

UNIVERSITY OF STRATHCLYDE
Department of Chemical & Process Engineering
DISABILITY EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT
OF TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT

Please read this summary in conjunction with the Department's Report: 'Review on The Accessibility of Teaching and Assessment'

Summary

As part of the Disability Equality Scheme (DES) the University required all Departments to review the accessibility of their teaching and assessment arrangements and provide a formal report on findings to the Vice-Principal. The Department has a close relationship with students and sought the views of the whole student body, particularly those with a disability. Disabled students were involved in discussions/reflection and preparation of the report, and their input to the process was invaluable.

The Review report described the Department's position at the start of the review, outlined procedures used in conducting the review, and summarised the outcomes of the review and future plans to monitor, evaluate and improve accessibility, namely:

- ✦ The Department will review and monitor accessibility of teaching and assessment for disabled students on a regular basis and via a number of different routes.
- ✦ The Departmental Disability Contact (DDC) will continue to meet regularly on an individual basis (students' preference) with disabled students currently registered for classes within the Department, with other staff involved if/when appropriate.
- ✦ Disability considerations will become a standing item on the agenda of Teaching Committee and general Departmental meetings.
- ✦ Intake: the Department will from 2009 begin to keep records of applications from disabled students; this information will be collated and recorded.
- ✦ Future intake: the Department will continue to review teaching and assessment activities and be proactive in implementing adjustments that will benefit students.
- ✦ Student Involvement: if requested by students in future, group meetings similar to main Staff/Student committee meetings could easily be implemented.
- ✦ Staff Handbook: disability information provided will be re-written and expanded for the next edition.
- ✦ Teaching: revision of teaching materials/assessment practices will take into account needs of disabled students; the Department will continue to provide lecture materials in advance on *WebCT*.
- ✦ Laboratory programme: PDRA/PG laboratory demonstrators training session will include extended and expanded training on disability aspects from 2009-2010, in liaison with the Disability Service.
- ✦ Assessment: the Department will continue to ensure, wherever possible, that students are not penalised for spelling and/or grammatical errors, provided they do not conflict with published assessment criteria.
- ✦ IT facilities: two dedicated computer laboratories are provided by the Department for student use, care being taken to ensure provision takes note of any special requirements for disabled students;
- ✦ Study Abroad Placements: the Study Abroad Co-ordinator will keep records of any disabled students participating in a study placement abroad, monitor their performance and collate information. Safety aspects in host institutions will be assessed to ensure comparability with Strathclyde protocols;

- ✦ Industrial Placements: prior to the placement the Industry Liaison Manager discuss the needs of each student needs with the host company, in consultation with the student, to ensure the placement is suitable and that appropriate monitoring is put in place;
- ✦ Publicity/Information: staff responsible for the Dept. website, UG/PG Handbooks and the production of publicity materials will ensure that all information is available in alternative formats if required, and that this is publicised;
- ✦ Open Days: staff responsible for information sessions will ensure that information is available in alternative formats if required, and that the website offers a discreet opportunity to request a special arrangement(s) if necessary;
- ✦ Estates: wherever possible the Department will involve disabled students in relevant issues associated with the teaching/study environment in future and will ensure that any proposed refurbishment of Departmental areas is mindful of disability issues;
- ✦ Emergency: the Department would seek advice in advance from Safety Services about the emergency evacuation procedures for a physically disabled person, such as the provision of refuge areas or assistance to exit our buildings;
- ✦ Review of performance: the Department will from 2009 keep records in order to compare disabled students' performance with that of their peer group; this information will be collated and recorded.
- ✦ Future: the Department has further opportunities for review and monitoring of wide-ranging disability issues when collating and writing the Annual Disability Report required by the Equalities and Diversity Committee [previously Disability Equality Scheme Implementation Group (DESIG)].

The Review was a very interesting and informative exercise and the procedure helped staff to critically assess current practices to identify where things are done well and where adjustments are needed. The Department will continue to reflect on teaching/assessment and would welcome the views of students, particularly those with a disability, in ensuring that provide a good experience for all our students. The DDC is generally the first point of contact but the Department's 'open door' policy encourages students to interact with staff and this will allow for feedback, either formally or informally, as students are aware that they can raise issues and make suggestions to staff at any time.

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