

UWS UNIVERSITY OF THE
WEST *of* SCOTLAND

**DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME
ANNUAL REPORT 2008**

Introduction

The University of the West of Scotland published its Disability Equality Scheme in December 2006 and an Annual Report on progress in December 2007. This report updates further progress and outlines the key priorities for the forthcoming year.

1. Infrastructure and Organisation

The Equality and Diversity Board has continued to meet and has received regular progress reports from the Disability Working Group. The DWG has strategic responsibility for student related matters and has received a further set of annual reports from academic schools and departments on their work in meeting the needs of disabled students.

The Disability Equality Scheme Working Group, which was formed to prepare the Disability Equality Scheme has now been disbanded and monitoring of progress against scheme objectives is the responsibility of the Equality and Diversity Coordinator, on behalf of the Equality and Diversity Board.

The network of Enabling Support coordinators has been extended to provide more comprehensive coverage for all four campuses.

A key action for the coming year will be input to the new school and departmental development plans to ensure that they include disability equality objectives.

2. Curriculum planning, course production and presentation

The emphasis has been on addressing issues for disabled students through Validation and Subject Health Review processes. A major review of all aspects of the curriculum has led to increased awareness of the need to consider how learning, teaching and assessment strategies will enable modules to be accessible to all students. In particular consideration has been given to the identification in the module descriptors of learning activities for which adjustments may be necessary. A key facet of the new curricula which will be of direct benefit to students with disabilities is the wider use of Personal Development Planning. All students will engage in reflection on the strengths and difficulties and this will be of particular benefit to students who already have identified disabilities

3. Student Services

Schools and the Centre for Lifelong Learning continue to report an increase in the number of students disclosing a disability and requiring support from the Enabling Support Team. To meet these needs additional staff appointments have taken place this year:

- Part-time Enabling Support Adviser (Dyslexia) employed at Ayr campus

- Additional day secured for part-time ES Adviser (Dyslexia) at Paisley campus bringing total Dyslexia Adviser provision at Paisley campus to full-time
- Part-time ES Adviser (Dyslexia) employed at Hamilton campus
- Funding secured for part-time ES Adviser (Dyslexia) post at Dumfries campus (1 day per week).
- The creation of a new Student Services Administrative Assistant post at Hamilton campus has improved administrative support for the ES team at Hamilton, particularly in the area of Non Medical Personal Helpers (NMPH provision).

We plan to increase the number of Non Medical Personal Helpers in the coming year to improve provision across all campuses.

Enabling Support Co-ordinators meetings have increased from annually to biannually and the training programme for ES Co-ordinators was successfully carried out during 2007-08. Training events included dyslexia awareness training, understanding & managing epilepsy, and a visual impairment information session.

A training programme for ES Co-ordinators has been developed for 2008-09 and events will include mental health awareness training, autistic spectrum disorder awareness session & information pack, and deaf awareness training.

Each campus now has a fully functional assistive technology suite, providing a wide range of assistive software & hardware for students. The suites are also used for carrying out demonstrations of equipment, for students & staff.

The Library has continued to expand its collection of electronic texts and journals, which are available via the website and therefore not subject to any physical access constraints

There are still significant numbers of students starting studies without a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan in place and addressing this will be a priority in the coming months.

4. Information and communication

The review of internal communication has been completed and changes implemented. Further improvements have been made to the accessibility of prospectuses and other printed material and we have implemented changes to recruitment and selection procedures.

In 2008 the University employed a new strapline, "Committed to equality and diversity" in all recruitment advertising.

We have circulated a leaflet to all staff to support positive mental well-being for students.

From early 2009 we have plans to give students the ability to alter screen resolution and colour schemes, work which is tied in with the University's move to a new Windows based network environment.

5. Staff employment and training

The "Diversity Awareness Raising" workshops have been rolled out to all staff and to date over 600 have attended. In addition, schools and departments have delivered their own training on disability issues including the inclusion of disability issues within the PgCert in Higher Education curriculum.

We have been working with Glasgow Centre for Independent Living (GCIL) and have now identified two placements for disabled employees, supported by GCIL through training and employment services.

We are also in discussion to advertise UWS vacancies through the GCIL Employment Service, with a view to attracting and employing more disabled people.

For 2008-08 a need has been identified for more training for staff on how to support students with Mental Health issues. We will also develop workshops to promote Teachability principles in curriculum design, learning and teaching and assessment.

6. Accessible buildings

Further improvements to building have been made in the reporting year:

- Improvements have been made to the assisted evacuation system at Hamilton campus with Response Teams being formed from Security Staff rather than staff volunteers. This gives a more comprehensive and reliable coverage for this function.
- Ongoing work is being carried out to improve and extend the refuge system at Hamilton and additional communications points are to be installed in Caird Building and part of Almada Building
- We will review the level of resource committed to Occupational Therapy to ensure that the requirements of ergonomic assessment for students are met.
- Health and Safety Services have been involved in the design process for the new campus at Ayr, trying to ensure that safe emergency evacuation for disabled staff and students is easier at the new campus than on the existing campuses.

7. Engaging with the wider community

We have established links with disabled people in the community and are looking at employability and student recruitment issues at all campuses.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Progress reports on the DES are made to the Equality and Diversity Board and to Senate on a regular basis and included the first data report for staff and students, published in February 2008.

The workforce data capture date is 1st August each year and this second annual report uses data held at 01/08/2008.

	Disability			
	Disabled	Not Disabled	Not Known	Information refused
Academic Staff	9	0	0	0
School AT&S	6	0	0	0
Dept AT&S	6	0	0	0
Total	21	0	0	0
Percentage by category 2008	1.30	0	0	0
Percentage by category 2007	1.26	0	0	0

For Academic posts the applicants who declared a disability were at the rate of 4%, (19) with 5 %(5) being short listed and 3 %(1) being appointed. The not known /not declared rate was 5%. For support roles the application rate was 3.4%%, (47) with 2.4 %(8) being short listed and 3.3 %(3) being appointed. Appointment is consistent with application rate. The not known /not declared rate was 10%.

A major challenge in the coming year is to increase the percentage of applications and appointments from disabled people.

Student data show an increase in the number of students with declared disabilities attending the University:

Disability by category (2006/07)

Disability	Total
No known disability	16750
An unseen disability, e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma	295
Autistic Spectrum Disorder	9
Blind/are partially sighted	31
Deaf/have a hearing impairment	73
Dyslexia	387
Mental health difficulties	55
Multiple disabilities	138
Personal care support	5
Wheelchair user/have mobility difficulties	66
A disability not listed above	105
Not known	891
Missing Data	2
Grand Total	18807

The proportion of students with a “not known” status has declined considerably compared to previous years.

Student progression and retention data has been produced for each School and action plans have been developed. Our data show that both full time and part time disabled students are still more likely to fail their courses than the average of the student population.

Future Action

In 2009 we will be reviewing the Disability Equality Scheme in preparation for developing and publishing a revised scheme in December. In addition to the priorities mentioned above we have outstanding commitments to:

- Ensure that Schools and Departments include disability equality objectives and actions in their strategic plans due to be developed in Spring 2009
- Continue to work with students to improve the design, presentation and assessment of courses for disabled students
- Improve our links with organisations for disabled people

We believe that this report shows steady progress in implementing the University’s Disability Equality Scheme and we are committed to making further improvements in future years.