

Annual Disability Equality Report 2007

Report to Council on the Disability Equality Scheme - December 2007

1. Context	2
2. Demonstrating Progress of the DES and Action Plan	3
Core areas for improvement	3
• Item 1 – Access and the built environment	3
• Item 2 – Communications	4
• Item 3 – Training.....	5
• Item 4 – Service delivery	5
• Item 5 – Staff and student recruitment and retention	6
• Item 6 – Democratic participation	7
Other activities	7
3. Promoting Disability Equality	7
• Further Disability Support Links	7
• Language and Learning Centre	7
• Networking Events	8
4. Disability Monitoring	9
• Staff Monitoring	9
• Student Monitoring	9
• Demographic comparators	11
5. Conclusions and Commitment to Disability Equality	11
Appendix 1 – Updated Action Plan	

Annual Disability Equality Report 2007

1. Context

- i) This report represents the first Annual Disability Equality Scheme Report presented to Council following adoption of Aberystwyth University's (AU's) Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan made effective in December 2006. The report assesses the impact of the Policy and Action Plan during the previous 12 months, as part of AU's duties under the **Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA 2005)**.
- ii) The Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and the three year Action Plan was designed to assist and complement AU's existing Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy in respect of disabilities equalities and to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (2005). The Act, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in terms of access to employment and the services it provides, includes in its General Duty the requirement for public bodies to:
 - promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
 - eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act;
 - eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
 - promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons;
 - encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.
- iii) The Disability Rights Commission's (now Commission for Equality and Human Rights - CEHR) Statutory Code of Practice on the 'Duty to Promote Disability Equality' recommends that the annual report should:
 - monitor and demonstrate progress against the DES action plan, including progress on eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and meeting targets;
 - show results of the year's information-gathering;
 - indicate how the DES will continue to develop;
 - describe how the information gathered will be used to inform action;
 - show continuing commitment to disability equality.
- iv) The DES report has been prepared by the Equalities Advisor, in consultation with various AU Officers and the Chair/members of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Committee. The report summarises the progress of the DES and three-year action plan. It also includes other activities that have been implemented since the formation of the scheme.
- v) Due to the scheduling of the meeting of the University Council, the report will be presented for adoption by Council on 18 March 2008 and made available in both Welsh and English as a public document via the Equal Opportunities and Diversity website on <http://www.aber.ac.uk/human-resources/en/equal-ops/> or via the Equality Advisor located in Human Resources Department. To receive the report in any other format, please contact the Equalities Advisor on opp@aber.ac.uk or (01970) 62 8598.
- vi) The DES forms part of a full and positive agenda on Equality and Diversity that aims to deliver equality through an inclusive approach. The specific work on disability equality remains a priority for the University and assists in embedding the wider principles of equality.

Summary: This is the first Annual Report for Disability Equality required under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA 2005).

2. Demonstrating Progress of the DES and Action Plan

- vii) The initial formation of the DES included a consultation process over a period of a year which included Staff, Students and other Stakeholders ensuring that the needs of disabled people were taken into account. It also facilitated the removal of barriers and promoted equality of opportunity for disabled staff, students and other users of its services. The DES was published on the AU website in December 2006 and promoted through the weekly e-mail service for staff and students. The scheme is also promoted through a mandatory e-learning diversity programme currently being delivered to all staff.
- viii) The scheme was designed to help the University deliver improvements in six core areas which formed the framework on which AU's Action Plans was developed. The following items summarise progress in these areas which are also shown with update remarks within the Action Plan (Appendix A).
- ix) **Core areas for improvement:**
- a) **Item 1 – Action Plan Tasks 4 a-c**
Buildings access and the built environment: (access in and between University buildings).

Estates Department summarised the following 2007 DDA works for 2007 as follows:

- New external lift for the Llandinam building, new lift for Robotics and an upgraded lift for the Hugh Owen library.
- Wheelchair refuges in all academic buildings.
- Nosings to external steps.
- Upgraded external signage.
- Wheelchair ramps at the Physical Sciences and Milford buildings.
- Automated doors at the Arts Centre, Hugh Owen A, D and E levels.
- Upgraded disabled parking bays.
- Other reactive works.

Consultation took place in June 2007 with Estates Department, Information Services, Guild Disability Officer and Health and Safety Advisor on issues such as Freshers Week, Emergency Egress, (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans) (PEEPs), Lifts, Evacuation Chairs, Refuge Areas, (Thomas Parry Library, Law, Arts Centre, Careers, LLC, International Politics, Sports Centre, Students Union Shop, Launderette and Hugh Owen summer works. Further consultation will take place in June 2008.

PEEPs continue to be coordinated by Student Support Services for students and Human Resources Department for staff.

IS Disability Access and Software Licensing Manager reported that:

- A new Green Card carrel has been built in the Law Library of the Hugh Owen building, which contains network access and an adjustable desk, with level access from the outside (on Level E).
- A new audio/video link onto Level E providing access to users with mobility difficulties was also installed in 2007, where a bell rings on the Issue Desk and a monitor viewing the automatic door allows staff to activate a remote door release to facilitate the entry of the individual. The process works in the same way for egress.

- Level E has a newly constructed toilet for disabled users; all with level access to the outside via the new door release system. A new DDA compliant lift has also been installed, providing access to floors and the area where the new toilet is housed.

Summary

There has been a range of works undertaken in 2007. However, more comprehensive reporting of other departments, monitoring mechanisms and Access Surveys are required in order to fulfill actions required in the Action Plan.

b) Item 2 – Action Plan Tasks 3a-h

Communications: (how we communicate with our staff, students and other users of our services and the necessity to provide information in accessible formats)

The DES and Action Plan is available on the HR website but has not yet been published on Student Support Website which is in the process of being updated. It is available in a range of accessible formats on request (none requested in 2007). The Scheme was initially promoted through weekly email to staff and students in early February 2007 and through various presentations and equality training sessions.

Student Support Services: A review of Student Support Service took place in 2006. The key recommendation was to establish an integrated, student-focused sector, with enhanced communications with academic departments and users.

Implementation started in 2007, including the recruitment of a new Director, and two Assistant Directors.

The Assistant Director (Learning Support) is responsible for bringing learning and language skills closer to the student population and to make more effective communications with the support provided in academic departments.

The Assistant Director (Welfare and Retention) is expected to improve retention rates by provided closer cohesion between the various elements of support across the University and beyond.

Student Support Services has embarked upon a major programme of staff development: to strengthen its reputation for friendly and accessible services, and to increase its competence for communication and retention. A branding and image-setting exercise has been undertaken, parallel with the University's new corporate identity, and in collaboration with users and the Students Union.

The sector is currently reviewing its committee structure, to ensure that it is fit for the purpose of sound and effective representation and decision-making. A shared-management approach has been achieved between staff and the student Union.

The Director of Student Support Services has had meetings with the Equalities Advisor and the Centre for the Development of Staff & Academic Practice (CDSAP) to facilitate a more 'joined-up' approach to staff and student disability issues. It has also had some briefing sessions to discuss learning needs and retention issues. The Director is also supporting a CDSAP initiative to set up disability round-table meetings.

c) Item 3 – Action Plan Tasks 7a-b

Training: (the need to provide targeted training and information for all staff so that we are able to ensure our staff fully understand their responsibilities in relation to the DES)

The CDSAP is looking at delivering disability awareness more effectively by setting up round-table discussions, events and drop-in sessions in order to consult, support and train on various disability themes. CDSAP has also delivered 2 bespoke disability sessions discussing the needs of disabled people, sharing resources, signposting to other sources of support and undertaking needs analysis.

The diversity e-learning course which is in the process of being delivered by the EA to all staff has a specific module on disability outlining the definition of disability, Disability Equality Duty and reasonable adjustments. It also links to the DES and Action Plan.

d) Item 4 – Action Plan Tasks 6a-d

Service delivery: (including making effective use of technology and a one-stop shop approach to enable easier access for all)

As part of the new structure of Student Support Services, a new Student Support Centre, located on the main Campus, is being established in December 2008. This will assist in the 'one-stop' approach as it will incorporate the main aspects of the service, including an Enquiry/ Reception Desk, Welfare Adviser, Learning Support contact, Student Finance, and Disability Adviser. It will liaise closely with Language and Learning staff and the Student Health Centre, which is due to relocate to the main campus in 2008. The Student Support Centre will be launched in December to focus and promote links with student users.

The Disabilities Officer offers the following services:

- loan equipment such as recording machines or a radio hearing aid if equipment has broken;
- arrange note-taking by trained postgraduates and staff;
- administer DSA in order to employ English/B.S.L Interpreters, Support staff and Note-takers.;
- provide learning and study support;
- advise on [special examination arrangements](#);
- liaise with G.Ps or Consultants;
- arrange adapted accommodation;
- arrange access to [Green Card Areas](#), which consist of specialist software and hardware to meet individual needs;
- advise on adaptive technology;
- inform on any new specialist software and equipment;
- Provide a [Braille or Audio transcriptions, and tactile diagrams service](#).

In September 2008, Disabilities support will integrate more fully within student support, to provide closer cohesion between medical, psychological and financial support. A more seamless, student-focused approach is planned, including improved communications with academic departments and other learner services. Student Support continues to advise students on the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) and overseas needs assessments.

e) Item 5 – Action Plan Tasks 5a-h

Recruitment and retention (of disabled people as students and staff and supporting them to perform to the best of their abilities);

Student recruitment and retention: With regard to Action Plan item 5d (Reviewing guidance material on creating accessible access to learning and teaching), a pilot exercise named Teachability commenced in 2007. Led by the Deputy Director of Student Support Services, it aims to promote the creation of an Accessible Curriculum for students with disabilities.

The pilot seeks to identify the recognised experiences of disabled students trying to access courses of study and of academic staff devising innovative ways of enhancing that access. The aim is to recognize the potential benefits to all students, which will provide a stronger incentive for considering changes that need to be actioned, rather than the duties required to comply with legislation. To date, four academic departments have been involved in the pilot (TFTV, International Politics, IMAPS and IRS). They have attended a workshop entitled 'Teachability: Delivering an inclusive curriculum made easy', met with a consultant to review the impact and needs of their curriculum, and developed their own action plans. A presentation is anticipated in July 2008 in order to share and disseminate the experiences of Teachability and its impact on Teaching and Learning Curriculum to other departments. Further reporting on outcomes will be undertaken during the next Disability Annual report.

Student Support Services are reviewing how they promote their new facilities and services for disabled people, both within the promotion of a 'one-stop' Centre and within AU's publications, e.g. Prospectus. It also intends on disseminating information through AU's staff and students' weekly email service, consulting with users of the new Centre and reshaping the Committee structure of Student Support in order to enhance the student experience.

Student Support Services regularly invites disabled people to assist with Open and Days and other activities. During Open Days, Student Support Services has a desk which offers disability and health support and funds a disability student to support the day. Student Support Services plan to improve activities for parents of students with disabilities.

Student Support Services continues to strive to ensure that each student's recommended provision is met.

Staff recruitment and retention: In November 2007, the HR Department successfully reaccredited their Two Ticks 'Positive about Disabled People'. This accreditation means that AU will interview any disabled candidates that apply for a post who meet the essential criteria. Part of the action plan for the forthcoming year is to contact members of staff with disabilities to review any development and/or reasonable adjustment issues.

Guidelines on making "reasonable adjustments" are yet to be developed although the HR Department also continues to administer the Access to Work scheme which offers grants, support and advice to disabled people and employers. Several staff received support from the scheme in 2007.

The HR Department has also drafted new application and monitoring forms which updates the definition of disability, assists with Two Ticks applications, requests reasonable adjustments and updates categories of disability to meet Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) requirements.

f) Item 6 – Action Plan tasks 11a

Democratic participation: (including encouraging and supporting disabled people to take part in the activities and processes of the University).

AU aims to deliver an inclusive approach to consultation on its activities and processes and, through information and a range of training sessions, is actively working to promote the positive duty.

As mentioned above, an accessibility consultation process took place in June 2007, and CDSAP also aim to organise a 'round-table' meeting for people with disabilities. Such consultations should give opportunity to encourage people with disabilities to take a wider role in University processes and activities. Awareness raising events have also been delivered by the Guild in 2007

x) Other activities:

The other main activity undertaken in 2007 was an Equality Impact Assessment screening process (Action Plan item 10). To date, over 300 policies have been gathered and screened by the Equality Advisor which includes an element of disability impact assessment, i.e. a question on different needs in relation to the screened policy.

xi) As shown in Appendix A the DES Action Plan, contains an update in the "Comments / Further Actions" and "Completed" sections to demonstrate progress against the plan.

Summary: A review has been undertaken on key areas of the DES and the implementation of tasks on the DES Action Plan. The DES Action Plan has been updated to show progress against the plan.

3. Promoting Disability Equality

xii) Further Disability Support Links:

The Centre for Academic Development (previously Staff Development Office) offer further support in designing inclusive learning on its website with guidance from:

[Techdis](#) which supports the education sector in achieving greater accessibility and inclusion by stimulating innovation and providing expert advice and guidance on disability and technology.

[SWANDS](#) with guidance for dealing with admissions, teaching, learning and assessment

[RNID](#) for teaching strategies for use with deaf students.

Support is also offered by the [Language and Learning Centre](#).

xiii) Language and Learning Centre:

The Language and Learning Centre (LLC) seeks to promote equality through a range of activities and aims to enable students to achieve their full potential in a variety of ways. The

Academic Learning Curriculum Access/Dyslexia Service (ALCADS) offers specialist study tuition advice and assistance to students who have underlying learning/communication differences, including dyslexia, and who may therefore be disadvantaged by some traditional teaching/learning practices.

Initial referral and full cognitive (diagnostic) assessments (including Educational Psychologist and Specialist Teacher assessment reports) are available. ALCADS offers National Network of Assessment Centre services and provides Study Needs Assessments as part of AU's facilitation of access to Disabled Student Allowances. Individual learning strategy development programmes are available to students and these can be complemented by a variety of group settings where sessions take account of differences in individual cognitive processing styles and consider challenges implicit in the HE environment, with the aim of increasing student's effectiveness in assessing and dealing with these and meeting their individual potential.

xiv) **Networking Events:**

The Equality Advisor and other staff members attended two external meetings of Ceredigion Equality of Service Delivery Group, organised by Dyfed-Powys Police, in 2007 where the opportunity for any disability issues for visitors, staff and students have been discussed.

The Equality Advisor attends quarterly Equality Challenge Unit Welsh Liaison Meetings attended by all Universities in Wales and HEFCW, where disability equality is discussed and good practice shared.

Student Support's Disability Officer reported the following recent activities:

- Meeting with CDSAP to discuss an 'Accessibility Café' provision
- Meetings with IS Disability Accessibility Officer regarding provision for public services
- Liaison with Estates Departments and students regarding accessibility issues
- Annual meeting with UK Transcription Units
- Staff meetings regarding the review of Student Support Services and with ALCADS.

The Student Guild's Diversity / Development Officer and Students with Disability Officer reported the following:

The Guild has run a Disabilities Awareness Evening where various talks were delivered, i.e. the Guild's Students with Disabilities Officer on life as a disabled student, the Societies Officer on dyslexia and a student with cerebral palsy gave a talk about living with such a disability. This was a well attended student awareness raising event.

The Students with Disabilities Officer also delivered a talk on Dyslexia where ALCADS distributed information and talked about the different forms of dyslexia. This was held in an external location (the Orangery) where free tea and biscuits were supplied. This was another well attended event with good student feedback.

The Union is still one of the most accessible buildings in Aberystwyth and the Student Guild continues to strive to improve this.

Summary: AU aims to promote and embed disability equality through a range of training, signposting, support and networking activities.

4. Disability Monitoring

xv) Staff Monitoring:

The recording of staff with disabilities in 2004 showed that only 4 members of staff were reported on HR's database as declaring a disability. Since that time, with data collections undertaken for equalities monitoring, Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and with data being cleansed and updated more regularly, this figure (recorded as at January 2008) has risen as follows:

- xvi) Of the total AU staff, which numbers 2013, 52 (30 males and 22 females) are recorded currently as having a disability. This represents 2.73% of staff. 33 (63%) are full-time and 19 (37%) are part-time. House Services and Residential and Hospitality Services employ the greatest number of staff with a disability with a total of 12 staff (23%). Seven categories of disability were recorded (Blind Visual Impairment, Deaf Hearing Impairment, Long-standing, Physical Mobility Impairment, Specific Learning, Multiple Disabilities and Other Disability Type). Of the total of 52 staff, 46 (88.5%) were recorded as White British and the other 6 staff as White Welsh (1), White Irish (1), Not Known (1), Information Refused (1) and Other White Background (2).
- xvii) Data categories have recently been changed on HR's database and a new Recruitment Application and Monitoring form to synchronize with HESA requirements is being developed. Disabled data fields are now recorded as follows:
- Specific learning disability (such as dyslexia or dyspraxia)
 - General learning disability (such as Down's syndrome)
 - Cognitive impairment (such as autistic spectrum disorder or resulting from head injury)
 - Long-standing illness or health condition (such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy)
 - Mental health condition (such as depression or schizophrenia)
 - Physical impairment or mobility issues (such as difficulty using arms or using a wheelchair or crutches)
 - Deaf or serious hearing impairment
 - Blind or serious visual impairment
 - Other type of disability – (to specify).

xviii) Student Monitoring:

As at February 2008, AU has a total of 10,698 students. Of these 976 (9.12%) students are recorded as having a disability; 379 (3.54 %) students are accessing Disability support Allowance and 597 (or 5.58%) without any disability allowance.

xix) This is shown in the table below:

Disability Allowance	Disability Category	Total Disabled	UG FT	UG PT	UG DL	UG Other	PG FT	PG PT	PG DL	PG Other	SELL
N	01	204	147	2	0	3	15	15	3	0	18
N	02	23	15	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	5
N	03	31	17	0	2	0	0	3	2	0	7
N	04	64	40	1	0	2	3	5	0	0	13
N	05	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
N	06	27	15	0	1	0	4	3	1	0	3

N	07	87	39	2	6	0	6	5	19	0	10
N	08	18	2	1	0	0	2	1	1	0	11
N	09	130	104	0	1	0	5	5	1	0	14
N	10	11	10	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Y	01	283	254	1	0	2	10	3	1	0	12
Y	02	6	5	0	1	0	0	0	0		0
Y	03	16	11	0	0	0	2	1	2	0	0
Y	04	15	10	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	1
Y	05	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0		0
Y	06	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Y	07	8	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Y	08	11	8	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Y	09	28	25	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1
Y	10	8	7	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0

Key: UG = Under-graduate, PG = Post-graduate, SELL = Life Long Learning
 FT = Full-time, PT = Part-time, DL = Distance Learners, Other = Other

- xx) The total number of students in the above categories (1 to 10), whether in receipt of disability allowances, or not, is shown below. The disability category records the type of disability that a student has, on the basis of the student's own self-assessment as indicated in HESA guidance.

01 = Dyslexia	487
02 = Blind/are partially sighted	29
03 = Deaf/have a hearing impairment	47
04 = Wheelchair user/have mobility difficulties	79
05 = Personal care support	3
06 = Mental health difficulties	30
07 = Unseen disability, e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma	95
08 = Multiple disabilities	29
09 = A disability not listed above	158
10 = Autistic Spectrum Disorder	19

Total Students with Disabilities = 976

Note: Figures are currently not known for HESA categories of
 00 No known disability, 98 = Information Not Sought or 99 = Not Known.

- xxi) Of 976 students recorded as having a disability, 79% were full-time students (i.e. 74% UG and 5% PG) and 21% part-time students (i.e. 1% UG, 5% PG, 4% DL and 11% Other). 42% of the 976 students were in the Faculty of Arts, 32% in Science and 26% in Social Sciences.
- xxii) Of the total of students with disabilities, 50 were reported as having ethnic minority backgrounds with the greatest number of these located within the School of Management and Business, i.e. 12 students.
- xxiii) Of 132 students who withdrew from their studies, 13 students (or 10%) were students with disabilities.

xxiv) **Demographic comparators:**

The UK Census 2001 data indicates that almost 9.5 million people (18.2 per cent) say they have a long-term illness, health problem or disability which limits their daily activities or the work they could do. Of these, 4.3 million are of working age. The Census also states that Wales has the highest proportion of people with limiting long-term illness (23.3 per cent) and that Ceredigion has almost one-third of the population (approximately 23,000 of a population of 75,000 as recorded as having “Limiting long-term illness” or “General health 'not good’”).

xxv) The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) statistics for 2005/6 show that, of 138,000 students studying in HE Institutions in Wales, approximately 7700 (or 5.6%) are students with disabilities (2.8% in receipt of DSA and 50% with no allowance). In this context, AU’s current figure of 9.12% points to a positive indicator for being an accessible HE service for students with disabilities.

xxvi) For staff with disabilities HEFCW show a figure in 2005/6 of 2.5% in comparison with AU’s figure of 2.73% for the current period.

Summary: AU has undertaken monitoring for staff and students.

5. Conclusions and Commitment to Disability Equality

xxvii) AU continues to work towards its commitment to disability equality and its duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA 2005).

xxviii) AU attempts to work proactively with external partners and organizations in order to collaborate and share good practice in disability equality issues.

xxix) AU endeavors to deliver a more ‘joined-up’ approach (between staff and student services) on disability equality.

xxx) The review and restructuring of Student Support, together with the recruitment of a new Director and two Assistant Directors, works towards enhancing learning support and providing a more integrated and accessible service.

xxxi) Staff are increasingly becoming aware of disability equality and duties of the DDA 2005. More staff equality training has been delivered to staff in 2007 than in previous years, which included an element of disability training e.g. training delivered to Council, Senior Management Team and interview panels.

xxxii) HR Department staff received disability equality training delivered by the Equality Advisor and are in the process of delivering a mandatory bilingual e-learning diversity programme to all staff.

xxxiii) CDSAP is currently reviewing ways of enhancing disability awareness and looking at initiatives for consulting and networking with staff.

xxxiv) The following tasks should be prioritised during the forthcoming year:

- Further dissemination of the DES and Action Plan;
- Greater awareness of staff and student support services;
- Disability awareness initiatives to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons and encourage participation, e.g. training, mentoring and networking events;

- Collaboration with Estates Department on reporting and communication regarding the updated accessibility of AU buildings;
- Greater consultation between Student Support Services and Human Resources coordinated on PEEP's;
- Further collaboration and mechanisms ensuring the prompt reporting disability equality;
- Initiatives to measure improvement of disability support (e.g. feedback questionnaires from staff and students).

Internal information sources for this report include Management Information Services, Student Support Services, Language and Learning Support (Coordinator of ALCADS), IS Disability Accessibility Officer, Student Disability Officer, Disability and Diversity Guild Officers, Human Resources Department, Estates Department and CDSAP. External sources include the 2001 National Census, HESA and HEFCW.

Please contact Ms. Olymbia Petrou on 01970 62 8598 or opp@aber.ac.uk if you would like this information in an alternative format, e.g. Braille, Audio Transcriptions, etc.