



# Student Disability and Neurodivergence Inclusion Policy

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## Purpose of Policy/Procedure

This policy enables staff, students and other relevant parties to understand their rights and responsibilities, and to support the University in promoting disability inclusion, preventing discrimination, and fulfilling its duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and [public sector equality duty in Scotland](#).

This supersedes the current Disability Policy.

## Scope of Policy/Procedure

This policy applies to all current and prospective students of the University of Strathclyde, across all levels and modes of study. It covers every aspect of the student experience, including teaching, learning, assessment, research, placements, fieldwork, accommodation, digital services, and extra-curricular activities.

It applies to students with a wide range of impairments and health conditions, including neurodivergent students, regardless of whether they use the term "disabled" to describe themselves or have made a formal disclosure.

### Related Policies & Procedures:

- [Strathclyde Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy](#)
- [Disability Inclusion Action Plan](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedures](#)
- [Disability and Neurodivergence at Work Policy \(in development\)](#)

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## Committee Route

Equality Diversity & Inclusion Committee, Education Strategy Committee, Senate

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# Student Disability and Neurodivergence Inclusion Policy

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# Student Disability and Neurodivergence Inclusion Policy

## Introduction and Purpose

1. The University of Strathclyde is committed to fostering a supportive, inclusive environment that enables disabled students to participate fully in academic and student life. This policy affirms our responsibilities under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and articulates our strategic and values-led approach to disability inclusion. It is grounded in the social model of disability, which recognises that it is societal and institutional barriers, not individual impairments, that disable people.
2. We recognise, respect and value difference and diversity within and across the University community. An environment in which staff, students and visitors feel equally valued and respected is key to the realisation of the University's aims and objectives.
3. The University does not tolerate, and actively works to prevent and eliminate, discrimination, harassment and victimisation as defined under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and to ensure that our students, staff and visitors, as well as those who apply to work or study at the University, are treated fairly.
4. Our ambitions to continue to enable inclusion and promote equality are embedded within our Strathclyde Vision 2030 strategic plan and [People Strategy](#) and reflected in our shared [values](#).

## Scope

5. This policy applies to all current and prospective students of the University of Strathclyde, across all levels and modes of study. It covers every aspect of the student experience, including learning, assessment, research, placements, fieldwork, accommodation, digital services, and University and University of Strathclyde Students' Association (USSA) organised extra-curricular activities.
6. It applies to students with a wide range of impairments and health conditions, including neurodivergent students, regardless of whether they use the term "disabled" to describe themselves or have made a formal disclosure.
7. The University of Strathclyde recognises that students' experiences of disability and inclusion are shaped by multiple, intersecting identities. Protected characteristics such as race, sex, gender reassignment, religion or belief, and pregnancy or maternity status may combine to create compounded barriers or experiences of discrimination. We acknowledge that students are not defined by any single characteristic. We are committed to addressing the complex realities of intersectionality in how we develop, implement and review policy and support. This policy should therefore be read alongside the University's broader Equality and Diversity policies, which provide the institutional framework for meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010: [Strathclyde Equality & Diversity Policies](#).
8. The University recognises that a small number of students with complex medical needs may fall under the definition of Adults At Risk under the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007. In such cases the Disability & Wellbeing Service will work with the Safeguarding Team to assess whether a

student meets the definition and if so, to ensure that the University discharges its obligations under the [Act](#) and [associated guidance](#) accordingly.

9. Definition of an adult at risk:
  - that they are unable to safeguard their own well-being, property, rights or other interests;
  - that they are at risk of harm; and
  - that because they are affected by disability, mental disorder, illness or physical or mental infirmity they are more vulnerable to being harmed than adults who are not so affected.
10. This policy enables staff, students and other relevant parties to understand their rights and responsibilities, and to support the University in promoting disability inclusion, preventing discrimination, and fulfilling its duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and [public sector equality duty in Scotland](#)
11. The policy acts to identify and address inequality for the university community, including all students, including exchange and placement students and those applying to study at Strathclyde.
12. The University works in partnership with the University of Strathclyde Students' Association (USSA) to take forward its work on disability inclusion and seeks to gather relevant student feedback to inform our activities in this area.
13. This policy is intended to be applied globally across all University campuses. Where local laws or regulations impose additional or different requirements, the University will comply with all applicable local laws, and the provisions of this policy shall be interpreted and applied accordingly.

## Definitions

14. **Disability:** A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on day-to-day activities (Equality Act 2010). We recognise that some individuals may not identify as "disabled" and may prefer terms such as neurodiverse, or having a health condition.
15. **Disabled Student:** A student who meets the legal definition of disability, or who identifies as having an impairment or condition that may affect participation in academic or student life.
16. **Neurodivergence:** Neurodivergence refers to natural variations in how people think, learn, and process the world, and includes conditions like autism, ADHD, or dyslexia.
17. **Reasonable Adjustment:** A change to remove or reduce disadvantage for a disabled student.
18. **Anticipatory Duty:** The legal requirement to proactively consider and address potential barriers that disabled students might face.
19. **Substantial Disadvantage:** A disadvantage that is more than minor or trivial and places a disabled person at a significant disadvantage compared to others.
20. **Competence Standard:** An academic, medical, or other requirement that is essential to demonstrate a necessary level of competence. The duty to make reasonable adjustments does not apply to the competence standard itself but does apply to the way it is assessed - unless the method of assessment is an integral part of demonstrating that competence.
21. **Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** Proactive, inclusive curriculum and teaching design that supports all learners.
22. **Mainstreaming:** The integration of inclusive practices into standard processes, not only for individual cases.
23. **Supporting Guidance:** Linked documents that support implementation of this policy. (see Section 10).

# Policy Statement

24. In line with our legislative duties, the University of Strathclyde 2030 Strategy, and our values of being *“People-Oriented, Innovative, Collaborative, Ambitious and Bold”*, we commit to advancing inclusion for all disabled students.
25. Our approach is guided by five key principles:
  - **Equity:** Disabled students must have equitable - not just equal - opportunities.
  - **Student-Centred Practice:** Students are active partners in designing their support.
  - **Proactive and Inclusive Design:** We aim to anticipate needs from the outset.
  - **Legal Compliance:** We meet our statutory duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty.
  - **Transparency:** Clear, accessible information and support pathways will be maintained.
26. The [Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#) requires the University to:
  - Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
27. These duties apply to all aspects of the student experience, from recruitment and admissions through to graduation, including academic and non-academic services, assessments, placements, fieldwork, accommodation, and student representation.

## Disclosure and Confidentiality

28. The Equality Act 2010 makes it clear that when a student discloses a disability - formally or informally - the University is legally considered to be aware. Students can disclose at any point. Staff must treat all disclosures as official knowledge and act accordingly. This includes:
  - Verbal disclosures to personal tutors, administrative staff, or academic advisors.
  - Disclosures made informally via email, phone, or conversation.
29. Staff should refer students to the Disability & Wellbeing Service. Confidentiality will be maintained unless disclosure is necessary for safe and effective support.
30. The University will take proactive steps to identify students who may require support, including those who have not disclosed a disability, and will ensure staff are trained to recognise signs of distress or disadvantage.

## Reasonable Adjustments

31. The University is legally required to make reasonable adjustments. These may involve, but are not limited to, changes to:

- Teaching methods.
- Assessment formats.
- Timetables.
- Provision and support for assistive technologies.
- Campus accessibility.
- Group work arrangements.

32. Adjustments must be:

- Timely and tailored.
- Evidence-informed.
- Reviewed regularly.
- Non-compromising of competence standards.

33. The University will:

- Provide tailored, timely reasonable adjustments that avoid substantial disadvantage.
- Regularly review and, where feasible, anticipate the need for such adjustments (anticipatory duty).
- Engage in dialogue with students to understand both their needs and preferred learning methods.

34. We take a dual approach:

- **Anticipatory:** Building inclusive, flexible practices into the curriculum and delivery models.
- **Reactive:** Tailoring support based on disclosure and individual assessment.

35. Both approaches are essential: anticipatory inclusion benefits all students, while tailored adjustments ensure equity for individuals. In support of providing tailored adjustments, the University will proactively encourage new and existing students to disclose a disability, long term health condition, neurodivergent condition, or specific learning difference. The University recognises that reasonable adjustments may be required even without formal disclosure, where staff are reasonably aware of a student's difficulties.

## Inclusive Learning and Universal Design

36. To help meet our anticipatory duties under the [Equality Act 2010](#) and [public sector equality duty in Scotland](#) - and to deliver on our vision for a fully inclusive learning environment in line with our Disability Inclusion Action Plan and Strathclyde Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy - academic staff are expected to embed inclusive practice within teaching and assessment. This proactive approach ensures that barriers are removed before they arise. Inclusive practice may include:

- Making lecture outlines and core learning materials available in advance.
- Ensuring videos are captioned and materials provided in accessible formats.
- Structuring group work to allow flexibility and meaningful participation for all.
- Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) for new programmes and modules.
- Engaging disabled students' feedback as part of curriculum review.

37. We actively promote Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and other inclusive teaching approaches as a proactive approach to inclusion, reducing reliance on individual adjustments and supporting our legal duties to anticipate diverse needs.

# Responsibilities

38. Responsibilities are as follows:

- **All Staff:** Required to complete any future University mandated training on disability inclusion and legal obligations.
- **Senior Leaders:** Responsible for providing leadership, accountability, and sufficient resources, with oversight and governance through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC).
- **Disability & Wellbeing Service:** Provides expertise, assessment, and support planning. Provides recommended Reasonable Adjustments to academic departments to support students' needs.
- **Academic Departments:** Must engage constructively with adjustment recommendations and provide flexible, inclusive practice.

# Governance

39. The implementation and application of this Policy is overseen by Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDIC), which will receive annual reports.

40. Data relating to disclosures, reasonable adjustments, student outcomes, and complaints will be anonymised, monitored, and reviewed. Equality Impact Assessments will be conducted on major changes to curricula, assessment, or student services. The University commits to using sector developments, legal guidance and case law to continually enhance our policy and practice. We will evaluate this policy using:

- Data on student outcomes, disclosures, and adjustments
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Feedback from disabled students and staff
- Legal developments and case law
- Complaints and appeals

# Related Policies

41. This policy aligns with:

- **Strathclyde Student Mental Health & Wellbeing Strategy**
- **Disability Inclusion Action Plan**
- **Student Equality and Diversity Policy**

# Accompanying Supporting Guidance

- This Policy will be supported by a suite of guidance documents to assist staff with its implementation.