



## **Student Disability and Academic Support policy**

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### **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Arts University Bournemouth is firmly committed to a policy of equal opportunities for all students and positively welcomes applications from people with disabilities and/or additional needs. Throughout all aspects of University life, we actively encourage and support the participation of students with disabilities.

1.2 Under disability legislation, a disability is defined as “a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

1.3 The Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 / 2005, subsequently amended by the Equality Act 2010, make it unlawful to discriminate against a disabled person in relation to the provision of education and related services.

1.4 This policy supports the University in ensuring compliance with the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B4: Student support, learning resources and careers education, information and guidance.

1.5 The Arts University Bournemouth recognises that all students may require support with their learning at any time in their academic career, and that an ethos based on equality and inclusion will encourage students to fulfil their intellectual and artistic potential. However, it is also recognised that students with a specific learning difficulty or other disability may have additional learning needs and require a higher level of individual support in order not to be disadvantaged by their disability.

### **2. Disclosing a disability**

2.1 Students are encouraged to disclose all disabilities, however mild or severe, at the time of their application to the Arts University Bournemouth. Students who disclose will be given opportunities to discuss their individual needs with specialist staff within Student Services.

2.2 All new students are invited to disclose any disability at the start of their course. In addition, students are encouraged to disclose at any point during their studies, by contacting Student Services.

2.3 Students who disclose a disability will be asked to provide evidence from a relevant medical specialist, educational psychologist or specialist assessor to support their disclosure. Students may choose which members of AUB staff are informed of their disability but should recognise that, if they choose not to share information with some staff, the provision of any reasonable adjustments may be affected.

2.4 All enquiries are handled discreetly and confidentially; AUB operates under the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010 & Data Protection Act 1998. Only in exceptional circumstances, when direct action needs to be taken in order to protect a student's health and welfare and/or that of others, will it not be possible to maintain confidentiality. However, if any such course of action were deemed to be necessary, the student would be informed of this intention.

### **3. Admission arrangements**

3.1 Before making an application to the Arts University Bournemouth students are encouraged to seek assistance in choosing an appropriate programme of study based on their aspirations, skills and needs by contacting the relevant course staff and Student Services for advice.

3.2 All applications are considered impartially; disclosure of a disability does not disadvantage students in any way.

3.3 In addition to any selection interview for a chosen course of study, students may be invited to meet with one of our specialist support staff, in order to identify individual needs and any support required.

3.4 It is recommended that disabled students contact AUB at the earliest opportunity in order for the appropriate arrangements to be made prior to the start of the course. If AUB is unable to provide the support required, students will be supported to identify an alternative provider wherever possible.

### **4. Physical access to the Arts University Bournemouth**

4.1 While the campus is wheelchair accessible, with automatic doors, lifts and toilets all suitable for wheelchair users, access to certain studios and departments may be limited. In instances where access is limited, AUB will endeavour to arrange for classes and tutorials to be undertaken within accessible spaces wherever possible.

4.2 Free priority parking is available for students with mobility difficulties. Student Services are able to advise on applications. Please note that provision of a car parking pass does not guarantee a parking space.

4.3 The atmosphere within some workshop areas may aggravate asthma or breathing conditions. Students who experience these conditions should discuss any health implications with their doctor prior to being exposed to these hazards.

4.4 The AUB campus is fitted with a deaf alert fire alarm system, which provides free of charge vibrating pagers to students with hearing impairments.

4.5 AUB Halls of Residence has accessible rooms suitable for wheelchair users or students with mobility or hearing difficulties.

### **5. Identification of additional learning needs**

5.1 AUB offers all students an initial screening service to identify their preferred learning style and to identify possible risk of specific learning difficulties (such as dyslexia).

5.2 Students whose initial screening results suggest a possible risk of specific learning difficulties are invited to undergo further tests to gain more detailed information regarding the student's learning profile, and their individual strengths and weaknesses.

5.3 UK Higher Education students whose test results suggest that they are most at risk of specific learning difficulties may be referred for a full diagnostic assessment with a specialist assessor. The cost of this diagnostic assessment will be met by the University, but a cancellation charge may be levied for students who fail to attend their assessment.

5.4 Diagnostic tests for specific learning difficulties may not provide an accurate diagnosis in students for whom English is a second language. Therefore, International students may not be referred for a diagnostic assessment if screening suggests that they are at risk of a specific learning difficulty, and any referral is at the discretion of Student Services. Students may provide evidence of a diagnosis of specific learning difficulties conducted in their first language, if appropriate, but are requested to arrange translation of any document presented.

5.5 The University is not obliged to provide or fund educational psychologist's assessments, and referral for such assessment is at the discretion of Student Services.

5.6 The University utilises the services of independent, professionally qualified educational psychologists and specialist assessors. In the event that a student does not agree with the professional diagnosis of the psychologist or assessor, or if the diagnosis contradicts previous reports, the University will not fund further assessments. The University cannot comment upon the accuracy of any previous diagnostic report, and students should note that the existence of a previous report does not guarantee a positive diagnosis.

## **6. Academic Support within Student Services**

6.1 The Academic Support Service has specialist teachers who are able to offer individual or group support to students with Specific Learning Difficulties.

6.2 Student Services can support eligible Higher Education students in applying for the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) which can contribute to the costs of equipment and/or specialist software, and personal assistance.

6.3 AUB will endeavour, but is not obliged, to provide any non-medical helper or technical support, or reasonable adjustments, recommended in DSA needs assessment reports. Such support may include (but is not limited to) the provision of a note taker, mentor, communication support worker, or technical support worker, and will only be implemented with the approval of Student Services.

6.4 The Academic Support service is able to loan a limited number of laptop computers and / or digital voice recorders to disabled students. Please note that the use of recorders is governed by paragraph 7.3, below.

6.5 All students are able to access support from the Academic Support service on a drop-in basis, and can make use of Claro text-to-speech and Inspiration mind mapping software on student computers on the AUB campus.

## **7. Reasonable Adjustments**

7.1 The University has a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled students are not disadvantaged as a result of any disability or impairment. Students are not expected to suggest which reasonable adjustments should be made, but the responsibility for identifying the *need* for a reasonable adjustment lies with the student.

7.2 All courses require students to undertake a range of learning, teaching and assessment methods. Students who consider that the nature of their disability means that they would be disadvantaged by a particular form of learning, teaching or assessment, should discuss this with their course lecturer and Student Services. Reasonable adjustments are agreed on an individual basis; there are no automatic extensions to deadlines, or other universal adjustment, for disabled or dyslexic students.

7.3 Students who wish to make use of recording equipment to assist with note taking are reminded that the content of a lecture or other taught session remains the intellectual property of the person delivering it, and the recording must be used only for a disabled student's personal study. Any recording must not be shared or reproduced (other than for transcription purposes), broadcast, published or misused in anyway. Students should seek permission from those who are being recorded and confirm upon request how any recordings will be stored and deleted.

7.4 AUB's complaints, appeals and disciplinary procedures apply equally to all students. If, due to the nature of their disability, students require additional support to attend or prepare for any meetings relating to complaints, appeals or disciplinary issues, this will be provided. Students should notify the Head of Student Services, who will ensure that any necessary support is arranged.

## **8. Student entitlement and responsibility**

### 8.1 Students have the right to:

- Choose not to participate in any screening or diagnostic tests;
- Discuss the outcome of any screening or diagnostic tests with specialist staff within Student Services
- Self-refer to an independent educational psychologist outside of AUB (Student Services can provide contact details if required). In this case, the cost of any diagnostic assessment cannot be met by AUB;
- Apply for the DSA independently (direct through Student Finance England) if preferred; students are not obliged to disclose this to AUB;
- Arrange their DSA needs assessment independently, and select to attend any DSA Assessment Centre approved by the Disabled Students' Allowance Quality Audit Group (DSA-QAG);
- Employ their own non-medical helper(s), in line with DSA regulations, as long as the support to be provided is approved by Student Services;
- Withhold information relating to their disability from academic or other staff at AUB. However, it should be noted that this will necessarily limit the provision of reasonable adjustments.

### 8.2 Students have a responsibility to:

- Ask for advice, guidance or support with any disability-related needs in a timely fashion;
- Attend any appointment(s), or give a minimum of 24 hours' notice of cancellation. If less than 48 hours' cancellation is received for educational psychologist's or specialist assessor's appointments or DSA needs assessments, AUB reserves the right to charge the student a cancellation fee;
- Book and attend promptly any individual appointments or tutorials required;
- Conduct any agreed follow-up actions resulting from appointments or tutorials.

The Arts University Bournemouth is committed to the provision of a working and learning environment founded on dignity, respect and equity where unfair discrimination of any kind is treated with the utmost seriousness. It has developed and implemented an Equalities Strategy and Action Plan to guide its work in this area. All the University's policies and practices are designed to meet the principles of dignity, respect and fairness, and take account of the commitments set out in the Equalities Strategy.

This policy has been subject to an equality analysis to ensure consideration with regard to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

Date of last EA review: December 2014

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