



## Information for Learners with Disabilities, Health Conditions and/or Specific Learning Difficulties

DFEi, as an equal opportunities Further Education and Training (FET) Institute, welcomes applications from learners with additional needs. DFEi will endeavour to provide appropriate supports and services for all learners with disabilities or specific learning difficulties to access its courses, within the limits of available resources. Funding may be available from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) and the ESF under the Higher Education Authority (HEA) Fund for Learners with Disabilities. Learners with a wide variety of disabilities are supported including those with a Visual Impairment, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Physical Disability, Mental Health Conditions, Specific Learning Difficulties, such as Dyslexia and Developmental Co-ordination Disorders such as Dyspraxia and significant ongoing illnesses. Applicants to the Disability Fund must meet certain nationality and residency criteria. The services and supports available to individual learners will depend on the grant allocated by the HEA.

A supplementary application form for learners with additional needs is available from DFEi. Documentary evidence verifying the learner's Disability/Specific learning difficulty must be provided with the completed supplementary application form. Completed forms should be returned to the Disability Advisor as early as possible.

### 1 Information

- 1.1: The following information is for learners with disabilities, including the areas of mental health and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.
- 1.2: Read the attached information before you complete the application form.
- 1.3: Failure to disclose relevant information at application stage could result in the lack of provision of additional supports and services which are designed to meet your needs.
- 1.4: Learners are advised that it is in their own interest to seek an advisory meeting with the Disability Advisor prior to application.

### 2 Disability Fund

- 2.1: DFEi will apply (with your consent) to the Disability Fund in the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education Authority (HEA) for equipment or services to help you better access your course in DFEi.
- 2.2: The fund provides grants towards the provision of services and the purchase of equipment for learners with disabilities. The scheme applies to learners who have sensory, physical and/or communicative disabilities. The categories covered by this disability fund include:

Categories covered by the disability fund include	
Blind/Visual Impairment	Deaf/Hearing Impairment
Mental Health Condition	Physical Disability
ADD/ADHD	Aspergers Syndrome/Autism
Specific or General Learning Difficulty	Significant On-going illness
Neurological Conditions (brain injury, speech or language disabilities, specific or general learning difficulty)	DCD (Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia)

- 2.3: This Third Level Access is funded by the Irish Government and part funded by the European Social Fund.

- 2.4: The kind of supports needed may vary from person to person, but can include the following:

Supports include	
Use of assistive technology equipment and software: eg laptops, reading software etc	Additional learning support with 1:1 or in small groups
Personal Assistant while in DFEi	Transport
Use of a sign language interpreter	Use of an electronic note taker
Examination Considerations (scribe, reader, tape recorder, use of word processor in exams)	

- 2.5: The level of services and support learners receive will depend on the grant allocated by the HEA.
- 2.6: Funding usually comes through in December each year.
- 2.7: Funding is not provided for any costs associated with assessment or diagnosis of a disability. More general information is available from the Higher Education Authority (HEA), [www.heai.ie](http://www.heai.ie).
- 2.8: Learners have the right to appeal to the HEA, if refused a grant.

### 3 Application Process for the Disability Fund

- 3.1: It is the learner's responsibility to complete the supplementary application form for Learners with Disabilities, Health Conditions and/or Specific Learning Difficulties. This is available from the administration office at [info@dfei.ie](mailto:info@dfei.ie), or Tel: (01) 2809676, or from the website [www.dfei.ie](http://www.dfei.ie).
- 3.2: It is the learner's responsibility to return this form to the Disability Advisor with 2 copies of the relevant documentation as outlined below.

<b>Primary disability, significant health condition or specific learning difficulty</b>	<b>Required Evidence One or more of the following</b>
Blind/Visual Impairment	Report from an ophthalmologist or ophthalmic surgeon with signature or a letter from the School for the Visually Impaired, signed by the Principal, letter from NCBI confirming registration with the Council
Mental Health Conditions	Report from a psychiatrist
ADD/ADHD	Report from a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist
Specific Learning Difficulty	Report from a qualified psychologist (no older than 5 years) from date of needs assessment). If the individual was tested pre their sixteenth birthday i.e. The report does not contain results from Wechsler Adult Intelligence-Fourth Edition. If the psychological report has results from the WIAS IV it has no time limit.
Neurological Conditions (brain injury, speech or language disabilities)	Report from a neurologist and/or other relevant Consultant
Deaf/Hearing Impairment	An Audiogram from a qualified audiologist or a letter from the School of the Deaf, signed by the Principal
Physical Disability	Report from a relevant consultant
Aspergers Syndrome/Autism	Report from a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist
Significant On-going illness	Report from a relevant consultant (eg for epilepsy report from a neurologist) or Consultant Registrar
DCD (Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia)	Report from a qualified psychologist and occupational therapist or neurologist
General Learning Difficulties	Report from Psychologist – no time limit

- 3.3: The Disability Advisor will arrange an appointment with the learner to commence the application process to the HEA. It is important that this appointment is scheduled prior to course commencement so that application to the HEA can be completed on time.
- 3.4: It is the learner's responsibility to complete the Needs Assessment in conjunction with the Disability Advisor. The closing date is usually October 1<sup>st</sup>.

### 4 Attending for interview/advisory meeting

- 4.1: Learners who require special assistance (eg a sign language interpreter, personal assistant (etc) when attending an interview or advisory meeting are requested to provide their own assistant.

- 4.2: If this is not possible, then learners should contact the Disability Advisor well in advance at (01) 2809676 to allow DFEi to make appropriate arrangements as it may take a number of weeks to source special arrangements.
- 4.3: It is important to note that if the applicant is unable to attend for interview or for the advisory meeting at the scheduled time that adequate cancellation notice for this service can be given.
- 4.4: It is the responsibility of the learner who has not been assessed to make sure that assessment is complete prior to attending DFEi.

<b>Useful Contacts</b>	
<b>The Association for Higher Education Access and Disability (AHEAD)</b> Phone: (01) 7164396 Email: <a href="mailto:ahead@aheda.ie">ahead@aheda.ie</a> Website: <a href="http://www.ahead.ie">www.ahead.ie</a>	<b>Dyslexia Association of Ireland</b> Phone: (01) 8776001 Email: <a href="mailto:info@dyslexia.ie">info@dyslexia.ie</a> Website: <a href="http://www.dyslexia.ie">www.dyslexia.ie</a>
<b>Deaf Hear</b> Phone: (01) 8175700 Email: <a href="mailto:info@deafhear.ie">info@deafhear.ie</a> : <a href="http://www.deafhear.ie">www.deafhear.ie</a> Minicom: (01) 8175777: Text: (01) 8783629	<b>National Council for the Blind and Visually Impaired</b> Phone: 8307033 Email: <a href="mailto:info@ncbi.ie">info@ncbi.ie</a> Website: <a href="http://www.ncbi.ie">www.ncbi.ie</a>

## 5 Examination considerations

- 5.1: Learners can request special examination considerations based on individual needs.
- 5.2: Learners need to supply DFEi's Disability Advisor with a copy of the Department of Education's accommodations letter they received in 2<sup>nd</sup> level or a letter from the FET/HE centre. College or Institute outlining the supports they received in this area.
- 5.3: Learners who qualify for additional time need to be aware that they may be facilitated in a share examinations centre which may include a number of other learners also receiving extra time.
- 5.4: To avail of the dyslexia guidelines in DFEi's assessment (eg essays, projects etc) and examinations a learner with specific learning difficulty must complete the following process:
- Provide an up to date Educational Psychological Assessment, no older than five years.
  - Register with the Disability Service
  - Complete an educational needs assessment with the Disability Services
  - Confirm the presence of a significant spelling difficulty (<16<sup>th</sup> Percentile).
- 5.5: Where spelling and grammar are core competencies of a subject, a learner's work must be marked on the basis of accuracy in the language. Therefore spelling and grammar waivers will not apply to language based subject such as: Media Studies, Writing Skills for Journalism, Communications and Word Processing.
- 5.6: Learners should note that marks awarded for Spelling and Grammar in any assessment within DFEi will never exceed 10% of the overall assessment mark.
- 5.7: Spelling and grammar waivers do not apply for continual assessment work (report, essays, etc.) as the learner should have access and sufficient resources to correct assessment material prior to submission.