



University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow



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I am an autistic alumnus of the University, having graduated from my undergraduate degree in 2023, and played a significant role in the research and production of this webpage for disabled applicants. I was motivated to play a role in creating this page by my own lived experience, full of ups and downs, and did so with a determination to help people like me overcome the challenges facing them as well as enabling them to thrive in their difference.

I studied for my undergraduate degree between 2019 and 2023. During this time, I was not registered with the Disability and Wellbeing Service as being autistic because I didn't have the confidence to reveal my diagnosis to anyone without fear of inappropriate judgment. However, it was only after my studies, when working with a Careers Adviser on my personal development and I had gained the confidence to be more open about my diagnosis, that I realised the level of support that I had missed out on and understood the impact that this had on my studies.

When I was in seminars, my tutors were unaware that I was autistic so, as a result, unrealistic contribution expectations were placed upon me. The University was unaware of the impact stress, anxiety and mental health issues had on the completion of my assignments, so I didn't bother asking for assignment extensions under these circumstances because I assumed that not being registered with the Disability and Wellbeing Service would result in a request being rejected.

With hindsight, I now realize the impact that not utilising support services had on my studies, the depth of support that was available and the extent of what is yet possible in supporting disabled applicants and students. I was motivated to play a role in creating this website to ensure that you don't make the same mistakes that I did and are able to get the most out of your studies. My work throughout, therefore, included me asking myself the question 'what would I need?' if I were applying for a course and registering with the Disability and Wellbeing Service.

Research for this page begun with analysing our current disability information webpages and comparing other Scottish universities' information pages for disabled applicants. Looking at our own services at that time, I found that we were missing important information specified for disabled applicants. Observing the webpages of other Scottish universities provided a bird's eye view of current services available to disabled applicants across Scotland, ensuring that I would include things like modern and up-to-date inclusive language whilst excluding things like

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Daily Mail University of the Year Awards

**SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY
OF THE YEAR
2024**
Daily Mail University of the Year Awards

**EUROPEAN ENTREPRENEURIAL
UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR
2023**
Triple E Awards

excessively formal language, clunky page layouts, vague descriptions of support services or an excessive focus on visible or non-visible disabilities. After this stage, I was given the opportunity to present my work to people in the department, after which I accepted advice on things I should include or improve upon.

In creating the skeleton framework for this page, it was important to ensure that the layout was logical and accessible. The most positive, welcoming, and optimistic messages, encouraging students to disclose a disability, are placed at the top of the page. As a person who did not disclose a disability previously, I understand that it is important that you know that you are entering a safe environment where you will not be judged adversely, feel confident to disclose a disability, and understand the importance of doing so for your studies. Information about the support services available, the process of implementing adjustments and campus accessibility is as thorough as possible and the language used is inclusive, understanding, and welcoming.

It has been a privilege to play such a significant role in the creation of this webpage. I wanted to use my lived experience to enhance the scope and quality of the support provided and encourage others unsure of disclosing a disability to do so. By creating the most comprehensive and detailed page possible, I sincerely hope that this gives you the confidence to make a disclosure. Reassurance that your disclosure will be treated with understanding and respect, and that you will benefit from it. Moreover, I hope that this page has made you fully aware of the services available so that you can take advantage of them.

I'm proud that I was able to create something that will have a lasting and positive impact on disabled applicants and students at the University.

James Murray

Graduate of the University of Strathclyde, Disability in Admissions Project Assistant

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