

DFEi, as an equal opportunities Further Education and Training (FET) Institute, welcomes applications from students with additional needs. DFEi will endeavour to provide appropriate supports and services for all students with disabilities or specific learning difficulties to access its courses, within the limits of available resources. Funding may be available from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the European Social Fund (ESF) under the SOLAS Fund for Students with Disabilities. Students with a wide variety of disabilities are supported including those with a Visual Impairment, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Physical Disability, Mental Health Conditions, Specific Learning Difficulties, such as Dyslexia and Developmental Co-ordination Disorders such as Dyspraxia and significant ongoing illnesses. Applicants to the Disability Fund must meet certain nationality and residency criteria. The services and supports available to individual students will depend on the grant allocated by SOLAS.

A supplementary information form for students with additional needs is available from DFEi. Documentary evidence verifying the student's Disability/Specific learning difficulty must be provided with the completed supplementary information form. Completed forms should be returned to the Disability Officer as early as possible.

1 Information

- 1.1. The following information is for students with disabilities, including the areas of mental health and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.
- 1.2. Read the attached information before you complete the information form.
- 1.3. Failure to disclose relevant information at application stage could result in the lack of provision of additional supports and services which are designed to meet your needs. It may not possible to provide certain accommodations after the closing date if relevant information is not disclosed at the application stage.
- 1.4. Students are advised that it is necessary to seek an advisory meeting with the Disability Officer prior to course commencement.

2 Disability Fund

- 2.1. DFEi will apply (with your consent) to the Disability Fund in SOLAS for equipment or services to help you better access your course in DFEi.
- 2.2. In accordance with the *National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015-2021* the above fund provides grants towards the provision of services, and the purchase of equipment for students with disabilities. The scheme applies to students who have sensory, physical and/or communicative disabilities. See Table 1 for categories covered by this disability fund.

Table 1 Categories covered by the disability fund include

Blind/Visual Impairment	Deaf/Hearing Impairment
Mental Health Condition	Physical Disability
ADD/ADHD	Asperger’s Syndrome/Autism
Specific or General Learning Difficulty	Significant On-going Illness
Neurological Conditions (brain injury, speech & language disabilities, specific or general learning difficulty)	DCD (Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia)

- 2.3. This Third Level Access is funded by the Irish Government and part funded by the European Social Fund.

- 2.4. The kind of supports needed vary from person to person. See Table 2 for examples of supports.

Table 2 **Examples of Supports**

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of assistive technology equipment and software e.g. laptops, reading software etc.• Personal assistant• Sign language interpreter• Additional learning support (1:1 or small groups)• Transport• Electronic note taker• Examination considerations (e.g. scribe, reader, tape recorder, use of word processor)
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- 2.5. The level of services and support students receive will depend on the funding allocated by the SOLAS.
- 2.6. Funding is typically allocated to colleges in December each year.
- 2.7. Funding is not provided for any costs associated with assessment or diagnosis of a disability.
- 2.8. Students have the right to appeal if refused a grant. In this instance, information is available from the Disability Officer.

3 Application Process for the Disability Fund

- 3.1. It is the student's responsibility to complete the supplementary application form. This is available from the administration office by email info@dfei.ie, telephone (01) 280 9676, or from the website www.dfei.ie.
- 3.2. It is the student's responsibility to return this form to the Disability Officer with copies of the relevant documentation as outlined in Table 3.
- 3.3. The Disability Officer will arrange an appointment with the student to commence the application process for funding. It is important that this appointment is scheduled prior to course commencement so that application for funding can be completed on time.
- 3.4. It is the student's responsibility to complete the Needs Assessment in conjunction with the Disability Officer.
- 3.5. **Applications must be submitted by September 30th.** This deadline must be observed in order to guarantee submission for funding by October 1st. Failure to meet this deadline may result in a lack of funding.

Table 3 *Details of Required Evidence*

Primary disability, significant health condition, or specific learning difficulty	Required Evidence (One or more of the following)
Blind/Visual Impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed report from an ophthalmologist or ophthalmic surgeon • Letter from the School for the Visually Impaired, signed by the Principal, • Letter from NCBI confirming registration with the Council
Mental Health Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from psychiatrist
ADD/ADHD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from psychiatrist or psychologist
Specific Learning Difficulty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from psychologist (no older than 5 years from date of needs assessment). <p>Exceptions to the 5-year period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the tests referred to in the report have clearly been conducted using Adult Scales i.e. Weschler Adult Intelligence Fourth Edition. The Psychological report has results from WAIS IV or V. • If the report is older than five years but accompanied by up to date attainment tests e.g. WRATH 4 (completed on or after 1st February 2015) carried out by SEN teacher.
Neurological Conditions (brain injury, speech or language disabilities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from a neurologist and/or other relevant Consultant
Deaf/Hearing Impairment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audiogram from a qualified audiologist, or • Letter from the School for the Deaf, signed by the Principal
Physical Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from a relevant consultant
Asperger's Syndrome/Autism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist
Significant On-going illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from a relevant consultant or Consultant Registrar (e.g. for epilepsy report from a neurologist)
DCD (Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from a qualified psychologist and occupational therapist or neurologist
General Learning Difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report from Psychologist – no time limit

4 Attending for interview/advisory meeting

- 4.1. If required to attend an interview or advisory meeting, students who require special assistance (e.g. a sign language interpreter, personal assistant etc.) are requested to provide their own assistant.
- 4.2. If this is not possible, then students should contact the Disability Officer well in advance at (01) 280 9676 to allow DFEi to make appropriate arrangements as it may take a number of weeks to source special arrangements.
- 4.3. It is important to note that if the applicant is unable to attend for interview or for the advisory meeting at the scheduled time that adequate cancellation notice for this service can be given.
- 4.4. It is the responsibility of the student who has not been assessed to make sure that assessment is complete prior to attending DFEi.

Useful Contacts	
Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD) Phone: (01) 7164396 Email: ahead@ahead.ie Website: www.ahead.ie	Dyslexia Association of Ireland Phone: (01) 8776001 Email: info@dyslexia.ie Website: www.dyslexia.ie
Deaf Hear Phone: (01) 8175700 Email: info@deafhear.ie Website: www.deafhear.ie Minicom: (01) 8175777 Text: (01) 8783629	National Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired Phone: 8307033 Email: info@ncbi.ie Website: www.ncbi.ie

5 Examination considerations

- 5.1. Students can request special examination considerations based on individual needs.
- 5.2. Students need to supply DFEi's Disability Officer with a copy of the Department of Education's accommodations letter they received in 2nd level or a letter from the FET/HE centre, college or Institute outlining the supports they received in this area.
- 5.3. Students who qualify for additional time need to be aware that they may be facilitated in a shared examinations centre which may include a number of other students also receiving extra time.

- 5.4. Spelling and grammar waiver only apply for examinations in DFEi. A student with a specific learning difficulty must complete the following process:
- a. Provide an up to date Educational Psychological Assessment, no older than five years.
 - b. Register with the Disability Service
 - c. Complete an educational needs assessment with the Disability Services
 - d. Confirm the presence of a significant spelling difficulty (<16th Percentile).
- 5.5. Where spelling and grammar are core competencies of a subject, a student's work must be marked on the basis of accuracy in the language. Therefore, spelling and grammar waivers will not apply to language-based subject such as: Media Studies, Writing Skills for Journalism, Communications and Word Processing.
- 5.6. Students should note that marks awarded for Spelling and Grammar in any assessment within DFEi will never exceed 10% of the overall assessment mark.
- 5.7. Spelling and Grammar waivers do not apply for continual assessment work (report, essays, etc.) as the student should have access and sufficient resources to correct assessment material prior to submission.