



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

Disability and dyslexia support

Disabled Student's Support Recommendations
(DSSR) Reports: A Guide for Students



STUDENT SUPPORT AND WELLBEING

northumbria.ac.uk/ssw

What is a DSSR report?

The DSSR report is the formal notification that the University's Disability and Dyslexia Support Team sends to staff in your Faculty about your disability. The Disability and Dyslexia Support Team is part of the University's Student Support and Wellbeing Service.

Your DSSR report contains recommendations for how Faculty staff should support you as a disabled student – in other words, it explains what 'reasonable adjustments' we recommend that your Faculty should put in place to enable you to access your course.

The purpose of the support recommended is to remove/reduce the disadvantage that you may experience in accessing your programme of study because of your disability. It is intended to 'level the playing field' but not to give you an advantage over other students. You will be asked to sign the DSSR report to confirm that you have agreed the content of it, that you have read this leaflet and that you give permission for it to be sent to your Faculty.

What are the University's legal obligations to disabled students?

The Equality Act 2010 (and formerly the Disability Discrimination Act) states that a person has a disability if he or she 'has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [their] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

It is unlawful, under this Act, to:

- Discriminate (directly or indirectly) against disabled students
- Harass or victimise disabled students

In addition, crucially in this context, the University has a statutory duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' for disabled students where a provision, criterion or practice puts disabled students at a substantial disadvantage compared to those who are not disabled.

The 'reasonable adjustment' may be to remove or alter the provision, criteria or practice or to provide an auxiliary aid or service to the disabled student to remove or reduce the disadvantage.



'Reasonable adjustments' apply not only to physical features such as doors and stairs but also to learning, teaching and assessment methods. However there is no requirement to make 'reasonable adjustment' to the application of competence standards or to academic or other prescribed standards.

Will I get all the support that is recommended in my DSSR report?

The recommendations in the DSSR report are just that – recommendations. The Disability and Dyslexia Support Team is making these recommendations to your Faculty to explain what the Faculty should do to remove or reduce any disadvantage that you may experience as a disabled student.

While it is expected that Faculty staff will make every effort to put this support in place, there may be occasions where elements of the support may not be possible or may conflict with assessment criteria and/or competencies to be demonstrated. However, if this is the case, this will normally be explained to you by your Faculty, and they will explore with you other ways of ensuring that you can access your course.

Sometimes, Faculties may also have other ways to meet your support requirements. For example, some of the recommendations in your DSSR report might already be complied with by current good practice for all students in inclusive teaching, learning and assessment methods on your programme. Where this is the case, some of the recommendations in your DSSR report might not be necessary.

What about confidentiality?

The DSSR report will be sent electronically to the Student Progress Team in Student Central. They will then arrange for it to be circulated to all of your tutors. It will also be re-circulated as necessary as you progress through your programme. If you wish to limit which of your tutors receive your DSSR report you can do this, but you need to understand that this may limit the support available to you if other tutors do not know about what you need.

The DSSR report remains confidential between you, staff in the Disability and Dyslexia Support Team and relevant staff within your Faculty.

In some cases, information will also be passed on to other parts of the University, where this is essential to meeting your requirements – for example, if you have significant Library support needs and have agreed to the DSSR report being sent to the University Library, then staff in the University Library will also have access to some information from your DSSR report. When information is shared in this way, those staff receiving it will also treat it sensitively and confidentially.

As the DSSR report contains information about disability, which is ‘sensitive personal data’ as defined by the Data Protection Act, it will be stored securely by those staff who have access to it and will be disposed of confidentially by your Faculty when you complete or leave your programme. A copy is kept securely by Student Support and Wellbeing for six years after that date.

What are my responsibilities as a student to help to make sure that these recommendations work?

As an independent adult learner, it is very important that you take responsibility for your own learning and also for helping Faculty staff and other University staff to support you effectively. As set out in section 4d of your DSSR report, you need to be proactive in accessing support. It is certainly our experience that support is more effective when all parties take responsibility and work together.

What do I do if I feel that my Faculty-based support package is not working?

In the first instance you should contact the Student Progress Team to discuss your concerns. After that, if you feel that it is still not working, you should contact the Disability and Dyslexia Support Team.

What do I do if my support needs change at any time?

During your course, you may be contacted by the Disability and Dyslexia Support Team to check how your support is going and to ask you whether you feel it would be useful to meet to review your DSSR report.

However, you do not need to wait for us to contact you. If at any time you feel that your support needs have changed, or your DSSR report needs to be reviewed, you should contact the Disability and Dyslexia Support Team to arrange an appointment for this purpose.

Your DSSR report might also be reviewed at other times. For example, if you are waiting for a Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) Assessment of Needs report, and this was not received at the time of agreeing your DSSR report, then your DSSR report might be reviewed once your DSA Assessment of Needs report is available to ensure you are getting all the support you require.



If my disability is a long-term mental health condition, is there other support available?

The Disability and Dyslexia Support Team can provide you with practical support. If you require therapeutic support, please contact the Counselling and Mental Health Support Team for more information. Visit: northumbria.ac.uk/counselling

How does the DSSR report link to the Late Authorisation process and the Personal Extenuating Circumstances process?

Late authorisation

If you have personal circumstances, which are unforeseen and unpreventable and are having a serious effect on your ability to submit assessed coursework by the published hand-in deadline, you can apply to your Faculty for more time to complete the work. These 'late authorisation' requests need to be submitted to your Faculty in advance of the deadline for the piece of work concerned. Sometimes disabled students might require a late

authorisation for disability-related reasons; for example, if a disabled student has a condition which flares up in the week leading up to a deadline. If you feel that your late authorisation claim relates to your disability, you should state this when you make the claim. Your disability support requirements will then be taken into account when your Faculty considers your claim.

Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PECs)

Students can submit a claim to their Faculty for 'personal extenuating circumstances' which have significantly affected their assessed work. These claims are submitted after assessed work has been completed. This would be relevant if, for example, you have experienced a serious mental or physical illness or a serious personal trauma, and you feel that this affected the work you have just completed or submitted. The circumstances would normally be unforeseen and unpreventable.

PECs should not normally be used for a disability for which you have a DSSR report in place, because, in that situation, your disability support requirements would normally be foreseeable and other types of support will have been put in place for you. PECs could, however, be used in circumstances where there was an unforeseen and significant flare-up or deterioration in a condition (for which medical evidence would be required) or where a disability had been previously undiagnosed.

What will happen next?

The Student Progress Team will contact you to arrange a meeting to discuss the support recommended in your DSSR report. In some cases, a member of the Disability and Dyslexia Support Team may also attend that meeting.

Who should I contact if I have questions about the DSSR report?

For any questions, please contact the Disability and Dyslexia Support Team - see back page for contact details.



Contact the Disability and Dyslexia Support Team

Visit us at one of the following Ask4Help points

At City Campus

Student Central, City Campus Library
Student Central, City Campus East

At Coach Lane Campus

Student Central, Coach Lane Library

At London Campus

Ground Floor

At Amsterdam Campus

First Floor, Fraijlemaborg Building (Tel: 020 703 8280)

Prospective students can email us at:

Email: sv.disability@northumbria.ac.uk

Current Northumbria students:

Please enquire via the Student Portal: myportal.northumbria.ac.uk

Tel: 0191 227 4127

northumbria.ac.uk/disability

If you are a distance learner, please contact us to discuss different ways in which we can help you to access the information and support you require.

Please contact us if you require a copy of this publication in an alternative format – such as braille or large print.



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