



## **Part 3 - Disability Policy for Students**

### **1. Commitment**

Bedford College is committed, through its Equality and Diversity Policy, to providing a learning environment which welcomes and values individuals equally, and aims to provide the support to enable students to succeed, regardless of learning difficulty or disability.

Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) was amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001) to place general and specific duties on education providers in relation to disabled people. These duties were further strengthened in 2006 to prevent direct or disability-related discrimination or victimisation. This is defined as less favourable treatment of a disabled person because of an impairment or health condition.

There is also an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments, which means that the general requirements of disabled people with a wide range of conditions must be anticipated and addressed. Once a reasonable adjustment has been put in place, it should be brought to the attention of disabled people, for example through signage or in publicity materials.

The College welcomes the Disability Discrimination Act and endeavours to make reasonable adjustments to all aspects of the College to avoid substantial disadvantage to any disabled student or other disabled people. It has in place a Disability Equality Scheme which outlines how it will meet its duties under the Act.

The College Charter includes a pledge to offer appropriate support to all students who have an identified learning need as well as to provide information on access to buildings and car parks.

Copies of the College Charter and Equality and Diversity Policy are available from Student Services and on the College website at [www.bedford.ac.uk](http://www.bedford.ac.uk), and additional information can be found in the Student Handbook.

**All these documents are available in large print format on request from Student Services.**

## **2. Every Child Matters**

The College has regard to the general health and well-being of its students. It seeks to follow the principles enshrined in the Government's Every Child Matters agenda, the outcomes of which underpin this policy. We are committed to ensuring that, in the College context, students with learning difficulties and disabilities are safe and healthy, have opportunities to enjoy and participate fully in student life, achieve their maximum potential and are equipped to face their next steps.

## **3. Additional support**

The College offers a range of opportunities to help students achieve their learning goal. These include:

- courses aimed specifically at students with learning difficulties or disabilities, taught by staff with the relevant expertise and supported, where necessary, by support staff
  
- support with:
  - literacy
  - numeracy
  - key skills
  - study skills
  
- support is arranged at a mutually convenient time and can be:
  - one-to-one or one-to-two out of class
  - in class
  
- aids and equipment, for example for:
  - deaf students
  - blind students
  - sensory/speech impaired students
  - those with mobility difficulties
  
- specialist help such as signers, note-takers, communicators, personal carers, emotional support, mobility support
  
- specialist support for students with dyslexia including:
  - scotopic sensitivity assessment
  - full diagnostic assessments and assessment updates
  - examination reports and requests for special arrangements
  - assessments for speakers of other languages

All support is provided subject to assessment of need.

Further information can be obtained from the Additional Support Adviser on 01234 291905.

#### **4. Recruitment and admissions**

The College is committed to having in place admissions procedures and entry criteria which do not discriminate against disabled people. Details of all courses at Bedford College can be found in the full-time and part-time prospectuses or on the College website at [www.Bedford.ac.uk](http://www.Bedford.ac.uk). Prospectuses are available from the Enquiries and Guidance Service at the main College site or by telephoning 0800 074 0234 (minicom 01234 212945). Large print and audio formats can be provided.

Application and enrolment forms give students the opportunity to indicate any special requirements they may have. They will be contacted by the Additional Support Adviser and offered an individual private appointment to discuss their needs.

Although the College endeavours to make reasonable adjustments to meet the general requirements of disabled people, students with disabilities have the right to confidentiality about the nature or degree of their disability. However, by creating a positive and welcoming environment, we would wish to offer every opportunity and encouragement to people to disclose their disability to enable us to offer the appropriate personalised support. Support or adjustments which are required to meet the student's needs will be made as sensitively as possible.

Potential students may contact the Additional Support Adviser for advice and information at any time before or during the application process.

After a discussion with the Additional Support Adviser an interview with an Additional Support Tutor will take place where all the necessary arrangements for their support will be discussed, including any specialist assessment which may be necessary.

Sometimes support needs may be identified after a student has started their course at College. Tutors work with the Additional Support staff to make sure students receive the help they need.

#### **5. Examinations and assessments**

The purpose of examinations and assessments is to determine a student's achievement and skills. If necessary, the college Examinations staff can apply for special arrangements to help students undertake examinations and assessments.

These can include:

- additional time in examinations
- accessible accommodation
- a reader or writer
- enlarged print or Braille exam papers
- use of a computer

- reader
- amanuensis
- enlargement programme on computer

All decisions on special arrangements are made by the exam boards. Applications need to be made well in advance of the examination date and students should discuss their needs with their tutor in the first instance. Some students may need to supply medical evidence, and this should be obtained by the student in good time. Students who require special arrangements for any other reasons need to have an up-to-date assessment report.

## **6. Personal support**

All full-time and substantive part-time students at Bedford College have a personal tutor to provide help and guidance throughout their course. The tutor is normally the first point of contact for students experiencing difficulties with their studies. In addition, the College's Student Services team provides a comprehensive range of specialist support services:

- Counselling Service to help with any personal problems or offer emotional support
- Careers Service to provide advice and guidance on opportunities in learning and work.
- Finance/Welfare Service to advise on matters relating to student finance

For students requiring urgent medical assistance there is a team of qualified first aiders and access to a first aid room.

## **7. College facilities**

All principal teaching, learning and ancillary facilities at Bedford College are accessible to students irrespective of mobility. Where necessary, however, classes are relocated to more appropriate accommodation.

The College seeks to make continuous improvements to physical access to all its buildings. Reasonable adjustments will be made where disabled students or other disabled people might otherwise be substantially disadvantaged.

The College is committed to providing reserved parking spaces for people with disabilities, by prior arrangement. At the main College site parking is free for students with disabilities and there are special parking bays for blue badge holders; other sites have sufficient accessible parking for all students. Contact the Additional Support Adviser on 01234 291905 for more information.

Details of access to College buildings for people with disabilities are available from Student Services. Information about emergency evacuation procedures is given at induction.

## **8. Promoting diversity**

The College publicises the support available to students with disabilities and promotes positive images of disability. Students are given every opportunity before they join the College, at induction and during their course to disclose any disability and seek appropriate help through the Additional Support service. There are link workers from the Additional Support team in each programme area.

There is an annual Equality and Diversity Week attended by organisations supporting disability, and training in aspects of disability are regularly offered, via the College's staff development days.

Opportunities are being explored for developing social/support groups for students with learning difficulties and disabilities, for example through the enrichment programme.

## **9. Monitoring, evaluation and the student voice**

Take up and delivery of additional support are monitored by the Additional Support and Disability Manager and reported through the College's self assessment process.

The profile and success of the student population are monitored by disability, age, gender and ethnicity and reported to the College Executive via its performance monitoring procedures.

Cross-college student surveys undertaken by the Quality Department are adapted for use by students with learning difficulties. The results are analysed centrally and fed back to the relevant course teams or support managers for action. Where issues are identified they are dealt with through team meetings and course reviews.

Focus groups to elicit students' views of the Additional Support service are held each term with students selected at random from the additional support database. Meetings are facilitated by staff from Student Services to ensure impartiality.

## **10. Complaints procedure**

Bedford College operates a complaints procedure. Anyone who feels we are not meeting our commitments in relation to support for students with disabilities should contact the Assistant Director responsible for Additional Support and Disabilities in the first instance. If they are still not satisfied, or their concerns relate to any other aspect of College provision, they should contact Student Services who will support them in taking the matter

further. Alternatively they may register a complaint online via the 'Have Your Say' system on the student intranet. Further information on the complaints procedure is included in the Student Handbook.

## **11. Useful contacts**

Additional Support Adviser Melanie Del La Motte	01234 291905
Assistant Director (responsible for Additional Support and Disabilities) Katrina O'Brien	01234 291652
Director of Student Services Lesley Ferguson	01234 291908
Student Services Help Desk	01234 291934
Enquiries and Guidance	0800 074 0234
Main college switchboard	01234 291000
Minicom	01234 212945

## **12. Related policies and procedures**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following College policies and procedures:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Disability Equality Duty and Scheme
- Disability Disclosure Procedure
- Basic Skills Policy
- Additional Needs Support Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Student Grievance Procedure
- Complaints Procedure
- Confidentiality Policy
- Bullying/harassment Procedure
- Student Involvement Strategy
- College Charter

Lesley Ferguson  
Director of Student Services

Karen Campbell  
Additional Support and Disability  
Manager

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