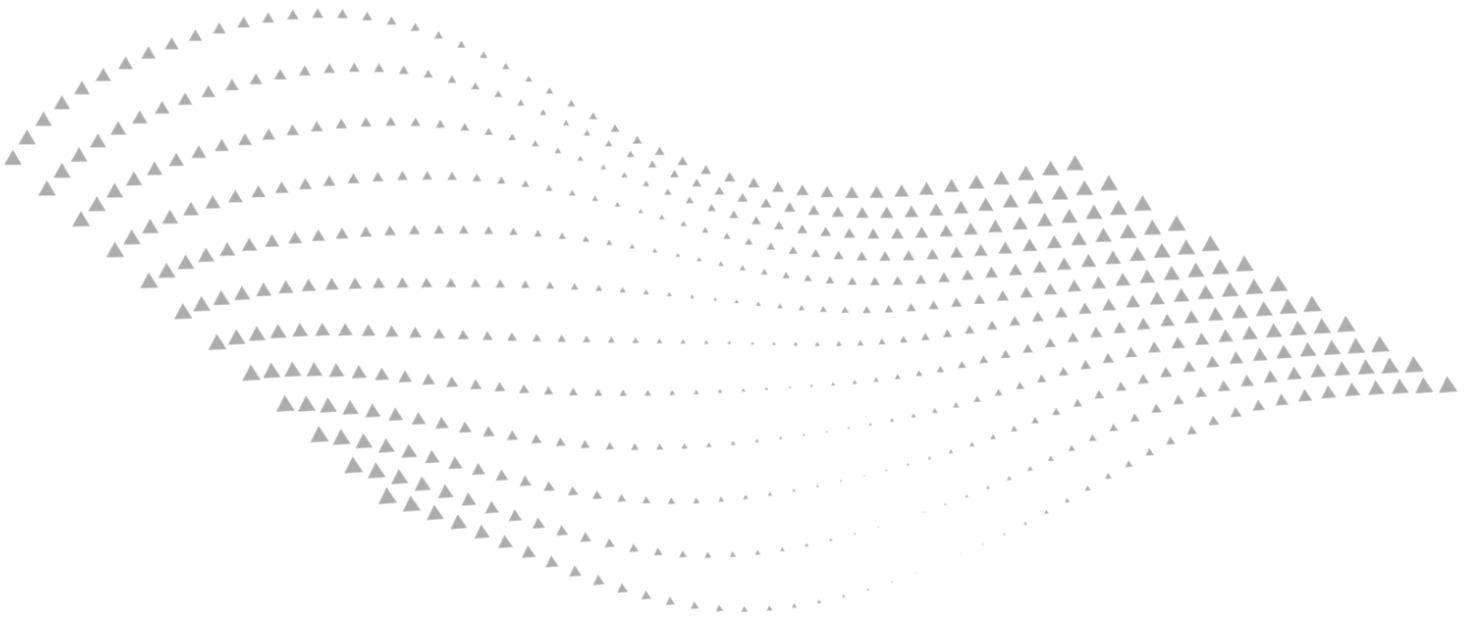




PERFORMERS
COLLEGE

Performers College

Student Support Disability Guide



1. Welcome

The purpose of this handbook is to answer any questions you might have about the disability support available to students at Performers College. Performers College is committed to ensuring that disabled people are provided with equal access to their chosen course of study and facilities at the College and is working towards removing any barriers which might prevent a disabled person from actively participating in student life at Performers College.

Disability support is available through the Student Support team who are able to provide advice and information to all disabled students. We provide a free and confidential service to all students and applicants. We work with students with a wide range of disabilities, including but by no means restricted to:

- Specific Learning Difficulties (such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD)
- Mental Health Difficulties (such as depression, bi-polar disorder)
- Long-term medical conditions (such as HIV, cancer, multiple sclerosis)
- Unseen disabilities (such as diabetes, asthma, epilepsy)
- Sensory impairments (such as visual impairment, hearing impairment)
- Mobility or physical impairments (such as paralysis, arthritis)

2. Disability Statement

Performers College is committed to ensuring that disabled people are provided with equal access to their chosen course of study and facilities at the College. The College recognises the social model of disability, whereby the individual is understood to be disadvantaged not by their disability, but by social barriers, such as the physical environment, methods of communication and prejudicial attitudes. The College is committed to working towards removing any barriers which might prevent a disabled person from actively participating in student life at Performers College. We provide advice and information for disabled students and aim to enable disabled students to reach their full potential at Performers College.

3. Contacting Disability Support

Disability support is available through the Student Support team who can be contacted in the following ways:

By Telephone: 0121 647 3633

By Email: studentsupportbham@performerscollege.co.uk

By Letter: Performers College Birmingham, Little Ann Street, Birmingham, B5 5SR

4. Legal Framework

The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1 October 2010. The Act was brought in to integrate, simplify, clarify and further strengthen former discrimination legislation. It is important to note that the vast majority of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has simply been transferred over into the new Act.

Someone has a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Substantial means that it has more than a minor or trivial effect on his/her ability to do normal day to day activities. Long term means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last 12 months. There are special rules for people who have recurring or fluctuating conditions who can also qualify. Persons who are registered blind, have a severe disfigurement, MS, HIV or cancer will automatically qualify for protection under the Act. They do not have to satisfy the test outlined above.

How does the Act protect disabled persons?

The Act protects students from:

Direct Discrimination - Treating a person worse than someone else because he/she has (or had) a disability/is perceived to have a disability or is associated with someone who has a disability.

Indirect Discrimination - Using a policy or practice which impacts worse on a particular group and which cannot be objectively justified.

Discrimination Arising from disability - Treating a disabled person unfavourably because of something connected with his/her disability when this cannot be objectively justified.

The Equality Duty

The Act introduced an equality duty, which came into force on the 6 April 2011. It is very similar to the previous disability equality duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It means that the College needs to promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons and to take steps to eliminate discrimination and harassment against disabled persons. If you would like to find out more information about the Equality Act, you can do so on the Equality and Human Rights website: www.equalityhumanrights.com

5. Confidentiality

We operate a confidential service within student support, which means that information about a student and/or their disability is not passed on to third parties without student consent. We encourage students to contact us as early as possible regarding their disability, so we can ensure that they are provided with equal access to their chosen course of study and facilities at the College. Every student will be contacted at point of offer and asked to complete a Student Support Disclosure and Confidentiality Consent form.

We reserve the right to break the Disclosure and Confidentiality Consent Form in circumstances where the student is reasonably believed to be a risk either to themselves or others. Any decision to break confidentiality would be made by the Student Support Officer and/or Head of Student Services.

Student Support may need to disclose information in order to help support you. However, the student has the right to limit their disclosure. Students may be required to complete additional support forms (e.g. Individual Support plans) with Student Support at the department's request.

Full Disclosure

If a student allows full disclosure, then information will only be shared where necessary on a 'need-to-know basis'. Those with whom we may need to share information or request further information may include (but is not strictly limited to); your Course Leader and tutors, the Exams Team who arrange your exams, Health and Safety staff, support workers, your Educational Psychologist, your Needs Assessor or your DSA provider. We always ask the people with whom we share your information to respect your confidentiality and to not pass your information on to anyone else unless they are also involved in your support.

Restricted Disclosure

You can choose to restrict (i.e. prevent) disclosure to individuals outside of Student Support or to only allow information to certain individuals. In these cases, Student Support will inform the student that this will limit the reasonable adjustments that can be put in place.

The student is advised that should they choose to limit their level of disclosure, a failure by the College to make reasonable adjustments is unlikely to be grounds for any subsequent mitigation. Please be aware this may limit the level and type of support the College can provide for you. If you would like to discuss the different options and the effect on your support, please contact Student Support.

Under the Data Protection Act (1998) disability is considered to be 'personal, sensitive information'. We therefore provide a confidential service to students, which means that information about a student and/or their disability is not passed on to third parties without their consent. The Disclosure and Confidentiality Consent Form is a record of who you have or have not given your consent for Student Support to discuss your case with and, where appropriate, share relevant information.

Any information held by Student Support will be kept for a period of six years, after your last point of contact with us, as required by the Data Protection Act (1998). After this date, the information held by Student Support will be disposed of appropriately.

6. Specialist Services

Students Student Support provides several services to disabled students. These include:

- Advice and information on disability support and reasonable adjustments
- Advice and information on additional funding which disabled students may be eligible to apply for (such as Disabled Students Allowance (DSA)).
- Advice and information on arranging an assessment for a Specific Learning Difficulty with an Educational Psychologist

- Liaising with the Programme/Course Leaders, Academic team and Heads of Department to implement recommended exam provisions
- Assistance in arranging Non-Medical Helpers (such as note-takers, one-on-one support mentors)

We can provide guidance and advice to students without evidence of their disability. However, we will not make any recommendations for support, and the College will not implement any reasonable adjustments, until the student provides written evidence of their disability.

7. Evidence of Disability

Evidence of a student's disability must be confirmed in writing by an appropriately qualified professional. Examples include:

- GP letter
- Consultant letter
- Dental surgeon letter
- Psychiatrist/Psychologist letter or report

All evidence must be contemporaneous and relevant to the period for which they are applying for adjustments. It is the responsibility of the student to provide Student Support with evidence of their disability.

Obtaining Evidence of a Disability

Where a student does not have evidence of a disability, we can provide advice and guidance on how to obtain it. We can assist students in arranging an assessment with an Educational Psychologist, where the student believes they may have a Specific Learning Difficulty. The cost of an Educational Psychologist assessment is met by the student. For BA students that are unsure whether they may have a Specific Learning Difficulty, we are able to provide an in-house assessment called QuickScan which will identify your learning style and highlight any evidence of learning support requirements which will help you decide whether to invest in an Educational Psychologist's report.

All students on our Diploma courses or non-UK BA students without documentation evidencing their Specific Learning Difficulties will be required to take our in-house screening called StudyScan to identify your learning style and potential need for additional support. Diploma and non-UK BA students are ineligible to apply for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA).

Students should contact Student Support to book an in-house screening. Where a student requires written evidence of disability from a medical practitioner, we can provide the student with a letter to present to their practitioner, explaining why the College requires evidence of disability. We will not cover the cost of any letters issued for a student by a medical practitioner.

Temporary illness or injuries

Support for students who are pregnant, or have a temporary illness or injury, will be agreed and provided by Student Support. Students are advised to contact Student Support to discuss their circumstances.

8. Reasonable Adjustments

Under the Equality Act, the College also has an obligation to make adjustments for disabled students once it becomes aware or should be aware that they have a disability. A “reasonable adjustment” is a change that the College can make to the way in which a course is delivered, or the way in which we carry out assessments to remove a disadvantage caused by a disability. Reasonable adjustments should be tailored to the needs of an individual student but support provisions are most commonly identified in accordance with recommendations made by an Educational Psychologist, or other medical professional.

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) - Marking of Assignments

Upon receipt of evidence confirming a diagnosis of a SpLD, we will identify work from a student with SpLD so it is marked appropriately. Marking guidelines have been written for the academics on how to mark work for those students with a SpLD.

Extensions

Students with a registered disability may request an extension for coursework assignments on the grounds of their disability, as a reasonable adjustment. Please be informed that evidence of a SpLD does not guarantee an automatic right to an extension. Where a student has a disability, we do not recommend blanket extensions for all assignments. We recognise that where possible students should adhere to given deadlines, in the interests of their academic progress.

It is the student’s responsibility to negotiate all extensions in advance of the submission deadlines with their Head/Deputy Head of Student Services. It is at the discretion of the Head/Deputy Head of Student Services as to whether or not an extension is granted.

Examinations/Assessments

The Student Support team in discussion with the Course Leader will identify what reasonable adjustments need to be put in place for the individual disabled person in line with recommendations made by an Educational Psychologist, or other medical professional. The purpose of reasonable adjustments to the assessment format is to reduce any disadvantage a disabled student faces due to their disability.

The Student Support team will inform the Exams Team of what reasonable adjustments are to be put in place. The Student Support team must inform the Exams Team in appropriate time before the assessment in order to guarantee that support can be provided.

9. Physical Accessibility

The College has no available parking for students. It is advisable that disabled visitors contact the College prior to enrolment to check what space is available. Performers College is accessible to disabled students. It is recommended to contact the Student Support or Estates team at each College for specific details on accessibility.

Student Support also work closely with facilities and provide an orientation/induction meeting for new disabled students who may have a visual impairment/blind, wheelchair users and/or experience mobility difficulties, to become familiarised with the College and facilities. Students, who would like the orientation/induction meeting, must contact Student Support prior to enrolment for this to be arranged.