

Your Student Disability Support at Oxford

This guidance is intended to help you navigate disability support at Oxford. [Section II: Disability Support](#) and the [Key actions flowchart](#) at the end of this document shows you what you should do at each step of your journey, and who in your College or the University is responsible for setting up reasonable adjustments to support you in your studies. The stages in the student journey have actions for you; please read these carefully. As a first step, you should note [who your Disability Coordinators are at your College and Departments\(s\)](#).

You may also find the following links helpful:

- [About the Disability Advisory Service](#)
- [About Student Support Plans](#)
- [University Counselling Service](#)
- [Common Approach for Supporting Student Mental Health](#)
- [Providing Evidence for your Disability](#)
- [The UK Government's Disabled Students' Allowance](#)
- [Examination Adjustments](#)
- [Glossary of key disability terms](#)

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I. People and Terminology

Defining Disabled

Under the Equality Act 2010, a person is [defined as disabled](#) if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

Disability Coordinators

College Disability Coordinators are responsible for providing oversight of provision for undergraduate students, and **Departmental Disability Coordinators** are responsible for postgraduate students. However, please reach out to either your College or Departmental contacts if you need help. They can work together to help you, and will signpost if someone else better placed to assist. The person with the Disability Coordinator role may be different depending on your College, but it is often a member of staff in the academic office or in welfare support. Check [here](#) to find out who is the designated Disability Coordinator in your College and Department. Your College's and Department's Disability Leads are responsible for oversight of monitoring accessibility and working on disability strategic priorities.

Academic Staff

Academic Staff include: Tutors, Lecturers, Supervisors etc. and they are responsible for implementing any teaching-based disability adjustments. You are encouraged to have ongoing communication with these people about what support you need to access teaching; they will be considering how to apply and interpret your Student Support Plan (SSP) recommendations, ensuring that teaching practices (and any reasonable adjustments to those practices) provide equal access to learning opportunities and align with competence standards.

The Disability Advisory Service (DAS)

DAS is the **Disability Advisory Service**. They are a central team in the University who look after student disability support. You can find all the information you need on [their website](#). They create **SSPs** for disabled students, which are [Student Support Plans](#) – a document that confirms DAS registration and outlines recommended disability adjustments for those involved in your support to consider. In some cases, a college or department may take a view on implementation if different practices would more effectively remove disability-related barriers, the recommended measure is not reasonable in the local context (e.g., due to practical delivery issues or academic/competence standards), or there are other activities requiring adjustments that DAS had not considered. Any alternative arrangements should be discussed with you, explaining why another approach is necessary.

Student Support Plans (SSPs)

Once you have declared your disability and provided necessary information, the DAS will issue the the [Disability Inclusion Statement](#) to your department, college, and Bodleian libraries. This statement shares the standard inclusive practices and reasonable adjustments that are currently recommended for disabled students. If you need further support and adjustments in addition to the practices set out in the statement, the DAS will create a Student Support

Plan (SSP) for you, which would set out recommendations for additional adjustments that could support you in the areas of:

- Teaching adjustments
- Human support (also known as non-medical help)
- The built environment, including travel between study sites
- IT equipment study technology
- [Examinations and assessments](#)
- Library provision

Please note that an SSP only makes recommendations, and **it is up to your College and/or Department to decide with you what reasonable adjustments are possible and most appropriate for you**, given your individual circumstances, your course of study and what is reasonable and practicable.

Formal Adjustments via the Proctors' Office and Education Policy Support

For the purposes of disability support, the **Proctors' Office and Education Policy Support (EPS)** are the University teams who make decisions on extensions, dispensations and complex disability adjustments to [summative assessments](#) (e.g., University examinations and coursework submissions). Neither the Proctors' Office nor EPS can make decisions about college matters, such as extensions to tutorial work (formative assessments) or accommodation provision.

II. Your role as a student

Student agency is at the heart of Oxford's professional welfare services. It is key that you communicate with staff if you need help or if your reasonable adjustments are not working for you. **You can reach out to:**

- Your College Disability Coordinator
- Your Department Disability Coordinator
- The Disability Advisory Service
- Your tutors, supervisors and other teaching/research staff
- Welfare support staff across the collegiate University

Our community is designed to encourage and support academic, social and personal development and wellbeing by providing an abundance of opportunities for you to thrive and grow. You can look after your own health and wellbeing, and work with us to organise your disability support, in the following ways:

- **Keep in touch** with your College and Department, and let them know if you need help.
- **Share your needs with staff as soon as they become apparent.** The sooner you engage with your college or department, the better they can work with you to make sure you receive the support and adjustments you need. Some adjustments can become more difficult to implement if discussed after arrangements have already been made, such as exam or accommodation adjustments. Staff want to ensure you receive the reasonable adjustments you need, and early communication helps them achieve that.

- **Seek out support when needed**, e.g., by making use of the welfare resources available from your College and the [University Counselling Service](#) (see the Common Approach to [Support Student Mental Health](#) for more information).
- **Register with the [Disability Advisory Service \(DAS\)](#)** for structured support as soon as your disability needs present, or when you receive an offer to study at Oxford.
 - Provide [evidence of your disability](#), health condition or specific learning difficulty to meet University guidelines for DAS registration.
 - Let us know how your disability affects your studies or student life, steps you take to manage the impact and what support or adjustments have been helpful before – so that DAS can prepare and share your Student Support Plan (SSP) with relevant staff (with your permission) across the collegiate University.
 - Provide evidence of previous exam adjustments and how they met your needs.
- **Engage actively with disability study aids and support strategies** if they are available and make good use of the available support.
- **Let someone know if there is a problem with your support** (e.g., the Disability Advisory Service, or college/department Disability Coordinator) or a change in circumstances related to your disability.
- **Complete all necessary paperwork**, including applications for the [Disabled Students' Allowance](#) (DSA), as applicable, and maintain accurate information on [Student Self Service](#) – ask DAS or your College or Department Disability Coordinator for help if these tasks are difficult for reasons relating to your disability.
- Depending on the nature of your disability and prognosis, some of your support requirements may evolve over time. For example, students with fluctuating or treatable/improving conditions may wish to adjust SSP arrangements to support their longer-term academic and personal development goals – **talk to DAS if you would like to review your support plan**. Similarly, if your condition is well-managed and you are no longer requiring study support, let DAS know.
- **Make full use of any health support or treatment** you need to access from healthcare services outside the University.



III. Your Student Journey: Support and key actions

1. Before you apply

All colleges and departments proactively consider the needs of future disabled students in planning their services and provision, to optimise accessibility and inclusion.

- **Speak to staff** during open days, early discussions with potential supervisors or when you are looking into studying at Oxford **about the disability support available**.

2. During the application process

If you are an undergraduate applicant, your interviewing College(s) will contact you directly to ask what adjustments or support you need for your interview. Your Department(s) may also get in touch, depending on your course. If you are a postgraduate applicant, your Department(s) will contact you directly to ask what adjustments or support you need ahead of any interview(s), if applicable.

- **Consider declaring your disability on your application**, to help ensure that your needs are considered and met.
- **Let your College and/or Department know what you will need** for your interview when you are contacted.

3. When you have an Offer or as soon as your disability needs present

Your College, Department(s), and the Disability Advisory Service (DAS) will signpost you to register with the DAS and discuss disability study support for your course. If you are an offer holder and you declared a disability on your application, the DAS will reach out to you to help you with the DAS registration process.

- **Register with the DAS** as early as possible, whether this is as soon as you receive an offer (you don't need to wait for a confirmed place or your results) or as soon as your disability needs arise. When registering, you will be asked to [provide evidence](#).
- **Speak with your College or Department Disability Coordinator** or attend the DAS drop-in clinic if you would like support with or have any issues with this process.

4. While you are waiting on your DAS registration

Once you have disclosed your disability, the DAS will contact you and/or your College/Department about any further information that they need (e.g. additional evidence).

- While you are waiting for a Student Support Plan to be issued, you can **meet with your College or Department's Disability Coordinator to discuss your disability support**. They will work with you to decide on reasonable adjustments or provide support that you need, even if you are waiting on medical evidence or an SSP. If you are an offer

holder, this will enable your College and Department to begin working to ensure that site access and facilities are suitable ahead of your arrival.

5. Before you move into College accommodation or when any accommodation needs arise

The DAS will **not** normally make any recommendations about College accommodation in your Student Support Plan. Instead, you should work with your College to determine what accommodation adjustments will be best for you, given your needs and what is reasonable and available.

- If you feel you need College accommodation adjustments due to your disability, **reach out to your college to work with them** to determine what accommodation or accommodation adjustments will be most appropriate for you, among the options available. Try and do this as early as possible, so your needs can be considered during your College's accommodation allocation processes.
- If you can, **provide medical evidence** so your College can help to ensure that appropriate adjustments are put in place.

6. When your Student Support Plan is issued

You and your College and/or Department Disability Coordinator will be notified when your Student Support Plan is added to your student record on Evision. In it, the DAS will make recommendations for reasonable adjustments that your College and/or Department(s) can make to support you, in what is called a Student Support Plan (SSP). At this stage, the DAS may advise you to apply for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) so that you can access funding for study aids and support strategies.

- **Reach out to your College and/or Department Disability Coordinator to discuss the recommendations and what can be implemented.** If your College and/or Department cannot provide the recommended support, e.g. due to practical limitations or better options, or if there are any complex arrangements, your College and/or Department will reach out to you to discuss your options.
- If advised, complete the funding paperwork for the Disabled Students' Allowance promptly. Let the DAS know if this is difficult for reasons relating to your disability so that they can explore other ways to help you.

7. When your Student Support Plan is shared

Your College and/or Department(s) Disability Coordinators will share your Student Support Plan with the staff who need to make reasonable adjustments, including your tutors or supervisors. If you are an undergraduate student, your lead subject tutor will share relevant teaching support information with other teaching staff who support you. If you are a postgraduate student, this will be done by your course director or supervisor.

- **View the list of people your SSP has been shared with** on Student Self-Service. If there are any gaps, let your College and/or Department Coordinator know.

8. Before any exams or assessments

Colleges submit applications to the Exams Team, the Proctor's Office and Education Policy Support for adjustments to exams and assessed work for most undergraduate programmes. Departments arrange and monitor adjustments for postgraduate and some undergraduate programmes.

- **Contact your College or Department(s) as soon as you think you'll need [reasonable adjustments](#) to exams or assessments.** This should be done as far in advance as possible, and before the 4th week of the term before your exams at the latest.
- If unforeseen circumstances—such as a flare-up of your disability—affect [your ability to attend an exam or submit an assignment](#), **contact your College or Department as soon as you are able** to discuss the options available to you.

9. After your adjustments have been implemented

Your College and Department Disability Coordinators and the DAS will remain available to support you throughout your course.

- **Regularly reflect on if the support in place is working for you.** If your needs or circumstances change or if your support is not working well, **discuss making changes** with the DAS, your College/Department Disability Coordinator or your tutors and/or supervisors directly.
- **Ask for help if you need it and stay in touch** with the staff who are there to support you. Think about how you might take advantage of opportunities to develop skills you would like to leave Oxford with, and how we can help you get there.

III. Key actions flowchart

