

# Disabled Student Accommodation Reimbursement Policy

**Created August 2022**

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## Disabled Student Accommodation Reimbursement Policy

Published – June 2022

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### 1. Introduction

1.1 This policy details how the University meets its legal obligation under the Equality Act 2010 by ensuring that disabled students living within University owned accommodation are not placed at a disadvantage to their non-disabled peers, relating to costs incurred specifically due to disability need.

1.2 This policy details the University's responsibilities, where support is not available through external agencies such as Disabled Students' Allowance, or Adult Social Services.

### 2. Scope

2.1 This policy addresses all aspects of reimbursement for accommodation related costs for disabled students at the University.

2.2 This policy applies to all students living within University of Chester owned and managed accommodation. It does not extend to students at partner colleges, partner accommodation providers, council providers, or any other private entity in which students may be residing during their studies, regardless of the private provider's relationship with the University.

2.3 Allergies do not directly fall under the Equality Act 2010 unless they meet the essential criteria which includes substantial adverse effect on day-to-day activities. We are able to support preferences for allergy-related University owned accommodation requests to help mitigate risk, but allergies will need to be reviewed on a cases by case basis, under this policy, for any reduction in costs towards accommodation.

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## 3. University Requirements

3.1 The University will review additional accommodation costs incurred by an applicant/ student, wholly because of their disability.

3.2 In situations where a disabled applicant/ student is eligible for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA), and where they undergo a Needs Assessment and receive a recommendation relating to costs for accommodation that is managed by the University, these requests will be reviewed under this policy. This may ultimately lead to an alternative outcome, as the University must be satisfied that the conditions of this Policy are met to ensure equity and parity of service, in line with our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

3.3 In situations where the applicant/ student is eligible for DSA and where they opt to live in accommodation that is not owned by the University, the University are unable to support with these additional costs as this will fall under the remit of DSA. Therefore, any requests for support for funding for private residence as per 2.2 should be made through the DSA process.

3.4 Disability & Inclusion will review all accommodation requests and medical evidence provided by applicants/ students, clearly detailing whether further medical evidence is required, or whether they approve the Accommodation Office to provide a reduction in accommodation costs incurred by the applicant/ student, specifically due to their disability need.

3.5 The Accommodation Office will make a judgement on suitable comparators for the purpose of determining a reduction in accommodation costs from all University owned accommodation within a 5 mile radius.

3.6 The Accommodation Office will not provide a reduction in costs towards a student's preferred accommodation which goes above and beyond their disability need. Where a preferred University owned accommodation also fulfils the student's individual needs, then the Accommodation Office will review equitable University owned living spaces that meet individual need to determine the reduction in cost.

3.7 Due to the limited availability of adapted and/ or accessible accommodation available within the University, Disability & Inclusion will work with the Accommodation Office to best prioritise provision based on the point of application and individual need. Therefore, we cannot guarantee we can accommodate individual living requests, and these will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

3.8 There may be instances where a student is not in agreement with the decision not to approve a reduction in accommodation due to disability need by Disability & Inclusion. If the student is unable to resolve the matter informally, or the Disability Support Officer cannot reach an alternative decision without discussing further with management, then this will be escalated to the Disability Team Leader/ Disability & Inclusion Manager for

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further consideration.

3.9 If the student is dissatisfied with the Disability Team Leader and/ or Disability & Inclusion Manager's decision, they can make a complaint under the University's Complaints Policy and Procedure which can be found using the following link: <https://portal1.chester.ac.uk/proctor/Pages/default.aspx>.

## 4. Student Requirements

4.1 Applicants are expected to be proactive in informing the University's Accommodation Office of their disability-related needs by using the service's application process and including the requested information. In addition, there is also a section specific to accommodation on the Disability Questionnaire sent to all applicants who have disclosed a disability. Students should provide as much detail as possible within this section too. (See Appendix A for examples).

4.2 Applicant will be required to submit appropriate medical evidence supporting their request to [disability@chester.ac.uk](mailto:disability@chester.ac.uk).

4.3 Applicants are advised to visit the proposed accommodation as far in advance as possible, in order to check its suitability and discuss their needs in detail. Failure to do so may limit the University's ability to provide reasonable adjustments to meet the individual needs of the student.

4.4 Disability & Inclusion will monitor information relating to accommodation requests as early as students raise a potential need. Therefore, there is no specific date for requests to be open for consideration. The latest an accommodation request should be submitted for a September start date would be when A-level results are known.

4.5 Applicants commencing courses with mid-year or alternative start dates should also provide as much notice as possible before their start date. Please note, that due to the large number of courses that run from September to July, there may be limited accommodation available mid-year.

## Appendix A

### Examples of Disability related needs

1. A requirement for self-contained accommodation as a result of a sensory disability, e.g. visual impairment, that prevents the student from maintaining independence when sharing bathroom/ kitchen facilities because other students impact on the accessibility or usability of the shared space.
2. A requirement for self-contained accommodation as a result of an unseen condition such as a mental health disability, Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC) or a medical condition that prevents the student from using shared bathroom/ kitchen facilities without a substantial impact on their wellbeing

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and ability to carry out self-care activities.

3. A requirement for an en-suite accommodation as a result of an unseen condition such as long term/ chronic irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) that prevents the student from being able to share bathroom facilities because of the need to access these facilities in a time-sensitive manner.

These examples are for illustration only. They are not exhaustive and there may be other disability-related requirements for different accommodation provisions. In addition, the conditions noted in these examples will not automatically require the above accommodation adjustments, as the difficulties experienced will be specific to each individual.