

16.8. Guidelines for Supporting Students of Determination (Special Needs)

1. Introduction

These guidelines apply to Middlesex University Dubai and are derived from comparable policies that apply to our UK-based provision with reasonable adjustments due to local operational and regulatory considerations. Such considerations mean that Middlesex University Dubai is realistic in understanding that these guidelines will vary compared to our home campus. At the same time Middlesex University Dubai fully supports the Dubai Inclusive Education Policy and the UAE's National Policy for Empowering People of Determination and is committed to ensuring that disability does not provide a barrier to participation in learning and teaching, facilities and services for existing and prospective students. The University supports an anticipatory approach that requires pro-active consideration of access to learning, teaching, services and facilities to ensure adjustments are made in advance of students of determination attempting to study or use the services and facilities.

The University is committed to addressing barriers to inclusion (structural, cultural, organisational and attitudinal) and takes as its starting point the premise that accessible and appropriate provision is not 'additional' but a core element of the overall service, which the University makes available.

All academic disciplines and services will use inclusive practices and reasonable adjustments to change procedures or environments to remove any disabling effects or barriers to participation.

It is important to note that Middlesex University Dubai works within the context of Dubai Knowledge Park/ Dubai International Academic City (a managed government education zone). Dubai Knowledge Park (DKP)/ Dubai International Academic City (DIAC) provide all infrastructural and facilities support and management and is directly in charge of all 'Shared Facilities' including but not limited to the food court(s), the DKP/DIAC campus grounds, the DKP/DIAC recreation areas, internal roads, infrastructure, and all other common assets.

2. Definition of Disability

Middlesex University (including Dubai campus) acknowledges that a person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (UK Equality Act 2010). Long-term means it has lasted for at least 12 months, it is likely to last at least 12 months, or it is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person. Disability covers a wide range of physical and mental impairments, including physical and mobility difficulties, hearing impairments, visual impairments, specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, medical conditions and mental health problems.

3. Principles

The University will ensure that in all policies, procedures, functions and activities consideration is given to the means of enabling students of determination full participation in all aspects of the academic and social life of the institution.

University staff will work in partnership with the Centre for Academic Success (CAS) and the Learning Disability Counsellor alongside students of determination to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made, enabling them to meet their full academic potential.

4. Disclosure and Confidentiality

The decision of whether or not to disclose a disability and the timing of any disclosure belongs entirely to the individual student.

However, if opportunities have been given to disclose a disability and an individual decides not to then the University will not be able to offer them individual support or adjustments.

Should the student choose to disclose their special needs, a current report written by a recognised specialist (for example, a certified Educational Psychologist) will be required to put appropriate arrangements in place. In putting any access arrangements in place, the student's usual way of working will be preferred within reason.

The University will manage the process of information sharing and will treat all personal data confidentially; access to disability-related information will be provided on a need to know basis only, in order for reasonable adjustments to be implemented.

5. Reasonable Adjustments

The University seeks to increase the inclusivity of learning and teaching to optimise the learning experience for all; however, it is recognised that this does not negate the need for reasonable adjustments. Adjustments may include specific examination arrangements, provision of additional support for learning and adjustments to assessment practices.

Adjustments will be made within the parameters of the following factors:

- The nature of student circumstances and needs following consultation with the student and examination of available evidence and relevant assessments
- The nature of the academic programme of study
- The likely effectiveness of the adjustment in removing the disadvantage
- The practicality of the adjustment, taking account of: disruption, health and safety issues, the reasonable expectations of others and external factors (for example, factors in relation to student placements)

- The costs, including the availability of external funding sources to assist in the adjustment
- Regulatory considerations
- The possibility of using inclusive measures, which is the University's preferred method of ensuring accessibility, rather than a reasonable adjustment.