

Cardiff School of Physics and Astronomy

Procedures to Support Students with Disabilities

A. Purpose of this document

This document is intended to inform current and prospective students, and School staff, of the actions taken to support students with disabilities in the Cardiff School of Physics and Astronomy.

Specialist support for students is provided by the University's Disability and Dyslexia Service (DYSLEX), but the School will also assist students with accessing the support if desired. If you are a current student and you disclosed a disability on your application form or since arriving, DYSLEX should have been in contact with you. If this has not happened, please feel free to ask one of the School contacts (details in Section D) to alert DYSLEX on your behalf.

B. Procedure on Receipt of Notification of Student Disability

The University's Disability and Dyslexia Service (DYSLEX) sends a letter to The School discussing the needs of each individual student with dyslexia, disabilities and sensory impairments. This letter constitutes a formal communication to the School of the individual support requested by the student from DYSLEX, and also the support being requested of the School:

"[the student] may benefit from the following departmental support, however [the student] recognises that these are recommendations and not mandatory requirements."

On receiving the letter from DYSLEX, the Disability Contact instigates the following course of action:

- (1) **All letters regarding individual students are received by the School Office and copied to the student's personal tutor, the Head of Year, and the Director of Undergraduate Studies** (unless this action is specifically excluded within the letter). Another copy is placed in the student's file in the School Office.
- (2) **Special Provision made for examinations/tests (e.g. extra time, use of computer, amanuensis) is recorded by the School Office and lists are made available to the Heads of Year, who pass them on to Module Organisers .**
- (3) **The Office will further inform staff members within the School where the content of the letter indicates that this is appropriate.** Guidance will be sought from DYSLEX where applicable, but otherwise the Office will use the following table to determine who should be informed and what action to take, depending on the request for support being made:

Support requested	School response	Copy letter to:
Approval to word process and spell-check short lab reports following a lab session	The aim of laboratory sessions is to develop the skill of laboratory note-taking, and therefore only students with disclosed disabilities may use laptops during laboratory sessions. Students will be encouraged to use a lab book, in which case the MO will remind markers that minor faults of grammar and spelling are to be disregarded, as access to word processing was not possible.	MO
Provision for the student to receive appropriate additional time for class tests	Where tests contribute to the final Module Mark, Module Organisers will be requested to finish tests 10 minutes before the end of a lecture period, so that students with extra time for formal University examinations are allowed extra time to complete the class tests.	Year Tutor, MO
Provision of reading lists in advance of the course with advice to help prioritise	Module reading lists are already available to students, either within each module description (available on the Web) or through Blackboard. If additional help is required, this should be requested from the module organiser. There is a responsibility on all staff to ensure that reading lists are appropriately concise and relevant, but it is accepted that evaluating relevancy of literature is an important skill we expect students to develop.	NA
Provision of handouts and copies of overhead transparencies for all subjects prior to the lecture to aid preparation and enhance understanding	The Module Organiser will routinely fulfil this request when made in person by the student. If the student encounters any difficulties the Year Tutor or Disability Coordinator should be advised.	Year Tutor. Disability Coordinator
Provision of hand-written lecture notes in type so they can be more easily read	School policy is that Lecturers should only provide printed lecture notes.	NA
Approval of the use of a digital voice recorder or other similar equipment in lectures	This approval is given as standard to all students. Lecturers are asked not to draw attention to or question the use of such devices during lectures.	NA
Provision of feedback on assignments with respect to content, structure and grammar	Physics and Astronomy is largely a numerate subject (i.e. numerical answers to Physics and Astronomy problems), where grammar and spelling are not significant issues. However, for individual projects and some group projects (assessed by 100% coursework), which would normally be word-processed, students will be required to reach minimum standards with respect to grammar and spelling. All students will be expected to reach the standards available from proprietary software tools. Meetings may be arranged with DYSLX for students to receive feedback in the context of their disability.	Personal Tutor, Project Supervisor
Review of the student's academic progress	This forms part of the personal tutor's usual role for all students.	Personal Tutor
Extension of major project deadlines, or the time allowed for completion of coursework (e.g. regular lab reports)	The School will not approve extensions of project or coursework deadlines on the basis of a disability or dyslexia alone. This is because the logistical problems created would impact on the entire organisation of teaching in the School. It may also prevent the student from receiving feedback at an appropriate time. If an individual student encounters specific difficulties in meeting deadlines, s/he should consult their project	Project supervisor, Personal Tutor

	supervisor or personal tutor, or where appropriate, submit Special Circumstances to the School Office.	
Assistance with accessibility to laboratories and lecture rooms	Where students have physical disabilities or sensory impairment, the timetabling of activities in particular rooms will take into account as far as possible the ease of access to these rooms and facilities therein.	Timetabling Officer; Facilities Manager

C. School Approach to Student Assessment

While Physics and Astronomy is largely a numerate discipline, the expectations of employers are such that it is essential that graduates have been trained in such skills as report-writing. Therefore students of the Cardiff School of Physics and Astronomy are expected to achieve learning outcomes related to accuracy and correctness of written language, independent of the content of written work. Students will be required to demonstrate this ability with access to supporting technologies or materials (e.g. when completing coursework), but need not demonstrate it under exacting time constraints. Therefore:

- (1) In **University Examinations**, errors in spelling and grammar will not be penalised by markers unless the meaning is obscured.
- (2) In **School Tests**, specific provision will be granted to any student that receives such provision during University Examinations. Students are advised to check this provision with the Office.
- (3) Where a student's writing does not make sense, and it is not clear that they have demonstrated the appropriate knowledge, markers will **not** attempt to re-interpret what the student might have meant.
- (4) All students will be expected to reach minimum standards of grammar and spelling for **project dissertations or similar coursework**, which would normally be word-processed. All students will be expected to reach the standards available from proprietary software tools.

D. Support and Contact Details

The School wishes to develop its support mechanisms for students with disabilities and will be organising a series of help sessions. These are intended both to directly support students but also to generate feedback to the School to help it develop appropriate policies. You will be contacted by the School about the timings of these meetings. There is expectation that students who receive support will attend these meetings and contribute to both their own development and that of the School.

Students with queries may contact the following for advice and help:

Disability and Dyslexia Service: 50 Park Place, Tel. 029 20874528.

School Disability Contact: Mrs Louise Winter, School Office (N1.04), Tel 029 2087 6468.

School Disability Coordinator: Dr Bernard Richardson, N1.24, Tel 029 20876710.

Director of Learning and Teaching: Dr Carole Tucker, N1.15, Tel. 029 20874144.

Equality and Diversity Committee: Dr Annabel Cartwright, WX1.10, Tel 029 20874857.