

Disability Support Services

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to describe the main procedures associated with the provision of services and activities of the Disability Support Services unit.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Disability Services Manager (DSM) has overall responsibility for this process. All staff, including Student Support Officers (SSOs), Alternative Format Officer (AFO), Senior Occupational Therapists (SOTs) and Senior Administrator (SA), are responsible for implementing the associated procedures.

PROCEDURE

Disability Services provides various services and information to pre-entry applicants with a disability and post-entry students with a disability, including traditional-aged students, mature students, and postgraduate students (part-time and full-time). Disability Services also provides Information and guidance to academic and administrative staff in the University concerning the requirements of Students with Disabilities.

The primary procedures associated with Disability Support Services are:

- A. DARE (Disability Access Route to Education)
- B. UxL summer school
- C. Student Need Assessments
- D. Information processing intake and output (including medical documentation, Learning educational needs summary, exam accommodations, repeat exams)
- E. Student Supports provided by external partners (Note taking services, PA, ISL, transport)
- F. Specialised student supports (ULEAD, Individual support sessions, Group support sessions)
- G. Funding application (ESF)

A. DARE

Pre-entry Information, including DARE (Disability Access Route to Education) SSOs are responsible for most of the pre entry work carried out. This includes organising information sessions, linking in with schools, external agencies, guidance counsellors and families to provide information and resources regarding the Disability Access Route to Education. This also includes sitting on committees and contributing to the development of the DARE route. The Disability Support Services is also responsible for dealing with all DARE applicant queries nationally.

B. UxL summer school

The UxL summer school provides a two day on campus experience to students who may find the transition to university difficult. The summer school provides an on campus experience that allows students to experience some key aspects of college life. Preparation begins in January when schools and local support services are contacted and information is provided. Students provided an expression of interest form and asked to provide some information about themselves. The summer school runs two groups every year and students are on campus for two days per session. Topics covered include; student responsibility, organisation and time management for college students, social life, study skills and self advocacy.

C. Information processing

a. Medical Documentation

Disability Services processes significant amounts of sensitive documentation. Medical documentation is required in order to register with Disability services. Documentation can be provided by the CAO from DARE applicants. This is provided once a student accepts their place at UL. Students can also self-identify through the student portal and provide their medical documentation to the office. This needs to be checked and processed to ensure it meets the documentation requirements. It is then uploaded to Docuware and a profile is created on Docuware for each student. This is inline with the university's data retention policy.

b. Lens reports

Every student who registers with the office and requires reasonable accommodations is provided with a LENS report. This document is created following the needs assessment and outlines the reasonable accommodations that are in place for the student. This information is provided to both the student and academic staff. This is provided via a link and students and staff must log in using their UL user name and password.

c. Exam reports

Exam accommodations are put in place following the needs assessment. SA must compile and populate an exam file by week 7 of the semester. This file is then sent to the exam office within academic register who assign rooms and invigilators for students. This file is also provided to the EATC unit so they can begin preparation for assistive technology requirements. Once the exam office have completed their work this information is uploaded and a link is made available to students to view their exam accommodations.

D. Needs assessments

Every student who registered with DSS is sent an invitation to attend a needs assessment. This is a meeting with the student and the SSOs, AFO, DSM or OT to determine reasonable accommodations and to create a support plan. This meeting usually happens at the beginning of semester however can happen later if a student decides to register with the service late. Prior to the meeting the staff member will read and check medical documentation to ensure it is correct. Each student is sent a link to book either an online or in person meeting at a time that suits them. Each meeting is usually about 30 minutes in length. Following this the student will receive a follow up email outlining what has been discussed and once the data is inputted to the SIT system they will receive the official lens report. This is the first set in developing a support plan for each student.

Student supports provided by external partners (AFO,SA)

a. Note-takers (AFO)

During initial assessments with the DSS students will be identified as needing a note-taker for their modules. These ID numbers and module codes will be sent to the AFO. Emails are sent to module class and responses received. Successful note-takers take notes for the specified modules, these notes are emailed to the Note taking service email. Notes are uploaded to the DSS Brightspace page where students can access\download them

b. Personal assistance service (SA)

During the needs assessment the need for a PA is determined and contact is made with the tendered service provider. This will usually happen well advance of semester starting. The service provider will arrange a suitable candidate and they will engage with the student and DSS staff. A student timetable is provided and a schedule of work is put in place.

c. ISL (SA)

During the needs assessment the need for ISL is determined and contact is made with the tendered service provider. This will usually happen well advance of semester starting. The service provider will arrange a suitable candidate and they will engage with the student and DSS staff. A student timetable is provided and a schedule or work is put in place. The academic department is also included so they are aware of the interpreter will be in place during the semester.

d. Transportation (SA)

During the needs assessment the need for transport is determined and contact is made with the tendered service provider. This can be either our on campus bus service or our taxi service. This will usually happen well advance of semester starting. The service provider will arrange a suitable candidate and they will engage with the student and DSS staff. A student timetable is provided and a schedule will be put in place.

E. Specialised Student support (DSM, SSOs, SOTs)

Requirement for specialised student support identified before needs assessment or at needs assessment with students. Disability Services provides a tired model of support offering both group support sessions and one to one supports. Supports include Occupational Therapy based support, support around academic writing, social supports, support with self awareness, group work, presentations, study skills, adhd support and time management and organisation. Students are tracked and assigned to a support person following the needs assessment. If a student requires some more informal support they can avail of what we call a college coach this is a person employed by DS who may be a postgraduate student and who can meet with the student one or twice a week.

F. ESF funding (SOA)

The purpose of the Fund for Students with Disabilities is to provide resources to colleges of further and higher education to deliver critical services, reasonable accommodations and supports for learners with disabilities on full-time courses. The Fund aims to support the participating learner's personal, educational and professional development and contribute to achieving their full potential. The fund has extremely specific reporting mechanisms and requires the inputting of a significant amount of data. The SA is responsible for the reporting on this fund and will ensure information from a gresso is in line with what is being report. The SA needs to liaise with the Finance office, EATC,

external agencies and the DSM to ensure information is correct and accurate. Once agreement is reached on the final document the return is sent to the HEA.

DOCUMENTATION

Where relevant, list documents to be used with this process (e.g. work instructions) and provide hyperlinks to each.

RECORDS

Records are held by (name of unit) for the period defined by individual processes. All members of staff operate in accordance with the [University's Records Management and Retention Policy](#). Any personal data that is used as part of this process is processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) / Data Protection Acts 1988-2018 and [the University of Limerick Data Protection Policy](#).

PROCESS VERIFICATION

Identify how the effectiveness of the process is evaluated (e.g. Self/QMS audits). List any metrics/ key performance indicators (KPIs) related to the process.

REVISION HISTORY

Revision No.	Date	Approved by:	Details of Change	Process Owner
1			Initial Release	
2	09/08/2023	DSS Officer		DSS Officer