

## **Applicants with disability specific needs in relation to college membership, accommodation and / or accessing an academic programme of study**

At Durham University, we are proud of our excellent student support provision. We aim to provide an inclusive, welcoming and supportive service and our support network is designed to ensure that wherever you access support, you receive an informed and efficient response.

We encourage applicants with disability related needs to provide all relevant information to our support team as early as possible in the application process. This enables us to fully assess your needs and provide any reasonable adjustments necessary for you to engage with your studies, in a timely manner and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

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### **How to let us know about your disability related needs**

Every applicant holding an offer from Durham University will automatically receive an email inviting completion of our Disability Disclosure Form, in March. To ensure disability related needs can be met, it is essential that applicants disclose their requirements when requested and by no later than 30<sup>th</sup> June, so that our team can assess needs in relation to college membership and accommodation, as well as specific academic programmes.

As an applicant, if you do not provide relevant information by 30<sup>th</sup> June, but do so at a later stage, while every attempt will be made to accommodate your needs promptly, the University cannot guarantee that all required adjustments will be in place in time for you to commence your studies.

As soon as you submit a Disability Disclosure Form, you will receive an individual, personal link to a secure portal which you should use to upload any [supporting documentation](#).

As part of the process for college membership and accommodation, applicants are asked to rank preferences for college membership. In June, you will also be asked to confirm whether you wish to apply for college accommodation. Any disability related information provided as part of the Disability Disclosure Form will potentially inform decision making around college membership and accommodation, in line with the University's legal duty.

You can find more information about the Disability Disclosure Form process [here](#).

### **College membership and accommodation**

If the nature of your disability necessitates provision of specific adjustments in relation to access and / or accommodation, please ensure that you inform us as soon as possible. If you do not provide relevant information when it is requested and by no later than 30<sup>th</sup> June, the University cannot guarantee that a suitable room will be available upon commencement of your programme.

Requests for adjustments submitted at very short notice will be considered but cannot be guaranteed as college and accommodation allocations will have already been made.

Once your disability related needs have been assessed in terms of your college membership and accommodation allocation, and decisions made in relation to any adjustments required, this will be communicated to you. Wherever possible, we will aim to communicate decisions to applicants within two weeks of a Disability Disclosure Form, and appropriate supporting documentation, being submitted. This information will be shared with the University's Accommodation & Allocations team who will then communicate with you regarding your college membership and accommodation.

While the University endeavours to meet college preferences, it is a legal requirement for the University to ensure that you are safe and not disadvantaged by your college membership or accommodation allocation. Following completion of the Disability Disclosure Form, where your accommodation needs are determined by the

University to require a specific room type or location, and these needs cannot reasonably be met by your preliminarily allocated college, the University reserves the right to reallocate your college membership to a college that can best meet your needs. [College membership allocation](#) is made at the sole discretion of the University and if reallocation is deemed necessary by the University, the decision is final.

## **How your disclosure and supporting documentation are assessed**

Any information you submit as an applicant shall be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and as set out in the [University's Privacy Policy](#)

For the purposes of the Disability Disclosure Form, information submitted is assessed by a team of support practitioners working under the oversight of the University's Disability Support department. Where any applicant request is deemed to be not required by the assessor on disability needs grounds, this request is escalated for second review to an alternative assessor who has no prior knowledge of your information. If both reviewers agree with the decision, this decision is confirmed as final and is communicated to you. If the reviewers differ in their decisions, the request will be escalated to the Head of Disability Support for final confirmation. Once a decision is confirmed as final, there is no opportunity for appeal.

Once all information has been assessed and a decision confirmed as final, this process will not be repeated. However, we recognise that in a small number of cases, medical or disability related needs may change after a final decision has been confirmed to you. If you feel this applies to you and you have recent supporting documentation (not already supplied previously) to confirm this change in circumstance, please contact [disability-support@durham.ac.uk](mailto:disability-support@durham.ac.uk) for further discussion, stating 'DDF Outcome - Review' as the subject header. A member of the Disability Support Team will then contact you directly.

Please note that we receive an extremely high volume of emails over the summer; we will respond as soon as we are able to do so.

## **Learning and teaching on your academic programme**

The Disability Disclosure Form provides an opportunity for you to inform us of any disability related needs and this information will also be assessed by our Disability Support team in relation to your academic programme. This allows us to ensure that any necessary adjustments can be put in place so that you can access your

programme. If the team require any additional information from you, they will contact you directly and discuss your needs further.

## **Supporting documentation**

To make any adjustment in response to a disclosure made to the University, we require approved supporting documentation to be submitted alongside your disclosure. Any applications submitted without supporting documentation will still be considered, however provision of adjustments will be subject to receipt of supporting documentation; if supporting documentation is provided at a very late stage, the University cannot guarantee that all adjustments will be in place at the commencement of your studies.

If supporting documentation is not provided prior to your arrival at the University, the University may not be able to accommodate you appropriately. If you are experiencing difficulties in obtaining supporting documentation, please contact [disability-support@durham.ac.uk](mailto:disability-support@durham.ac.uk) and an Adviser will be happy to discuss this further with you.

Please note that we experience extremely high numbers of emails over the summer period; we will respond as swiftly as we are able to do so.

**Approved supporting documentation** should meet the following criteria:

- Be written in English
- Be written on official headed/stamped paper from a professional body/practitioner
- Health related requests must be provided by a medical professional (GP, consultant, specialist nurse) and should clearly state your diagnosis and detail the impact of your health issues on a day-to-day basis.

If you are requesting a specific room type, your needs will be assessed by the University based on the information you provide and any approved supporting documentation.

You can find additional guidance around supporting documentation here: [Supporting Documentation for Disability Support](#)

## **Specific accommodation adjustments available**

While accommodation adjustments will sometimes differ for individual applicants, the Disability Disclosure Form provides a brief list of adjustments that are typically requested by several applicants each year. If the adjustment you require is not listed,

please don't worry; there is a free text box included where you can provide more information for us to assess.

The University is currently producing new guidance on Assistive Service Animals. This will be published on our webpages as soon as it is completed. If you are an applicant with a registered service animal, please contact [disability-support@durham.ac.uk](mailto:disability-support@durham.ac.uk) and we will be happy to discuss your needs further.

Durham University is committed to supporting applicants who may experience financial difficulties relating to additional en-suite accommodation charges being incurred because of a disability need. Please see [here](#) for more information.

### **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) & Emergency Medical Conditions**

Applicants are provided an opportunity within the Disability Disclosure Form to inform the University of any disability / medical condition that may mean they cannot evacuate a university building independently and quickly, in the event of a fire or other emergency.

If you feel this may be applicable to you, please indicate this at the relevant stage of the form, and you will be contacted to discuss the creation of a **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan**; this will be created for both accommodation (if appropriate) and learning and teaching venues and will provide you with a personalised plan for evacuation in the event of an emergency situation.

The Disability Disclosure Form will also ask you to identify any **emergency medical conditions**. By this, we mean any medical condition that may require emergency intervention, for example:

- an allergy potentially causing anaphylactic shock and requiring use of an EpiPen or medical intervention;
- A medical condition potentially causing seizures;
- A medical condition that may potentially involve loss of consciousness.

**This is not an exhaustive list.** If you believe that this may be applicable to you, please indicate your needs clearly on the Disability Disclosure Form and you will be contacted to ensure that we can provide any reasonable adjustments in relation to this. Your safety is our primary concern so please make sure you provide all relevant information to enable us to assess your needs fully.

### **Accommodation adjustments we cannot provide**

Please note that the University is unable to provide alcohol free accommodation, accommodation solely occupied by vegetarian / vegan occupants, or those with a specific dietary preference. We are also unable to guarantee 'quiet' accommodation; while some colleges are smaller than others, all offer communal residential communities and as such, have associated, reasonably expected noise as standard.

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We hope that this information has been helpful to you during your application to Durham University. If you have not been able to find the disability related information you require, please see [Disability Support - Durham University](#) for more information or contact Disability Support at [disability-support@durham.ac.uk](mailto:disability-support@durham.ac.uk) / 0191 3348115.