



ASTON
UNIVERSITY

IN THE HEART OF
BIRMINGHAM

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

FOREWORD

Aston University is committed to ensuring equality in the delivery of learning and teaching, in the recruitment of students and in the employment of staff. It recognises its responsibility under the current legislation to ensure that it does not discriminate against students, potential students, staff, potential staff and visitors to the University, who have a disability. The University is committed to the continuing development of an 'enabling' environment and a non-discriminatory culture within the University community.

The Disability Equality Scheme identifies the action which has already been undertaken by the University to embed non-discriminatory practise in all aspects of its work and details the action the University has taken to date to ensure equality in the delivery of its core activity of learning, teaching and research and in improving access. The Action Plan identifies the priority areas for further development.

The University is committed to the social model of disability which is defined as;

'...the recognition that primarily it is the loss or limitation of opportunities, due to environmental and social barriers, that prevents people who have impairments from participating in society on an equal level with others.'

The Disability Equality Scheme articulates the University's approach to eliminating disability discrimination. It is important that all members and prospective members of the University community implement the same approach and form a common understanding of the social model of disability. This Scheme also outlines the work that will be needed to develop this common understanding.

CONTENTS	PAGE
Foreword	2
Contents	3-4
The Legal Context	5
The Disability Equality Scheme	5
Definition of Disability	6
Consultation and Involvement	7
Involving the Local Community	7
Responsibilities for the Scheme	8
Aston University	8
Context	8
Declaration of a Disability by Students and Staff	9
Student Data	10
Campus Accessibility	10
The Current Position and Action taken to achieve this	10-11
WEB Pages	11-12
Alternative Formats	12
Admissions Policy	12-13
Enrolment	13
Teaching and Learning	14
Code of Practice	14
Academic Standards	15
The Library	15
Learning and Support	16
Disability and Additional Needs Unit (DANU)	16
Study Support Workers	16
Dyslexia /Additional Learning Needs Support	16
Further Support for Students	16
Liaison with other Departments and Services	17
Assessment and Examinations	17
ICT Provision	18
Laboratories	18
Widening Participation and Outreach Activities	19
Schools and Colleges Liaison	19
Potential to Succeed	19
Careers	19
OTHER SERVICES	20
Aston Students' Guild	20
Students' Advice Centre	20

THE UNIVERSITY AS EMPLOYER	20
Applying for work at the University	20
Starting Work	21
Disclosure and Confidentiality	21
Training and Career Development	21
Redundancy	22
Discipline	22
Harassment	22
Monitoring and Data Collection	22
Communicating with Staff	22
MOVING FORWARD	23
Feedback from the Focus groups	23
Feedback from the Surveys	24
DEVELOPING THE ACTION PLAN	25
THE ACTION PLAN - 2006-2009	26-31
Learning and Teaching	26
Widening Access	27
Human Resources	28
Research	29
Business and Community	29
Physical Accessibility	30
Information Access	30
Monitoring and Review	31
Publications and Promotion	32
Appendix A-Student Survey	
Appendix B-Staff Survey	

THE LEGAL CONTEXT

The Disability Discrimination Act, 1995, amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, places a statutory General Duty on all public authorities and Higher Education Institutions to promote disability equality.

The 2005 Act provides an increasingly robust legislative framework which requires the University, in carrying out all functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination
- Eliminate unlawful harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Take steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons

Aston University recognises that promoting equality will improve facilities and services for everyone. The aim, therefore, is to make equality a central part of the way the University operates by putting it at the heart of policy making, service delivery, learning and teaching and employment practice.

The Disability Equality Scheme

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 imposes a number of specific statutory duties on the University. These duties are intended to assist the University in meeting the General Duty, in particular by setting out what it should do to plan, deliver and evaluate action to eliminate discrimination and promote equality. The core requirements are:

- The preparation and publication of a Disability Equality Scheme
- Implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme via an action plan in the scheme
- Annual reporting

This Disability Equality Scheme has been produced to comply with these requirements and to contribute towards the University's commitment to promoting good equalities practices, to ensure that the University meets the needs of students, prospective students, staff, prospective staff and visitors with a disability. This Scheme sets out the overall objectives for improving and addressing disability inequalities and the action plan for delivering improvements to access, teaching and learning, and services. Its aim is:

- To meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act and set out plans to improve access to teaching and learning, employment and University services

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

- To make sure that the needs and views of students and staff with a disability are taken into account in the design and delivery of courses and services, in making access improvements and in developing policies
- To continuously monitor and improve the ways in which courses and services are delivered to students with a disability

In addition to the Disability Discrimination Act, this Scheme supports compliance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, the Building Regulations 2000 (including amendments 2003) and the Fire Precautions (workplace) regulations 1997 (as amended 1999). This Scheme also anticipates future disability legislation and recognises that the duties in this area are likely to expand. It is also recognised that this will be a continually evolving document.

Definition of Disability

The Act defines disability as:

'A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'

The effect must be substantial (that is, more than minor or trivial); 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.

'Impairment' covers physical impairments and impairments affecting the senses such as sight and hearing. It also covers mental impairments, including learning disabilities and mental illness. Even if an impairment is controlled by medication or special aids the person is still considered as disabled for the purposes of the Act.

'Substantial' includes progressive conditions where impairment is likely to become substantial, such as cancer; multiple sclerosis; muscular dystrophy and HIV infection. People with these conditions are covered by the Act from the moment there is a noticeable effect on their day-to-day activities, however slight.

'Long-term' relates to effects which last for at least twelve months, or are likely to last for twelve months or more, including conditions which are likely to recur.

'Day-to-day' activities are normal activities carried out by most people on a regular basis, and must involve one of the following broad categories: mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; the ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects; speech, hearing, eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; perception of the risk of physical danger.

Severe disfigurements are treated as a disability, even though they may not affect a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT

The University recognises that the involvement of students and staff with a disability and of disabled people in the wider community is critical to the success of the Disability Equality Scheme.

To develop and implement the Scheme a Steering Group was formed, reporting to the Disability Working Party and with the Senior Pro Vice Chancellor acting as champion of the scheme. The group ensured that information about the Scheme was sent to all staff and students via email and students and staff were invited to attend a series of briefing meetings and were asked to indicate if they would like to participate in the development of the Scheme. A total of twenty seven staff and students made a commitment to be involved. A leaflet detailing the Scheme was produced and circulated to all staff and students via email and hard copies were distributed around key points of the campus for visitors. Articles were also published in the University's staff magazine and the Students' Guild newspaper.

External researchers were appointed to conduct focus groups with staff and students, involving both disabled and non-disabled people. The results of these focus groups were then used to inform the development of a staff and a student on-line survey and feedback from the focus groups and the survey was, in turn, used to inform and develop the Action Plan. 478 students and 214 staff completed the survey, a total of 692 respondents, of which 209 indicated that they had an impairment and 48 considered that they had a disability.

Focus groups, surveys and exit interviews with students and staff with a disability will be undertaken on a regular basis and the information gathered used to monitor and inform the Action Plan.

Involving the Local Community

The importance of engaging with local disability organisations was recognised as was the fact that the other two Universities in Birmingham would be involved in the same process. To ensure that these, often small, organisations would not be inundated with requests a postal survey was conducted jointly with the University of Central England and the University of Birmingham. Other users of University facilities, i.e. clubs and societies that use teaching rooms or sports facilities were also contacted. The survey asked for views on the accessibility of each of the University campuses and on support services. One organisation which has worked closely with Aston University to deliver training to staff on Autistic Spectrum Disorders cited the support currently available to students with Aspergers' Syndrome as an example of good practice.

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

Further links with groups that work with disabled people in the local area will be established, where such links do not already exist, to obtain feedback from people in the community to ensure that the University is responsive to their needs and that individuals and groups are not being excluded from participating in courses or other activities offered by the University.

Responsibilities for the Scheme

The University Council has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the University complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, 1995 and has a lead to play in actively promoting disability equality and in eliminating discrimination and harassment of disabled people within the University community. The Senior Pro Vice Chancellor will continue to champion the scheme within the University but the Disability Working Party will have responsibility for monitoring the impact of the scheme.

Monitoring and Review of the Scheme

The Disability Working Party will be responsible for:

- Ensuring that the policies, procedures and practices with disability equality relevance have been identified for initial screening and are included at Appendix B.
- Reviewing amendments where necessary in practice and procedure and any proposed policy changes following impact assessments
- Advising the Equal Opportunities Forum on the implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme and the Action Plan
- Ensuring appropriate consultation procedures are adopted
- Providing regular progress reports to the Equal Opportunities Forum
- Monitoring the outcomes of Impact Assessments and incorporating relevant actions into the Action Plan.
- Monitoring progress on the Action Plan and reporting annually to the Equal Opportunities Forum.

The Equal Opportunities Adviser, a member of the Disability Working Party, will have responsibility for producing an annual report which will be presented to the University Council through the committee structure.

The Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan will be available on the website and through other appropriate media.

ASTON UNIVERSITY

Context

Aston University is a single campus University in the centre of Birmingham, the smallest of the three Universities in the city, with a student population of approximately 7200 full time equivalent students, the majority studying on full time programmes, with 70% of undergraduates undertaking a placement year

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

as part of their course. 2,117 students live on campus in University Halls of Residence. Although Aston University operates within a national and international context a significant percentage of the students come from the West Midlands region and are drawn from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds and socio-economic groups.

Accessibility

www.aston.ac.uk/disability

The University campus is flat and self-contained, with health care facilities, grocery stores, newsagents, banks, a hairdresser, photocopying facilities and a range of places to eat and drink all on site. The campus is also very close to the centre of Birmingham and its full range of facilities. The city centre is almost entirely pedestrianised facilitating access to a wide range of shops and services.

The Campus Accessibility Guide provides comprehensive advice on the easiest routes across the campus and within the buildings.

Declaration of a Disability by Students and Staff

In the academic year 2006-2007, 406 current students and 34 staff declared a disability. However, Aston University recognises that staff and students do not always disclose their disability and that this will be reflected in the statistics. This is borne out by the fact that of the 209 staff and students who indicated on the survey that they had an impairment only 48 described themselves as having a disability. The number of disabled students joining the University has risen steadily each year, both those who have openly disclosed a disability and those students who declare after enrolling on a course.

It is difficult to establish accurate comparative data on the levels of disability in the local community due to the different definitions of disability in official figures. However, according to the 2001 Census, 6.7% of Birmingham residents aged 16-74 were economically inactive because of permanent sickness or disability, compared with 5.7% in the West Midlands and 5.3% in England as a whole.

In Birmingham 1.5% of 16-24 year old males and 1.1% of females in this age group were permanently sick or disabled. The 2001 Census also shows that there were 4,022 students with limiting long-term illness in Birmingham. There are in excess of 50,000 students in Birmingham forming 10.1% of the

population compared with 7% of the population of residents aged 16-74 in England and 8.1% in the West Midlands.

These figures need to be considered in the context of national research which shows that:

- One in twenty disabled people are in further or higher education compared to one in ten of the rest of the population. (Labour force survey, Winter, 2000-1)

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

- Disabled young people are 40% as likely to go into higher education aged 18 as their non disabled counterparts. (National Audit Office - Widening Access to Higher Education, January 2002)
- 21% of young disabled people said they were discouraged from taking particular options in school and 20% were discouraged from taking GCSEs
- 30% of young disabled people who had not gone on to further or higher education said they were prevented from doing so for a reason related to their disability. (NOP Survey of young disabled people undertaken in December 2002)
- More than double the number of disabled people are out of work than non-disabled people. (Labour Force survey, winter 2001-2).

Based on the HESA statistics for the academic year 2004-05, the University is approximately 1% below the national average in the number of students who have declared a disability, are claiming Disabled Students' Allowance and who are domiciled in the UK and the number of staff who have declared a disability is not representative of the proportion of disabled people of working age in the community. The University recognises that there are many potential reasons for non-disclosure and that discussions need to take place with staff and students and potential applicants to identify the barriers to disclosure and to address these. The University is committed to creating a positive culture to enable students and staff and prospective students and staff to disclose a disability.

The Equal Opportunities Monitoring Task Group has examined available data regarding the progression, retention and degree classification of disabled students at the University and could not find any significant differences to these outcomes when compared with non-disabled students.

Student Data

Code	Description	Number
1	Specific Learning Difficulties	142
2	Visual impairment	15
3	Hearing impairment	23
4	Mobility impairment	13
T	Autistic Spectrum Disorder / Asperger Syndrome	6
6	Mental Health Difficulties	12
7	Unseen disabilities	143
8	Two or more of the categories listed	5
9	Other additional need or disability not listed above	47
	Total	406

The Current Position and the Action taken to achieve this

The University has an ongoing commitment to improving and developing facilities and services for students, staff and visitors with a disability and to further this, the University's Estates Department commissioned an audit in 2001 in order to determine accessibility of the buildings for disabled people. Using this to prioritise improvements the University made significant investment in improvements in access to teaching facilities, residential accommodation and recreational facilities in areas where disabled people had indicated there was an access difficulty, as well as to areas which could be used by prospective students who had declared a disability.

More recently in August 2005 the Estates Department conducted a site wide risk assessment utilising BS 8300:2001 and the JMU Access Partnership fact sheets. An action plan was drawn up and priorities identified for each building, the main focus of which was on the installation of lifts and further improving access across campus, including dropped curbs and clearer signage. Most of this work has been completed resulting in a number of significant improvements including:

- Significant improvements to the Vision Sciences Building parts of which had been inaccessible to people with mobility difficulties. The installation of a DDA compliant lift with lowered, tactile buttons, audible floor announcements plus improvements to the external access ramp and automatic door has made this building fully accessible.
- The Chemical Engineering building had been largely inaccessible to people with mobility difficulties. Wheelchair users could not access any part of the building without assistance. The installation of an automatic door in the rear entrance corridor to the ground floor and a unisex DDA compliant toilet facility has made this building accessible. An external fire exit has been converted to a 'card swipe' operated automatic door to provide direct access to the existing DDA compliant lift.
- Improvements made to the Sports facilities include the installation of automatic doors to the Woodcock Sports Centre and the changing rooms and a new ramp at the external entrance point. Curbs have been lowered at the rear of the Gem Sports facility and to the front and side of the Chemical Engineering Building to enable access from the adjacent Disabled Parking spaces and via the existing footpaths.
- Modifications have been made to twelve existing lifts within the Main Building, North and South Wings and the Students' Guild with these lifts being fitted with lowered tactile buttons and audible floor announcements to ensure they are DDA compliant.
- A new DDA compliant stair lift has been installed to the rear of the Great Hall, on the short flight of stairs between the Main Building and the North Wing, making the North Wing building accessible from within the building for people with mobility difficulties.
- Power assisted doors have been installed to the South Wing entrances of the Main Building which provides access to the main Reception point for the University. Automatic doors have also been installed to the North Wing entrances and the Library.

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

- Braille and tactile signs and surfaces have been installed in all buildings across the campus.
- Many other improvements have been made to aid accessibility, including clearer signage, improved lighting, repositioning of swipe card access points, lowering of handrails, clearer marking of routes and steps and the lowering of curbs.

The University recognises that the significant improvements made to the physical access to buildings is only one element in ensuring that students, staff and visitor can participate fully in the University community and the University has also been addressing issues of access to information and the delivery of learning and teaching.

WEB Pages

Increasingly, potential staff and students and current students, staff and visitors rely on the University's web site to access up to date information. This can be of particular value to those who find printed information less accessible. An informal analysis of the accessibility of the University's website was conducted in August 2006 to ensure compliance with relevant standards. The University's web pages were tested in accordance with the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

Due to the large volume of pages on the University's site a 'sampling' approach was adopted as recommended by W3C, where selected parts of the site were tested for conformance to Web Accessibility Initiative standards. The sections chosen for examination included the Home Page, Aston Media, the Disability and Additional Needs Unit, Information Systems Aston, information for International Students, the Library, Widening Participation and Prospective Students. A variety of tools were used including accessibility checking tools, manual examination of code and the use of assistive technology products. It was found that, although many of the pages did not fully conform, level 'A' could be achieved by addressing a small number of changes. The main issue was a lack of textual equivalents of displayed images indicating the need to ensure that web authors were always alert to these issues when adding or amending pages. This will be addressed to ensure that the site is fully compliant.

Alternative Formats

A range of the University's key documents are available in alternative formats. The University's Undergraduate Prospectus is available in large print, Braille, audio tape and on the web pages. Leaflets produced by the Disability and Additional Needs Unit are available in large print and electronic format; the

Disability Statement is available in all formats and other information can be produced on audio tape and Braille on request. There are also tactile and large print versions of the University's campus map.

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

The Library and Careers Service provide information in a variety of formats, but provision elsewhere in the University is inconsistent although many sources of information are available electronically and can be manipulated into larger print. This is addressed in the Action Plan. Guidance has been issued to all staff about accessible print formats and it is the intention of the University to ensure publications are made available in alternative formats as they are updated and amended.

Admissions Policy

The University has always welcomed and encouraged applications from students with disabilities. All applications are judged solely on academic merit. Applications are tracked from the point of being received through to enrolment and beyond, helping the University to ensure that it meets the needs of these students.

Having established academic suitability for a course the Department to which the student has applied will offer those applicants with complex support needs an interview in order to find out more about any academic support they may require. Applicants are encouraged to find out as much as possible at these interviews to help them make an informed choice. The University offers specialist advice, support and guidance to prospective and current students through the Disability and Additional Needs Unit (DANU) part of Student Services, based within Student Support. The Disability Co-ordinator is usually invited to the interview to answer questions relating to any specific adjustments or support requirements. DANU will also advise staff about support arrangements for these interviews, such as accessible parking, use of support workers and information in alternative formats.

If a prospective student declares a disability on their UCAS form a copy of their application is automatically sent to DANU. It is recognised that a disability may be declared openly or more subtly on the form and admissions staff have been advised to check all sections of the form where a disability may have been mentioned. DANU will offer advice to the admitting School or Department and will also make direct contact with all applicants who have indicated that they have a disability, sending them a letter of welcome and a self-assessment of support requirements form for them to complete. This form also asks the applicant to indicate to whom, within the University, relevant information about their support needs can be communicated and provides advice on DANU's confidentiality policy. Leaflets containing information on issues such as applying for the Disabled Students' Allowance, support for International students and support for students with specific learning difficulties are also provided.

Where an applicant has complex support needs, DANU will liaise with the Admissions Tutor and any other appropriate staff with the applicants' permission. Some support arrangements may need to be identified and arrangements put in place even if the applicant is not holding a confirmed firm

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

offer in order to ensure that if the student subsequently enrolls with the University all necessary arrangements are in place for the start of the academic year.

At the point where it is confirmed that an applicant will be coming to the University DANU will, with the student's consent, provide the Department with details of the support required and start to co-ordinate support wherever possible. DANU makes written recommendations to the named contact in each department for circulation to the relevant teaching / administrative staff.

Enrolment

New students are offered support with enrolment procedures such as individual appointments, rather than queuing, assistance with completing enrolment forms and forms in larger print.

Teaching and Learning

The University is committed to creating an inclusive learning, teaching and assessment environment for all its students and to ensuring that students with a disability receive full access to education and other related provision and have the same opportunities as non-disabled students. To achieve this, the University has developed and embedded a range of policies and practices to ensure that students, prospective students, staff, prospective staff and visitors with a disability are not discriminated against.

Code of Practice

www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/equalops/policies/Disability_Policy_Student.jsp

In response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001, the University published a 'Policy Statement and Code of Practice on Special Educational Needs and Disability'. This policy and code is designed to support staff in understanding their responsibilities under the Act and in identifying and developing best practice, as it was recognised that staff might require guidance in putting in place reasonable and anticipatory adjustments to meet the wide ranging needs of students.

A core aim of the policy is to ensure that students with a disability are not discriminated against in the delivery and assessment of the curriculum. The teaching departments have been identified as having responsibility for providing an accessible learning and teaching environment and that, where appropriate, there should be a range of assessment methods to enable disabled students to realise their full potential. It was noted that by addressing the needs of disabled students other students would also benefit from inclusive teaching practices. Recommendations within the policy include:

- mainstreaming inclusive practice
- engendering and embedding a climate of innovative and flexible practice, monitored by the department and not centred on an individual student

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

- ensuring access to classes, lectures, seminars and practical sessions
- identifying alternative methods of examinations and assessments
- ensuring access, or identifying realistic alternatives, to study abroad, work placements or field trips
- producing learning equipment and materials such as lecture notes and handouts in advance; ensuring laboratory equipment, computer facilities, seminar rooms, lecture theatres, laboratories etc. are accessible
- ensuring access to the library and other resource centres

The University will continue to develop and embed best practise in all learning and teaching activities.

The University recognises that students will be placed at a substantial disadvantage if the course is delivered through an inaccessible medium and that materials need to be available in accessible formats. Academic staff are asked to produce handouts and course materials in digital format as these are most easily converted into Braille or audio formats. They are also asked to provide any web based material or visual aids such as OHP's to support orally delivered material in advance of the lecture. This not only assists students with dyslexia and those with a hearing impairment who can lip-read more effectively if they have some advance knowledge of the subject matter and any new terminology but also enhances the learning experience of International students who will also benefit from learning new terminology in advance of the class.

Where video is used, staff are asked to give thought to either subtitling or producing transcripts or audio description of key visual information as this may be essential for some students. Subtitled videos also benefit students who are non-native English speakers.

Academic Standards

The Act does not require the University to do anything that might mean it cannot maintain academic or other prescribed standards in a particular learning programme. However, the University will seek to ensure that it takes all reasonable steps to enable suitably qualified students, or prospective students, with a disability to successfully participate in, and complete, all academic programmes through the provision of a flexible learning environment.

The Library

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

The Library is committed to making facilities and services accessible to students, staff and visitors with disabilities, to enable them to gain maximum benefit from print and electronic resources. A range of policies are in place to assist students and staff with a disability.

Some materials can be loaned for extended periods and to reduce journeys to the Library, especially for off-campus users, can be sent out and returned by post or renewed over the telephone. Support Workers are also able to borrow materials on their client's behalf using a pre-signed memo. Computers in the Library can be pre booked to enable access to electronic resources. There are several small study rooms which can be booked for use by students with additional needs and a larger study room has been equipped with whiteboard, height-adjustable table, daylight lamp, computer with larger screen, scanner and range of assistive software, and a CCTV magnification system.

Induction loops are fitted at all service points and in the Library Information Skills Suite where Library seminars can normally be arranged at a time to suit individuals including the evenings, or one-to-one training may be arranged.

Learning and Support

A Learning and Skills Centre is located in the Library and an Assistive Technology Officer is available in the Centre, to advise on technical support that is best suited to the individual learning and support needs of students with a disability. Consideration is also being given to integrating the current study skills support for Dyslexic students offered within Student Support, within the Learning and Skills Centre.

Disability and Additional Needs Unit (DANU)

www.aston.ac.uk/disability

DANU, part of Student Services based in Student Support, offers specialist advice, support and guidance to prospective students, students and staff and co-ordinates support for students and prospective students of the University who have physical, sensory or hidden disabilities, mental health or specific learning difficulties. They provide a confidential service offering advice on all disability-related issues and can also arrange diagnostic assessments for students who believe they may have specific learning difficulties. They also provide guidance to Departments and to individual academic staff working with students with a disability.

Study Support Workers

DANU operates the Personal Assistance Scheme (PAS). PAS recruits and trains students to enable them to provide a variety of study support for students with disabilities and additional needs, including:

- note-taking
- Keyboard manipulation
- Readers
- assistance in the library/ laboratories
- transcription services
- mobility assistance

- Mentoring
- Orientation
- any other non-medical support

Dyslexia /Additional Learning Needs Support

For those students assessed as requiring assistance with study skills, support is offered on a one-to-one basis with a Dyslexia/Study Skills Support Tutor, who can help with essay structuring, revision techniques, proofreading and other study strategies.

Further Support for Students

DANU can assist with the provision of British Sign Language Interpreters, Communication Support Workers, Visiting Teacher Service tuition, campus orientation visits and sessions, liaison with supportive external organisations such as RNIB and Autism West Midlands, liaison with Social Services to provide personal care assistants and liaison with local mental health teams.

DANU also advises on entitlement to the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) and assists with applications. The DSA can pay for equipment, study support workers and any extra study-related costs. DANU also provides advice about other sources of funding for those not eligible for the DSA or whose needs exceed the allowances paid by the DSA. It should be noted that depending on the way in which a student is funded they may be required to meet the costs of some of these services from the DSA or their own resources.

Liaison with other Departments and Services

DANU can assist in liaising with other departments and services to arrange, for example, adapted accommodation, personal evacuation plans in the event of a fire alarm, on-site accessible parking, access to lecture materials and individual exam arrangements.

The University will make every effort to provide appropriate support and to make reasonable and anticipatory adjustments; however, some services are subject to availability and successful application for funding, such as the provision of sign language interpreters. EU and International students are not eligible for the DSA or other state funding and are advised to contact the Disability Co-ordinator for further advice.

Dependent on the nature of the disability and the individual needs assessment students may also be eligible for:

- **Accommodation** for the duration of their studies, adapted as appropriate with, for example, vibrating emergency alert systems, internet access, en-suite bathrooms, ground floor / larger floor space, mobility-related equipment such as hoists, grab rails, adapted beds and general adaptations for wheelchair users
- **Individual examination arrangements** such as extra time, rest breaks, use of a word-processor, language-modified papers, a

private room in which to sit the exam, a BSL interpreter, a reader, or an amanuensis

- **Support from academic departments** such as individual access arrangements to lecture materials in advance, on-line learning materials, course adaptations and additional support from a personal tutor.

Assessment and Examinations

The University has an established and embedded Examinations Policy for students with a disability and can offer a variety of adaptations for examinations according to individual need. Students with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) may be given extra time to complete exams, the use of a laptop, question papers in larger, clearer print or on a coloured background or the use of an amanuensis.

The University also offers students with Specific Learning Difficulties the opportunity to identify their (otherwise anonymous) exam scripts by placing authorised stickers on them, alerting markers not to penalise for presentational errors.

Other adaptations include modified exam papers for students with hearing impairments, BSL interpreter provision, private rooms for students with attention deficit or social phobia issues, taking examinations in alternative venues such as the student's own home.

Due to the success of the University in increasing its numbers of students with disabilities, more resources are needed to accommodate individual needs and the University has been considering the most appropriate way of addressing this issue.

ICT Provision

The University is currently working on 'mainstreaming' assistive technology to make it more widely available across the University. A range of software is available to support students including:

- textHELP Read & Write – whilst this has been specifically designed to assist those with dyslexia it can also be of value to some people with hearing impairment whose first language is not English as it provides a range of tools such as text-to-speech, word prediction and homophone checking
- Inspiration – a 'mind mapping' tool that helps to organise ideas visually. It allows the user to gradually 'build' written documents incrementally by drawing out the ideas graphically on-screen and then adding a textual outline
- Dolphin Supernova – a combined screenreading and screen magnification package to meet a variety of needs for students who are blind or partially sighted

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

- Kurzweil 1000 – Three PCs in the Additional Needs room are equipped with scanners that can be used with this software which allows the user to scan printed documents and the PC will then read the document back to the user via speech synthesis.

The University also has a facility for the limited production of tactile diagrams and a Scotch Dymo Braille labeller for small Braille label production. Loop systems are installed in various locations around the University and fire alert pagers are available from Security for students with a hearing impairment. In addition the University has a small selection of products that are available for short-term loan by students who are waiting for their own equipment to be delivered or who are not eligible for Disabled Students' Allowance including, portable PCs; copies of textHELP Read & Write; TFT displays; microphones; a copy of Dragon Naturally Speaking 7 and a Sarabec phone flasher.

Laboratories

In both the laboratories and the clinical environments adjustments are made based on the individual need of the student or member of staff.

The external bodies governing Optometry and Pharmacy have been reluctant to identify what support they consider counter to professional competency standards and those which they find acceptable. For this reason, the University has offered support in all areas where individuals may need it except in Dispensing (Pharmacy) and Clinical Practice (Optometry). This is due to concerns that any support in these subject areas may prejudice the chances of a student being eligible to take the external professional exams after obtaining their degree. The University is seeking clarification from both the RPSGB and GOC and is still awaiting a response.

Widening Participation and Outreach Activities

The University is fully committed to widening participation and the needs of disabled students are taken into account when planning outreach events including visits by schools to the University, the residential Summer School and mentors bringing pupils on to campus. All students across the University are encouraged to take part in Outreach activities, such as tutoring, mentoring and ACE activities. On the application form to attend these events school pupils are asked to identify any individual needs they might have to ensure that appropriate support can be offered. However, the low attendance of disabled students on summer schools has been identified at a national level and members of the University staff are seeking ways to address this issue.

Schools and Colleges Liaison

The needs of students with a disability are taken into account at events organised by Schools and Colleges Liaison, for example, Open Days, campus tours and the Higher Education Convention. Visiting students are asked to indicate any particular needs and advice is sought from DANU about support needs for the event.

Potential to Succeed

Students with specific learning difficulties are one of three groups targeted by a Widening Participation funded research project being undertaken by the University. The project aims to establish indicators of potential for Widening Participation groups as well as intervention strategies to support students once they arrive at the University. Interventions include the development of E-groups and a Dyslexia Students Group and a study room and study skills support for dyslexic students.

Careers

A Placement Support Adviser, based in Careers, identifies any student who might be disadvantaged in terms of access to placement or employment opportunities and develops appropriate intervention strategies. The Adviser works closely with DANU to support disabled students in accessing their placement. The Careers service runs an annual Diversity Awareness Week. This involves a range of employer-led events for students and staff aiming to raise awareness of diversity issues and provide support to those who may be disadvantaged in the labour market.

Aston Students' Guild

Aston Students' Guild exists to enhance the student experience at Aston University by identifying, anticipating and satisfying the needs of its membership through student democracy, representation and involvement. The Guild is committed to promoting equality and diversity to all its members and strives to represent the needs of individuals and groups both nationally and locally.

The Vice President Education and Welfare, the Students' Advice Centre Manager and the Equalities Officer work closely with the Guild Welfare and Equalities committees, DANU and the National Union of Students to raise awareness of diversity issues and provide support where ever possible through campaigns, lobbying and representation.

Students' Advice Centre

The Students' Advice Centre (SAC) provides free and impartial advice, assistance, representation and information service for Aston students. It is committed to 'Quality and Equality for all'.

THE UNIVERSITY AS EMPLOYER

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

Aston University is committed to promoting equality and diversity and to ensuring, through its recruitment and selection processes that it encourages applications from all groups represented in the wider community at a local, national and international level. The University welcomes and encourages applications from disabled people and seeks to create a positive and supportive work environment. This applies to newly appointed staff and to staff who become disabled or become aware of a disability during their employment. The Disability Policy for Staff details the University's approach to the employment and retention of disabled people.

Applying for work at the University

To ensure that employment opportunities are accessible to as many applicants as possible all person specifications and job descriptions are checked by Personnel and consideration given to the advertising options which will reach the widest audience. Application forms and further information are accessible via the web and are also available in alternative formats. As part of the application process candidates are asked if they require any adjustments or additional requirements at the interview or in the post they are applying for to ensure that recruitment processes are open to all candidates.

Training is offered to all managers on issues of recruitment and selection, equal opportunities and legislation and best practice in terms of drafting person specifications, short-listing and interviews.

Working for the University

The University recognises that although many disabled staff require little or no change to their working arrangements it recognises that adjustments to the work environment can be a key element in helping staff to work effectively. Where a disclosure is made prior to commencing employment the individual is taken through a structured assessment process the focus of which is on their requirement within the role. The University may seek advice from appropriate external organisations, including the Job Centre Plus 'Access to Work Scheme'. Information relating to the provision for disabled staff is again provided to all staff at induction and offers a further opportunity for an individual to disclose a disability or additional need.

All permanent posts are subject to a probationary period. This is a supportive process which involves two way communication to discuss any concerns, problems and training requirements which may have arisen and can also be used to address the need for any adjustments.

If a member of staff becomes disabled during the course of their employment, or where their circumstances change, all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that they are able to remain in employment at the University. Following a full assessment, appropriate options will be discussed with the individual.

Disclosure and Confidentiality

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, any information given to the University relating to a disability is treated in confidence. In some circumstances it may be helpful to disabled staff for their immediate colleagues to have some information about their disability. Individuals will be asked whether they wish their colleagues to be informed of their disability and their wishes will be respected. Information on the Equal Opportunities Monitoring form is confidential and does not constitute disclosure of a disability to the University.

Training and Career Development

The University is committed to ensuring that disabled staff will not be disadvantaged in their opportunities for training and development. The Centre for Staff and Academic Practice Development responds to requests for adjustments or additional requirements, such as interpreters, large print or electronic versions of training materials, on internal training programmes and will advise on such provision for external training programmes. Every effort is made to provide other appropriate types of support for disabled members of staff. Regular reviews will be undertaken to ensure that arrangements are appropriate to the needs of the individual.

Redundancy

In the event that the University is faced with possible redundancies it will ensure that the arrangements for consultation and the selection criteria do not discriminate against disabled staff.

Discipline

In the event that a disabled member of staff is the subject of disciplinary action the University will consider whether there are any reasons related to their disability to account for the behaviour which led to the disciplinary action.

The University will ensure that the disabled person is treated fairly in terms of having time to prepare for any such proceedings, so that they are not placed at a disadvantage compared to non disabled employees. It will also check whether "reasonable adjustments" need to be made in relation to arrangements for disciplinary action or interviews.

Prevention of Harassment

The University Policy for the Prevention of Harassment aims to promote dignity within the workplace. The policy also defines disability harassment, providing examples of behaviour seen to be harassment in relation to disabled people and makes it clear that this behaviour will not be tolerated. The University has trained harassment advisers who are available to advise staff on the appropriate course of action should they feel that they have been subjected to harassment or bullying.

Monitoring and Data Collection

The University monitors the numbers of disabled people who apply for posts and those who are short listed and selected. It records if any of those are existing employees. This information is collected on a confidential basis through the Equal Opportunities Monitoring procedure and the figures are reported anonymously to the Equal Opportunities Forum. The numbers of staff who declare a disability through this process is very low and does not provide an accurate reflection of the number of disabled staff at the University. Action needs to be taken to address this issue.

Communicating with Staff

In addition to the University's Disability Policy for Staff employees' rights and responsibilities in relation to their employment are made explicit during the University's Induction programme. A range of disability awareness programmes are available and it is recommended that all members of staff attend.

Working with Business and the local Community

Moving Forward

The University has been engaged in an ongoing programme of improvements to the campus and the built environment and in its' approach to the delivery of learning and teaching. It is committed to a continuing programme of development and has welcomed the feedback from students, potential students, staff, potential staff and visitors who have a disability as well as that from the local groups and other stakeholders.

Feedback from the Focus Groups

There were two separate focus groups for students, each session lasting from 1.5 to 2 hours and generating much discussion. Although only a small number of students attended all the participants indicated that they felt that it was worthwhile and expressed a desire to be involved in the development of services for students with a disability in the University.

It was the reputation of Aston and the specific nature of the courses that were the key factors in the decision to apply to the University. The availability of support was not a major factor in the decision although there was an awareness that support was provided. The welcoming feel of the University was an important factor in the decision making process with one participant being very positive about how they had been treated as a student first and a disabled person second which they felt to be important as this made them feel that disability was not perceived as a difficulty or an impediment to applying to, or studying at, the University.

Participants were positive about the support provided by DANU and felt that staff members were helpful. Their 'open door' policy was particularly welcomed. The Library was also identified as 'good' although students did not like having to ask to use the lift to access the first floor.

Although students were positive about the welcoming feel of the University there was a general consensus that the main difficulties they faced related to the attitudes of other people rather than the physical accessibility of the campus.

Among the issues discussed was a concern that once a disability had been disclosed, for which there was no supporting documentation immediately available, there was a delay in putting support in place until evidence had been provided. The University should have a series of reasonable and anticipatory adjustments in place to support students, such as lecture notes in advance, which should assist the majority of students. However, specific adjustments can only be made once a full assessment of the students needs has been received and this could lead to a delay occurring. Departments need to take steps to ensure that this is taken into account when assessing work submitted during this period.

The students expressed the need for a 'support coordinator' based in the School and this is addressed through the Action Plan. There was also a desire for 'inclusive lecturing' for everyone, not just those with a disability, to remove any stigma attached to having a special need and to help overcome disclosure issues. Ideas included everyone having more time to complete assignments and any student being allowed to record lectures. Students can only record lectures if they have been given permission to do so, identifying them as having a disability.

Students felt that there was a need for more training for staff; this had also been identified by some staff. The students expressed an interest in being involved in this training.

Feedback from the Survey

A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.

From their analysis of the responses to both the focus groups and the survey the researchers main finding was that 'the overwhelming message from this survey is that staff and students, both with and without disabilities, enjoy working and studying at Aston and find it an accessible, supportive and inclusive environment. Staff members were very positive about supporting students with disabilities, seeing this as their responsibility and a core part of their job. The majority of staff and student respondents, disabled and non-disabled were also very positive about their experiences of attitudes and support from others'.

The following was also identified:

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

- compared to their non disabled peers, students with a disability were more likely to agree that their course presented particular difficulties for them and were less likely to agree that they were equipped with the appropriate skills for their future career or to do their best in exams
- students with a disability gave lower ratings on average than non-disabled students in relation to the ease of getting to and from the campus
- students with a disability were much less likely to agree with the statement, 'I found it easy to secure a sandwich placement'.

Analysis of the staff survey identified the following:

- staff who indicated they had a disability were more likely to know about the support available for students with disabilities than their non disabled colleagues and to say that they had received adequate training in supporting students with a disability
- staff with a disability were less likely to agree that there was good support for staff with a disability than their non-disabled counterparts
- staff with a disability were more likely to agree that their job role presented particular difficulties for them, compared to their non-disabled colleagues.

From the feedback it is clear that whilst the University cannot be complacent over physical access issues the priorities in the Action Plan need to focus on staff training, embedding best practice in teaching and learning and on continuing to improve services and facilities for staff with a disability.

DEVELOPING THE ACTION PLAN

In developing this, its first Disability Equality Scheme, the University has reflected on and detailed, through this document, its' current position. It has used the feedback from the student and staff survey, the focus groups and the involvement of the local community to determine whether its' own view of the provision it makes is reflected in the experiences of staff, prospective staff, current and prospective students, visitors and the local community and has used this information to identify and prioritise action that needs to be taken to further improve the quality of the experience of prospective students, students, prospective staff, staff and visitors to the University.

The Action Plan has been divided into the eight areas that the University is required to report to HEFCE embedding the Action Plan with other monitoring activity undertaken by the University. The University will continue to engage students, potential students, staff, potential staff, visitors and other stakeholders in monitoring the Action Plan through an ongoing series of focus groups and surveys which will ensure that the University can best respond to the needs of students, staff and visitors with a disability.

As this Scheme is seen as an evolving document the Action Plan will be regularly reviewed in the light of feedback received to ensure that it is meeting its' aims and to identify further areas that need addressing.

ACTION PLAN 2006-2009

**Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme
ACTION PLAN 2006-2009**

Action Plan – Item 1	Learning and Teaching			
Objective	Actions required	Responsibility	Time Scale	Progress
To continue to promote best practice in Learning and Teaching	Create a mechanism for dialogue between the Disability Working Party and the Teaching Committees. U/G Admissions Forum, U/G and P/G Programmes Management groups and Quality Standards Committee.	Chair of Disability Working Party	In place for academic Year 07/08	
	Establish a system of known and trained disability contacts in each subject area to (a) act as a contact point for students with a disability and (b) liaise with DANU. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a training programme for Departmental Representatives and suggest area contacts. 	Disability Coordinator Staff Development & the disability Coordinator	In place for academic year 07/08	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a review of resources for examinations for students with disabilities and additional needs. Undertake an audit of provisions for students with a disability within departments. Undertake a review of the consistency and quality of support provided by the Schools to students with additional needs in terms of course delivery and supply of lecture notes before lectures. Build on the Policy and Code of Practice on SENDA to embed an understanding of the actions required. Incorporate the principles of impact assessment into the development and design of courses and modules 	Registry Chair of Disability Working Party/ Schools of Study/ Disability Coordinator/Chair of Disability Working Party Teaching & Learning Committee	During academic year 07/08 By end of academic year 06/07 Current academic year 06/07 During academic year 07/08	

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

Action Plan – Item 2	Widening Access			
Objective	Actions required	Responsibility	Time Scale	Progress
To increase the number of students with disabilities in line with the national benchmarks	Monitor the number of applications, offers and admissions of disabled student's conversion to ensure equality of access.	Registry	Annually	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review how the University is marketed to applicants with a disability. Recruit existing students with a disability to act as ambassadors at Open Days and other events. Ensure that specialist colleges and specialist school units are included in admissions fairs and other activities. Develop profiles of, and links, with successful graduates then alumni links to create positive role models. 	Marketing Marketing Marketing Alumni Office	Annually Annually Annually Annually	

Action Plan – Item 3	Human Resources-to include training & awareness			
Objective	Actions required	Responsibility	Time Scale	Progress
To improve the representation of disabled people in the workforce	Continue to monitor applications, short listing and appointments of staff by disability status to ensure equality of access	Equal Opportunities Adviser	Annual Report	
	Monitor responses to the various media to maximise effectiveness of job advertisements.	Human Resources	Ongoing	
	Develop an action plan to encourage disabled members of staff to declare their disability on their Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form and to disclose disabilities or additional needs to the University as appropriate.	Equal Opportunities Adviser	October 2007	

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

	Demonstrate the University's commitment by achieving the Positive about Disabled People Symbol ✓✓	Human Resources	January 2008	
	Develop further guidance on the recruitment and selection of people with disabilities for managers and all members of interview panels and involve students and staff with a disability in developing and delivering training.	Equal Opportunities Adviser	June 2007	
	Develop best practice in recruitment and selection by encouraging all Panel Chairs to undertake specific training in disability awareness.	Staff Development	EO Training Plan 2007-08	
To promote best practice in the employment of disabled people	Develop an annual University event promoting a positive approach to disability issues among staff.	Equal Opportunities Adviser	March 2007	
	Ensure issues relating to the recruitment and retention of disabled people is included in the review of flexible working practices.	Equal Opportunities Adviser	April 2007	
	To review disability equality training to ensure that it is offered in a variety of ways, including e-learning	Staff Development/ Disability Working Party/ Disability Coordinator/ Equal Opportunities Adviser	June 2007	

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

Action Plan – Item 4	Research			
Objective	Actions required	Responsibility	Time Scale	Progress
To promote best practice in the support of research students and staff with disabilities	Ensure implementation of the RAE Equality Code of Practice	Research Strategy Forum	During academic year 07/08	
	Undertake an audit of disability related research, seminars and research informed teaching and publicise this through the University web site.		During academic year 07/08	

Action Plan – Item 5	Business, Statutory and Community Links			
Objective	Actions required	Responsibility	Time Scale	Progress
To maintain and further develop links with local business, statutory organisations and local community organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distribution of University prospectus and literature to raise awareness of opportunities for employment and study. • Invite organisations to University events on disability issues. • Promote awareness of employment opportunities in the local communities. • Promote disability awareness amongst employers in order to generate more placements for students with a disability. • Establish feedback mechanisms with statutory bodies where issues relating to transport or other access issues have been identified. 	Marketing Equal Opportunities Adviser Human Resources Careers & Schools Placement Officers Chair of Disability Working Party	Annually As they arise As vacancies arise Ongoing As they arise	
Procurement	Review the policy and procurement procedures in relation to the DDA 2005.	Purchasing	During the academic year 07/08	

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

Action Plan – Item 6	Physical Accessibility			
Objective	Actions required	Responsibility	Time Scale	Progress
To continue to improve the physical accessibility of the University	Undertake a further access audit of the campus in terms of physical accessibility and revise the existing action plan and allocate resources as appropriate.	Estates	During academic year 07/08	
	Ensure that there is a representative on Estates Committee with expertise on disability issues	Estates	Annually	
	Promote awareness of the Accessibility Guide across the University and to local community organisations.	Disability Coordinator	Annually	
	Train key staff within each department on accessibility within the University.	Disability Coordinator/Staff Development	Ongoing	

Action Plan – Item 7	Information Access			
Objective	Actions required	Responsibility	Time Scale	Progress
To ensure that all published information is accessible to all	Undertake an audit of all published information from the point of view of accessibility, in relation to all formats to include hard copy, electronic formats and via the web.	Marketing	Ongoing	
	Achieve W3C Web accessibility Standard	Information Systems Aston	During academic year 07/08	
To improve accessibility of University web pages and promote awareness amongst web content authors about accessibility issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct work as necessary to satisfy a conformance level of 'A' by addressing a small number of priority 1 issues, especially a lack of textual equivalents of displayed images. Progress to 'AA' conformance, which addresses priority 	Information Systems Aston	By the end December 2007	
		Information Systems Aston	By the end December	

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

	<p>level 2 issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training for web content authors about accessibility issues. 	Information Systems Aston	<p>2008</p> <p>By the end December 2007</p>	
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Action Plan – Item 8	Monitoring and Review			
Objective	Actions required	Responsibility	Time Scale	Progress
To monitor effectiveness of action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report monitoring data on staff and student issues through the DWP to the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Group. • Ensuring quality impact assessments on policies, practices and procedures of disability equality relevance, are understood. • Report actions from outcomes of Impact Assessments and incorporate into Disability Equality Action Plan. • Report on monitoring outcomes to University Council through Committees structure. 	<p>Equal Opportunities Adviser</p> <p>Equal Opportunities Adviser</p> <p>Owners of Policies/ Chair of Disability Working Party</p> <p>Equal Opportunities Forum & Disability Working Party</p>	<p>Annually</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annually</p> <p>Annually</p>	

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

Action Plan – Item 9	Publications and Promotion				
Objective	Actions required		Responsibility	Time Scale	Progress
<p>To promote the University, both internally and externally, as an inclusive environment for staff, students and the local community (or as an inclusive employer and provider of Higher Education)</p>	<p>Undertake an awareness raising campaign on disability issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A briefing on disability issues for Teaching Committees and other relevant committees • Campaign on disclosure • University Event promoting a positive approach to disability issues. • Promoting impact assessment throughout the University. 		<p>Head of Student Services & Disability Coordinator Human Resources & Student Services Equal Opportunities Adviser Equal Opportunities Adviser</p>	<p>Annually Ongoing Annually Ongoing</p>	

Disability Equality Questionnaire

About you:

1. Please choose one of the following

- Undergraduate Student
- Postgraduate Student

2. Number of years at Aston

- Less than one year
- One year
- Two years
- Three years
- More than three years

3. Gender

- Male
- Female

4. School of study

- Aston Business School (ABS)
- Combined Honours (CH)
- School of Engineering & Applied Science (EAS)
- School of Languages & Social Sciences (LSS)
- School of Life & Health Sciences (LHS)

5. Where you live

- Aston accommodation on campus
- Private/rented accommodation
- Family home
- Other (please specify)

6. View on students with disabilities or additional needs.

How many students with disabilities or additional needs have you met or known in the last 12 months?

7. If applicable, please describe the most common types of disability and additional needs of the students you have met or known

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. Aston University ensures all students have equal access to all services						
b. Aston includes all students in activities that take place						
c. Aston provides good support for students with disabilities or additional needs						
d. Supporting students' individual needs is not a core part of what the University does						
e. Students with disabilities are a nuisance						
f. I am happy to mix with students with disabilities						
g. Some students with disabilities 'play the system'						
h. I know about the support available at Aston for students with disabilities						

9. In relation to supporting students with disabilities or additional support needs, which areas should Aston prioritise for development and/or improvement?

10. Please add any further comments you wish about Aston's general attitude to additional support needs or disabilities of students

The following sections ask about your personal experiences at Aston University

First impressions

11. Please rate the following aspects according to your first impressions of Aston.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. The prospectus was clear about who could apply						
b. I felt able to fully participate in the interview and/or Open Day						
c. The induction I received was useful						

Please add any further comments you wish about your first impressions

Current experience of studying at Aston

13. Please rate the following according to your current experiences of studying at Aston and your future options.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. I chose Aston because I thought I would be supported in my studies						
b. Teaching delivery and learning materials are appropriate for my needs						
c. Aston University has supported me well thus far in my studies						
d. My subject/course of study presents particular difficulties for me compared to others						
e. I have been equipped with the necessary skills to further my future career						
f. I have been encouraged to aim high						
g. I feel able to do my best in exams and assessments						

14. Please add any further comments you wish about your current experiences and/ or future options

Sandwich placements/Year Out

15. Is a Sandwich Placement/Year Out available on your course?

Yes

No

If 'No', please go to question 19

16. *Have you already completed a sandwich placement as part of your course?*

Yes

No

If 'Yes', please answer question 17 but skip question 18

If 'No', please go to question 18

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

17. If you have completed a sandwich placement, please rate the following according to your feelings about your placement:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. Aston University provided good information about sandwich placements						
b. I was encouraged to look for a sandwich placement						
c. Aston supported me in finding my sandwich placement						
d. I found it easy to secure a sandwich placement						
e. My sandwich placement caused more difficulties for me than others						
f. I would recommend a sandwich placement to other students						
g. My sandwich placement was a waste of time						

18. If you have not yet started a sandwich placement, please rate the following:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. Aston University has good information about sandwich placements						
b. I will look for a sandwich placement when the time comes						
c. I'm confident that Aston will support me in my sandwich placement						
d. I am confident that an organisation or business will offer me a placement						

19. Please add any comments about sandwich placements

Attitudes of Others

20. Please rate the following according to how others at Aston treat you

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. Support from departmental and personal tutors						
b. Support from other students						
c. Attitudes and behaviour of academic (teaching) staff members						
d. Attitudes and behaviour of front-line staff members (e.g. catering, security, library)						
e. Attitudes and behaviour of other students						

21. Please add any further comments you wish about the attitudes of others at Aston.

Accessibility

22. Please rate the following according to your experiences of accessing buildings, services and facilities at Aston University.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. Getting to and from the campus						
b. Finding way around campus (e.g. signage, maps)						
c. Moving around and between buildings on campus						
d. Moving around University accommodation						
e. Accessing Information Services and Systems (e.g. library, computing facilities)						
f. Accessing catering facilities						
g. Availability of appropriate menus for your dietary needs						
h. Accessing sports & leisure facilities						
i. Suitability of sports & leisure facilities for your needs						
j. Accessing toilet facilities						

23. Please add any further comments you wish about accessing services and facilities

Support services

24. If you have used any of the University support services, please rate how satisfied you were with the support you received

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. Careers Service						
b. Health Centre						
c. Counselling Service						
d. Disability and Additional Needs Unit (DANU)						
e. Chaplaincy						
f. Equal Opportunities Unit						
g. Aston Students' Guild (Union)						
h. Finance office						
i. Accommodation office						

25. Please add any further comments you wish about University support services

Your own disabilities or additional support needs

26. Please tick all the disabilities or additional support needs that apply to you (select all that apply)

- Specific Learning Difficulty e.g. Dyslexia
- Blind or partially sighted
- Deaf or have a hearing impairment
- Wheelchair user or have mobility difficulties
- Mental health difficulties
- An unseen disability e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Multiple Disabilities
- Other (please specify)

If you do not have a disability or additional support need please go to question 33

Disclosure

27. Have you told anyone at the University about your disability or additional support needs?

- Yes
- No

If 'No', please go to question 31

28. When did you **first** disclose? Please tick one

- Before applying to the University
- During the application stage
- At induction
- During my first year of employment
- When I found out about my difficulty
- After the first year
- Other (please specify)

29. To whom/where did you **first** disclose your disability or additional support needs? Please tick one

- Via my application form
- At induction
- Line manager
- Co-worker
- Head of School/ Department
- Occupational Health
- Equality and Diversity Department**
- DANU
- Personnel Services
- Equal Opportunities Advisor
- Information Service Centre/Library staff
- Other (please specify)

30. Please rate the following according to your feelings about disclosure:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. The response I received to my disclosure was helpful and supportive						
b. I would encourage others to disclose their disability or difficulties						
c. Disclosing has improved my experience of working at Aston University						
d. Aston has made reasonable adjustments to support me						

31. Please describe the key issues for you about whether or not to disclose your disability/ies or additional support needs

If you disclosed your disability or additional support need, please go to question 33

32. What are your reasons for not disclosing your disability or additional support needs? Please tick as many as apply

- My disability is not relevant to my job role
- I do not want this to affect my application
- I feel I may be treated differently
- I may be discriminated against
- I have not been given the opportunity
- I don't see how disclosing would benefit me
- I didn't consider myself as 'disabled'
- The relevant support is not available
- I feel this information is private
- Other (please specify)

33. What could Aston do to encourage people to disclose their disabilities or additional support needs?

34. The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) defines a disability as "a physical or mental impairment which has substantial long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities".

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

- Yes
- No

Final Section

35. Aston University values the diversity of its staff and student population: please let us know your ethnic group. *Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your ethnic group.*

A White

- British
- Irish
- Any Other White background – go to question 36

B Mixed

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any Other Mixed background – go to question 36

C Asian or Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any Other Asian background – go to question 36

D Black or Black British

- Caribbean
- African
- Any Other Black background – go to question 36

E Chinese or other ethnic group

- Chinese
- Any Other Chinese background - go to question 36

36. Please describe your ethnic group if not clear from question 35

37. Is there anything further you wish to add?

38. If you wish to be entered into the draw for two £25 prizes, please include your name and email address or contact details. You will not be contacted for any other reason

Thank you for taking the trouble to complete the survey. This will help us to continue to improve and develop services and support for staff members and students at Aston.

Disability Equality Questionnaire

Appendix B

About you

1. Please choose one of the following

- Academic and Research Staff
 Non-Academic / Support Staff

2. Number of years at Aston

- Less than one year
 One to five years
 Six to ten years
 Eleven to fifteen years
 More than sixteen years

3. Gender

- Male Female

4. Area of work

Please indicate which School or Department you work in

Views on students with disabilities or additional needs

5. How many students with disabilities or additional needs have you known in the last 12 months?

6. How many students with disabilities or additional needs have you known in the last 5 years?

7. If applicable, please describe the most common types of disability and additional needs of your students

8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. I am happy to help students with disabilities						
b. Students with disabilities are a nuisance						
c. Some students with disabilities 'play the system'						
d. It is not my responsibility to deal with students with disabilities						

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

e. Supporting students with disabilities is a core part of my job						
f. I know what my responsibilities are regarding students with disabilities						
g. I know about the support available at Aston for students with disabilities						
h. I have received adequate training about supporting students with disabilities						
i. Support for students with disabilities is adequately funded at Aston						

9. In relation to supporting students with disabilities or additional support needs, which areas should Aston prioritise for development and/or improvement?

Views on staff with disabilities or additional needs

10. How many staff with disabilities or additional needs have you known in the last 12 months?

11. How many staff with disabilities or additional needs have you known in the last 5 years?

12. If applicable, please describe the most common types of disability and additional needs of staff with whom you have worked.

13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. Aston University ensures all staff have equal access to all services						
b. Some staff are unfairly excluded from activities that take place						
c. Aston provides good support for staff with disabilities or additional needs						
d. Some staff with disabilities 'play the system'						
e. Individual needs are supported appropriately at Aston University						
f. Supporting staff's individual needs is not a core part of what the University does						

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

14. Please add any further comments you wish about Aston's general attitude to additional support needs and/or disabilities of members of staff

15. In relation to supporting staff members with disabilities or additional support needs, which areas should Aston prioritise for development and/or improvement?

The following sections ask about your personal experiences at Aston University

First impressions

16. Rate the following aspects according to your first impressions of Aston.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. The job advertisement was clear about who could apply						
b. I felt able to participate fully in the interview						
c. The induction I received was useful for my role						

17. Please add any further comments you wish about your first impressions

Current role and future options

18. Please rate the following according to your feelings about the current role and future options

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. I chose Aston because I thought I would be supported in my work						
b. Aston University has supported me well thus far in my work						
c. My job role presents particular difficulties for me compared with others						
d. I have been equipped with the necessary skills to further my future career						
e. I have been encouraged to aim high						
f. I have been provided with opportunities for training						

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

19. Please add any further comments you wish about your current role and/ or future options

Attitudes of Others

20. Please rate the following according to how others at Aston treat you

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. Support from line managers						
b. Support from co-workers						
c. Attitudes and behaviour of other staff members						
d. Attitudes and behaviour of students						

21. Add any further comments you wish about the attitudes of others at Aston.

Accessibility

22. Please rate the following according to your experience of accessing buildings, services and facilities at Aston University.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. Getting to and from the campus						
b. Finding way around campus (e.g. signage, maps)						
c. Moving around and between buildings						
d. Accessing Information Services and Systems (e.g. library, computing facilities)						
e. Accessing catering facilities						
f. Availability of appropriate menus for your dietary needs						
g. Accessing sports & leisure facilities						
h. Suitability of sports & leisure facilities for your needs						
i. Accessing toilet facilities						

23. Please add any further comments you wish about accessing services and facilities.

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

Support Services

24. If you have used any of the University support services, please rate how satisfied you were with the support you received

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. Careers Service						
b. Health Centre						
c. Counselling Service						
d. Disability and Additional Needs Unit (DANU)						
e. Chaplaincy						
f. Equal Opportunities Unit						
g. Aston Students' Guild (Union)						
h. Finance office						
i. Accommodation office						

25. Please add any further comments you wish about University support services

Your own disabilities or additional support needs

26. Please tick all the disabilities or additional support needs that apply to you (select all that apply)

- Specific Learning Difficulty e.g. Dyslexia
- Blind or partially sighted
- Deaf or have a hearing impairment
- Wheelchair user or have mobility difficulties
- Mental health difficulties
- An unseen disability e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma
- Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- Multiple Disabilities
- Other (please specify)

If you do not have a disability or additional support need please go to question 33

Disclosure

27. Have you told anyone at the University about your disability or additional support needs?

- Yes
- No

Aston University's Disability Equality Scheme

If 'No', please go to question 31

28. When did you **first** disclose? Please tick one

- Before applying to the University
- During the application stage
- At induction
- During my first year of employment
- When I found out about my difficulty
- After the first year
- Other (please specify)

29. To whom/where did you **first** disclose your disability or additional support needs? Please tick one

- Via my application form
- At induction
- Line manager
- Co-worker
- Head of School/ Department
- Occupational Health
- Equality and Diversity Department**
- DANU
- Personnel Services
- Equal Opportunities Advisor
- Information Service Centre/Library staff
- Other (please specify)

30. Please rate the following according to your feelings about disclosure:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not applicable
a. The response I received to my disclosure was helpful and supportive						
b. I would encourage others to disclose their disability or difficulties						
c. Disclosing has improved my experience of working at Aston University						
d. Aston has made reasonable adjustments to support me						

31. Please describe the key issues for you about whether or not to disclose your disability/ies or additional support needs

If you disclosed your disability or additional support need, please go to question 33

32. What are your reasons for not disclosing your disability or additional support needs? Please tick as many as apply

- My disability is not relevant to my job role
- I do not want this to affect my application
- I feel I may be treated differently
- I may be discriminated against
- I have not been given the opportunity
- I don't see how disclosing would benefit me
- I didn't consider myself as 'disabled'
- The relevant support is not available
- I feel this information is private
- Other (please specify)

33. What could Aston do to encourage people to disclose their disabilities or additional support needs?

34. The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) defines a disability as “a physical or mental impairment which has substantial long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

- Yes
- No

Final Section

35. Aston University values the diversity of its staff and student population: please let us know your ethnic group. *Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your ethnic group.*

A White

- British
- Irish
- Any Other White background – go to question 36

B Mixed

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any Other Mixed background – go to question 36

C Asian or Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any Other Asian background – go to question 36

D Black or Black British

- Caribbean
- African
- Any Other Black background – go to question 36

E Chinese or other ethnic group

Chinese

Any Other Chinese background - go to question 36

36. Please describe your ethnic group if not clear from question 35

37. Is there anything further you wish to add?

38. If you wish to be entered into the draw for two £25 prizes, please include your name and email address or contact details. You will not be contacted for any other reason.

Thank you for taking the trouble to complete the survey. This will help us to continue to improve and develop services and support for staff members and students at Aston.

Appendix B

Mapping for Impact Assessments Policies, Procedures and Practices

Widening Participation /Student Services/Diversity

- Widening Participation Strategy
- Access Agreement
- Admissions
- (Central policies, School policies, 'Admissions Policy for Students Declaring a Disability')
- Enrolment
- Access to Learning Fund Guidance
- Disability Strategy
- Childcare provision
- Residential Accommodation Allocations Policy
- Careers
- Community Outreach
- Sport and Recreation
- Chaplaincy

Research

- Higher Degrees by Research
- [General Regulations for Higher Degrees by Research and Theses \(MPhil and PhD\) \(intakes from 2004\)](#)
- Ethics Procedures
- RAE 2008 Code of Practice

Learning and Teaching

- Student handbooks (Schools and registry)
- Marking policy for students with Specific Learning Difficulties (DANU)
- Policy regarding the recording of Lectures (DANU)
- [Regulations on Examination and Assessment](#) (Regulations Sub-Committee /Schools?)
- [General Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes \(intakes from 1998, 2001, 2004, 2005\)](#) (Regulations Sub-Committee /Schools)
-
- [General Regulations for Undergraduate Programmes \(intakes from 1999, 2000, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005\)](#) (Regulations Sub-Committee /Schools)
-
- [General Regulations for Foundation Degrees \(intakes from 2003, 2004, 2005\)](#) (Regulations Sub-Committee /Schools)
-
- Attendance Monitoring procedures (in Schools) (Schools)
- Code of Practice for the External Examiner System for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Programmes (Registry and Schools)
- Guidelines on the preparation of references (Registry)
- Policy on charging for learning and teaching materials (Schools)
- Sanctions Policy and Procedures (Regulations Sub-Committee)
- Library policies

Human Resources

- Recruitment and Selection
- Disciplinary Procedures
- Grievance Procedures
- Leave Procedures
- Pay Policy and Procedures
- PRP
- Pensions and Employee Benefits
- Probation
- Promotion and Re-grading
- Job evaluation
- Redundancy and Restructuring
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Retirement Policy, ill-health retirements
- Staff Representation
- Whistle blowing
- Work Life Balance Policies including Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave
- Policy for the Prevention and Management of Work-Related Stress
- Staff Development Policy
- Learning and Teaching Strategy
- Appraisal
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Prevention of Harassment Policy
- Disability Policy for Staff
- Health and Safety
- HIV/Aids Policy
- Policy on smoking

Business and the Community

- Financial Regulations, including Student Fees
- Purchasing Policy

Other Regulations

- Students' Complaints Procedure (Registry)
- Academic Appeals (Registry/ Regulations Sub-Committee)
- University Communications – Corporate Guidelines
- Disciplinary Regulations for students Regulations Sub-Committee
- University's Communication Systems monitoring policy and ICT Regulations
- The Code of Practice for the Conduct of Meetings
- Guild Policy Manual
- I.P. Policy