

Disability Services – Guidelines for Students

LSTM provides confidential information, advice and guidance to prospective and current students and to staff teaching. Assessing or advising students who, for a variety of reasons, may require additional support.

Definition of Disability

The Equality Act (2010) defines a disabled person as someone who has a mental or physical impairment that influences his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The effect must be:

- Substantial (that is more than minor or trivial) and
- Long term (that is, has lasted or is likely to last for at least 12 months or for the rest of the life of the person affected) and
- Adverse

LSTM recognises the social model of disability, whereby an individual is understood to be disadvantaged not by their disability, but by social barriers, such as the physical environment, methods of communication and prejudicial attitudes. LSTM is committed to developing a fully inclusive learning environment for all our students.

How LSTM can help

LSTM provides support to students with a wide range of disabilities including but not limited to:

- Learning difficulties (such as dyslexia or dyspraxia)
- Health and mental health conditions
- Autism spectrum conditions (such as Asperger syndrome)
- Sensory impairments
- Mobility difficulties

LSTM offers tailored case-by-case disability related support for academic studies and will identify if there is support we can offer. LSTM can also provide advice on sources of funding such as the Disability Support Allowance (DSA).

Should you experience a disability, a long-lasting or temporary injury at any point in your studies, you are encouraged to contact the Student Experience Officer as soon as possible to discuss what adjustments can be put in place for you, or if there are any other suitable options, so your studies are not affected.

If you receive an injury before you arrive (e.g. you have broken your leg) please make the Student Experience Officer aware so that adjustments can be put in place for your arrival.

How do I disclose my disability?

You can disclose disability at any point in the year by contacting the Student Experience Officer during Drop In hours (please see end of guidance) or by emailing SAW@lstmed.ac.uk; but it is preferable to disclose when applying for your programme or as soon as possible afterwards, so that support arrangements can be put in place promptly.

What happens when I disclose my disability?

Once you have disclosed your disability, the Student Experience Officer will send you a Learner Support Questionnaire to complete and return with appropriate evidence. This questionnaire will help the Student Experience Officer to learn about you, your circumstances and the effects your disability has on your learning environment.

The Student Experience Officer will request to meet with you once the Learner Support Questionnaire has been completed to discuss what reasonable adjustments can be provided to assist in academic studies.

After this confidential meeting, and with your agreement, the Student Experience Officer will create an Individual Learning Plan that will outline the reasonable adjustments that will be put in place for your academic studies.

What are the reasonable adjustments?

Reasonable adjustments are measures put in place to change the way LSTM students are taught and assessed if the student will be disadvantaged at LSTM because of a disability.

Reasonable adjustments can include but are not limited to:

- Alternative exam arrangements, such as extra time, rest breaks or using a PC
- Teaching materials and exams in large print or an electronic format
- Specialist equipment (i.e. loan of digital voice recorders, specialist accessibility software, ergonomic equipment)
- Study Skills Mentor

Please email the Student Experience Officer on SAW@lstmed.ac.uk to discuss any requirements not on this list.

Please note, any **new** reasonable adjustments for exams must be requested at least **3 weeks** before the exam*. You may only apply if you already have an Individual Learning Plan in place.

*Requests sent less than 3 weeks before the exam will be looked at case by case but are not guaranteed.

What reasonable adjustments don't include.

Whilst LSTM will always endeavour to aid students in their studies, there are times when reasonable adjustments cannot be made. For example:

- LSTM cannot make reasonable adjustments to competence standards.
- LSTM students must achieve the same learning outcomes as other students, even if changes are made to how students are taught and assessed.
- Reasonable adjustments cannot be made where there would be a health and safety risk.
- Reasonable adjustments cannot be made where there is insufficient time to put these in place, or where the student has not provided, or been unable to provide, valid evidence. In those cases, it may be more appropriate to apply for an extension (written assignments) or a deferral (examinations), or to apply for extenuating circumstances. For more information on extensions, deferrals and extenuating circumstances, please contact the Registry Team on assessment@lstmed.ac.uk.

If you are uncertain as to whether you are eligible for adjustments to be put in place, please contact the Student Experience Officer on SAW@lstmed.ac.uk.

How does LSTM decide on reasonable adjustments?

The Student Experience Officer will consider your needs on an individual basis and make recommendations with the aim that you are not disadvantaged in relation to a disability.

Recommendations are based on:

- Evidence provided of a disability
- What support has worked well in your previous studies
- A needs assessment that has already been carried out
- Course requirements

Recommendations are included in the Individual Learning Plan which is forwarded, with your consent, to your Director of Studies to share with your module convenors.

What evidence do I need?

Please refer to the 'Disability Evidence Guide' provided to you along with this document.

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

You can apply for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) to cover some of the extra costs you have because of a mental health problem, long term illness or any other disability.

You must apply for DSA if you require specialist equipment or support mechanisms (such as an ergonomic chair or study skills tutor) and if you require a needs assessment as LSTM does not provide funds for these.

To be eligible to apply for DSA, you must live in England and have a disability that affects your ability to study. You must also:

- Be a postgraduate student (including distance learning)
- Qualify for student finance from Student Finance England
- Be studying on a course that lasts at least a year.

You cannot get DSA from Student Finance England if you're:

- An EU or Overseas student
- Eligible for NHS Disabled Students' Allowances (this is a separate scheme)
- Getting equivalent support from another funding source. E.g. from your university

It is advised that you apply for DSA as soon as possible as the process can take up to 13 weeks.

If you are an EU or Overseas student, LSTM will make every effort to put reasonable adjustments in place, based on evidence provided, but you should also investigate sources of funding in your home country before coming to the UK.

For more information on applying for and receiving DSA, please visit the Government website here: <https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas>

Supporting Students with Mental Health Conditions

LSTM is committed to nurturing an environment where all students feel supported, valued and included. It has specific legal responsibilities towards students whose mental health difficulties fall within the definition of disability within the law. These students may require reasonable adjustments to enable their equal participation and access to the curriculum.

The aims of LSTM, in respect of student mental health, are to:

- Promote positive mental health among the whole student population.

- Raise awareness of mental health issues and provision and reduce stigma so that students in difficulty are encouraged to seek help and staff are confident in their response.
- Provide LSTM staff with relevant, up to date mental health training and supervision opportunities in order to efficiently and effectively support students.
- Provide consistent and effective support to students experiencing mental health difficulties, with a co-ordinated approach within LSTM and, where required, a timely referral to appropriate specialist NHS services.
- Create a culture in which confidentiality and dignity are not only respected, that they are an expectation for all who are part of the LSTM community.

Student Wellbeing

You may not require one-to-one, face-to-face support, though if you are experiencing challenges or difficulties, LSTM offers a wide range of support mechanisms and interventions that include:

- A drop-in facility which is operated from LSTM
- A dedicated Student Advice and Wellbeing (SAW) email address of which the team monitor throughout the day. This facility is available to you regardless of where you are studying.
- One-to-one appointments where applicable. If you are temporarily or permanently based overseas, you will be offered generic welfare appointments by phone, email or Skype.
- Online psycho-education resources including self-help books and eBooks.
- One-to-one therapeutic sessions and groupwork if you are based at LSTM.
- Referral to a local Exercise Referral Scheme.
- An opportunity to take part in LSTM's Walking for Health Scheme, lunchtime craft for wellbeing sessions and a range of other health and fitness sessions aimed to improve physical and psychological wellbeing.
- Provision of social events and an opportunity to participate in off campus excursions and day trips aimed at enhancing the student experience.

Student Advice and Wellbeing Drop-In Hours

The Student Advice and Wellbeing (SAW) Drop-In service is currently not being offered due to COVID restrictions. Students will be informed of any changes as restrictions are lifted. SAW are still offering virtual appointments which you can access by emailing SAW@lstm.ac.uk.

Accessible Parking

If you require an accessible parking space, you will need to complete the 'Accessible Parking Application' form. You can request the form from the Student Experience Officer by emailing SAW@lstmed.ac.uk.

Once the application form has been completed, you will need to send this to Facilities Management, along with any supporting evidence, by emailing the form to fm@lstmed.ac.uk.