



Student and Academic Services – Disability Service – Delivery Model ‘Review’

Equality Impact Assessment – March - June 2026

1. Introduction/Context

We propose to redesign the ‘Service Delivery Model’ for our student-focussed Disability Service (DS). DS will adapt our approach to the way we support students, moving away from the current model to one which facilitates increased colleague wellbeing and maintains student inclusion.

The existing approach to service provision is based on a historic model devised when there were much lower (recorded) numbers of disabled students joining the University each year. Since 2020, we have observed a significant increase in the numbers of disabled student entrants and in those engaging with DS.

DS registrations have risen steadily every year since 2020-21. So far, in 2025-26, there are 5155 students registered with the Service, up by 600+ from the end of 2024-25. Registration numbers have doubled since the end of academic year 2020-21 (5155 in 2025-26 compared to 2584 in 2020-21) through a combination of improved access to the Service and increased disclosure rates. DS continues to see a rise in disclosures of long-term mental health conditions including depressive illnesses and diagnosed anxiety disorders. 15% of students registered with DS in 2025-26 are international students; this has risen from 7.7% in 2020-21.

These evidenced increases in volume necessitate changes to the service model to ensure sustainable provision for both staff delivering the service and for students accessing it. Additional factors informing the rationale for change, include:

- Lack of scalability in current model based on projected resourcing for DS in the foreseeable future.
- Rigid programming of Disability Adviser (DA) time limits flexibility to respond to students with complex requirements; the new model will offer greater autonomy and agility.
- Existing onboarding methods to DS will benefit from changes to ensure more efficient, user-friendly and timely support to students requiring lower-level input from DS.

The changes aim to:

- Streamline the process for students.
- Avoid long wait times for appointments and delays to the implementation of adjustments (SSPs; Study Support Plans) and support.
- Provide flexible ways for students to get what they need.

Change will take place on two levels:

1. A set of initial adjustments will be put in place for all disabled students, without the need to see an adviser. These comprise 25% extra time at assessment, flexibility with coursework deadlines, and use of a computer in exams where use of a computer is relevant and appropriate.

- These adjustments can be amended and updated if the Disability Service becomes aware of more information about the student's needs.
- 2. Students will have multiple options for engaging with DS, giving them the flexibility to use DS in a way that suits them and their level of need.
 - **Level 1:** Students with straightforward study support needs will be able to access adjustments by simply submitting their study support request (SSR) with supporting documents.
 - **Level 2:** Students will be invited to a set-up appointment, to identify adjustments and other study support needs, and be supported to apply for DSA (Disabled Students' Allowance).
 - **Level 3:** Students with complex needs will be supported by a named adviser for as long as case working is required. In many cases, case working by a named adviser will only be on a short- or medium-term basis.
 - **All students:** can access support by attending a drop-in (running daily during Semesters 1 and 2, and twice weekly at other times) or emailing support@disability.gla.ac.uk.

2. Potential Equality Impacts

Equality and Wellbeing Considerations on DS Colleagues in Implementing Operational Changes:

The initial plan for DS is to change the model of delivery. This comprises adaptations to ways of working. These changes are mainly connected to the operationalisation of the service and are not considered to constitute 'substantive organisational change' as discussed in the Management of Organisational Change Policy. As such, impacts are considered on the basis of best practice for implementing change in an inclusive-by-design manner and include:

Engagement and Communication:

3. Engagement has been early and has focused on concise and clear discussions with team members directly impacted by the changes.
4. Updates and opportunities for engagement have been shared in a variety of formats, including in-person and online meetings, email updates, slide pack on the changes.
5. Ensuring line managers are equipped to have informed discussions about the changes and to help colleagues identify any training needs, potential reasonable adjustments, etc.

Building feedback mechanisms into the process:

6. Consultation opportunities have included mechanisms to feedback during discussions, in 1:1s with line managers, via online feedback forms, and through dedicated meetings that can be booked with the Disability & Inclusion Lead.
7. Feedback provided by these means has been taken into consideration and acted upon via updates to plans.

Monitoring:

8. We will review the impacts of the changes on e.g. workload allocation and reported wellbeing, ensuring follow-up on any training or upskilling needs that have been identified and agreed.

The equality impacts of this change are outlined below and demonstrate how these changes will support equality of opportunity for disabled students in accessing adjustments to support their learning.

There are additional considerations from a colleague wellbeing perspective. These are not necessarily connected to any protected characteristics of DS staff members. However, it is useful to demonstrate the potential benefits to colleague wellbeing from a more sustainable service delivery model.

It should be noted that where members of the cohort have been on extended periods of sickness absence, additional efforts have been made to ensure they have been fully briefed and updated on the changes as part of their return-to-work.

Equality Implications of the changes on Disabled Student Experience:

By implementing changes to the DS service delivery model, we anticipate positive equality impacts aligned to the General Equality Duty. These are outlined below.

Advancing equality of opportunity:

- By empowering students to get the support they need quickly and with minimal administrative or additional burden, the changes will help to provide a more equitable student experience and better support students in their learning.

Fostering good relations between those who share protected characteristic and those who do not:

- Reducing any potential stigma for disabled students who may require adjustments and support but do not wish to attach to DS long-term to access basic adjustments to support their learning and assessment.

Reducing potential unfavourable treatment:

- Benefits to being able to get adjustments more quickly, potentially increasing the number of students engaging with the more light-touch model and also providing DAs with additional capacity to focus on individual students with more complex requirements for adjustments and support. This should ensure that students who need additional and more flexible support will receive a greater level of service from the University and should reduce any potential unfavourable treatment from being delayed in receiving or prevented from receiving appropriate adjustments to their learning and assessment.

Review:

It is recommended that the DS review the impacts of these changes on the students registering with and accessing the service at least 4 to 6 months following the operationalisation of the changes and then at least annually, as part of regular service delivery reporting.

Signed:

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