

Approved by the HR Committee on 21st October 2009

**University of Westminster
Disability Equality Scheme 2009-2012
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University of Westminster Disability Equality Scheme 2009-12

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The University of Westminster is committed to creating a stimulating, supportive and accessible learning and working environment, based on mutual respect and trust, to assist all staff and students to achieve their full potential, irrespective of disability. The University is committed to ensuring that all students and staff are treated fairly and it has a long tradition of promoting disability equality.

The University's approach and policies in the area of disability equality are underpinned by the Social Model of Disability, which does not focus on an individual's medical condition or impairment, but instead identifies the disabling impact of the structural, organisational, physical and attitudinal barriers that tend to exclude some people, preventing equality and inclusion. The University aims to create barrier-free learning and working.

2. MAJOR AREAS OF PROGRESS SINCE THE FIRST DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

This is the University's second Disability Equality Scheme. To provide a snapshot of some of the key progress since the first Disability Equality Scheme was developed and approved in November 2006, detailed annual disability equality progress reports have been produced and published to demonstrate progress on an annual basis in respect of promoting disability equality by various stakeholders and disability equality champions and a comprehensive website has been set up which is dedicated to providing details of support available for disabled staff. This reinforces our commitment to embracing diversity and promoting equality and helps to encourage disclosure of disabilities so that appropriate reasonable adjustments can be made.

Additionally, an all staff disability data capture exercise was carried out in early 2009. Another very significant area of disability equality work has been the Inclusive Curriculum for Disabled Students Project (ICDS). This has been a three-year project involving disabled students and academic and professional service staff at the University. One of the key aims of the project was to produce a set of resources that will support staff to develop and deliver curriculums that are inclusive and accessible for disabled students. A major resource produced by the project is a set of learning and teaching guides designed to support the delivery of an inclusive curriculum for disabled students. Each of the guides focuses on a particular theme ranging from course design and validation, recruitment and enrolment, together with different aspects of learning, teaching and assessment. These are supported by a series of case studies from individual disabled students looking at barriers and solutions, and by staff case studies giving examples of effective inclusive practice.

This second Disability Equality Scheme sets out the University's continuing commitment to disabled students and staff and provides a framework to ensure that the University offers a supportive learning and work environment for all members of the University community. It is also a specific response to the revised Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

3. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people or those that have had a disability, without justification. Indirect discrimination where a provision, criterion or practice presents barriers, is potentially as unlawful as direct discrimination. Reasonable adjustments must be considered fully before any decision is taken to justify less favourable treatment towards a student or member of staff. Discrimination is only lawful for 'substantial and material' reasons and in limited prescribed circumstances outlined within the DDA.

The Act defines disability as "a physical, sensory or mental impairment", which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- "Impairment" covers physical impairments and impairments affecting the senses such as sight and hearing. It also covers mental impairments, including learning disabilities and mental illness where the condition is recognised by a respected body of medical opinion. If the impairment is controlled by medication or special aids the person is still considered as disabled for the purposes of the Act. Severe disfigurements are treated as impairments, even though they may have no effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
- People with stress related illnesses and conditions such as chronic fatigue syndrome may be covered if there are long term, substantial and adverse effects. Those with other long term chronic conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, upper limb disorders (eg repetitive strain injury) or epilepsy may also have legal protection.
- "Substantial" means more than minor or trivial and includes progressive conditions where impairment is likely to become substantial, such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy and HIV. One of the changes within the DDA 2005 is that people with HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis are now deemed to be covered from the point of diagnosis, rather than from when their condition has an adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities.
- "Long-term" means effects which have lasted for at least twelve months, or which are likely to last for twelve months or more. Long-term effects include those which are likely to recur.
- "Day-to-day activities" are normal activities carried out by most people on a regular basis, and must involve one of the following broad categories: mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; the ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects; speech, hearing, or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; perception of the risk of physical danger.

The 1995 Disability Discrimination Act was amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 which meant that public bodies responsible for post-16 provision are required to respond to the law as below, to show that they do not discriminate against disabled students or other disabled people:

- From 1 September 2002 it became unlawful to discriminate against disabled people or students by treating them less favourably than others; responsible bodies are required to provide certain types of reasonable adjustments to provision where disabled students or other disabled people might otherwise be substantially disadvantaged.
- From 1 September 2003 responsible bodies were also required to make adjustments involving the provision of auxiliary aids and services, and
- From 1 September 2005 responsible bodies were required to make reasonable adjustments to physical features of premises where these put disabled people or students at a substantial disadvantage. SENDA (DDA Part 4) has now been further amended with the introduction of the DDA (2005).
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amended the DDA 1995 to include people diagnosed with cancer, HIV or multiple sclerosis from the point of diagnosis and removed the requirement that mental illnesses must be 'clinically well recognised'. It also introduced a new positive duty on public authorities to develop a Disability Equality Scheme to eliminate harassment and discrimination against disabled people, promote equality of opportunity and encourage participation of disabled people in public life.
- The Equality Bill 2009 will introduce new changes to employment legislation with respect to disability. New ways to claim for disability discrimination are to be introduced - 'discrimination arising from disability' and 'indirect discrimination'. These would replace 'disability-related discrimination' which was very severely curtailed by the House of Lords decision in *LB Lewisham v Malcolm*. The Government proposes to make it easier to claim reasonable adjustments from service providers. It would no longer be necessary to show that the provider's practice etc makes it 'impossible or unreasonably difficult' to access the service. The test would be whether the practice places the disabled person at a substantial disadvantage. This is the threshold currently used for employment. Direct discrimination or harassment based on association or perception is to be made unlawful. That applies to employment, but also to other areas such as services and education. This proposal implements the European Court decision in *Coleman v Attridge Law*, but also goes beyond it.

In order to meet the general duty to promote disability equality, which came into effect on 5 December 2006, Higher Education Institutions and other public bodies had a specific duty to produce their first Disability Equality Scheme which also had to include an action plan by 4 December 2006, and which was to be reviewed every three years.

4. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: STUDENTS

4.1 Marketing, admissions and enrolment

The undergraduate and postgraduate prospectuses are available on the University's website in PDF format. Prospective students are able to extract text from the PDF prospectuses which can then be run through enlargers, voice-activators etc.

The correspondence and publicity materials regarding Open Days are reviewed to ensure that the University is aware of any access needs of prospective students and those accompanying them. Events are normally staged in accessible locations and organisers are briefed on access routes. The University has developed Virtual Tours for all its sites: <http://www.westminster.ac.uk/page-13342>

These provide a useful tool for marketing the University and are also helpful for disabled students in terms of giving them an idea of how accessible the University's sites are and prior to a visit and for those who might be unable to attend an Open Day.

The University has a policy on the accessibility of web pages and e-learning material, and it is available to all staff, including content editors and site designers. The University will make reasonable adjustments to ensure that all websites, web pages (including those within the VLE Blackboard), and other e-learning materials are accessible to all users regardless of disability.

In accordance with the University's Diversity and Dignity at Work and Study Policy, applicants are assessed for admission according to the University Admissions Regulations for Taught Courses. The University will admit students to its courses on the basis of the following principles:

- reasonable expectation that the applicant will be able to fulfil the objectives of the course and achieve the standard required for the award;
- the University requirements for admission to the course leading to a particular award;
- equality of opportunity for all applicants.

Disabled students are welcome at the University and there are various ways in which support is provided. Students have a responsibility to make known their requirements and disability in a timely manner so that appropriate services and practices (including safety measures) can be provided where necessary.

An applicant who has declared a disability (other than dyslexia) on their application form is automatically referred to the relevant Disability Adviser, or where necessary, to the University's Student Health Service. The purpose of this is to assess the applicant's needs in terms of any assistance that can be provided by the University and allow the applicant to decide if the available support and accommodation meets their needs.

The enrolment letter sent to all students contains the contact details of the Disability Services. The letter advises students with a disability to contact the Disability Services as soon as possible to discuss support available.

The University's **Essential Information for Disabled Students and Students with Specific Learning Difficulties** (<http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-15470>) provides a summary of the services, facilities and site accessibility for disabled students. The above document is available on the Disability Services website along with a great deal of other helpful information about disability, accessibility and support. As well as the information provided on the web, the above booklet is available in Text Only format for visually impaired and dyslexic students.

International disabled students can apply to the **International Disability Fund** for support.

4.2 Code of Practice for Disabled Students

This was revised in February 2006 and is accessible on the Disability Services website and the Academic Registrar's website. Informed by the University's current policies and activities, the Estates Strategy, other University documents, external legislation and other guidelines, the University Code of Practice for Disabled Students aims to:

- Provide a framework that ensures the University remains within the law and supports all students
- Respond to precepts included in the Quality Assurance Agency's Code of Practice Section 2: Disabled students or any successor documents
- Identify and document good practice and if necessary make further recommendations that strengthen the University's commitment to supporting disabled students.

4.3 Code of Practice on Supporting Students with Mental Health Problems

This aims to ensure that the University does not discriminate academically or socially against any student because of their mental health problems and that students with mental health problems are positively encouraged to declare them. This code of practice was formally reviewed and revised in February 2006 by the Disability Services Committee and the Student Affairs Forum.

4.4 Teaching and learning

The University will take all reasonable steps to ensure that courses (including placements and other specialist learning environments) are organised in ways which offer the best opportunities for full participation by disabled students, subject to the maintenance of academic quality standards.

The needs of disabled students will be considered within University validation and review processes. All academic staff responsible for programme specification, placements and exchanges should seek advice from the Disability Tutors and the Disability Services staff. Deans of School are ultimately responsible for ensuring disabled students have access to courses, placements or exchanges.

The University holds an annual **Teaching and Learning Symposium**. This provides staff and partner institutions a chance to discuss pedagogic issues and share their good practice. Previous Teaching and Learning Symposiums have focused on subjects such as “dyslexic students: issues for successful inclusion” and other relevant disability and inclusion areas.

4.5 Assessment

Special arrangements for examinations and assessments for disabled students may be provided if judged appropriate by the relevant School Manager, in consultation with the Director of Academic Services. Students may contact Disability Services or their Disability Tutor for further advice.

The University provides within its regulations, provision for special arrangements for disabled students including extra-time allowances, sheltered accommodation and provision of equipment where relevant. Students should contact Disability Services who will ensure that those exam arrangements are communicated to the School Office to put in place.

4.6 Provision for Students with Dyslexia

The University recognises the extra determination, hard work and skills that students with dyslexia can bring to their studies. The **University of Westminster’s Dyslexia Student Guide** has detailed guidance on the provision for students with dyslexia, which is the most commonly declared disability within the University along with other Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs). There is also information about this area in the Code of Practice for Disabled Students.

The **AchieveAbility Network**, which is national and hosted by the University aims to disseminate information, share best practice and lobby policy makers for appropriate learning opportunities to support the continuation rates of SpLD learners across sector. We work closely with our partner organisations and regions to embed the practice we have undertaken to date. We develop materials and information to share with all those who are interested in promoting awareness of the needs of SpLD students across educational sectors. These materials and practice have been developed through an evidence based approach. The research methodology for the AchieveAbility Network is as follows *‘AchieveAbility engages with action research as a method of “learning through doing” that is both reflective and inclusive aiming to enhance practice through project based collaboration’*.

5. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: STAFF

5.1 Recruitment and Selection

The University’s application and selection procedures aim to encourage applications from disabled people. Applications for employment from potential employees who have a disability are considered against the same criteria for the post as applications from potential employees without a disability but support for disabled staff and applicants is available and reasonable adjustments are made. The University has a published Appointments Policy and Procedure and Guidelines for Staff. Vacancies are advertised in a wide range of media and the text of all advertisements and further particulars is made available in electronic, large text or other format upon request.

All members of recruitment and selection panels will have attended the relevant recruitment and selection briefing. Only those selection criteria which are directly relevant to the ability to undertake the duties and responsibilities of the job successfully are specified and care is taken not to use criteria which may unjustifiably place a disabled applicant at a disadvantage in the selection process. Those responsible for writing selection materials are encouraged to specify clearly both the essential and desirable requirements of the post.

Consideration is given to special interview arrangements to ensure that a disabled person is not at a disadvantage compared to other applicants. This may include ensuring that the interview room is accessible for any applicants with mobility difficulties. Disabled applicants are offered reasonable adjustments in relation to the interview process, for example adjustments to any presentations.

5.2 Induction, Training and Support

Training events and information sessions on disability awareness and successful recruitment and selection are run regularly by the Human Resources Development (HRD). The University has a programme of induction training for all new staff, which includes completion of the on-line Respect for People Diversity programme and a programme on Health and Safety and an on-line module on Disability.

Access to training opportunities will be provided on the same basis as for other staff and the University will make reasonable adjustments in accordance with the relevant legislation to ensure that a person's disability does not place them at a substantial disadvantage in this aspect of their employment.

5.3 Disability Support and Staffing Infrastructure

The Disability Services Forum (DSF), a formally recognised University committee, meets three times an academic year to consider disability issues. It oversees the implementation of the Code of Practice and the Essential Information for Disabled Students and Students with Specific Learning Difficulties, identifies and disseminates best practice and ensures that the University responds to the needs of students to enable them to maximise their learning experience.

The DSF is also responsible for developing and reviewing policy in relation to disabled students and staff and ensuring compliance with the relevant legislation. Its membership includes student representatives and University departments including Health and Safety and Estates and Facilities.

The DSF reports to the University Executive Board to ensure key staff and Senior Management are made aware of their responsibilities with regard to Disability issues and advising on the University response to ongoing legislation.

Throughout the University senior managers are expected to encourage the involvement and participation of disabled employees to ensure that, wherever possible, employment practices and procedures recognise and meet their needs.

There are Disability Tutors in each school, reporting to the Dean of School but with a functional line to the Director of Academic Services. They are specifically trained in meeting the needs of the disabled students in Higher Education and are responsible for assisting Deans of School, and advising them of their responsibilities.

The University's Disability Services is part of Academic Services (Corporate Services) and provides specialist advice to students on equipment, funding and support and recruits, trains, coordinates and monitors a team of over twenty support workers to support disabled students in their studies. The Disability Services works with University departments to advise on policies and procedures and advise staff on changes in the legislation. In addition it arranges and provides tailored training within the University on disability issues, legislation and University responsibilities to its students. The Disability Services works with the Disability Liaison Tutors on issues affecting access to the curriculum; with library staff on access to the library for disabled students, with Estates and Facilities on physical access arrangements and with Health and Safety on emergency arrangements. Students who qualify for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) can undergo a needs assessment at the Central London Assessment Centre which also offers IT training and specialist advice on technology and the DSA.

The **Counselling and Advice Service** provides confidential counselling, guidance and support to both staff and students. It also provides a rolling training programme for University staff, both academic and professional support staff, in supporting students with mental health problems.

The aim of the training is to ensure that staff are familiar with the signs and symptoms of mental illness; to de-stigmatise mental illness and to help staff feel more confident about dealing with mental health issues; to raise awareness of support systems that exist so staff are better able to refer students to appropriate help and to raise awareness of the DDA and the requirements it places on staff and the university.

The Counselling and Advice Service, in conjunction with Disability Services runs a **Mentoring for Mental Health Programme** for students with long term mental health problems to help them cope with the demands of their course. Mentoring is not counselling but can help students work out strategies to deal with their studies more effectively. Students can ask for mentoring at any stage of their course and the support is flexible and tailored to meet individual need.

Careers and Student Employment (CaSE) recognises that many students face potential barriers in their attempt to develop their careers including low confidence and lack of opportunities as well as discrimination from employers on the basis of several factors, including disability.

CaSE proactively seeks to assist students to tackle this inequality. To support disabled students it has ensured that its services are accessible to all. It provides a dedicated careers consultant with a specific remit for supporting disabled students, information resources in a range of formats including sub-titling and large text, signer and interpreter support if requested, workshops offering advice on disclosure and

relevant legislation, information on disability friendly employers and a comprehensive website covering a wide range of disability issues for students. CaSE is undertaking a review of its services to disabled students which started in August 2009 and should end by January 2010. The review, which is being conducted in line with guidance from the Association of Graduate Career Advisory Services (AGCAS), covers the accessibility of information rooms, interviewing facilities, equipment, resources and careers and enterprise events. It will involve disabled students in an assessment of how services are delivered and how CaSE actively promotes equality of opportunity. The review recommendations will include not only the changes needed to ensure that premises, resources and services are accessible but also the action required for staff training, research and the ongoing involvement of disabled students.

The University's **Library Service** provides a number of high quality support services for disabled students. Each library has a Disability Support Librarian who is available to offer advice, and, where practical, to make special arrangements to help these students. These library professionals meet regularly as the ISLS Disability Support Group, to review policy and practice and share expertise.

There is an extended loan scheme for disabled students and each library has an area with assistive computing provision, with software and equipment for helping people with physical disabilities, sight impairment and dyslexia.

IT Services also offer assistive computing provision and support the relevant software located in libraries.

The HR Manager (Equality and Diversity) is responsible for providing professional advice and guidance on equality and diversity issues, monitoring the operation of HR policies relevant to diversity issues with regards to University staff, providing support and advice to disabled staff, developing policies and best practice in the area of equality, diversity and inclusion and managing equality and diversity related projects and initiatives. All of the University's equality, diversity and inclusion related policies and support structures for staff can be found on the diversity section of the HR website.

Occupational Health can advise and support any disabled employee where adjustments to the work or environment are required. When a member of staff develops a disability or medical condition which affects their ability to carry out the normal duties of the post, managers should, in the first instance, contact their local HR Managers who will liaise with Occupational Health to determine the likely prognosis, to advise on any changes to duties or working practices which may be appropriate and any special assistance or requirements.

The Safety, Health and Environment Team, will, on request provide guidance and support on risk assessments and reasonable adjustments. Any medical information disclosed to Occupational Health will remain confidential except where consent has been given for disclosure to allow the University to make reasonable adjustments based upon Occupational Health's recommendations.

The SHE Team also oversee the University's emergency procedures and specific assessments and disclosures relating to these including disclosures of medical requirements to first aiders and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS).

The Student Health Service is a nurse run service providing urgent treatment and health advice during university hours, term time only, for most ailments, injuries and ill health, as well as help and advice relating to disabilities and chronic problems that might affect studies or university life.

The AchieveAbility Network, which is national and hosted by the University aims to disseminate information, share best practice and lobby policy makers for appropriate learning opportunities to support the continuation rates of SpLD learners across sector. We will be working closely with our partner organisations and regions to embed the activities we have undertaken to date. We will also be developing materials and information to share with all those who are interested in promoting awareness of the needs of SpLD students across educational sectors.

5.4 Reasonable Adjustments for Staff

The University will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace and to employment arrangements to ensure that a disabled person is not at any disadvantage when compared to a non-disabled person.

The University is also committed to providing an enabling and accessible learning environment and details of reasonable adjustments and support services for students with specific learning difficulties or conditions have also been covered in the relevant sections of this policy document.

Reasonable adjustments are changes to the duties of the post or employment arrangements to allow a disabled person to undertake, or continue to undertake, a job. Reasonable adjustments might include measures such as:

- altering working hours;
- re-allocating some duties;
- finding alternative accommodation;
- allowing absences during working hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment;
- giving additional training;
- modifying physical features of the workplace such as fixtures and fittings, furniture and granting access to specific modifying equipment such as voice activated computer software and telephones adapted with an amplifier;
- making special arrangements for parking and access to buildings;
- translating instructions and reference manuals into accessible formats, such as large print and audio cassette;
- providing a reader or sign language interpreter;
- giving feedback in a particular way;
- modifying assessment or testing procedures.

Please note that the above examples are not exhaustive and other adjustments may be necessary in individual circumstances. Reasonable adjustments do not have to be costly and advice and financial contribution in certain circumstances is currently available from the Government's Access to Work Scheme which provides support to disabled people to help them overcome work related obstacles resulting from their disability, if their disability is likely to last for 12 months or longer. Practical help can include aids for communication, special equipment, alterations to premises or the working environment, support, including assistance with communication and travel where a disabled person is unable to use public transport. Further details about the scheme are available on the University's Diversity section of the HR website or the Job Centre Plus website.

In all cases the person concerned must be consulted on the reasonable accommodation of his or her needs. Decisions on whether an adjustment is reasonable must take into account all relevant factors, including the extent to which the alteration will improve the situation for the disabled employee or job applicant (for example in terms of allowing the individual to carry out the requirements of their post), the cost of the measures, both financial and in terms of disruption caused to others and the ease of making the change. Any proposal by the line manager to make reasonable adjustments or provide equipment for an individual should be discussed with the relevant HR Manager or HR Manager (Equality and Diversity) prior to any course of action being taken.

5.5 Disability arising during employment

When employees develop a condition or a disability during the course of their employment, all reasonable steps will be taken to accommodate the effects of their disability by making adjustments to their existing employment, or through appropriate retraining and redeployment, enabling them to remain in employment with the University whenever possible.

HR Managers will seek the involvement of the individual concerned, the University's Occupational Health Service, the HR Manager (Equality & Diversity) and/or other appropriate specialist agencies, in order to assess the effects of impairment and explore possibilities for appropriate and practical adjustments.

Line managers should discuss the options available with individuals after taking appropriate advice from HR/Occupational Health and after any external assessments have been carried out at Occupational Health's request. Each case will be considered individually, taking into account all the relevant circumstances.

These may include:

- continuing in the same post with reasonable adjustments to the duties and/or the working environment or provision of equipment;
- re-allocation of duties within the team or group;
- re-deployment to another post within the University, which may include a requirement for retraining within a reasonable timescale;
- consideration of early retirement/resignation on ill-health grounds;

- or, if having considered all other options carefully, it is clearly apparent that the employee cannot realistically continue in employment, then a decision to terminate the employment may be made. In such cases the employee will have the usual right of appeal.

In some cases, the disability will be a progressive condition which develops over time and a number of options will be appropriate at different stages. For example, the individual will probably be able to continue for some time in their existing post, with or without appropriate adjustments, before any of the other options require consideration.

6.0 Physical Access and the Built Environment

The University is committed to making buildings and sites more accessible. In response to specific changes in legislation and to continue to improve accessibility, the University is carrying out a program of work (2002-2009) to ensure we meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

A complete, professional survey was completed in spring 2002 to itemise any shortcomings in the University Estate. In consultation with expert consultants and with reference to key documents (e.g. British Standards, *Designing to Enable*, Gateshead Access Group), a phased, prioritised program, over 2002-2009, was compiled.

The priorities are as follows:

- Priority 1: Building access and transportation (constantly monitored and improved as required)
- Priority 2: Induction loops (all general teaching rooms with a seating capacity of more than 50 people now have induction loops and for all other classrooms portable induction loops are available).
- Priority 3: Lift controls (completed)
- Priority 4: Tactile flooring and stair nosing (completed where possible)
- Priority 5: Lighting levels (completed)
- Priority 6: External handrails (completed)

The University is currently undergoing a rebranding exercise which will lead to the formulation and eventual installation of new and consistent signage across the estate. This will comply with good practice guidance and improve directional and information signage for people with disabilities.

There is a continuing dialogue between all sections of the University Disability Services, both providers and users, to ensure that all new requirements are considered and where reasonable incorporated into the University Estate.

All refurbishment projects undertaken by the University incorporate all the necessary compliance work as a matter of course.

Access statements for each University site are available on the Disability Services website. The University also provides suitable accommodation within some Halls of Residence for those disabled students who are given priority when allocating these bedrooms.

7.0 PROCUREMENT

The Central Procurement Unit aims to ensure that the University continues to meet its legal obligations to make sure that suppliers and contractors supplying goods and services to (or performing services on behalf of) the University comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. This will be achieved by revising standards terms and conditions for contracting services to include information about the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, ensuring that the relevant government guidance on social issues or equality issues in procurement is considered and including a requirement in every contract that the contractor must comply with the anti-discrimination provisions of the Act. Further details are available on the Procurement website.

8.0 DISCLOSURE AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that students and staff declare regarding disability is confidential and maintained within the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. Where students or staff need support, it may be necessary to provide some limited details of their disability to help the appropriate members of staff understand their needs. However, this would only be done with agreement and after completion of a disclosure form for students or written consent by members of staff. If they disclose but want their status to remain confidential the member of staff should make it clear to the student that the University cannot be held responsible for any lack of support. A student disclosure form must be completed at this point.

Disabled students and members of staff are encouraged to disclose their medical conditions or disabilities so that the appropriate level of support or reasonable adjustments can be provided. As many disabilities are unseen, we have to rely on the staff member, student or applicant to make the disclosure about his or her own disability and reassure them of our commitment to disability equality and to making reasonable adjustments.

9.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

It may be necessary on occasion to make special arrangements to ensure that a person's disability or impairment, or any effect of it, does not increase risk to either their health and safety or that of anyone else at the University. Where a conflict arises from differing legislation the University will try to accommodate the requirements as fully as possible. However, in very limited and prescribed circumstances, health and safety considerations may take precedence.

When managers conduct risk assessments for disabled staff, consideration should be given to the provision and review of any reasonable adjustments, as outlined in this policy document.

Schools and Corporate Services Departments are responsible for ensuring that local 'Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's)' have been developed for their disabled staff. Individual staff should be consulted about their individual needs in the event of an emergency evacuation and a plan developed with the University's Fire and Emergency Planning Adviser. General evacuation and first aid information is available on the Safety, Health and Environment website: <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-16172>) or from building receptions, and is posted in every building.

Staff should make themselves familiar with any specialist equipment/ procedures that may apply to them.

Staff should also notify the member of staff responsible for health and safety in their department/unit of any changes that may affect the PEEP, such as a change to their location, and liaise with the relevant campus service manager or building manager to make sure their PEEP is kept up to date.

10.0 DISCRIMINATION AND NON-COMPLIANCE

All employees are expected to treat disabled colleagues, students and visitors with the same dignity and respect as their non-disabled counterparts. Any form of harassment of a disabled person on account of their impairment is unacceptable behaviour and is potentially unlawful under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

The University regards incidents of harassment very seriously and as possible grounds for disciplinary action which may lead to dismissal. Copies of the Diversity and Dignity at Work and Study Policy are available on the Diversity section of the HR website. All members of staff are required to become familiar with and understand the contents of the Dignity at Work and Study and other equality and diversity related policies. It should be noted that any intentional breaches of the legislation on equal opportunities or of the University Policy may lead to disciplinary action. Individuals should also note that they may be personally liable under law.

The University endeavours to provide an environment which is supportive and fair. Where problems arise relating to the operation of this policy do occur staff and students are encouraged to advise an appropriate member of staff as soon as possible. Where a complaint is not dealt with satisfactorily at an informal level any formal complaint or grievance should, in the case of a student, be pursued through the Student Complaints Procedure. In the case of a member of staff, the complaint should be pursued through the Grievance Procedure.

11.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy and any action plans arising from it will be monitored by the Disability Services Forum and the Diversity Audit Group and it will be formally reviewed every three years. The next major review will take place by 3rd December 2012.