

## (a) SpLD policy

The UK Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities. This means that, amongst other things, ordinands or candidates for Lay Readership with mobility issues, physical or sensory impairments, mental health issues or neuro-diverse conditions such as autism or specific learning differences may be considered disabled persons under the Act, depending on the severity of the impact this has upon them.

The law considers disability to be a 'protected characteristic' and insists that disabled persons should have fair access to opportunities, and that reasonable adjustments should be made to remove barriers to participation. Furthermore, these adjustments should be anticipatory so that they are ready for the arrival of a disabled person, rather than hastily put in place as an afterthought.

TEIs are urged to prepare and monitor an *Access and Participation Plan* that shows how they are providing effective support to candidates with disabilities; these set standards, fund adjustments and monitor compliance. At SEI, this plan is in course of preparation. The following is an overview of current initiatives/arrangements that support SEI's diverse student body and enable all to achieve their goals.

**Access:** SEI staff provide dedicated support to students as they enter the cohort, facilitating communication through accessible channels (face-to-face, telephone, email and web) to meet the needs of disadvantaged and hard-to-reach students. Each entrant is interviewed by a member of the core staff to facilitate a discussion regarding the intended programme of study but also to discuss study support needs; the student's particular support needs are noted and a personalised student support plan created. Those transitioning to higher education for the first time or entering higher education following a significant break are offered dedicated study skills sessions (particularly for those with difficulties with attention, navigating online resources and managing text), as well as one-to-one induction into the online Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), the web-based platform for the digital aspects of SEI's courses of study.

Every student is assigned a Diocesan Advisor who provides pastoral support and encouragement throughout the academic year through monthly meetings. Such meetings help to

- increase students' confidence of their ability to fulfil SEI's learning outcomes by enabling integration between theological study and overall development.
- ensure feasible study schedules and good work/life balance leading to a decrease in the number of extension requests and failed assignments
- monitor student engagement and provide an early warning of any difficulties, so that additional help can be accessed in good time
- signpost students to other support offered across the institution, such as the Chaplain and SEN ombudsperson.

## INITIAL MINISTERIAL EDUCATION 1-3 HANDBOOK



2020-2021  
(28 JANUARY 2021)

Community life within such a small TEI provides natural networks of support, where strong friendships are formed; these form the basis for peer-to-peer learning and support. SEI's ethos of seeking to be a learning community centred around worship, service and personal formation creates an environment in which both formal and informal accountability and support structures can flourish.

**Financial support.** DipHE Students at SEI are eligible to apply for Disabled Students' Allowance by virtue of studying courses which are at least 50% of the length of a full-time course. The bench mark is 60 credits per annum. DSA eligibility is outlined [here](#).

**External support.** To ensure consistency of support during a candidate's selection and formation phases with the Scottish Episcopal Church, candidates with accessibility issues have access to an SpLD ombudsperson, an independent mentor from whom support can be accessed, confidentially and independently; contact details - [a.waller@dundee.ac.uk](mailto:a.waller@dundee.ac.uk)

**Accessible learning and assessment.** SEI delivers residential training in a building that is wheelchair accessible. Weekly lectures can be recorded. Outlines, handouts and pre-reading in advance of the teaching is offered, and in an accessible format. Care is taken about fonts, paper colour and backgrounds to Power Points.

**Training for Diocesan Advisors.** A pilot scheme offering training is being offered in this coming year to Vocational Advisors, Diocesan Advisors and Training Incumbents of enquirers/candidates who have a specific learning difference (SpLD).

**Screening and diagnostic assessment.** Candidates will have been directed to any assessment in the course of the discernment process, with the cost of this being covered by provincial/diocesan arrangements which are currently being worked out. This places the assessment at the earliest possible stage and therefore increases the prospect of starting IME1 with arrangements in place. Where there is no other confirmation that a need exists, dioceses may wish to use a screening tool before engaging with a full diagnostic assessment. **The resultant certification should be presented to SEI core staff at the student's introductory interview.**

**Compliance.** SEI has an obligation to provide reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act to support students with special educational needs to undertake their studies

- a focussed reading list, where priority reading is highlighted in some way;
- any materials in advance of the lecture, if these are to be ordinarily disseminated to all students either during or after the lecture or a brief plan or outline of the lecture format, in advance of the session, to support advance preparation;
- permission, if required, to record some lectures, tutorials or seminars, having first obtained permission from the lecturer to do so;
- printed material in an alternative format;
- time to catch up on missed work, due to periods of illness or medical commitments, when necessary;
- consideration for additional time in which to complete written assignments in accordance with TEI and Common Awards procedures (such extensions being agreed in advance of the submission deadline);
- reasonably spaced deadlines in order to help pace workload;
- ability to use specialist software/equipment to access learning material.

## (b) Dyslexia Policy

### 1. Introduction

SEI positively welcomes applications from candidates with disabilities. Dyslexia, a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) is a registered disability. Therefore, candidates who have a report by an Educational Psychologist or other appropriately qualified person as evidence of a SpLD are eligible for appropriate support without compromising academic standards. Candidates should provide evidence of their disability prior to formal registration with the Institute to ensure all appropriate arrangements are confirmed.

### 1. The legislative background

#### 1.1 Context

The Institute is required by law to support disabled candidates effectively. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act of 2001 (2004 revisions are now law) and the Equality Act 2010 place three central obligations on the Institute:

- Not to unreasonably discriminate against disabled candidates;
- To make reasonable adjustments to facilitate their learning (however not at the expense of academic standards)
- To be anticipatory; requiring the Institute to plan ahead for the needs of future candidates.

#### 1.2 Reasonable Adjustment

The Acts uses the term 'reasonable adjustment' as the measure by which provisions for disabled candidates are set. The term reasonable adjustment is open to interpretation but it may be considered as: 'A necessary accommodation or alteration to existing academic programmes, offering individuals the opportunity to demonstrate their ability' (association of Dyslexia Specialist in Higher Education, ADSHE).

### 2. What is dyslexia?

One of the aspects of dyslexia that affects literacy is a difficulty in associating sounds with pictures and is linked to relatively inefficient rapid information processing capabilities and short-term-memory. Consequently, dyslexic candidates experience difficulties in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics.

### 3. Recording lectures and formal learning inputs

Many candidates with dyslexia have difficulty in writing by hand or writing and listening at the same time. As such, recording lectures and other formal learning inputs are considered to be reasonable adjustments. Any recording is for private use only. However, in the case of a tutorial, seminar or group discussion where the information may be shared and of a confidential nature, agreement of all those present is required.

### 4. Assessment and examination provision

- All assessment work submitted by candidates is eligible for marking with reference to the guidelines.
- Extensions to deadlines should be considered but successive extensions may not help the student. The procedure for extenuating circumstances should be followed in each case of an extension being considered.
- 25% extra time in examinations and class tests (including practical sessions) is commonly recommend by Needs Assessors and Educational Psychologist for candidates who have been assessed with SpLDs. However, other accommodations, for example the use of a reader or a typist may also be considered with appropriate professional advice. Any such advice should be adopted at the request of the student and after discussion with the Director of Studies.

## **5. Marking programme work and examination scripts**

- It is important for the marker to bear in mind the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria of a piece of work.
- If knowledge is being assessed, then marks should be awarded for core information and not deducted for spelling, grammar and punctuation errors, in other words copy editing errors. However, if spelling is crucial for example for a public document, then errors should be noted and some penalty considered.
- Similarly numbers can be written incorrectly especially when copied or when a calculation spans more than one page and this should be taken into consideration.
- If a piece of work is not well presented, it should be marked for content only, unless the layout of the work has been highlighted as one element of the assessment.

## **6. Alternative forms of assessment**

- Alternative forms of assessment may be necessary, but where accuracy in written language is essential this may not be an option.
- Whilst ensuring that a reasonable adjustment is made, academic standards must not be compromised. It is important that the student is involved in discussions concerned with an alternative assessment format. If it is not possible to make any adjustment, it must be clear on what grounds the decision has been made.
- If a student is assessed as having a SpLD during the programme of an academic year and is borderline for a module, re-marking completed programme work within that year should be considered, when practically possible. Candidates who were found to have dyslexia in subsequent sessions would not have papers re-marked from earlier academic years.

## **7. Procedures**

- If candidates wish to have their coursework scripts identified as the work of a student with a SpLD they should inform the Director of Studies.
- If a student is not formally registered as a disabled student but would like to make the marker aware of their SpLD he/she will need to provide evidence of their disability which should be given to the Director of Studies prior to work being submitted to the marker.
- If a student chooses not to have their work identified as that of a student with a SpLD then no dispensation will be given for poor grammar, punctuation or spelling.

## **8. Further information**

For further information, please look to the [British Dyslexia Association](#), [Dyslexia Action](#) (formerly The Dyslexia Institute) and the [National Attention Deficit Disorder Information and Support Service ADDISS](#)