



## Disability Policy for Students 2022-23

Scope and Purpose	This process applies to all students at Belfast Bible College.
Implication of non-adherence	Breach of various statutory requirements as listed below
Compliance and Regulatory requirements	To comply with various requirements of Disability and Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005 (DDA) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Order 2005 (SEND0). Reference has also been made to the Equality Act 2010
Who uses the process?	All students, staff, tutors and volunteers at the college.
Roles and Responsibilities	Management Team is responsible for the implementation of the policy. The College's Disability Officer has responsibility to ensure the policy meets current requirements.
Process review	This process should be reviewed following the end of each academic year
Related documents	Accessing Learning Support Procedures: Disability and Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)  Event Guidelines  Document and Presentation Guidelines  Disability Guidelines for Lecturers
Date last reviewed	May 2022

### 1.1. Terms of Reference

This policy has been written with reference to and in line with the current Northern Ireland legislative framework contained within the **Disability and Discrimination Act 1995 and 2005 (DDA)** and the **Special Educational Needs and Disability Order 2005**



(SENDO). Reference has also been made to the **Equality Act 2010**, which whilst currently only applying in England, Wales and Scotland, contains principles of good practice which may become UK wide policy in the near future.

## **1.2. Policy Statement**

The purpose of Belfast Bible College is to be a welcoming community in which God works to form his people by integrating spiritual, academic and practical education rooted in his Word, for growth in Christian life and service, locally and around the World.

In light of this purpose, Belfast Bible College is firmly committed to fostering an accessible and inclusive environment that welcomes individuals of diverse backgrounds and abilities. We seek to promote equality and diversity in all aspects of college life and firmly believe that these values should be promoted and encouraged at all levels and in all areas.

As stated, this ethos of accessibility is underpinned by legislation which prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities and places a responsibility on educational institutions and service providers to make reasonable and anticipatory adjustments in order to accommodate the range of needs of disabled individuals.

In practice, this means that Belfast Bible College is committed to not only actively discouraging discrimination against individuals with disabilities, but also to promoting accessibility and the provision of equal opportunities for those wishing to study at Belfast Bible College or to attend events which the College organises.

## **1.3. Definition of Disability**

For the purposes of this policy, the definition of disability is as stated in the DDA (1995) which states that a disabled person is one who has **“a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day to day activities.”**

This includes

- Physical, sensory and/or mobility difficulties



- Hearing difficulties
- Visual impairments
- Intellectual disabilities
- Specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, dyspraxia)
- Specific medical conditions (e.g. HIV, cancer)
- Mental health difficulties

#### **1.4. BBC Commitment**

Belfast Bible College is therefore committed to providing equal access and reasonable and anticipatory adjustments to enable individuals with disabilities to access the range of study opportunities and events which the College provides.

This includes a commitment to:

1. The provision of accessible information regarding the full range of courses and events provided by the College.
2. Safe physical access to the range of facilities offered on campus, as far as is reasonable and practicable.
3. Promoting informed and constructive attitudes to disability amongst all sections of the College community.
4. Recognising the need to adjust customs and practices if they create inequality of opportunity for people with disabilities.
5. The need to accommodate, insofar as is reasonably practicable, all qualified applicants irrespective of disability.
6. Cooperation between the College and groups or organisations which represent and/or support people with disabilities.
7. Ensuring that all staff with particular responsibilities in this area will undertake appropriate training.
8. Raising the profile of disability awareness amongst all staff and students.
9. Working with university partner institutions to ensure that students with a disability have access to the full range of services open to them.



## **Overview of Disability Procedures**

The following are areas in which considerations regarding disability are relevant. Documents giving full details of guidelines and procedures are referenced where appropriate.

### **1.5. College Events**

Belfast Bible College is committed to ensuring that all events held at the College are intentionally accessible for those with a disability, in line with the guidelines for Northern Ireland produced by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM).

Suitable training and information will be given to all staff with specific responsibility for facilitating events where external users are likely to be present. (See 'Event Guidelines Document').

### **1.6. College Publications**

Belfast Bible College is committed to ensuring that as far as is practicably possible, all documents produced for internal and external use will be produced in an accessible format, or alternatively ensuring that an accessible format is available on request.

As far as possible, all staff will be encouraged to implement the guidance given for the production of internal and external documents. (See 'Document and Presentation Guidelines').

### **1.7. Enquiring about BBC**

Prospective students with a disability may wish to discuss their specific needs with the College prior to making a formal application. Specific concerns can be initially discussed with the Admissions Officer, who will liaise as necessary with the College's Disability Officer. Prospective students, regardless of their disability, are encouraged to visit the College at some point during the application process and the College will ensure that any necessary adjustments are made to allow this to happen.



## **1.8. Applying to BBC**

Individuals with specific disabilities should indicate briefly the nature of support required early in the application process. Ideally this should be noted on the appropriate application form, as this helps to ensure that the necessary support is in place as close to the start of their course as possible. In line with the College's disability policy, students with disabilities have the right to equal access to facilities and courses offered throughout the College.

Questions regarding the application process or studying at BBC can be directed initially to the College's **Admissions Officer** either by telephoning the College on 028 9030 1551 or by email to [admissions@belfastbiblecollege.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@belfastbiblecollege.ac.uk)

Applicants are also welcome to contact the College's **Disability Officer** directly with any queries or concerns. The Disability Officer will work closely with other members of staff to ensure that reasonable and anticipatory adjustments are made for prospective students, current students and visitors to the college.

## **1.9. Enrolling as a Student**

While it is anticipated that most students with a disability will make this known at some point during the application process, we recognise that some individuals may feel reluctant to do this for a variety of reasons. In this case, any students with a disability or medical issue should inform the Disability Officer or relevant Programme Leader of this as soon as possible prior to or after commencing their studies, to ensure that appropriate advice and support can be given.

The Disability Officer will then arrange to meet with the student to discuss the kind of support which they feel they may need during their time at BBC. The Disability Officer will provide the necessary information needed for the student to appropriately process and access the support needed.

## **1.10. Confidentiality**

Information regarding a student's disability or support needs will only be disclosed to those relevant staff whose role it is to process and/or implement any necessary



adjustments to enable the student to participate fully in all aspects of their academic study and the life of the College. No information will be disclosed without the student's consent and confidentiality and privacy will be respected at all times.

### **1.11. Student Support**

The type of support the College provides for an individual student will depend on the student's particular needs as determined during the application and registration process.

### **1.12. Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA)**

The Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA) is a supplementary allowance available to students who may have extra expenses, as a direct result of their disability, arising from attending a higher education course. The allowance is designed to help disabled students benefit fully from their courses and it is not means-tested. Please refer to our 'Accessing Learning Support' document for more detailed information.

### **1.13. Accessing Learning Support (BBC)**

Prospective or existing students should contact the Disability Officer ([pmcdowell@belfastbiblecollege.ac.uk](mailto:pmcdowell@belfastbiblecollege.ac.uk)) if further information is required in accessing learning support.

### **1.14. Academic & Educational Support**

This form of support might include: materials in accessible formats (e.g. audio, large print, coloured paper), permission to record lectures, notes made available before class). (See 'Disability Guidelines for Lecturers').

### **1.15. Examination Support and In-course Assessment**

This form of support might include: additional time, rest breaks, quiet room under supervision, a scribe reader or interpreter, use of computer, recording of questions, assignment deadlines extension.



### **1.16. Library Services**

The College library is committed to a policy of equal access to information/resources for all students and every effort will be made to respond to individual requests in a positive and proactive manner. This form of support might include: extensions of short-term loan materials, loan of reference materials if viewing/reading equipment is required, reservation and/or renewal of ordinary loan material by telephone or email, and assistance with photocopying and/or database searching.

### **1.17. College bursaries**

A college bursary is available to students in receipt of Personal Independence Payments or other specific benefits. For more information contact the Finance Office.

### **1.18. Award Ceremonies**

All students have an entitlement to attend and participate in the College award ceremonies and arrangements can be made to ensure that access and support measures are in place, for example, access for wheelchairs or signers to interpret the ceremony. (See 'Event Guidelines Document').

## **Additional Sources of Help and Support**

### **Financial Assistance**

Further information on financial help available to students with disabilities can be found at [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

### **Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA)**

Further information on applying for DSA can be found at [www.studentsfinancenl.co.uk](http://www.studentsfinancenl.co.uk) and [www.nidirect.gov.uk](http://www.nidirect.gov.uk)

### **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**

[www.equalityni.org](http://www.equalityni.org)



## National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

[www.skill.org.uk](http://www.skill.org.uk)