



Guide for Disabled Students

Academic year 2015-2016



This guide is available in alternative formats: please contact us with your requirements.

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Introduction:

Welcome to Abertay. We are pleased that you have chosen us and look forward to working with you while you study here. The University provides a friendly and supportive environment with staff willing to do all they can to help. The basis of its aims and policies is to ensure that all students benefit from equality of opportunity.

This guide provides basic information to help you prepare for the start of your course, including advice on the support you can expect to receive from us and opportunities for additional funding.

We aim to contact students before the start of each academic year to discuss any additional support arrangements required. If you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to get in touch – our contact details are on page 6 of this guide.

Disability and Equality Policy:

The University's policy applies to students applying to enter the University, students with disabilities already on a course, and to those who develop some form of disability during their time at the University.

The policy covers the University's aims on:

1. Admissions
2. Curriculum and Assessment
3. Support
4. Staff Development

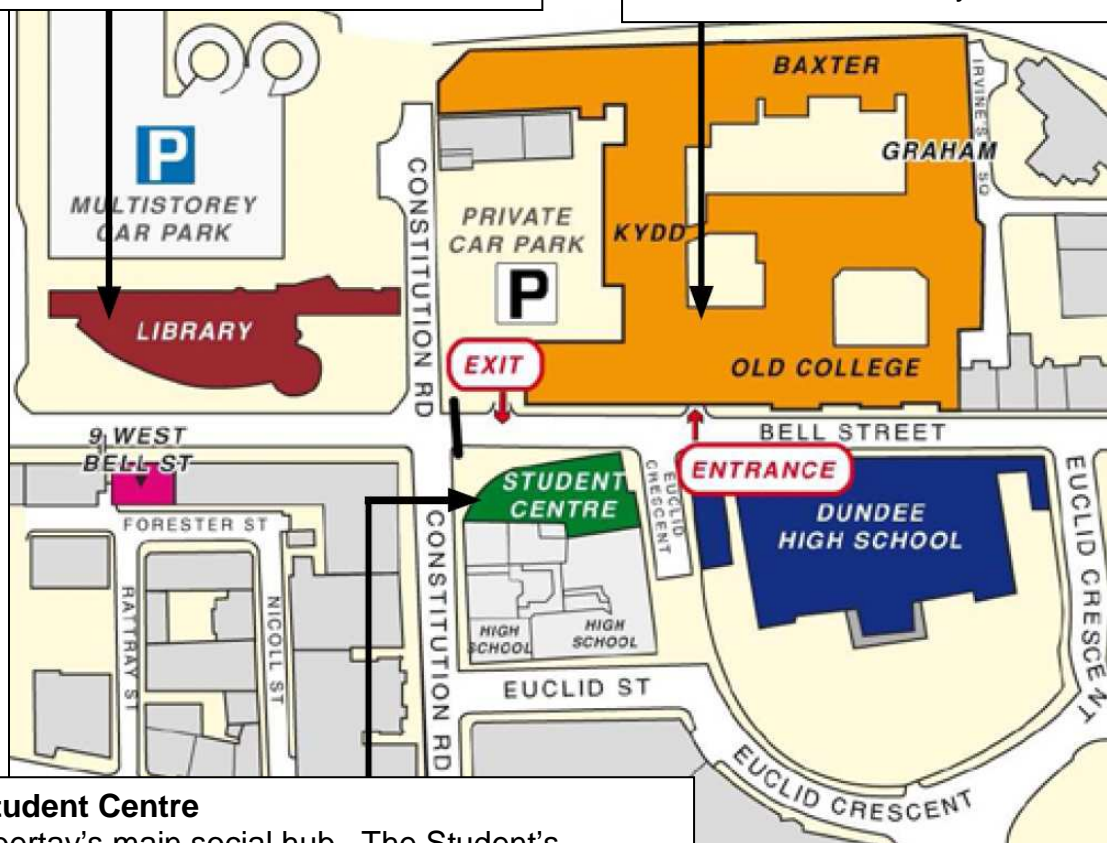
Abertay's Campus:

Library

For books and journals (obviously). Also for computers, study rooms to book for group work and for library and IT help. The library is also home to Student Services, which can be found on level 2.

Kydd Building

The main entrance to the university, where you will have most of your classes. Old College, the Baxter Building and the Graham Building – where other classes are held – can all be accessed via the Kydd Building.



Student Centre

Abertay's main social hub. The Student's Association is also responsible for representing students on university management committees.

There are lifts in the main Kydd Building foyer and towards the rear of both the Kydd Building and Old College. Wheelchair accessible toilets are available close to the main entrance of the Kydd Building, the ground floor of the Student Centre and on each floor of the Library.

General information about Abertay:

Abertay's campus:

The University has a city centre location and all campus buildings are close to each other. The majority of the teaching accommodation is located in the Kydd Building and Old College. The campus is a combination of old and new buildings, with adequate access to most parts. Improvements in recent years include ramp access, automated doors, additional lifts and accessible toilets. Wheelchairs, including a height adjustable electric wheelchair are available for short-term loan.

The Library is adjacent to the Kydd Building and was designed to provide easy access for all students. Most, but not all, of the University's buildings are accessible to disabled students. However, we would strongly encourage all prospective students, and particularly those who use wheelchairs, to visit the University at an early date to consider any additional support or adjustments that they might require, such as desks with adjustable height settings – preferably before beginning their course. We are happy to provide individual tours, which can also be filmed to offer a further opportunity for you to review any possible difficulties you potentially might experience.

Where access is difficult or impossible, alternative locations or timetables will be arranged wherever possible. There are very few programmes of study that would not be available to wheelchair users or those with mobility difficulties due to inadequate physical access.

Parking bays for blue-badge holders are available in the university on-campus car park for students with mobility difficulties.

Student Enquiry Zone:

The Student Enquiry Zone (SEZ) is your first point of contact for University services and is available for extended hours, weekdays and weekends.

Located on the ground floor of the Library Building, SEZ is also accessible via telephone and email.

You will find friendly supportive staff able to assist with many aspects of University life, including: accommodation; IT and library support; making payments; queries relating to your course such as module registrations, timetables and exams; and appointment bookings for a range of student support services, including careers, financial support and counselling.

Contact:

Tel: 01382-308833

Email: sez@abertay.ac.uk

Student Services:

Student Services provides a support and welfare structure for all students and offers advisory and counselling services, welfare and financial advice and information, study skills support and careers guidance.

Advisory and Counselling Service:

The Advisory and Counselling Service is where you can get advice on a wide range of issues, co-ordinate support, arrange functional needs, assessment and liaise with academic staff. The service also provides general advice on financial, practical and consumer issues. There is also legal advice available, contact Student Services reception who will make an appointment with a solicitor.

Student Services

Tel: 01382 308051

Email: StudentServices@abertay.ac.uk

Health:

Your health and wellbeing as a student at Abertay University is extremely important to us. For this reason we aim to provide a supportive, proactive advisory service which includes advice and guidance on various aspects of health care, the emphasis being on preventative measures and early access to help when needed.

The University has developed a relationship with the Hillbank Health Centre so that Abertay students registered with the practice have dedicated surgery times. The dedicated service is: Monday - Friday between 12.30 and 1.30pm. The address and telephone number for the Health Centre are:

Hillbank Health Centre

1A Constitution Street

DUNDEE

DD3 6NF

Tel: 01382 221976

The health centre has a website: www.hillbankhealthcentre.co.uk

Abertay's student accommodation:

If you have a disability of any kind please contact our Student with Disabilities Adviser by email at advisory@abertay.ac.uk or call 01382 308051 while completing the Accommodation Application. – Change to: If you have a disability that will impact on your accommodation requirements, please contact the Disabled Student Advisor by emailing disabilityadvisors@abertay.ac.uk or call 01382 308051 when completing your accommodation application.

You can apply for our halls when your offer is either conditional firm (CF) or unconditional firm (UF) by completing the Accommodation Application in OASIS. Any special (change to additional) requirements for your living situation should be detailed in the application.

We have 3 'barrier-free' rooms in our Meadowside Halls which are set up for students with disabilities. This flat has a separate ramped entrance for wheelchair

users. We also have facilities in all our halls for deaf students and can make reasonable adaptations if needed. Whichever hall you apply for, students with special (change to additional) living requirements for medical needs/disabilities should inform the Adviser of their specific requirements in order for the University to follow the correct procedure to ensure your personal health & safety.

More information on finding accommodation while you study at Abertay can be found online at abertay.ac.uk/studentlife/accommodation/.

For advice on Abertay student accommodation, contact the Residences Office:

Phone: 01382 308059

Email: residences@abertay.ac.uk

About the Disability Service:

The Disability Service is part of Student Services, the university's student support team offering information, advice and guidance across every aspect of student life, including funding, finding work, counselling and developing successful study habits.

We work with students from all over the world.

Introducing the Disability Service Advisors

The two main members of staff in the Disability Service are Claire Allan, Disabled Student Advisor, and Richard Costella, Advisor for students with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

Students with specific learning difficulties, including dyslexia, will be contacted by Richard Costella. Other students will be contacted by Claire Allan.

More information about Student Services can be found online at:
abertay.ac.uk/studying/support/

You can contact us in the following ways:

Claire Allan

- Disabled Student Advisor.
- Phone Claire on 01382 30 89 32 or email her at c.allan@abertay.ac.uk

Richard Costella

- Advisor for students with specific learning difficulties.
- Phone Richard on 01382 30 80 53 or email him at r.costella@abertay.ac.uk

How the Disability Service can help:

SPLD Screening Assessment

Screening assessment usually takes up to an hour during which you will be asked to complete a number of tasks to obtain a profile of your strengths and weaknesses. Should the screening assessment positively indicate dyslexia, or indeed any other learning difficulty, you will be advised to see a Chartered Educational Psychologist for a comprehensive psychological evaluation. The university can arrange this assessment on your behalf.

Study Skills and Learning Support (Specific Learning Difficulties)

Support is available through Student Services for students with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties. It is often possible to arrange one-on-one tutorials where a range of study skills and assistance with coursework and examination preparation can be addressed. All such support is confidential and staff are appropriately qualified to assist you with your learning.

Specialist individual support:

We work with a range of specialists to provide one-to-one support for students who would benefit from additional advice and guidance to help them engage with their studies and student life in general.

The specialist support available includes help for students with Autism / Asperger's, dyslexia, sensory impairments, mobility difficulties and mental health conditions.

Learning resources in alternative formats:

Academic material can be made available in alternative formats to suit individual students, including:

- Permission to record lectures
- Large print hand-outs and tutorial readings
- Audio transcriptions

Examination and Class Test Arrangements

The University can make additional and alternative arrangements for examinations for students with disabilities. These include: an extra time allocation, use of a PC, different formats of examination papers, alternative methods of recording answers, the use of reader or scribe and an individual room.

The approach adopted by the University is as flexible as possible. Students are encouraged to discuss their requirements with the Adviser and this is reviewed each year to ensure that the arrangements continue to be appropriate.

Please note:

We will always try our best to accommodate additional and alternative examination arrangements wherever we can. However, it can take time to meet your requirements, for instance by sourcing additional staff to scribe or locating a separate room.

For that reason, please be advised that we cannot guarantee to be able to put in place alternative examination arrangements if you let us have less than 6 weeks' notice.

For forthcoming exam weeks:

Session 2015-16:

Semester 1 exams: 14 to 18 December. Please contact us by 6 November.

Semester 2 exams: 2 to 6 May. Please contact us by 20 March.

Library and Computing Services

Library and IT staff can help when accessing computing facilities and library resources. Library staff will also provide assistance in obtaining books/journals where necessary. Concessions on printing charges are available for visually-impaired and dyslexic students. A range of assistive software is available on networked PCs across all the university, with additional software available on level 1 of the library. A PC equipped with an extra-large screen, enlarged keyboard and Zoomtext magnification software is also available for priority use by students with a visual impairment. Two computers used for black and white and colour printing are also fitted with an enlarged keyboard. Fact sheets are available with full information or you can check the library's portal pages.

Things to think about as you apply:

Your Application

Prospective students with a disability are encouraged to contact Student Services prior to completing a UCAS application form. You are welcome to visit the University, including the residential accommodation, to see whether it is suitable for your needs. Guidance is also available as to whether the course you wish to follow is appropriate in terms of its content and delivery and also with respect to your future career aspirations.

Decisions on admission to the University are made entirely on academic grounds.

The Admissions Tutor might refer your application to the Disability Adviser if they have concerns about the University's ability to meet your support needs. The Adviser will contact you to obtain further information at this point, and may invite you to visit the University. This is not an interview but simply an opportunity for you to experience the University campus and make a judgement on its suitability. It is also an opportunity for you as a prospective student to discuss practical issues with the Adviser and academic staff. It is important at this point that every student understands what facilities and support is available so that no misunderstandings take place once on the course.

All students are encouraged to make contact with the Disability Adviser as early as possible to discuss appropriate arrangements.

Telling the university about your disability:

We always appreciate it when students are able to tell us early on about their disability and any additional support requirements that they might have as it can help us to meet their needs.

You will have several opportunities to tell us about your disability, from first putting in your application to registering at the start of the academic year for your course. If you attend one of the University's Open Days or Information Days, you will have an opportunity to meet with one of us for an initial conversation about how we might be able to help you.

In addition, you can also contact the Disability Service at any time by calling 01382 308051 or by emailing disabilityadvisors@abertay.ac.uk. For some students, it is helpful to have an informal discussion with a member of the Disability Service first.

You do not have to tell us about a disability before you start your course. If, for whatever reason, you choose not to disclose your disability, you can meet with a member of the Disability Service for advice at any time during your course. Please be aware, however, that we cannot guarantee to be able to make all the adjustments you might require straightaway if time is limited.

Protecting your confidentiality:

The University takes your confidentiality seriously. We comply with the Data Protection Act, which means that we do not share any of your personal information without your prior consent and never without a good reason for doing so. The Disability Service also operates under the Student Service's Code of Confidentiality.

What happens once I tell the university about my disability?

If you choose to tell the university about your disability, that general information is then made available to the staff who will be teaching you and other support staff so they can make adjustments to meet your particular support requirements. That basic information is kept very general – for instance for a student with dyslexia, all that other staff would be able to see was that they had a specific learning disability.

A member of the Disability Service will contact you during the summer to ask you to provide evidence of your disability. We need this if we are to be able to support any applications for additional funding and if we are to be able to justify making changes for you, for instance providing a scribe during exams.

Things to think about once you have been made an offer:

Disabled Students Allowance:

Students with a disability can apply to their funding authority i.e. Student Awards Agency for Scotland or Student Finance (England & Wales / N.Ireland) for Disabled Student Allowance (DSA). This is to cover certain additional expenditure in attending your course arising from your disability. DSA is not means-tested and is available to students on both full and part-time funded courses (so long as the part-time course equals 50% of the full-time course). You will find more information on DSA at:

- www.saas.gov.uk
- www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas

Large Items Allowance:

Students with a disability can claim for a large items allowance to purchase enabling equipment, as long as it can be shown that the piece of equipment is necessary for full participation on the course. In order to assess the suitability of any equipment you will normally be asked to undertake a needs assessment. This may be done at Abertay or you may be referred to the Access Centre for an assessment of needs. The cost of the assessment can be covered from DSA if you are eligible. If you are assessed as needing specific equipment you will then be allowed to purchase this through DSA from SAAS or Student Finance. DSA can also be used for repairs to the equipment, insurance and extended warranty cover costs.

Non-Medical Personal Helper Allowance:

Certain disabled students may need the help of a lip-speaker, interpreter, note-taker, proof-reader and so on, in order to fully benefit from a chosen course. This can be paid for from DSA for the whole time you are on a course. DSA is not meant for costs that students would ordinarily have because of their disability nor is it to be used for costs that all students incur. SAAS or Student Finance will therefore not pay for this type of assistance.

Basic Allowance:

The basic allowance is to cover the costs of additional items such as dictaphones, photocopying, ink cartridges, internet and braille paper. The money from this can also be used for the payment of fees charged for advice or tests for suitable equipment (needs assessments). It can also be used to top up the two allowances previously mentioned.

Travel:

Included with every grant is an element towards the cost of travel. If, however, you incur additional travel costs related to your disability, you can sometimes claim for these extra costs. Further details on the amounts available under each category can be found on the SAAS and Direct Gov websites (see above).

Needs Assessment:

The Disability Service can help you make a claim for DSA and you are advised to consult us as early as possible about this as the process of claiming can take some time. A needs assessment can be arranged by the University and carried out in the university or at a Higher Education Access Centre. Students must normally be eligible for funding from SAAS or their LEA or Library Board. Overseas and EU students are not eligible.

Providing evidence of your disability:

We need to see evidence of your disability if we are to be able to help you to apply for additional funding or to work with staff to meet your particular requirements on your course. What evidence you might be able to provide will vary according to your disability and where you have previously been studying. For students with a long-term illness or other medical condition, a doctor's letter is often sufficient. For students with a specific learning difficulty, a recent diagnostic report written by a qualified professional, such as an educational psychologist or senior learning support teacher.

If you are not sure what evidence you might have, or do not have evidence, please contact us to arrange a first appointment to discuss how we might be able to help you.

Things to think about over the summer before you start:

You can find out useful information about the modules that make up your course before you arrive, including:

- What you are going to be studying.
- Who your tutor will be.
- How much time studying in class and on your own is required.
- Recommended reading
- How you will be assessed.

The focus here will be on the sections of the module descriptor that previous students thought would be most valuable for you to know about.

How to find the module descriptors for your course:

1. Visit abertay.ac.uk
2. Click on 'Studying at Abertay', towards the top of the page.
3. Click on 'Undergraduate courses', under the Related Pages section on the left-hand side of the page.
4. Find your course from the list that then appears.
5. Then click on the 'Course content' tab, which brings up the list of modules available at each stage of your course.

Understanding your module descriptors:

Section 1 of the module descriptors deals with basic information, such as who is responsible for teaching that module. Section 2 of the descriptor outlines what you can expect to study on the module. Section 3 tells you how you will be taught and assessed.

Reading up on your chosen module content beforehand can help you to identify what you are going to be studying, help you identify what you may or may not know about the topics at this stage. If you don't know, it allows you to have plenty opportunity to read up on the topic over the summer so you have an understanding before you get here. It can also be useful to think about the teaching and assessment methods you will experience. Are they familiar to you from your education so far? Will anything cause you practical problems? One example is lab work, which might be difficult if you have manual handling problems and a solution might be to allocate you with someone to assist you. Another example is taking notes in class, which can be harder for students with a specific learning difficulty, and in those situations we can make a range of options available to you, ranging from a digital recorder so you can listen again to your lectures, to someone taking notes on your behalf.

What help is available?

If you see anything in your module descriptors that causes you concern, either because it is unfamiliar or because you know from experience that it might cause you difficulties, please contact us.

Things to think about during your first weeks at Abertay:

Finding, reading and understanding your timetable:

You might be very keen to receive your timetable as early as possible. However, draft timetables are not normally available until August or even early September. You will not know which tutorial or practical groups you will be allocated to until the early weeks of term, which is when final timetable changes might also be made. If that causes you particular problems, for instance because you are making your own arrangements for non-medical personal helpers to attend classes with you, please contact us and we will try our best to help.

Where to find your timetable:

As soon as timetables are ready, they are published on the intranet,

1. Visit intranet.abertay.ac.uk, using your student ID number and password to log in.
2. Find the link for 'Timetables' under 'Resources' at the top of the page.
3. Click on the link for the timetable for the new semester towards the bottom of the page that then appears.
4. From the drop-down menu, select 'Group' and then find the year of your course that you will be joining.

What you will need to make this easier

- A note of module codes (to identify your classes)
- Academic timetable (to identify weeks)

There are a number of things you need to take into consideration.

- Weeks - you will notice that some events are not on every week
- There may be a number of tutorials for one module which have been split into groups

At first glance, don't panic. Your timetable will be explained to you during Orientation Week by teaching staff. Until you have been allocated your tutorial and practical groups, normally by week 2 of the semester, you will not be able to finalise when you will be required on campus. If organising yourself and managing your time are difficult for you, we are happy to help you practise new ways of keeping on top of your workload.

Preparing for the start of your course:

Abertay runs a range of preparation activities before the start of the new academic year.

Summer School:

Summer School – Monday 18 to Thursday 27 August – a 2-week programme of preparation workshops to choose from, ideal if you are joining year 1 of your degree.

Full details are available at:
abertay.ac.uk/studying/find/ug/summer/

Bridging Programme:

The **Bridging Programme** – Monday 18 to Thursday 27 August – a 2-week programme of preparation workshops to choose from, aimed especially at students joining year 2 or year 3 of their course.

Full details are available at:
abertay.ac.uk/studying/find/ug/bridgeprog/.

Contacts & Further Information:

Student Services

t: 01382 308051

e: StudentServices@abertay.ac.uk

Head of Student Services: James Nicholson

Head of Student Services

t: 01382 308094

e: j.nicholson@abertay.ac.uk

University of Abertay Dundee

Kydd Building

Bell Street

Dundee

DD1 1HG

t: 01382 308000 (switchboard)

w: abertay.ac.uk

Student Awards Agency for Scotland

(SAAS) (Scotland & EU)

t: 0845 111 1711

e: saas.geu@scotland.gsi.gov.uk

w: saas.gov.uk

Student Finance Direct

w: studentfinance.direct.gov.uk

Education & Library Boards (Northern Ireland)

Belfast

t: 028 9056 4237/8

w: belb.org.uk

North Eastern

t: 028 2565 5025 or 028 2566 2280

w: neelb.org.uk

South Eastern

t: 028 9056 6200

w: seelb.org.uk**Southern**

t: 028 3751 243

w: selb.org**Western**

t: 028 8241 1499

w: welbni.org

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