

Education

Current student - Support on course

Told them about disability - No



**RIGHT TO
PARTICIPATE**

Useful knowledge

Under the Equality Act 2010, all colleges and universities are expected to provide support for disabled students and make changes to help them learn. These changes are called 'reasonable adjustments'.

Education providers should think generally about what disabled people need in advance. They have a duty to anticipate the types of barriers that students with various impairments may face. The anticipatory duty might include changing physical features of a building or making sure that services such as BSL sign language interpreters can be arranged at short notice.

An education provider will usually need to know you're disabled before they provide individual support. They should take reasonable steps to find out, for example asking you during the application process or using information from your UCAS form. They should also give you lots of chances to tell them about your needs after you start your course.

Useful knowledge

- Effective communication
- Record-keeping

Ways to assert your legal rights

- 1.** 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. Tell them about your impairment, any difficulties you're having and ask what support can be put in place. Don't wait until it becomes a big problem.
- 2.** If you prefer, you could send an email or letter, telling the education provider that you have a disability. You don't have to go into detail about your condition but it may be useful to include the following wording:

I would like to request all reasonable steps be taken under the Equality Act to alleviate the disadvantage I am facing in my studies. I would appreciate

advice on the services available and I am happy to work with you to help assess my needs.

Make sure to describe any disadvantage you're experiencing. Feel free to suggest options for reasonable adjustments and the type of support you think would be helpful.

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 students progress in their studies.

We regularly hear examples of students who have successfully negotiated the support and adjustments they need through informal discussion and working through the learner support or disability service.

Education providers are not allowed to turn students away due to the cost of their support, nor are they allowed to charge students for their support.

In further education, colleges and training providers receive money from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to meet the costs of reasonable adjustments. In colleges this is usually called Learning Support and it is provided in a way to enable them to be flexible in the way they support all their students.

If you're aged 19-24 and have very high support needs you'll likely have an EHC plan and get individual funding from your local authority. If not, the college can apply for extra money called Exceptional Learning Support.

Where there are additional costs in higher education, the university can support you to make an application for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) as soon as they know about your disability. The application process includes a needs assessment.

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

[Funding in further education](#)

[Adjustments for disabled students](#)

[Applying for Disabled Students' Allowances \(DSAs\)](#)

[Understanding the Equality Act](#)

[Making a complaint](#)

Disability Rights UK [Into Higher Education](#) guide