

Confidentiality Policy

This document outlines the way that DSAS uses the information students give us about their disabilities and personal circumstances. The personal information students give us helps us to tailor support to the specific requirements students may have. We respect student confidentiality and want to assure students that any information we share will be handled in a sensitive and discreet manner.

The University gathers information on disabled students from two main sources: from the information students enter on their UCAS form, GTTR or other application forms and during the student registration processes. This information is available to the department through Banner, the University student database. We also gather information from support workers that students work with. However the majority of the information we hold about student's disabilities comes directly from students, through meetings, discussions and email, or with the students' approval from their assessment centre.

Why we need to share student information

We need to share information with other people in the University to make sure that students get the most appropriate support. Recent examples have included:

- Sharing information with a student's academic department to arrange an extension to some work, or to ask them to provide lecture handouts in advance.
- Liaising with Taught Student Administration to put in place exam arrangements such as extra time, using a PC, receiving exam papers in Braille.
- Contacting the Accommodation Office on a student's behalf to arrange suitable accommodation.
- Working with Estates to ensure that adaptations are made to accommodation or teaching spaces.
- Collaborating with the Student Mental Health Worker to help a student access local mental health services quickly and with support.

In order to support students effectively, DSAS may need to share information with various different groups of people within the University. We only share information, where necessary, and on a 'need to know' basis, which means that we will only share sufficient information to address the issue at hand, and only with the people directly involved in that situation.

We always ask that the people we share information with respect confidentiality and do not pass any details on to anyone else unless they are also involved in the situation.

Those we may share information with includes (but is not strictly limited to):

- Academic department(s) (Disability Contact, Tutors and Support Staff)
- Residential and Commercial Services/Accommodation Services
- Estates Services
- Student Services Centre and other student services
- Library
- Information Systems Services (ISS)

- Student Mental Health Worker, if appropriate

Sometimes it may be necessary for the support worker team to share information relating to a student's disability with people outside the University, where sharing this information is in their best interests. For example:

- Disabled Students Allowances assessors
- Funding bodies (e.g. Student Finance England, Local authority, Research Council)
- Any health professionals regarding student's disability (e.g. General Practitioner (GP), Consultant, Community Psychiatric Nurse, occupational health advisor)
- Other agencies such as Adult Services and social care agencies
- Externally funded support workers, such as sign language interpreters or personal assistants

The department does not normally discuss student's support with their parents/guardians, partners or other family members. We may occasionally provide family members with general information relating to the support we offer to all disabled students when it is requested, but we will not share information about a student with them unless we have clear permission to do so. This decision would always be made in consultation with a student.

Student information is kept in personal student files and locked in our secure filing room. Student files are kept in the department and do not leave the building. Personal information is also stored on individual University email accounts, and in a DSAS shared file directory and DSAS electronic records system. Both are password protected and encrypted through the University server, and all employees are bound by the Data Protection Act. When information is no longer required, it is shredded or disposed of through Confidential Waste.

In accordance with the Data Protection Act, personal information is stored securely for seven years before it is disposed of confidentially.

Students have the right to request a copy of all the information DSAS holds on them. This is usually in the form of their Student File. Students would need to complete a Request Form for Access to Personal Data which is available at http://www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/documents/dsar_form.pdf or from the University's Secretariat.

All staff are required to follow the University's code of practice around data protection, this can be found at http://www.leeds.ac.uk/secretariat/data_protection_code_of_practice.html .

Mentor/PA/DST Specific

- Mentors/PAs/DSTs will complete a record sheet/ILP for each meeting they have with students, this is kept in the students file and will be accessible to both the Support Worker Team (SWT) and Disability Coordinators.
- The main purpose of the record sheet/ILP is so the SWT can keep track of what the support worker is doing and keep a record of what happened in the meeting. The record sheet/ILP is also used by support workers to help guide their work with students.

- Support workers will only record information that they feel is relevant to the students' academic progress and wellbeing. If a student wishes something not to be recorded please discuss this with the support worker. In some cases they may be able to agree to this but if they feel a students' wellbeing is at risk they will have to record the information.
- If a support worker feels that a students' life or the life of others is at risk or that a student has broken the law then they will be required to pass this information on, with or without your permission.
- Student record sheets will not be shared with their academic department.