Union Theological College

Student Disability Policy and Procedures

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V01.4	December 2021	Faculty	Currently with Management Committee

Student Disability Policy and Procedures

General Principles

Definition

Union Theological College is committed to providing enriching learning and personal development experiences for all students, to maintaining high academic standards, and to a process of enhancement and improvement in the quality of its educational provision and personal support. These commitments extend to all of our students, including those with disabilities, long-term health conditions, and specific learning difficulties (SpLD). The College will:

- Actively promote a safe and inclusive environment for all students.
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, and/or victimisation.
- Engage sensitively with those who have declared disabilities.
- Respond appropriately to students who declare a disability.
- Ensure that reasonable adjustments are considered and implemented.

According to section 1 of the Disability Discrimination Act (Northern Ireland) Act 1995, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment which "has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [that person's] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities". "Long-term" in this case normally means at least 12 months.

The following policy and procedures apply to all students following courses delivered at Union College, undergraduate and postgraduate, as well as full and part-time, and it addresses any disability that would put a student at a disadvantage in learning and teaching activities, including medical conditions and/or specific learning difficulties.

Point of Contact

The first point of contact for students is the College Disability Officer, Dr Stephen Moore.

Data Protection

Students have the right not to disclose their disability or to request that their disability not be shared with teaching and administrative staff. However, non-disclosure or strict confidence requests will limit the College's ability to provide reasonable adjustments and might mean that no provision can be made for the student.

Student disability information will be held on a strict need to know basis in order for appropriate teaching and administrative staff to provide reasonable adjustments to the student's learning and teaching arrangements. Staff will maintain confidentiality as far as possible.

Support for Students with Disabilities

Admissions

As described in the Admissions Policy, the College is committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all its students and actively encourages applications from people with disabilities and long-term conditions. An individual s disability or long-term condition is not considered prior to an application being considered and has no bearing on the decision.

Making Reasonable Adjustments to Learning and Teaching

Wherever possible, students with disabilities should undertake the same assessments as others. However, where this is not possible, the teacher will apply reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability (Northern Ireland) Order 2005. A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of an impairment that places the learner at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with persons who are not disabled. Reasonable adjustments do not detract from the quality or rigour of learning, teaching, or assessment, nor do they give the student any unfair advantage over others. Rather, reasonable adjustments include deliberate steps to avoid substantial disadvantage so that all students may achieve and demonstrate intended learning outcomes.

The College does not prescribe specific reasonable adjustments for students with particular disabilities. Rather, the College Disability Officer, taking account of appropriate medical advice, advice from a Specialist Assessor or from a Disability Needs Assessment Centre will discuss with the appropriate module convener the actions which would be appropriate for a particular student. Reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Flexibility with deadlines.
- Flexibility with time limits.
- Permission to use an auxiliary aid.
- Permission to take occasional (or frequent) breaks from sitting.
- Use of a special examination room or an altered physical arrangement.
- Provision of alternative assessment arrangements.
- Provision of written notes and/or digital notes.
- Consideration for spelling and grammar.
- Printing on coloured paper.
- Permission to use a laptop in examinations.

Library-related reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Extended loan durations on high demand Library items.
- Book fetching service and general assistance, for example, with renewals and reservations.
- One to one Library induction tours and other Library-related training sessions.
- Electronic resources with added accessibility features.

Extended loans for Library resources. Alternative assessment arrangements are agreed with the Head of Department, and should be communicated to external examiners.

Field Trips and Work-Based Learning Opportunities

The College will ensure that, where practicable, students with disabilities will have equal opportunities to access field trips and work-based learning opportunities.

Access and Egress

The College is accessible to students with mobility issues. There are wheelchair accessible lifts, doors, accessible toilets, and designated parking spaces.

Retrospective Adjustments

The College will not normally make any retrospective adjustment to marks or apply retrospectively any reasonable adjustments to assessments that have already been completed prior to the disclosure or diagnosis of a student's disability.

Diagnosis of Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)

Where a student suspects that they might have a SpLD such as dyslexia, the College Disability Officer should be the first point of contact. College staff are not in a position to diagnose SpLD, but will facilitate the process of diagnosis through referral to appropriate and qualified bodies.

Disabled Student's Allowance

Students/Applicants who have a diagnosed disability/SpLD will be encouraged to apply for Disabled Student s Allowance. Information on Disabled Student s Allowance can be found at What are full-time undergraduate Disabled Students' Allowances for NI students? - Student Finance NI.

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