

Disabled Students' Survival Guide

Important information – please read.

Welcome to Staffordshire University.

Unless you've been in Higher Education before, you're probably not sure of what to expect at University as a disabled person. Well, don't worry; you're not on your own. There are around 1500 disabled students at the University doing courses across every subject area and at all levels.

We want you to succeed and achieve the very best that you can. To do that, we have to work together. Disabled students have the potential to do extremely well at the University and we have many examples of students who have succeeded and moved into rewarding careers, often returning to the University to undertake further study, supported by their employers. Those that do best are the students who make the most of the support on offer.

To achieve your potential, you must recognise the importance of working with the University in partnership to ensure that you are properly supported throughout your studies. You are at the heart of your support, your involvement is critical to your success.

In practice, this means the following. You should:

- Disclose your disability early and, where appropriate, apply for Disabled Students' Allowances. The sooner we know about your individual needs, the sooner we can work with you to arrange support.
- Acknowledge your responsibility. We can't support you properly if you aren't prepared to play your part. Our support partnership only works well when we both work together. Support is not a one-way process and requires all sides to be fully involved.
- Maintain a dialogue. Your support needs may well change as you move through your course. You have to tell us when that happens in order that we can make the necessary adjustments.
- Engage with your support. We know that sometimes it is difficult to be seen to be supported. It's important, however, for you to know that, where support is recommended, you will not achieve as well as you might if you don't take it up. This view is fully supported by research.

What support can I expect?

The University can support you in a number of ways if you are disabled and will always try to ensure that your needs are met in a way that suits you best. The following is a list of your main sources of support that you may wish to use and, of course, we'll work with you to help you decide which will work best for you:

Student Enabling Centre

Within the Student Enabling Centre are specialist staff that can help you to organise funding for your support and arrange the allocation of any support staff you may need. They will also help you to review the progress you are making with your support and negotiate any changes that may be necessary as your course progresses.

Many disabled students are entitled to Disabled Students' Allowances that help to fund the support you might need on your course.

Disabled Students' Allowances will help to pay for any technological or human support you may need. In order to access these funds you first need to provide evidence of your disability, normally a note from your Doctor or a current Psychologist's report will suffice. You'll then be given the opportunity to have your needs assessed independently in a specialist assessment. You don't have to worry here, we're only interested in how we can support you; you won't be academically assessed.

One thing that you must be aware of is that this is a lengthy process and it is vitally important that you start it as soon as possible, preferably before your course starts, in order to make sure that your full support package is implemented quickly.

If you aren't eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances, for example, if you are an International Student or your course isn't eligible, we still may be able to help you. You must contact the Student Enabling Centre as quickly as possible to see what we may be able to provide.

If you require support with your daily living needs, this remains the responsibility of your home Social Services Department. It is extremely important to let your Social Services Department know that you are coming to University and the changes this may make to your support. Advisors in the Student Enabling Centre can help you with this and we strongly advise that you take advantage of this support as the University is not obliged to provide you with support that is the responsibility of another agency.

For further information on how the Student Enabling Centre may be able to help with support and for full details on what to expect from the Centre, please visit our webpages at http://www.staffs.ac.uk/courses_and_study/disabled_students/ or contact us directly:

Student Enabling Centre Stoke Campus
Cadman Courtyard
College Road
Stoke on Trent
ST4 2DE
Tel: 01782 294977
e-mail: disability@staffs.ac.uk

Student Enabling Centre Stafford Campus
One Stop Shop
D001, Beacon Building
Stafford Campus
Tel: 01785 353302
e-mail: disability@staffs.ac.uk

Students at Shrewsbury Campus can make an appointment to be seen at Shrewsbury by using any of the contact details above.

Faculty/School Disability Coordinators.

Each Faculty and School within the University has a dedicated member of academic staff who acts as the Disability Coordinator for the Faculty or School. The role of the Disability Coordinator is to help you with issues relating to the academic side of your course or any issues directly connected to your Faculty or School. They are your point of first contact within your Faculty/School.

Your contacts are as follows:

Science - Dave Skingsley
S518 Mellor Building
Tel: 01782 295757
e-mail: d.r.skingsley@staffs.ac.uk

Health- Rosemary Shepherd
Royal Shrewsbury Hospital
Tel: 01743 261136
e-mail: r.p.shepherd@staffs.ac.uk

Law – Elizabeth Gillow
LW116, Law Building
Tel: 01782 294055
e-mail: eag2@staffs.ac.uk

Computing, Engineering and Technology – Robert Round
K223 Octagon Building
Tel: 01785 353470
e-mail: r.round@staffs.ac.uk

Business – Judi Rimmer
B260 Brindley Building
Tel: 01782 294207
e-mail: j.r.rimmer@staffs.ac.uk

Arts, Media and Design – Liz Allen
L511 Flaxman
Tel: 01782 294416
e-mail: e.j.allen@staffs.ac.uk

If you have any academic or Faculty/School related issues then please don't hesitate to contact your Coordinator.

Student Guidance Officers/Faculty Student Guidance Advisors

The University has Student Guidance Officers and, in addition, each Faculty and School has Student Guidance Advisors. Their role is not disability specific but they can, and do, support disabled students with more general issues.

The Student Guidance Officers can help you with a wide range of educational issues as well as offering specialist information and support.

Alternatively, you can talk to a Faculty Student Guidance Advisor. They are based within each Faculty and provide similar advice, guidance and information to that of the Officers.

A drop-in service is available for initial advice. If you have a more in-depth issue to discuss, then please contact either the Student Guidance Officer or the Faculty Student Guidance Advisor directly to book an appointment.

Contact Details: Student Guidance Officers

Student Guidance Officer - Stoke

Nicola Laurie

The Information Centre, First Floor Flaxman Building, College Road

Tel: 01782 292768

e-mail: n.j.laurie@staffs.ac.uk

Contact Details: Faculty Student Guidance Advisors

Faculty of Arts, Media and Design

Rachel Thompson

L526 Flaxman Building, College Road, Stoke

Tel: 01782 294715

e-mail: r.thompson@staffs.ac.uk

Business School

Lesley Mountford

B239 Brindley Building, Leek Road, Stoke

Tel: 01782 294073
Octagon Building, Beaconside, Stafford
Tel: 01785 353556 (by appointment)
e-mail: l.s.mountford@staffs.ac.uk

Faculty of Computing, Engineering and Technology
Assistant Faculty Student Guidance Advisor
tbc

Faculty of Computing, Engineering and Technology
Faculty Student Advisor
Janice Kalisz
K232 Octagon Building, Beaconside, Stafford
Tel: 01785 353345
e-mail: j.c.kalisz@staffs.ac.uk

Faculty of Health
Andrea Alker
BL010 Blackheath Lane, Stafford
(Appointments available at Stoke and Shrewsbury)
Tel: 01785 353795
m: 07824694589
e-mail: andrea.alker@staffs.ac.uk

Faculty of Health
Amanda Holt
BL010 Blackheath Lane, Stafford
(Appointments available at Stoke and Shrewsbury)
Tel: 01785 353795
m: 07767433943
e-mail: amanda.holt@staffs.ac.uk

Law School
Lisa Benson
LW106 Law Building, Leek Road, Stoke
Tel: 01782 294684
e-mail: l.j.benson@staffs.ac.uk

Faculty of Sciences
Jean Simpson
S031 Ground Floor Mellor Building, College Road, Stoke
Tel: 01782 294691
e-mail: j.simpson@staffs.ac.uk

Contacts within Information Services

We have a number of staff who can give tours of the buildings or help with practical aspect of using the buildings and access to equipment.

Law Library

Gill Round

Customer Services Library Supervisor

Tel: 01782 294307

e-mail: g.m.round@staffs.ac.uk

Nelson Library and Octagon Building

Lynda Hawkins

Customer Services and Operations Manager

Tel: 01785 353354

e-mail: l.hawkins@staffs.ac.uk

Thompson Library and Brindley Information Services IT Labs

Nicky Adams

Customer Services and Operations Manager

Tel: 01782 294553

e-mail: n.adams@staffs.ac.uk

For help with assistive software or technical help with equipment please contact

Karl Gimlett

IT & Learning Technology Officer

Tel: 01782 294452

e-mail: kgimlett@staffs.ac.uk

If you need assistance with your research, using library resources or need to discuss your support agreement or you are having difficulties you should contact your Subject Librarian.

Arts, Media and Design Subject Librarians

If you need assistance with your research, using library resources or you are having difficulties finding Arts Media and Design related information, please contact:

Debbie Roberts
Subject and Learning Support librarian
College Road
Stoke Campus
Tel: 01782 294809
e-mail: d.e.roberts1@staffs.ac.uk

Phillipa Calvert
Subject and Learning Support librarian
Thompson Library, College Road
Stoke Campus
Tel: 01782 294809
e-mail: p.c.billington@staffs.ac.uk

Business and Law Subject Librarians

If you need assistance with your research, using library resources or you are having difficulties finding Business and Law related information, please contact:

Alison Pope
Subject and Learning Support librarian
Leek Road
Stoke campus
Tel: 01782 294317
e-mail: a.j.pope@staffs.ac.uk

Geoff Walton
Subject and Learning Support librarian
Cadman Building
Stoke Campus
Tel: 01782 294448
e-mail: g.l.walton@staffs.ac.uk

Shaun Coates
Subject and Learning Support librarian
Nelson Library
Stafford Campus
Tel: 01785 353215
e-mail: s.coates@staffs.ac.uk

Computing, Engineering And Technology Subject Librarians

If you need assistance with your research, using library resources or you are having difficulties finding Computing, Engineering and Technology related information, please contact:

Sarah Hall
Subject and Learning Support librarian
Nelson Library, Stafford campus
Tel: 01785 353353
e-mail: s.d.hall@staffs.ac.uk

Cathryn Ashwood
Subject and Learning Support librarian
Nelson Library, Stafford campus
Tel: 01785 353392
e-mail: cathryn.ashwood@staffs.ac.uk

Health Subject Librarians

If you need assistance with your research, using library resources or you are having difficulties finding Health related information, please contact:

Pam Dunning
Subject and Learning Support librarian
Stafford Campus
Tel: 01785 353606
e-mail: p.dunning@staffs.ac.uk

Kay Coverdale
Subject and Learning Support librarian
Stafford Campus

Tel: 01785 353215
e-mail: k.m.coverdale@staffs.ac.uk

Shirley Kennedy
Subject and Learning Support librarian
Tel: 01743 261440
e-mail: s.kennedy@staffs.ac.uk

Sciences Subject Librarians

If you need assistance with your research, using library resources or you are having difficulties finding Sciences related information, please contact:

Andrea Hatton
Subject and Learning Support librarian
College Road
Stoke Campus
Tel: 01782 294448
e-mail: a.hatton@staffs.ac.uk

Kathleen Morgan
Subject and Learning Support librarian
Thompson Library, College Road
Stoke Campus
Tel: 01782 294770
e-mail: k.morgan@staffs.ac.uk

Students' Union

The Students' Union is able to offer a wide range of services to all students and can provide specific support to disabled students when necessary. Their specific pages for disabled students can be found at:

<http://www.staffsunion.com/advice/help/swd/>

This is also where they provide an explanation of their use of the description, "Students with Disabilities" as opposed to the University's use of the term "Disabled Students".

Disabled Students' Engagement Group

We hope by now that you will be assured that the University is committed to providing the very best support possible. We have stressed throughout this handbook that we view our relationship with disabled students as a partnership. With this in mind, we would like to invite you to become a member of the Disabled Students' Engagement Group.

The group was established in 2009 with the support of the Students' Union and following the University's participation in a national project to further the involvement of disabled students in higher education.

To date, the group has had sixteen members from across the University and including students on distance learning programmes. The main involvement of the group so far has been providing advice, guidance and suggestions to the development team for the new University Quarter, looking extensively at both the current and future University Estates. We have now agreed that the group will meet quarterly to monitor progress in achieving a truly accessible environment across the University.

This is a great way of demonstrating your commitment and skills development on your CV and will add to your employability in an increasingly difficult graduate employment market.

We are now looking to extend both the membership and role of the group and, if you are interested, would welcome your involvement. To do this, please contact Dave Allman, Head of Student Enabling Centre, on 01782 294982 or by e-mail at dave.allman@staffs.ac.uk

Staffs Uni Community Organic Garden

This Garden was established in 2007 primarily to support the mental wellbeing of students and staff with a specific focus on students experiencing mental health issues.

Just yards from the Leek Road site, the Garden is a cooperative, not for profit venture that shares its produce between those who join in as volunteers.

We meet every Sunday from 10-5 and on Tuesday and Thursday evenings in the Spring and Summer from 5-7. Participation is up to you; you can come as often or as little as you like.

We grow an extensive range of organic fruit and vegetables which are free to volunteers and, from September 2010, we are hoping to start a regular cooking session on Sundays. This will be a good way to develop your cooking skills if you aren't used to cooking for yourself.

This is a great opportunity for you to meet new people, socialise, get fit and improve your green credentials simply by joining in. It costs nothing and is great fun.

For further information, contact Dave Allman on 01782 294982 or by e-mail at dave.allman@staffs.ac.uk

In conclusion –

Please use this handbook to help you decide how to maximise your potential as a disabled student at Staffordshire University and remember that we are here to support you when things are difficult, providing you are prepared to work with us.

Welcome.