



# Disability Link Tutor Handbook

Disability and  
Inclusion



University of  
Chester

A department within Student Futures

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# Responsibilities of a Disability Link Tutor (DLT)

Disability Link Tutors are based within all departments and have the following responsibilities:

- To be a departmental point of contact for disabled students.
- To be a departmental point of contact for Disability and Inclusion.
- To circulate Inclusion Plans and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) to staff within the department, ensuring that disabled students have access to all reasonable adjustments, which includes the department supporting disabled students during an emergency evacuation as detailed within their PEEP.

Heads of Department have responsibility for appointing a DLT. Departments also find it useful to nominate administrative staff to take a coordinating role in this area. Disability and Inclusion provide information, advice and guidance to DLTs as and when requested, in addition Disability and Inclusion provide three DLT Sessions per year to support tutors undertaking this role.

## Disability Link Tutor Role Description

### **The Disability and Inclusion Team**

The Disability and Inclusion Team provides information, advice and guidance for disabled applicants/students and staff of the University of Chester. The Disability and Inclusion Team aims to inform disabled applicants/students of the many reasonable adjustment options available to them whilst they study.

### **The Disability Link Tutor Network**

The overall purpose of the Link Tutor Role is to strengthen the links between the Disability and Inclusion Team and academic departments in order to provide efficient and effective Disability and Inclusion to disabled applicants and students. The network aims to develop effective two-way communication between the Disability and Inclusion Team, students and academic departments and to help the Disability and Inclusion Team benefit from the professional/subject expertise and in-depth knowledge of the students held by the Disability Link Tutor.

## Key Areas of Involvement

- To act as a departmental point of contact for students on disability matters, to refer students to the Disability and Inclusion Team as appropriate and to help ensure that PATs are familiar with the work of the Disability and Inclusion Team.
- To act as a departmental or programme point of contact for the Disability and Inclusion Team, in particular to disseminate Inclusion Plans (IP) and to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations in the IP.
- To meet or designate a suitable departmental colleague to meet with Disability and Inclusion and the student to co-author any PEEP documents. This is required to ensure the student's health and safety during an emergency evacuation. Handbook J – Supporting Student Academic Achievement Appendix F Updated February 2020.
- To act as a departmental/programme point of contact when Student Case Conferences are held.
- To take part in Disability Link Tutor meetings each term to discuss the implementation of IP and effective support for disabled students.
- To feedback staff and students' views and needs to the Disability and Inclusion Team.
- To provide advice on subject specific support.

The above information can also be found within the University's Quality and Standards Manual, under Handbook J, Appendix F [here](#).

# How Students can Obtain Medical Evidence and What Is Acceptable

## Medical Evidence

When looking to obtain medical evidence in relation to a disability, a General Practitioner (GP) or suitably qualified professional needs to ensure that they are meeting the 'Definition of a Disability' under the Equality Act 2010.

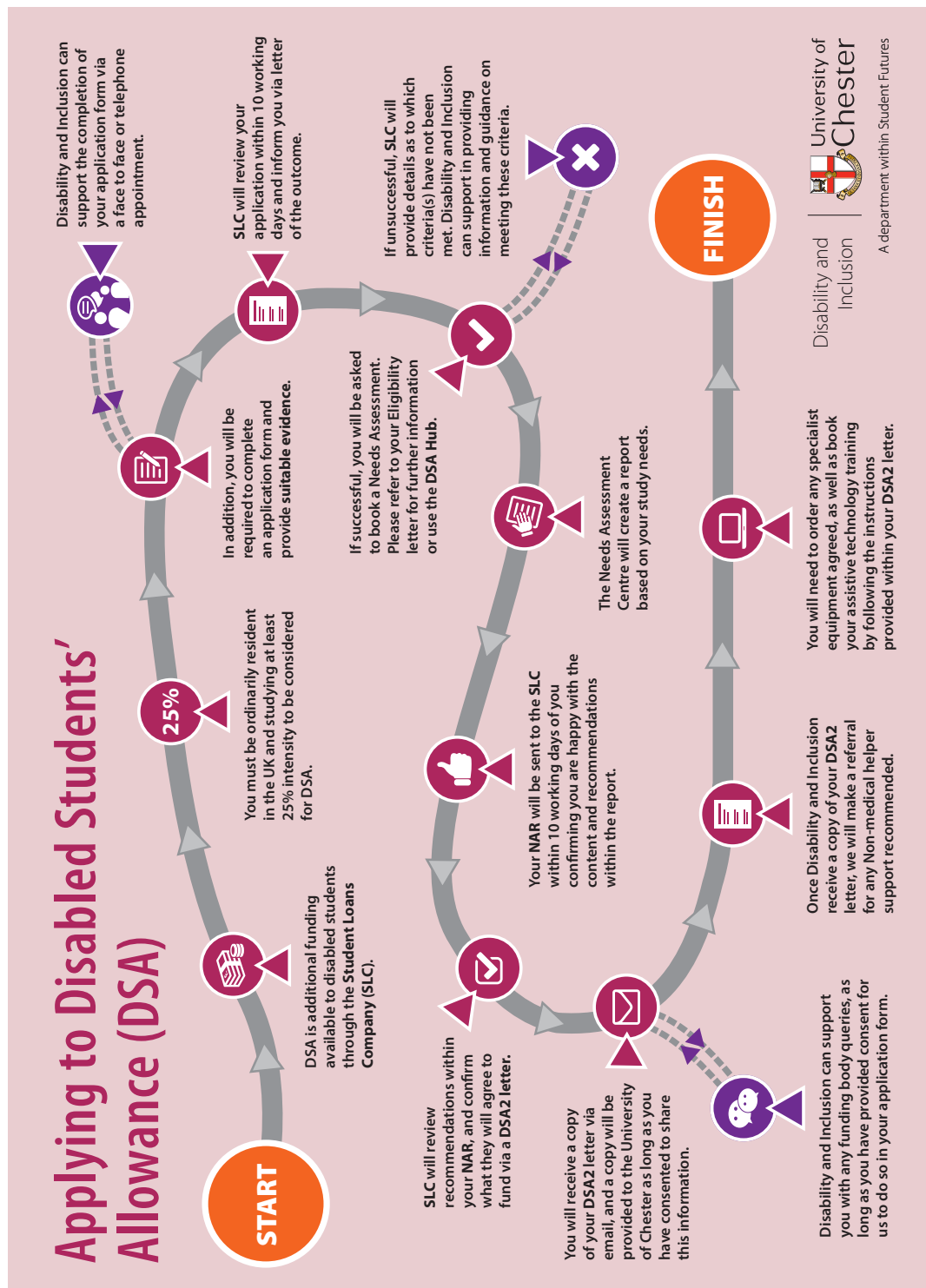
A person is disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.

**Please Note:** Disability and Inclusion have created a 'Disability Evidence Pro-Forma' which students can take to their GP or suitably qualified professional to complete. Students should be advised to contact [disability@chester.ac.uk](mailto:disability@chester.ac.uk) to obtain a copy of this form or alternatively, it can be found on our Portal Pages here.

# The Equality Act 2010, Step by Step

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>What 'substantial' and 'long-term' mean</b></p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substantial is more than minor or trivial.</li> <li>• Long-term means 12 months or more.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>When writing information regarding your difficulties, your doctor should:</b></p>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State a clear diagnosis.</li> <li>• Confirm if the condition has or is likely to last for a year or more and fall under the definition of the equality act.</li> <li>• Outline the effects of the condition on learning/attendance at University etc.</li> <li>• State impact on day-to- day activities. It is very helpful, if you foresee any impact to be 'substantial' in an academic environment, to state this.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>In looking at these areas, your doctor should consider if the condition affects:</b></p>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concentration.</li> <li>• Motivation.</li> <li>• Short term/long term memory.</li> <li>• Ability to mix in groups – anxiety.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Finally, if taking any medication, does it have any side effects that may impact on learning?</b></p> |   |

# Disabled Students' Allowance Flowchart



[Online link](#)

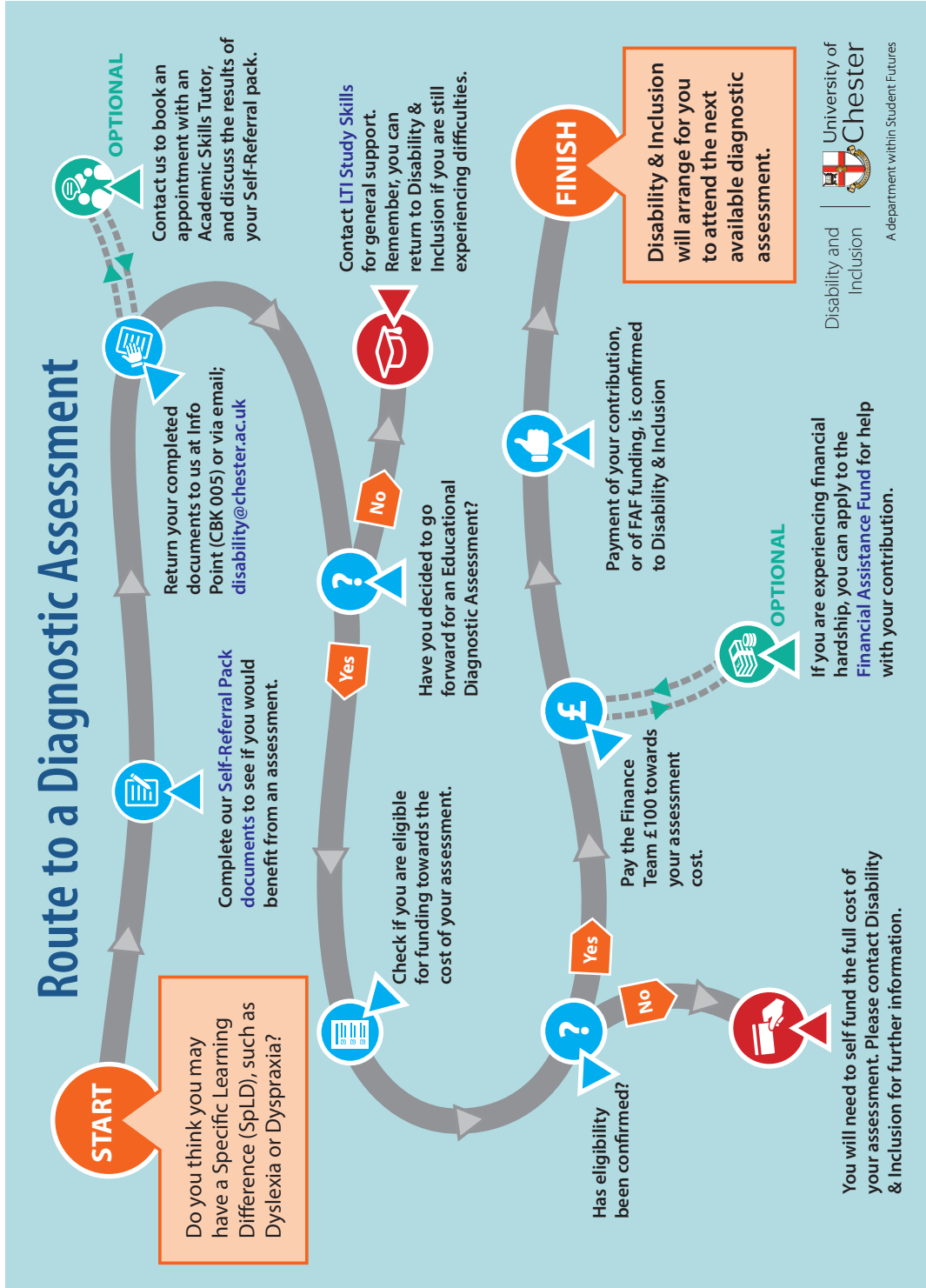
# Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs)

If a student states they have a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) or a suspected SpLD such as dyslexia or dyspraxia, they will need a full Educational Psychologist assessment completed in line with SpLD working group 2005/DfES guidelines.

If they do not have a full Educational Psychologist assessment completed to these standards, or they have not previously been assessed, they may be eligible to be assessed for an SpLD such as dyslexia via the Educational Psychologist affiliated to the University.



# Route to a Diagnostic Assessment



[Online link](#)

# Disability and Inclusion

## Appointment Types and When to Refer a Student

### DSO Full Appointment

Students should be advised to book full appointments for the following reasons:

- To discuss medical evidence that the student has provided to Disability and Inclusion.
- To discuss the results of an Educational Psychologist assessment.
- To discuss the contents of an Assessment of Needs report.
- To create a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). The student must have completed and returned the PEEP questionnaire to be booked into this type of appointment.
- To discuss reasonable adjustments to practical and professional courses.
- To discuss reasonable adjustments for field trips.
- Applicant meetings, again following receipt of acceptable evidence unless otherwise stated by a DSO (This would be due to significant complex needs).
- Accommodation visits.
- Request Non-medical Helper (NMH) support.
- Multi-disciplinary meetings. I.e. academic department/ non-medical helpers/ external support services.
- Discuss Mitigating Circumstance requests for disability-related reasons.

### DSO 30 Minute Appointment

Students should be advised to book a 30-minute appointment for the following reasons:

- Clarification of support on Inclusion Plan.
- Wishing to discuss further reasonable adjustments due to a new situation or diagnosis.
- Discussing a situation regarding NMH support.

- Assistance with completing a DSA application form/reimbursement form.
- Assistance with understanding how to obtain acceptable medical evidence.
- To discuss process for preparing for placement. DSOs can discuss the RAPP process and the impact of professional competencies in relation to reasonable adjustments, but the completion of RAPPs is the responsibility of academic departments.
- To discuss examination arrangements.

## DSO Quick Query Appointment

Students should be advised to book a quick-query appointment if they have a specific question about:

- Obtaining suitable medical evidence.
- Their Inclusion Plan.
- How/What support they can access. E.g. Initial information, no previous contact.
- Disabled Students' Allowance.
- The SpLD self-referral process.
- Obtaining an EP report.
- About attending Needs Assessment.

Please remember that you should be putting responsibility on to the student to book an appointment with our services independently. Initially, you should advise on the location of our Information Point in Binks 005 (telephone: 01244 511550), or for them to email disability directly on [disability@chester.ac.uk](mailto:disability@chester.ac.uk). We have found that students are more likely to engage with the Disability and Inclusion team if they contact us themselves.

We appreciate that some students with extreme anxiety for example, may require some initial support in engaging with our services, but this should be limited to ensure we are enabling our students to take ownership of their studies and any support they may require.

# Appropriate storage of Inclusion Plans

When storing Inclusion Plans, we would encourage the implementation of 'Publish and Point'. "Publish and Point" is a method of controlling the duplication of any documents being circulated.

Instead of sharing the Inclusion Plan via an email message, which gives each recipient an individual copy, a read-only version of the document is placed on a secure shared drive - 'published' - and a 'pointer' or shortcut is emailed to alert intended recipients. Recipients can then retrieve the document from the shared drive as required.

This method should ensure that all relevant parties have easy access to the most up to date version of any working document, and are not working from older, outdated versions. It also reduces the amount of multiple working copies in the folders of many individuals and avoid issues of access if documents are held with a single person who is then absent, busy, or leaves the organisation.

Finally, this method helps to encourage users to think more carefully about the most appropriate method for publishing information to recipients and to treat these consistently as formal documents.

There are a number of options available to faculties in terms of secure shared drives. These include using the University's shared network drives, setting up a SharePoint, or setting up Cloud based storage. LIS will be able to discuss with you which is most appropriate for your needs.

## Disposing of documents

In all cases, 'good housekeeping' of shared drives is essential to remove material which should no longer be kept. This includes;

- unnecessary duplicates of documents
- copies which are no longer required
- documents which are no longer required as the student has completed their course in full.

As part of Disability and Inclusion's data retention schedule, student files are retained on our records for a maximum of 6 years after the student has left the University. The files are then destroyed after this time.

For applicants who do not attend the University, their information is destroyed after 1 year.

**We encourage departments/faculties to retain Inclusion Plans in line with this schedule.**

## Password information

In order to fulfil our obligations under the Data Protection Act (2018), and the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), all Inclusion Plans will now be password protected when communicated from Disability and Inclusion to students, departments, or any other relevant party.

Departments/faculties may wish to remove the password once the Inclusion Plan is received, but should ensure it is stored appropriately with suitable security measures as detailed in the previous section "**Appropriate storage of Inclusion Plans**".

Students' initials will now be used in place of full names and can be identified by their student number. The password for each student's Inclusion Plan will be the first 3 letters of their course in lower case followed by their Date of Birth in **ddmmyy** format (no dots, spaces, slashes or brackets).

As an example, for a student born on 18th February 1985 studying Psychology, their Inclusion Plan would be protected with the password: **psy180285**

**Please note:** The first three letters of the password are the student's course **name**, as it appears on SIS, and not their course **code**.

Therefore, for a student born on the 18th Feb 1985 studying Psychology (SINPSYC), their password would be psy180285 rather than sin180285.

Students' birth dates and course information can be found using SIS, available through the University's Portal pages [here](#). Please contact LIS if you do not have access to this function.

**If you are not the intended recipient or have difficulties opening an Inclusion Plan, please contact Disability and Inclusion identifying this. We will be happy to look into the issue on your behalf.**

# Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans

Students who disclose that they have a disability that may impact on their ability to evacuate a building safely and independently in an emergency, are contacted by the Disability and Inclusion team to discuss a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP). Applicants that disclose a disability that may require a PEEP are contacted as early as possible in advance of the academic year.

Although PEEP completion is a joint responsibility of the Disability and Inclusion team and academic departments, the Disability and Inclusion will complete all initial contact with students to support in the PEEP completion.

Students are asked to complete a PEEP template that provides details of their disability and the support they require evacuating a building safely and independently.

Information in the PEEP template is then reviewed and the timetabling and accommodation teams are then contacted to discuss ground floor accommodation and ground floor teaching spaces if appropriate and available.

As your role as a DLT, you are expected *“To meet or designate a suitable departmental colleague to meet with Disability and Inclusion and the student to co-author any PEEP documents. This is required to ensure the student’s health and safety during an emergency evacuation”* (**Handbook J, Appendix F**).

The Disability and Inclusion team will facilitate these meetings, with the expectation that following creation of the PEEP document, the DLT will arrange a familiarisation meeting whereby disabled students requiring a PEEP meet with academic staff to discuss emergency routes.

Completed PEEPS are then shared with DLTs, the Health and Safety Department, the Residential Living team and Porters (if appropriate).

Disabled students who state that they do not require a PEEP are asked to sign a statement confirming this. They are also asked to identify how they intend to evacuate a building safely and independently.

**Please note:** Disabled students who disclose a disability that may warrant a PEEP are always contacted by the Disability and Inclusion team. If a student does not engage with the Disability and Inclusion team a PEEP will not be provided to DLTs for distribution.

# Epilepsy and Non-Epileptic Seizures

Students and Applicants who disclose that they have epilepsy or experience non-epileptic seizures are sent an Epilepsy and Seizure Questionnaire to complete. This provides the Disability and Inclusion team with information on the type and frequency of seizures experienced, ideally well in advance of the academic year.

The Disability and Inclusion team make it clear to students that medication cannot be administered by staff and that the student should contact their epilepsy nurse specialist or neurologist for advice on managing their seizures. It is also made clear to students that it is their responsibility as an adult to manage their seizures themselves. An epilepsy nurse specialist or neurologist may recommend assistive technology for seizure management such as an epilepsy alert watch or an epilepsy detection pillow.

Students are also asked to complete an epilepsy care plan with their Epilepsy nurse specialist or Neurologist. The care plan provides the Disability and Inclusion team with information around what staff can do to support a student during a seizure and when an ambulance should be called. For students living on campus, the care plan also details a realistic safety plan if the student experiences a seizure if alone on campus.

Care plans are shared to the university porters and DLTs. It is the responsibility of DLTs to distribute care plans to relevant academic staff.

**Please note:** Students who disclose epilepsy or non-epileptic seizures are always contacted by the Disability and Inclusion team. We will make multiple attempts to engage with students who experience seizures. However, if a student does not engage with the Disability and Inclusion team an epilepsy care plan will not be provided to DLTs for distribution.

# Support available through our Learning and Information Services (LIS)

The Learning and Information Services (LIS) department runs a number of services to support all staff and students within the University.

## **Assistive Technologist**

The assistive technologist works to promote the assistive technology that is available to both staff and students within the University as well as supporting other departments in making their resources more accessible. This is achieved through the [Assistive Technology Portal page](#), web page and [Moodle site](#) as well as classes run for staff, students and at the Equality and Diversity festival. Targeted assistance is given to students on a one to one basis either on-line or face to face. The contact e-mail address for the assistive technologist is [assistive-technologies@chester.ac.uk](mailto:assistive-technologies@chester.ac.uk).

## **Student Library and Research Inductions**

The subject teams within the libraries will take groups of students around the library to familiarise them with it, show the student how their reading lists can be retrieved and how to use the library for research as well. This service is also available on a one to one basis with students.

## **Accessible Books**

This is an on-going service available to students that have been authorised by Student Futures (Disability and Inclusion). This service ensures that the student has access to all the books in their reading list in the correct format so they can successfully complete their research and study. The requests for accessible copies of books are typically fulfilled either by RNIB Bookshare or direct with the publisher (who may be based in the UK or abroad). Typically, this request is for an accessible copy of an older text and it is usually provided in both PDF and WORD format.

## **Book Fetch service**

To use this service the students must be authorised by Disability and Inclusion. Students are then able to request a list of books on-line or at the helpdesk, with LIS staff then preparing the books for collection from their campus library.



## **SensusAccess Service**

There is an increasing number of requests for both journal articles and books to be made accessible for a student. Due to this, the University has subscribed to the [SensusAccess](#) service which allows all staff and students to upload/send articles and request that they are automatically converted to another, more accessible format. Further information is on the [SensusAccess Portal page](#).

## **Assistive Technology loans**

The University has a pool of both hardware and software assistive technology that students can borrow whilst studying. Students may need to borrow equipment for a variety of reasons such as when their own equipment is being repaired or when they are not eligible for the DSA. Once authorisation has been confirmed through Disability and Inclusion, they can borrow any of the hardware or software that is available, with the most common items being laptops and Dictaphones. Assistive technology is also available from the library helpdesk to be used within the library. In addition, the University also has software licenses available for Zoomtext, SuperNova, Dragon Naturally Speaking, Global Autocorrect, Sonocent Audio Notetaker and NTE.

## **MyStudyBar**

[MyStudyBar](#) is freeware which is available on University Computers and laptop. This, of course, can be downloaded on the student's home Windows computer or laptop too. It is a toolbar of apps, each of which can support students in a different way such as magnification, colour tinting and reading text aloud.

# Assistive Software available to Students

## **Texthelp Read&Write Gold**

The University has purchased a site license for [Texthelp Read&Write Gold](#) which is available on all University Computers and laptops including Macs. It is a toolbar of 24 different apps, all of which can support the student in different ways such as reading text aloud, word prediction, enhanced spelling and research tools.

## **MindView**

The University has purchased a site license for [Matchware MindView](#) which is available on all University computers and laptops. This is an on-line mindmap editor to aid in the creation of mindmaps to plan and research work, which can then be exported to Word, PDFs and PowerPoint slides.

## **SuperNova and Zoomtext**

[Dolphin's SuperNova](#) is magnification software for your Windows laptop/computer. It features allow users to change the contrast of pictures and text on the screen as well as read text on the screen aloud. [Zoomtext from Freedom Scientific](#) has similar functionality. Both apps are available for loan to students.

## **Dragon Naturally Speaking**

[Dragon Naturally Speaking](#) is dictation software that can be used by students to replace their keyboard. As well as being able to dictate into documents, the student can open apps and create new documents just by using their voice through the app.

# Assistive Equipment available to Students

| Equipment Name   |  |
|--|--|
| Ergobeads keyboard wrist rest                                    | Kensington Easy Riser                    |
| Height adjustable Mouse Pad Palm Support                         | Wooden Book rest                         |
| Evoluent Vertical Mouse 3 Right                                  | Portable inflatable lumbar support       |
| Logitech wireless trackball                                      | HP Scanjet G3110                         |
| Okolux Mobil Plus LED hand magnifier (4x/4,500K/60mm)            | Daylight Twist portable LED light        |
| Dome magnifier (1.8x - 5cm)                                      | Onyx Deskset video magnifier             |
| Ergobeads Mouse wrist rest                                       | Posturite writing slope                  |
| Wrist and Arm Support Platforms                                  | Go Mobile laptop rest (up to 17")        |
| Penguin Ambidextrous Vertical Mouse                              | Olympus zoom microphone ME-34            |
| Microsoft Trackball Optical                                      | C-Pen Reader pen                         |
| Score Pro 959 Footrest   | Pearl Portable CCTV system with OpenBook |
| Schweizer Bright Field dome magnifier with red line (1.8x /80mm) | AirO2bic Quill Mouse                     |
| Zoomtext large print Keyboard                                    |  |

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