

Disability Guide for Students

1. Disability Statement

BIMM Dublin is committed to ensuring that disabled people are provided with equal access to their chosen course of study and facilities at the College.

The College recognises the social model of disability, whereby the individual is understood to be disadvantaged not by their disability, but by social barriers, such as the physical environment, methods of communication and prejudicial attitudes.

The College is committed to working towards removing any barriers which might prevent a disabled person from actively participating in student life at BIMM Dublin.

We provide advice and information for disabled students, and aim to enable disabled students to reach their full potential at BIMM Dublin.

2. Welcome

The purpose of this handbook is to answer any questions you might have about the disability support available to students at BIMM Dublin.

BIMM Dublin is committed to ensuring that disabled people are provided with equal access to their chosen course of study and facilities at the School and is working towards removing any barriers which might prevent a disabled person from actively participating in student life at BIMM Dublin.

Disability support is available through the Student Services team who are able to provide advice and information to all disabled students. We provide a free and confidential service to all students and applicants.

We work with students with a wide range of disabilities, including but by no means restricted to:

Specific Learning Difficulties (such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD)

Mental Health Difficulties (such as depression, bi-polar disorder)

Long-term medical conditions (such as HIV, cancer, multiple sclerosis)

Unseen disabilities (such as diabetes, asthma, epilepsy)

Sensory impairments (such as visual impairment, hearing impairment)

Mobility or physical impairments (such as paralysis, arthritis).

3. Contacting Disability Support

Disability support is available through the Student Services team. Students may contact the Student Services team in the following ways:

By telephone - +353 1 5133 666

By email - studentsupportdublin@bimm.ie

By letter - BIMM Dublin, 62-64 Francis Street, Dublin 8

In person - Just ask for Student Services at Reception

4. Legal Framework

Under the Equal Status Act 2000, the term 'disability' means –

- a) the total or partial absence of a person's bodily or mental functions, including the absence of a part of a person's body,
- b) the presence in the body of organisms causing, or likely to cause, chronic disease or illness,
- c) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a person's body, (d) a condition or malfunction which results in a person learning differently from a person without the condition or malfunction, or
- d) a condition, disease or illness which affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or which results in disturbed behaviour.

How does the Act protect disabled persons?

The Act prohibits discrimination against disabled persons and defines discrimination as:

“A refusal or failure by the provider of a service to do all that is reasonable to accommodate the needs of a person with a disability by providing special treatment or facilities, if without such special treatment or facilities it would be impossible or unduly difficult for the person to avail himself or herself of the service.”

The Equal Status Acts 2000 – 2012 protect students from:

- **Direct discrimination** - when a person is treated less favourably than another person in the same situation on the grounds of disability
- **Indirect discrimination** - where an individual or group of people are placed at a disadvantage as a result of conditions or rules which they might find hard to satisfy and which cannot be reasonably justified.
- **Discrimination by association** - when a person is treated less favourably simply because they are associated with or connected to another person.
- **Discrimination by imputation** - when a person is treated less favourably because it is thought that they have a disability, whether or not that is the case.

The Equal Status Acts state that an educational establishment may not discriminate in relation to:

- The admission of students or the terms or conditions of admission
- The access of any student to any course, facility or benefit
- Any other term or condition of participation
- The expulsion of a student or other penalty

For more information on the Equality Acts and disability, please see the Equality Authority's website here: <http://www.ihrec.ie/>

5. Confidentiality

We operate a confidential service within Student Services, which means that information about a student and/or their disability is not passed on to third parties without student consent.

We encourage students to contact us as early as possible regarding their disability so we are able to ensure that they are provided with equal access to their chosen course of study and facilities at the College. Students will be invited to disclose their disability at point of enrolment and will then be contacted by Student Services with further information on registering for supports. Students studying a TU Dublin validated course will be referred to the TU Dublin Disability Service where they will discuss their disclosure agreement with the Learning Support officer. Students studying a BIMM validated course will be asked to complete a Learning Support Authorisation form, which covers issues of disclosure. This form can be amended by the student at any time.

We reserve the right to break the disclosure aspect of the Learning Support Authorisation Form in circumstances where the student is reasonably believed to be a risk either to themselves or others. Any decision to break confidentiality would be made by the Student Services Officer and/or Head of Student Services.

Student Services may need to disclose information in order to help support you. However, the student has the right to limit their disclosure:

Full Disclosure

If a student allows full disclosure then information will only be shared where necessary on a 'need to know basis'. Those with whom we may need to share information or request further information may include (but is not strictly limited to); your programme leader and tutors, the academic administration team who arrange your exams, health and safety staff, support workers, your educational psychologist, your needs assessor or your learning support provider. We always ask the people with whom we share your information to respect your confidentiality and to not pass your information on to anyone else unless they are also involved in your support.

Restricted Disclosure

Students can choose to restrict (i.e. prevent) disclosure to individuals outside of Student Services by not signing the Learning Support Authorisation form, or by requesting an amended form. In these cases, Student Services will inform the student that this will limit the reasonable adjustments that can be put in place. The student is advised that should they choose to limit their level of disclosure, a failure by the College to make reasonable adjustments is unlikely to be grounds for any subsequent mitigation. Please be aware this may limit the level and type of support the College can provide for you.

If you would like to discuss the different options and the effect on your support, please contact Student Services.

We provide a confidential service to students, which means that information about a student and/or their disability is not passed on to third parties without their consent. The Learning Support Authorisation form is a record of whether you have or have not given your consent for Student Services to discuss your case with other individuals/departments and, where appropriate, share relevant information.

BIMM Dublin agrees to hold data on students' disabilities for no longer than is necessary, in line with the GDPR Act (2018). BIMM policy is to hold this information for a period of six years, after your last point of contact with us. After this date, the information held by Student Services will be appropriately disposed of.

6. Specialist Services for Students

Student Services provide a number of services to disabled students. These include:

- Advice and information on disability support and reasonable adjustments at BIMM Dublin
- Advice and information on additional funding which disabled students may be eligible to apply for.
- Advice and information on arranging an assessment for a Specific Learning Difficulty with an Educational Psychologist
- Liaising with the Academic Administration team and Programme Leaders to implement recommended exam provisions
- Assistance in arranging Non-Medical Helpers (such as note-takers, one-on-one support mentors)

We can provide guidance and advice to students without evidence of their disability. However, we will not make any recommendations for support, and the College will not implement any reasonable adjustments, until the student provides evidence of their disability.

7. Evidence of Disability

Evidence of a student's disability must be confirmed in writing by an appropriately qualified professional. Examples include:

- Consultant's letter
- Ophthalmologist, Ophthalmic Surgeon
- Psychiatric/psychologist's letter or report
- Speech and language therapist

All evidence must be contemporaneous and relevant to the period for which they are applying for adjustments.

It is the responsibility of the student to provide Student Services with evidence of their disability.

Obtaining Evidence of a Disability

Where a student does not have evidence of a disability, we can provide advice and guidance on how to obtain it. We can assist students in arranging an assessment with an Educational Psychologist, where the student believes they may have a Specific Learning Difficulty. The cost of an Educational Psychologist assessment is that of the student.

For students on a BIMM validated course who are unsure whether they may have a Specific Learning Difficulty, we may be able to provide an in-house assessment which will identify your learning style and highlight any evidence of learning support requirements which will help you decide whether to invest in an Educational Psychologists report. Students on TU Dublin validated courses may be able to obtain an in-house assessment through the TU Dublin Disability Service but should contact Student Services for further information.

Students should contact Student Support to discuss an in-house assessment.

Where a student requires written evidence of disability from a medical practitioner, we can provide the student with a letter to present to their practitioner, explaining why the College requires evidence of disability. We will not cover the cost of any letters issued for a student by a medical practitioner.

Temporary illness or injuries

Support for students who are pregnant, or have a temporary illness or injury, will be agreed and provided by Student Services. Students are advised to contact Student Services to discuss their circumstances.

8. Reasonable Adjustments

The Equal Status Act (2000) requires the provider of a service to provide reasonable accommodations to an individual with a disability. A 'reasonable accommodation' is a change that the College can make to the way in which a course is delivered, or the way in which we carry out assessments to remove a disadvantage caused by a disability. Reasonable adjustments should be tailored to the needs of an individual student but support provisions are most commonly identified in accordance with recommendations made by an Educational Psychologist, or other medical professional.

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)

Upon receipt of evidence confirming a diagnosis of a SpLD and receipt of the student's consent to disclose, Student Services will contact the exams team and relevant tutors to ensure that they are aware of the SpLD. Assessors will be provided with assessment registers which allow them to identify work from a student with SpLD so it is marked appropriately. Marking guidelines have been written for the academics on how to mark work for those students with SpLD. Students who not agree to disclose their SpLD will not be marked differently, as tutors will not be aware that they have support requirements.

Extensions

Students may request an extension for coursework assignments on the grounds of their disability, as a reasonable adjustment.

Please be informed that evidence of a SpLD does not guarantee an automatic right to an extension.

Where a student has a disability, we do not recommend blanket extensions for all assignments. We recognise that where possible students should adhere to given deadlines, in the interests of their academic progress.

It is the student's responsibility to negotiate all extensions in advance of the submission deadlines with their Programme Leader and/or Head of Student Services and in line with usual extension request procedures. It is at the discretion of the Programme Leader and/or Head of Student Services as to whether an extension is granted.

Examinations/Assessments

The Student Services team will identify what reasonable adjustments need to be put in place for the individual disabled person in line with recommendations made by an Educational Psychologist or other medical professional. For TU Dublin students, the Student Services team will implement the recommendations of the TU Dublin Learning Support Officer. The purpose of reasonable adjustments to the assessment format is to reduce any disadvantage a disabled student faces due to their disability.

The Student Services team will inform the Education department of what reasonable adjustments are to be put in place. The Student Services team must inform the Academic Administration department four weeks before the exam in order to guarantee that support can be provided.

9. Physical Accessibility

The College does not offer parking spaces to students, but where it is necessary for the student to drive to the campus as a result of their disability, the College will liaise with them to ensure that space is provided.

BIMM Dublin is accessible to disabled students. There is a lift in the Francis St building ensuring access to the first floor, and a wheelchair accessible back entrance to the Coombe building. The outdoor area in the Coombe building is not accessible for wheelchairs, but the common rooms are accessible, there are accessible bathrooms available in both buildings. There is a fire refuge point on the first floor of the Francis St building in case of emergencies, linking to the emergency exit.

Student Services also work closely with facilities and provide an orientation/induction meeting for new disabled students who may be blind/ have a visual impairment, wheelchair users and/or experience mobility difficulties, to become familiarised with the College and facilities.

Students, who would like the orientation/induction meeting, must contact Student Services prior to enrolment in order for this to be arranged.

LEARNING SUPPORT AUTHORISATION FORM Appendix 1

I agree that my information will be shared with relevant BIMM Departments beyond Student Services in regard to my learning support and exam accommodation recommendations. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis in line with the Disability Policy.

I understand that by not consenting information to be forwarded to relevant departments means that Student Services will not be able to provide those supports that require disclosure of information.

I understand that it is my responsibility to inform Student Services of any changes in my circumstances, or if I require a change in supports.

I understand that in-class examinations are not included in this discussion and it is my responsibility to make myself aware of pending in-class assessments and examinations and to inform the relevant tutor. These supports are subject to availability and at the discretion of the tutor.

I understand that the examination accommodations are fixed for each examination period and are therefore NOT optional. Changes to accommodations may ONLY be made after agreement with Student Services and the Exams Department, this must be done no later than four weeks prior to examinations.

I understand that failure to avail of registered accommodations will result in immediate and permanent withdrawal of those accommodations for that year.

I must take responsibility for registering for supplemental exams and availing of the appropriate resources.

Signed student: _____ Date:

Print student name: _____

Student Number _____

Signed Student Services: _____ Date: