

## FAQs about Inclusive Learning

### **Should I notify the College of my disability? If yes, when?**

Students are encouraged to discuss their support requirements with one of our Learning Support officers as soon as possible. In this way, the most appropriate support can be identified, implemented as far as possible and modified in response to your individual needs. The quickest way to ensure your support needs are addressed is to complete the Learning Support Referral Form and send directly to the Learner Services department or email us at [cild@belfastmet.ac.uk](mailto:cild@belfastmet.ac.uk). You can also contact us on 028 90265097 to make an appointment to see one of our Learning Support officers.

### **I have a medical condition but not sure, if it would be classed as a disability. What should I do?**

There is no definitive list, but there are ways to define and measure disability. The main legal definition is set out in the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 - a disabled person is someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Long-term means your impairment has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months, or for the rest of your life.

This DDA definition is quite broad. For example, it can include people who have dyslexia, learning difficulties or long-term medical conditions. It can also cover people experiencing mental health difficulties.

If you are still unsure, contact us to arrange a meeting with one of our learning support officers.

### **If I disclose my disability, will it affect my application?**

Under Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) no student can be discriminated against because of their disability.

### **What happens if I decide not to disclose?**

Deciding whether to disclose is a personal choice, however there are benefits to disclosing. If you tell us about your disability, then we can discuss appropriate support strategies and put them in place. If you do not tell us before the start of your course and something needs arranging; that could mean a delay, as it can take time to arrange note takers, sign language interpreters etc.

### **What happens once I have disclosed my disability?**

You will be given an appointment to meet with one of our learning support officers to discuss your requirements and agree appropriate support strategies. Discussion and recommendations will be based on medical evidence, background information from you on how your condition affects you on a daily basis and previous support you may have received at school.

### **Who will be told about my disability?**

It is an important part of our service that we deal with any issues sensitively and discreetly. All information and evidence given to us will be treated and stored confidentially. If classroom adjustments need to be made, your course tutors will be made aware. Special Exam Arrangements are organised by the Examinations Officer and evidence is required before these can be processed. Your disability will only be discussed with others after consultation with you and with your consent.

### **Do I have to pay for this support?**

Belfast Met is allocated a budget each year to meet the needs of students with disabilities or additional support needs enrolled on Further Education courses. This fund does not cover transport or personal care.

Students on higher education courses may be entitled to claim [Disabled Students' Allowance](#) (DSA). But you must apply to your local education authority to confirm eligibility for this award.

### **I have a disability but do not need any support. Do I still need to come to Inclusive Learning?**

It is always a good idea to come along for a chat with a Learning Support Officer to find out about the full range of support available. Studying at college is often very different from school, so it is in your best interests to know what is available.

### **How do I ensure special examination arrangements if I have any disabilities?**

The first thing you need is either a report from an educational psychologist if you are dyslexic and/or dyspraxic, or medical evidence from a specialist or general practitioner for other types of disability, including visual impairment, hearing impairment, mobility difficulties, mental health difficulties, Asperger's Syndrome or other recognised disability. Wherever possible, evidence should explain why you need special arrangements. Bring the evidence to Inclusive Learning and arrange an appointment with one of our Learning Support officers. Final decisions on special exam arrangements are the responsibility of the Exam Awarding Body.

Special exam arrangements have to be applied for at the beginning of the exam period and do not carry over into a new academic year. It is the student's responsibility to make sure you have been assessed by a learning support officer before the deadlines set by Belfast Met and the exam awarding body

### **I am an international student with a disability – what should I do?**

You will need to provide evidence - medical or an educational psychologist report - in English. International students may not qualify for funding from ASF or DSA, so you may have to make other arrangements to fund your support. This could mean you have to pay some or all of your support costs.

**Download the Learning Support Referral Form (LS1) here:**  
[Download LS1 Form](#)