



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

Stranmillis University College Response Regarding Hearing Loss Enquiry

Stranmillis University College is committed to a policy of equal opportunity to Higher Education and seeks to ensure that disabled students have equitable access, as far as reasonably possible, to all aspects of University College life. Consequently, the University College will take all reasonable steps to ensure that disabled students can benefit from the full range of academic, cultural and social activities that the University College offers to non-disabled students.

The University College endorses the social model of disability, thereby not focusing on the individual's disability or medical condition, but instead identifying the impact of disability in the structural, organisational, physical and attitudinal barriers that prohibit disabled students from achieving equality of opportunity.

The operating principles for Stranmillis University College in relation to disability (including hearing loss) determine that:

- Applications for admission from disabled students are assessed on the basis of the applicant's aptitudes, abilities and qualifications;
- The University College will aim to create an environment where disabled students are comfortable in disclosing their disability and are provided with opportunities to disclose at various stages throughout their time at Stranmillis;
- The University College endorses the principles of inclusive curriculum for disabled students;
- Disabled students will have access to the appropriate reasonable adjustments to enable them to participate in all aspects of college life;
- Applicants and disabled students are provided with the opportunity to discuss their individual requirements with an appropriate member of staff; and
- Staff who are required to implement reasonable adjustments will have access to appropriate information.

The University College's Admissions Policy explicitly states that the College:

- Encourages applications from suitably qualified applicants, particularly from groups that are currently under-represented in Higher Education;
- Selects on the basis of fair, transparent, reliable and objective criteria, applied equitably and consistently; and
- Admits best-qualified applicants to courses in line with the University College's priorities, the targets agreed in academic plans and within the overall constraints applied by the government and professional bodies.

The University College welcomes applications from disabled students and will consider their application on the same grounds as non-disabled candidates. An individual's disability will not be considered prior to an offer being made. On receipt of an offer from the University College applicants will be asked to complete a questionnaire to determine reasonable adjustments, should they be accepted and placed on their chosen course at Stranmillis University College. In certain cases, a risk assessment may be deemed necessary and if so a panel of appropriate experts and School representatives will be established.

In the extremely unlikely event that there are fitness to practise concerns and where reasonable adjustments cannot be made, the University College reserves the right to withdraw an offer.

Stranmillis University College is guided by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order 2005, the QAA Code of Practice: Disabled Students 2010 and Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

The need of each successful applicant is assessed on an individual basis and **appropriate reasonable adjustments** are made as required regarding in course support, examination support, placement support, and guidance for academic staff.

Typical example of adjustments for students with a hearing impairment may include:

In-course support

In-course support can include some (or all) of the following depending on assessed need:

- Recognition that students with a hearing impairment, because of their disability, may have concentration and tiredness issues, and therefore require additional time;
- Recognition that when working in small groups hearing impaired students may need to use a separate room because of noise transfer from other groups;
- Lecturers may make use of microphones, particularly during lectures and tutorials;
- Students may wish their fellow students to be informed of their hearing impairment – for example other students need to be aware of the importance of facing the student directly when speaking;
- Students may have the support of a personal assistant/note-taker and may require a sign language interpreter to be present during classes;
- The availability of photocopies of PowerPoint presentations and other presented material, in advance of taught sessions;
- The use of Assistive Listening Devices such as an FM system when working in small groups. An FM system can be placed in the centre of a group and used like a telephone conferencing system (Lecturers may also make use of the microphone accompanying the FM System);
- Flexibility with deadlines, if required, in consultation with the relevant lecturer. It may take a hearing impaired student longer to produce work:
 - due to their difficulties with English (as it may be a second language for them if profoundly deaf from birth)
 - as they may have to wait for note-takers to email notes
 - as it may also take longer than peers to understand the content of the notes;
- Subtitling of video/dvd materials;
- The possibility of an alternative format of assessment, where appropriate, and in particular where their disability would put the student at a disadvantage e.g. music projects;
- Sympathetic consideration of spelling and grammar in all written assignments (it may take some time for the hearing impaired student to adapt to academic writing at University); and
- Use of library – students may require extensions on loans to allow for the reading of course material.

Examination Support

Examination support can include some (or all) of the following depending on the assessed need:

- Hearing impaired students may require exam papers to be modified because of English being a second language for them;
- Additional time in each examination session (normally 25% extra);
- Relocation of the student within the main examination venue to allow them hear instructions etc with greater ease;
- Announcements on a one-to-one basis to ensure that the student is aware of how much time they have left;
- Permit the student to sit their examinations in an alternative venue with one-to-one supervision;
- Use of computer to word process examination scripts
- Provision of a amanuensis; and
- Provision of a reader.

Placement Support

Placement support can include some (or all) of the following depending on assessed need:

- Placement providers need to be made aware of the hearing impaired student's support needs;
- The hearing impaired student may require the support of a personal assistant and a sign language interpreter during placement;
- Placement providers need to ensure that hearing impaired students are familiar with emergency evacuation procedures in the event of a fire or other emergency; and
- The University College will seek to ensure that the student's placement takes place in an inclusive and respectful environment.

Guidance for Lecturing Staff

Lecturing staff will be informed of the need for them to:

- Provide the student with clarification about the work involved;
- Not to move around the room too much when speaking/lecturing as that can make lip-read difficult;
- Observe basic communication rules such as:
 - not turning to write on the board when also speaking to the class
 - not covering one's mouth when speaking
 - not speaking in an exaggerated manner for the hearing impaired student benefit; and
- Perhaps devise a discreet means of ascertaining whether a hearing impaired student wishes to be asked a question so that they can avoid embarrassment.

General

In addition all key academic support areas within Stranmillis University College have loop induction hearing systems installed.

Dr Anne Heaslett
Principal
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