4.
What problems, if any, did you encounter during the tutorial session?
1.
2.
3.
4.
Would you consider tutoring for Disability Support Services again? Yes ☐ No ☐
If no, please indicate why not
Any further comments?

Appendix 4

End of Semester Student Evaluation of Tuition Form			
	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3
Student Name			
Tutor Name			
Number of hours per week			
Cumulative hours for semester			

Please list the academic objectives which were set with the tutor
1.
2.
3.
4.
Please list the key areas where tuition has been effective
1.
2.
3.
4.
Please list the key areas where you feel further support is required
1.
2.
3.
4.



Appendix 4 (continued)

What problems, if any, did you encounter during the tutorial session?
1.
2.
3.
4.
How beneficial did you find the tutorial sessions? Excellent ☐ ☐Good ☐ ☐Fair ☐ ☐Poor ☐
Please rate the tutor's style of delivery Excellent ☐ ☐Good ☐ ☐Fair ☐ ☐Poor ☐
Would you be happy to use this tutor again? Yes ☐ No ☐
If no, please indicate why not
Any further comments?