

Education

Applying

Format not accessible



**RIGHT TO
PARTICIPATE**

Useful knowledge

Under the Equality Act 2010, education providers are required to make their application procedures accessible to disabled people.

Not providing forms or information in an accessible format is a form of indirect discrimination. Indirect discrimination is where a policy, practice or procedure which is applied to everyone disadvantages those who are disabled.

In addition, if a disabled person is disadvantaged in the application, for example if you can't read the form or easily fill it out, including online, the education provider must make changes to the format. These changes are called 'reasonable adjustments'

Examples of changes to application forms can include making them available in different formats such as large print, audio or in Braille.

Useful knowledge

- Effective communication
- Negotiation skills
- Writing clearly
- Problem solving
- Time management

Ways to assert your legal rights

1. Speak to a staff member in the Admissions team or Student Services and tell them about your disability and the difficulties you're having applying for a course. You can ask them if the form can be made available in an alternative format. You could also ask if the form can be submitted in a different way, for example hard copy rather than online. This could be requested as a reasonable adjustment or a way for the provider to avoid the possibility of indirect discrimination.

If you're applying for an advanced course through UCAS and are having difficulties, you should contact UCAS and see if they can provide an alternative format or make a reasonable adjustment to the application process. For example, they may be able to take down some of your information over the telephone.

2. If you're not happy with the response of the education provider, ask for a confidential chat with the staff member responsible for disability. This person is usually called the learning support adviser, inclusive learning coordinator or disability adviser.
3. If you still don't get the support you need, try writing an email or letter and include the following wording:

Under the Equality Act 2010, education providers have a duty to ensure that, because of their practices, policies and procedures, disabled people are not placed at a substantial disadvantage because of their disability. I would like to request all reasonable steps be taken to alleviate the disadvantage I am facing in applying for the course.

Describe what has happened. Give facts of the case, being specific and clear. Make sure to describe the disadvantage you're experiencing in applying for the course.

Suggest the reasonable adjustments you would like the education provider to consider.

4. If you're not satisfied after informal discussions, you can make a formal complaint. You can usually find information about the internal complaints procedure from your student handbook, the college or university website or directly from the college. They must make the complaints procedure available to you in your preferred format.

Contact information UCAS and the email address for complaints can be found on their website at www.ucas.com/advisers/getting-started/how-you-can-contact-us.

The complaint letter should describe what has happened and how you're facing a substantial disadvantage because of your disability. The letter should include the following wording:

Under the Equality Act 2010, education providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for an individual who is at a substantial disadvantage due to their disability. I believe you have failed to make an adjustment by not providing/changing/allowing (explain the adjustment that could have been made to the application form).

[Download template complaint letter](#)

If you've exhausted the complaints process and the education provider has failed to make a reasonable adjustment to the application process, you may be able to take legal action. Taking court action can be a long, stressful and sometimes very expensive process. There are strict time limits for taking legal action under the Equality Act. You will have six months minus one day from the date of the act or omission that you're complaining about to make your claim in the County Court. The court can consider claims outside the time limit if it considers it 'just and equitable' to do so. You should take legal advice should you wish to pursue this through the legal route.

You can have confidence in the process because

Colleges and universities have been covered by the Disability Discrimination Act since 2001 and the Equality Act since 2010. Most have a good understanding of their legal duties and well developed systems for making sure disabled people can successfully apply to their courses.

You can get more help from

The [Equality Advisory & Support Service \(EASS\)](#) runs a free helpline assisting individuals with equality and human rights issues across England, Scotland and Wales.

- Telephone • 0808 800 0082
- Text phone • 0808 800 0084
- Email • [through websites form](#)

Disability Rights UK [student helpline](#)

Telephone • 0330 995 0414

Email • students@disabilityrightsuk.org

Disability Rights UK free factsheets on
[Understanding the Equality Act](#) and
[Making a complaint](#)