



Information for Students with Disabilities, Health Conditions and/or Specific Learning Difficulties

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 Higher Education Authority (HEA) 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 the HEA.

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.
- 1.4: Students are advised that it is in their own interest 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 the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education Authority (HEA) for equipment or services to help you better access your course in DFEi.
- 2.2: The 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. The categories covered by this disability fund include:

Categories covered by the disability fund include	
Blind/Visual Impairment	Deaf/Hearing Impairment
Mental Health Condition	Physical Disability
ADD/ADHD	Aspergers Syndrome/Autism
Specific or General Learning Difficulty	Significant On-going Illness
Neurological Conditions (brain injury, speech or 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 may vary from person to person, but can include the following:

Supports include	
Use of assistive technology equipment and software: eg laptops, reading software etc	Additional learning support with 1:1 or in small groups
Personal Assistant while in DFEi	Transport
Use of a sign language interpreter	Use of an electronic note taker
Examination Considerations (scribe, reader, tape recorder, use of word processor in exams)	

- 2.5: The level of services and support students receive will depend on the grant allocated by the HEA.
- 2.6: Funding usually comes through in December each year.
- 2.7: Funding is not provided for any costs associated with assessment or diagnosis of a disability. More general information is available from the Higher Education Authority (HEA), www.heai.ie.
- 2.8: Students have the right to appeal to the HEA, if refused a grant.

3 Application Process for the Disability Fund

- 3.1: It is the student's responsibility to complete the supplementary information form for Students with Disabilities, Health Conditions and/or Specific Learning Difficulties. This is available from the administration office at info@dfei.ie, or Tel: (01) 2809676, or from the website www.dfei.ie.
- 3.2: It is the student's responsibility to return this form to the Disability Officer with 2 copies of the relevant documentation as outlined below.

Primary disability, significant health condition or specific learning difficulty	Required Evidence One or more of the following
Blind/Visual Impairment	Report from an ophthalmologist or ophthalmic surgeon with signature or a letter from the School for the Visually Impaired, signed by the Principal, letter from NCBI confirming registration with the Council
Mental Health Conditions	Report from a psychiatrist
ADD/ADHD	Report from a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist
Specific Learning Difficulty	Report from a qualified psychologist (no older than 5 years from date of needs assessment). Two exceptions apply: 1: If the tests referred to in the report have clearly been conducted using Adult Scales i.e. Weschler Adult Intelligence Fourth Edition. If the Psychological report has results from WAIS IV or V, then the five year time limit will not apply. 2: If the report is older than five years, but accompanied by up to date attainment tests (completed on or after 1 st February 2015) carried out by an appropriately qualified teacher or psychologist.
Neurological Conditions (brain injury, speech or language disabilities)	Report from a neurologist and/or other relevant Consultant
Deaf/Hearing Impairment	An Audiogram from a qualified audiologist or a letter from the School for the Deaf, signed by the Principal
Physical Disability	Report from a relevant consultant
Aspergers Syndrome/Autism	Report from a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist
Significant On-going illness	Report from a relevant consultant (eg for epilepsy report from a neurologist) or Consultant Registrar
DCD (Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia)	Report from a qualified psychologist and occupational therapist or neurologist
General Learning Difficulties	Report from Psychologist – no time limit

- 3.3: The Disability Officer will arrange an appointment with the student to commence the application process to the HEA. It is important that this appointment is scheduled prior to course commencement so that application to the HEA can be completed on time.
- 3.4: It is the student's responsibility to complete the Needs Assessment in conjunction with the Disability Officer. The closing date is usually October 1st.

4 Attending for interview/advisory meeting

- 4.1: Students who require special assistance (eg a sign language interpreter, personal assistant (etc) when attending an interview or advisory meeting 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) 2809676 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	
The 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 : 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:
- Provide an up to date Educational Psychological Assessment, no older than five years.
 - Register with the Disability Service
 - Complete an educational needs assessment with the Disability Services
 - 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.