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QA Higher Education (QAHE) is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for disabled students and aims to create an environment which enables them to



Someone with a progressive condition is considered by law to have a disability as soon as it starts to have an effect on their normal day-to-day activities, as long as this is likely to be long-term. The effect does not have to be substantial as long as it's likely to become substantial in the future.

People with these conditions and impairments are automatically protected under disability discrimination law:

- cancer
- an HIV infection
- multiple sclerosis (MS)
- a visual impairment – if someone is certified as blind, severely sight impaired, sight impaired or partially sighted.

QAHE will ensure that in all policies, procedures, functions and activities, including strategic planning and resource allocation, consideration is given to the means of enabling disabled students' full participation in all aspects of the academic and social life of the institution.

QAHE's publicity, programme details and general information will be accessible to people with disabilities

QAHE is mindful of its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will ensure the needs of disabled students are not compromised by the competing requirements of this legislation with the responsibilities it places on QAHE in respect of the Equality Act 2010.

A student with a disability will not always be obvious to us. It is up to institutions to encourage students to disclose if they are disabled. Ensuring an open and supportive culture in which students feel comfortable in disclosing their disabilities is essential and providing as many opportunities to disclose as possible.

If a member of staff has been told about a disability, then the member of staff is required to inform the Learning Support team and under no circumstances should it be kept confidential.

QAHE will develop an environment within which individuals feel able to disclose their disability. Encouragement and opportunity will be given to students to disclose any disability that may have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities so that a discussion can take place about disability-related reasonable adjustments or other support that may be required. Individuals can choose to bring someone to accompany them at meetings to provide extra support if required.

QAHE will also encourage students to disclose any condition which in the short term has substantial impact on their day-to-day activities to ensure



that appropriate support can be provided.

Disclosing a disability is a personal matter and it is up to individuals whether they decide to tell the organisation and if so when to do this. However, if opportunities have been given to disclose a disability and an individual decides not to, QAHE cannot make adjustments. If you have concerns about disclosure and would like to discuss these confidentially contact the Learning Support team.

Disclosed information will be treated in the strictest confidence. QAHE will require explicit, informed and written authority for the giving of consent in respect of the processing, both internally within QAHE and externally by third parties of any sensitive personal information which is disclosed.

If a disabled student is to work frequently on his/her own has special requirements in relation to fire or general evacuation QAHE would encourage them to bring this to the attention of the Learning Support team so that appropriate plans and arrangements can be made. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that QAHE are informed of any disability in order that any issues can be addressed.

QAHE will monitor the applications, admissions, academic progress and nature of impairment of disabled students. QAHE will operate systems to monitor and review the effectiveness of provision for students with disabilities, evaluate progress and identify opportunities for enhancement. This includes monitoring representation of disabled students in different QAHE activities.

All applications will be assessed on the basis of academic suitability for the course in question. Discussions about the support requirements of students will be separate from that consideration. Criteria and procedures used for selecting students will relate to the requirements of the programme, including any professional requirements, and will not disadvantage or debar applicants with disabilities.

QAHE will ensure that students with disabilities will have access to the full range of support services, appropriate to their needs, which are available to their non-disabled peers. Where existing services cannot be made accessible, QAHE will make reasonable alternative services and arrangements available.

QAHE Senior Management team will advise on exceptional (disability) cases which require consideration outside current policy (i.e. where exceptional and possibly unusual adjustments are required).

QAHE will make information available about access to buildings and support facilities to enable disabled students to make an informed choice of University.



QAHE may, very rarely reject an application for a place or withdraw the student from their studies on the grounds of disability where:

there is the application of an academic, medical or other standard ("competence standard") applied by or on behalf of QAHE for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability. For example, if the chosen course of study leads to a professional qualification and the relevant professional body has set particular competence standards which would preclude membership by a student with a particular impairment. (In such circumstances, QAHE should, however, enter into discussions with a professional body to ascertain whether such competence standards may be amended to allow membership by a student).

There are material and substantial reasons such as overriding health and safety/duty of care concerns. A fitness to study will be conducted in all instances.

Essential reasonable adjustments cannot be made to the course content and the course's structure of delivery or to the provision of suitable staff or facilities.

When barriers caused by professional requirements and/or by regulations of professional



time to fully explore and understand the support they will need and the extent to which QAHE can provide it.

Support available to all students include:

Support from the Learning Support team to record lectures and seminars;

Mentoring support from Wellbeing Practitioners: Mental Health

Limited loans of equipment;

Use of computer, reader or scribe in exams.;

Sign language and teachers for the deaf



QAHE has a responsibility to balance its duty of care for disabled students with its duty towards all other students and staff. QAHE will make every possible effort to support students who need to suspend their studies on the grounds of fitness to study. Further information and guidance can be found in our Fitness to Study policy.

Where a medical condition or disability prevent a student from continuing with their programme of study, QAHE will attempt to provide advice and support on the options available according to the best interests of the student. Before suspending or withdrawing students are encouraged to explore the implications of their decision through consultation with their Faculty, Learning Support and Get Back on Track teams.

QAHE has in place policies and procedures to deal with complaints arising directly or indirectly from a student disability. In the first instance issues should be raised informally. Students should email the Head of Student Wellbeing at qahe.welfare@qa.com; it is anticipated that the vast majority of complaints will be resolved at this stage. Should it be