**Disability Advisory Service – Virtual Open Day 18 September**

These are a selection of FAQ based on questions asked at the July 2020 Virtual Open Days.

**Q. What kinds of disability support do you offer for students using a wheelchair? Given that certain colleges are older than others, can specific adjustments be made?**

The University has an Access Guide which details the accessibility of the University's buildings and facilities - <https://www.accessguide.ox.ac.uk/>. For any specific requirements, the Disability Advisory Service has a close working relationship with the Estates services of the University and we will work with them and individual colleges to arrange any reasonable access needs. It is important these conversations are started as early as possible once the student has received an offer so the college have time to consider and make adaptations where required.

**Q. Which colleges are the most accessible?**

Once a student is made an offer by a college, we would look to start discussions with staff about what changes may need to be made to ensure everything is accessible. For this reason, we wouldn't recommend applying to one college over another for accessibility reasons. Here is a link to the student-led Alternative Prospectus so that you can chose the college that best fits you based on your interests and course <https://apply.oxfordsu.org/>

**Q. Can students with access needs have priority for rooms in college?**

Yes, undergraduates are contacted by the Disability Advisory Service on receiving an offer and we would communicate any requirements to the college and department as relevant, including any access requirements, to ensure provision of an accessible room and to ensure suitable access is available in departmental spaces too. The DAS also works closely with the University Estates Service who are able ensure any additional building adaptations are completed if further work is required.

**Q. If a student has a disability, is it possible for them to stay in university accommodation for their entire degree?**

This can be possible and it will depend upon the evidence and the disability related need to stay in accommodation e.g. if adaptations need to be made or for other relevant reasons. As a first step it would make sense to see what accommodation is available at your preferred college and this link may help <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/colleges/which-oxford-colleges-offer-my-course>? As long as there are disability related grounds this could be considered.

**Q. Are individual colleges able to offer support for deaf students e.g. fire alarms etc. in residential accommodation?**

All students would be provided with appropriate support and aids to alert them of an alarm. This might for example include provision of a vibrating pillow or pager device or installation of an amplified or flashing alarm. Colleges would explore all emergency access and evacuation requirements directly with the student. Additionally DAS can liaise with Estates Department to ensure suitable alarms and hearing support systems are in place in the relevant department.

**Q. Are there contextual offers given for students that have missed a vast amount of school because of a long term condition?**

**Q. Who would I speak to regarding extenuating and complex contextual circumstances?**

Here is a link to the applications guide <http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/guide> and also advice for students with disabilities on applying to Oxford <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/applying-to-oxford/applicants-with-disabilities>

For questions about admissions please visit <http://www.ox.ac.uk/ask>

**Q. Will extra-time be given in application tests and interview if you are eligible for it in regular public exams at school?**

Yes, however this is typically the responsibility of the venue/organisation that is administering the test so I would advise you contact them directly. They may require you to provide evidence of your disability. There is more information about the admissions tests here <http://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/guide/admissions-tests> and you could also ask further questions via the Admissions team over on [www.ox.ac.uk/ask](http://www.ox.ac.uk/ask)

**Q. Should I use my personal statement or interview to disclose information about my disability?**

You should tick yes when asked if you have a disability during the application process, this will give the university a chance to consider what adjustments you may need for the admissions process. The university will not need to know details at this point. Here is a link to the website with advice on the application process for students with disabilities <https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/graduate/applying-to-oxford/applicants-with-disabilities>

**Q. I have autism and I'm anxious about starting university. Could I visit the university before starting to understand how to get to lectures etc.**

The university is currently closed and we are not allowing students to visit due to Covid-19 and the need to keep staff, current and prospective students safe. We hope to be able to offer students a chance to visit colleges, departments and the DAS once it is considered safe to do so.

**Q. What support is there for students with autism?**

When a student registers with the DAS, they will work with an Advisor to create a personalised Student Support Plan and a support package depending on the impact of their disability. Through the Disabled Students Allowance (a government funded grant for students from the UK), a student with Autism is likely to receive regular Specialist Mentoring sessions and assistive software. We would also work with the student, college and department to consider what study adjustments might be appropriate. Things we might want to consider may include accommodation arrangements, exam arrangements, flexible deadlines and buddy support.

**Q. How much are lecturers and academic staff typically told about a student's disability?**

This entirely depends on the student. The DAS only shares information with a student’s consent. Generally information is communicated on a Student Support Plan, which provides information on the impact of a disability on study and includes relevant recommendations, but this can be as limited or as detailed as you are happy with. If consent is limited or for no information to be shared this can limit what arrangements can be implemented, but lecturers and academics are very familiar with receiving support plans and implementing support recommendations.

**Q. When and how do I get a disability assessment?**

If you are a current offer holder and want to discuss support provisions for when you start university, you will be contacted by the DAS at some point over the summer to consider what support and arrangements might be suitable for you.

**Q. What provision do you make for students who do not have a formal diagnosis?**

To receive support from the university, you will be required to provide evidence of a disability. Once you are a matriculated student (enrolled) the DAS can help you with finding appropriate routes for assessment.

**Q. What reasonable adjustments can be given for variable conditions where daily energy levels etc. can vary wildly?**

On receipt of an offer, the DAS would contact you to explore requirements in more detail. Examples of support which could be considered include consideration of college allocation close to your department to reduce unnecessary travel and fatigue, flexibility in scheduling of tutorials and deadlines, taxi allowance for study related journeys, access to lecture recordings, notifying (with your consent) departments of possible disability related absence, recommendation of prioritised reading lists to help utilise your time as efficiently as possible, assistive software.

**Q. What support do you offer for students with learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD?**

Every student that registers with the DAS receives an individualised support plan and support package. We encourage students to apply for the Disabled Students Allowance and through this you would have access to study skills support and assistive software. Depending on the impact of your learning difficulty, you may also be recommended extra time and/or use of a computer during exams, flexibility with deadlines, extended library loans and lecture recordings.

**Q. What support is available for students with mental health difficulties?**

It would depend on the nature of the issue but there a variety of options. However, sometimes it can be difficult to know where to start.

Mental health is principally supported by the health sector and it would be advisable to seek support via the college GP initially.

They can then decide with you whether any long-term support, medication or other kind of treatment is likely to be helpful, including referring on to specialist services if needed.

If you have already had support in your local area for your mental health it may be useful to gain some documentation from those services to pass on to your GP in Oxford. If you access secondary mental health services in the UK then they should be responsible for transferring any care you may need to a local service. So you may wish to discuss this with them before coming to Oxford.

In some circumstances a mental health condition may be considered a disability.

To find out if that is likely to be the case you can explore this with the Disability Advisory Service, who can discuss in confidence with you whether you might be eligible to register with them for consideration of reasonable adjustments/flexibility on you course.  They can also help you to access any funded disability-related support such as that provided through Disabled Students Allowances (DSA’s).

There is more information about this here - <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability/eligibility>

In addition there are other important sources of support available to all students at the University. Many students make use of multiple of these in different circumstances.

Any student can approach the University Counselling Service (USC) who offer a range of support for any mental health difficulties including short-term individual counselling, group counselling and workshops - <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling>.

The USC also have some suggested self-help resources - <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/counselling/self-help>

If you would feel more comfortable approaching fellow students initially then there is also a specially-trained peer support scheme including Rainbow Peers and Peers of Colour <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/peersupport>

If you would prefer more anonymous support online and don’t feel comfortable enough to approach others then all students and staff at the University have access to 24/7 online mental health and wellbeing support via Togetherall (previously known as Big White Wall) - <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/news/2020-04-14-free-online-support-through-big-white-wall>

Finally, each college has its own support mechanisms and welfare staff designed to complement the overall University support, some students find the familiarity of this easier to access - <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/collegesupport?wssl=1>