

# Adjustments and support for wheelchair users and students with mobility conditions

Support for students who have mobility conditions, including wheelchair users, those who use other mobility aids and those with restricted mobility who do not use mobility aids.

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 need, while also communicating your needs to us.

## Additional support to apply for

### Disabled Students Allowances from your funding body

To ensure access and 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:

- Ergonomic assessment for equipment or furniture needed to study. For example, ergonomic chair, mouse and keyboard
- Help towards the cost of a light laptop
- Help towards increased travel costs (e.g. the cost of taxis for placements where necessary)
- 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 mobility-related disabilities 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.

## **Personal care or assistance**

If you require daily personal care or assistance to live independently, you will need to ensure that funding and arrangements are in place for this in advance of coming to university. This could include help getting around, with washing, getting dressed, using the toilet, transferring to your wheelchair or bed, help with eating or drinking and other support which relates to daily living, rather than study related support.

- UK students should contact their local Social Services team as early as possible to discuss what level of care or support they need and what will be funded and provided. It is likely an assessment of your care needs will be carried out, which can take 6-12 months to complete. Social Services generally agree Direct Payments, so you will also need time to recruit your assistants once you know the level of support that has been agreed
- International students also need to ensure they have made adequate provision for their personal care before arriving at university, but will not be able to access support through Social Services. Please seek advice on your support needs and funding for personal care in your home country before you arrive

## **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)
- Access to material in different formats via [Blackboard](#)
- 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:

- Field trips or practical sessions. For example, advance notice and discussion of what may be involved and what your accessibility needs are
- Lab practicals. For example, additional practical assistance in lab work, in consultation with the Disability Advisory Service
- 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 computer or scribe 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 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 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
- Assistance through Central Timetabling, to reduce travel time across a large campus, as far as is possible

## Accommodation

Student halls of residence offer opportunities for a communal living experience. There are several halls of residence; some situated on the edges of the campus; others are off-campus. Students have their own study bedroom and share a kitchen with between 6 – 12 other students. You may also share a bathroom with 6 – 10 other students, alternatively you can apply for a room with an en-suite shower room.

Find more information about individual halls on our [accommodation web pages](#).

- A range of adapted rooms are available in University halls. Please contact DAS in advance to discuss your needs and if possible, visit our campus and our rooms to get an idea of which best suit your needs. We can reimburse train, bus or petrol costs for you (and where appropriate, a carer or assistant) within the UK if a further visit is needed
- If you have further 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, an en-suite room, a walk in/wheel in shower or a particular type of hall. Please mention on your halls application if you need an additional room for a live-in carer. You will need to give information about costs for carers rooms to whoever is funding your personal assistance
- Once you have applied for halls, DAS may be able to support your halls application to be prioritised in your first year, we can also help support your application to return to halls in your second and third years, where this is needed for disability-related reasons
- 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](#)

## 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
- [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 (or speak to your sponsor or student finance authority to see what support is available if you are an international student).
2. Apply to your home social services if you may need personal care support or help with daily living tasks while at university. International students should speak to their home funding body.
3. When we write to you (usually the June before you arrive), please complete our online registration form and upload a doctor's letter confirming your mobility difficulties. 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. Support is subject to the provision of satisfactory medical evidence.
4. Please ensure you let us know immediately if any of the following apply:
  - a. You have severe allergies and are at risk of anaphylaxis
  - a. You carry an EpiPen for any reason
  - b. You have a medical alert bracelet, necklace or ID
  - c. You have epilepsy

Your wellbeing and safety is our primary concern. A first response card would be completed on the student portal for students with these medical conditions, this information would be available to Hall Wardens and Security staff.

**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.