

# Adjustments and support for students with mental health conditions

Support for students who have a mental health condition, such as depression, anxiety disorder, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, eating disorders, Bi-Polar Disorder or Schizophrenia

This document aims to inform you of the support and adjustments that the University can provide, as well as support that should be sourced from other organisations/agencies. To ensure success at university, it is important that you assess and plan for the support you will require, while also communicating your needs to us.

## From your academic school or department

### Automatic/standard adjustments

- Permission to record lectures for your own use subject to the University's [recording policy](#)
- Class handouts will be available at least 48 hours in advance (where possible) for you to download from [Blackboard](#) (the University's Virtual Learning Environment)
- As much advance notice as possible about group work, presentations or irregular teaching sessions (e.g. field trips or practical sessions which are not a regular feature of the course)
- Reading lists will be available before the module begins via the University's online reading list system [Talis Aspire](#)
- Clear marking criteria

### Adjustments which may be available on request

We recommend you meet with a Disability Adviser to determine which further adjustments you could qualify for and need. Unless they conflict with course requirements, adjustments in the following areas may be considered where appropriate:

- Presentations. For example, delivering to a smaller group, just the tutor, via video, marking on content only or exceptionally written presentation only with additional notes or alternative assessment
- Group work. For example, advanced notice or additional discussion with tutor. In exceptional circumstances, an alternative assessment may be available

- Field trips, or practical sessions. For example, advance notice and discussion of what may be involved and what your needs are
- Lab practicals - clear written notes on what is expected
- Vivas. For example, being asked one question at a time and allowed extra time to answer
- Dissertations. For example, being given feedback or actions in writing
- Exemption from being asked to read aloud if needed and requested
- In conjunction with the Disability Advisory Service, help, advice and liaison with compulsory work placement providers regarding your disability-related needs

## **From the Disability Advisory Service (DAS)**

We can meet with you individually to discuss what support would be helpful to you. We can offer:

- Exam provisions may be agreed by DAS and the Examinations Office, where appropriate. These will vary but are likely to include extra time. Rest breaks or use of a PC may also be agreed where appropriate
- Advice on applying for the Disabled Students Allowances
- An opportunity to attend our Induction Day in the summer before you arrive. This will offer the chance to meet other new students, give further advice on university life, and the opportunity to meet and discuss your needs individually with a Disability Adviser
- A Social Mentor or orientation buddy to help you integrate into university life, where appropriate. This is normally a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>-year undergraduate, who can meet with you during Welcome Week and attend key events or help you to join clubs and societies
- An Academic Mentor, where appropriate, to help you with planning your academic work and time management, liaising with the department where necessary. This is usually a post-graduate student
- Liaison with your department, with your consent, to help them understand what you find helpful. When you meet with your Disability Adviser, an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) can be completed
- Support in applying for parking permits where appropriate
- Access to a Sonocent licence to aid notetaking, where appropriate
- Advice on the application process to bring a therapy animal onto campus. Please see our [Assistance and Therapy Animals Policy](#) for further information

## **Accommodation**

Student halls of residence offer opportunities for a communal living experience. Students have their own study bedroom and share a kitchen and bathroom with between 6 – 12

other students. Alternatively, you can apply for a room with your own en-suite shower room.

Living in halls can be a great way to meet other students, but different students will have different views on acceptable noise levels, cleanliness and sharing, tolerance and consideration are key to harmonious communal living. You can find more information about individual halls on our [accommodation pages](#).

- If you have specific accommodation needs relating to your disability, please explain these on your application for halls to ensure your disability-related needs are prioritised. For example, you may request a hall close to the centre of campus, a ground floor room, a room on a higher floor, an en-suite room, a hall with fewer people sharing a kitchen or bathroom, or a particular type of hall
- Once you have applied, your application for halls in year 1 will be prioritised if you need to live in halls for a reason related to a disability or medical condition. This does not necessarily guarantee you a place but does give you priority over other students
- An Accommodation Contribution may be payable where you have specific accommodation needs in halls of residence and these incur an additional cost. Check the [Accommodation Contribution eligibility](#) pages for qualification criteria, the rate of contribution and how to apply
- Should you wish to explore alternatives to halls, you can see information on the [Students' Union Advice pages](#)

## **Additional support you can apply for**

### **Disabled Students Allowances from your funding body**

To ensure success on your course we recommend you apply for the [Disabled Students Allowances](#) (DSA). Applicants need to have been resident in the UK for 5 years before starting their studies. Successful applicants may be eligible for the following support:

- 1-1 regular support from a Specialist Mentor who has professional experience of mental health and can help you develop coping strategies for university
- Study Skills sessions (often weekly). Personal, tailored support to help with time management, essay writing skills, and reading and exam preparation strategies
- Help towards the cost of a laptop computer
- Assistive technology (e.g. digital voice recorder or specialist software for dictation or notetaking)

If you apply for DSA, your funding body will give you instructions on how to book a needs assessment, where an independent assessor will discuss your needs with you, determining your individual package of support. Most students with medically recognised mental health conditions will receive valuable support if they apply.

DSA applications take a few months to process, so we recommend you apply around the Easter before you arrive. Check the [DSA](#) link for more details.

## Non-UK students

If you are an EU or international student, we recommend you check with your sponsor or student finance authority in advance, as they should be funding additional support needed.

Self-funded students who may need additional support should provide evidence and discuss any needs in advance with the [Disability Advisory Service](#). A Disability Adviser will assess your needs and discuss with you how these can be addressed. It is important to note that adjustments beyond the 'automatic/standard adjustments' listed above can take some time to put in place, so early conversation with the Disability Advisory Service is essential.

## From other University services

As a student at The University of Reading, you will also have access to the following support services and facilities during your studies:

- [Welfare Team](#) to help you with any personal difficulties during your time at University
- [Counselling and Wellbeing Team](#) to help with mental health advice
- [Support Centre](#) - the first port of call for any queries regarding your studies
- [Library Support](#) - both online, and via Academic Liaison Librarians
- [Students Union](#) provide a range of services including advice and student activities
- [Student Financial Support](#) for help with budgeting and unexpected financial hardship
- [Life Tools workshops](#) to ease your transition into university and enhance your university experience

## Things to do now

1. Apply for [Disabled Students Allowances](#) (DSA) if you are a UK student. Speak to your sponsor or student finance authority to see what support is available if you are an international student.
2. When we write to you (usually the June before you arrive), please complete our online registration form and send a doctor's letter confirming your mental health condition. Support is subject to the provision of satisfactory medical evidence. Please provide this in good time to ensure your adjustments are in place for the beginning of term and allow additional time if you need to get your assessment translated.

**Please note:** Unexpected changes to services may be necessary due to the challenges of the Coronavirus and the need to reduce risks to students and staff. However, the Disability Advisory Service will always continue to deliver key services remotely where possible.