



Learning Assistance Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1 This policy is designed with the goal that “all students are provided with the support that they need to succeed in and benefit from” their studies at the College.¹ The College is fundamentally committed to a role of providing appropriate support for all students to enable them to fulfil their potential through their learning. It does this through teaching students learning strategies, techniques and skills that empower them to maximise their academic learning and become reflective, independent learners with strong transferable skills for employment.
- 1.2 The Learning Assistance Team supports two main groups of Higher Education students of Moorlands College.
- Those, who, by the broad definition of the Equalities Act (2010), are termed as having a disability, that is, a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.² Examples of disabilities include “physical and mobility difficulties; hearing impairments; visual impairments; specific learning difficulties including dyslexia; medical conditions such as HIV or cancer; and mental health difficulties.”³
 - Those who enter the College following the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).⁴
- 1.3 The role of the Learning Assistance Team, working with all other College staff, is to implement this commitment for the above groups of students. In addition, the Learning Assistance Team may from time to time support people with temporary injuries and others who require additional help according to the Supplementary Study Skills Policy. Learning Assistance support is provided to those who require it, whether full or part-time, undergraduate or postgraduate, based on or off campus.
- 1.4 This document uses the following terms and abbreviations:

RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning (the process used to assess applications to study from people without the standard qualifications or from people who are requesting exemption from some portion of the standard programme)
DSA	Disabled Students Allowance
NMH	Non-Medical Help
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulty

¹ The UK Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, *Quality Code* (“Quality Code”), Quality Expectation 2, cf. Quality Core Practice 9.

² Equality Act (2010), 6.

³ The information held on these students is subject to the College’s Information Policy.

⁴ See the College’s Admissions Policy.

2. Objectives

2.1 This policy enables the College to meet the following objectives:

- a) To deliver personalised student experiences that empower students to develop their potential to achieve academic excellence and employability
- b) To support the development of sustainable, robust and inclusive teaching and assessment strategies by providing academic staff with information, advice and guidance on reasonable adjustments
- c) To support the staff in the recruitment, retention and achievement of students with disabilities
- d) To support the development of an inclusive learning community involving specific disability-related awareness, understanding and best practice
- e) To promote positive attitudes towards disability in all its varieties and work strategically to ensure a pro-active, anticipatory approach to inclusivity, ensuring the reasonableness of adjustments with regard to the Equality Act 2010 and Moorlands College's legal duties.

3. Support for students with disabilities

3.1 The support the Learning Assistance team may offer relevant students includes:

- information, advice and guidance for disability-related concerns
- arranging screenings and Educational Psychology Assessments for SpLDs or sign-posting to the appropriate professionals for diagnostic assessments for other conditions
- assistance with applications for DSA
- support liaising with DSA allocated providers of equipment, assistive technology, study skills support or specialist mentor support
- writing Learning Assistance Plans.

3.2 Moorlands College will make reasonable adjustments to learning opportunities and assessment so that students with disabilities are not significantly disadvantaged compared with other students. All reasonable adjustments depend on each student's circumstances as evidenced by expert reports, such as a Needs Assessment, Diagnostic Report or doctor's report.

3.3 Examples of the reasonable adjustments it *may* be possible to make include:

- session materials 48-hours in advance to deconstruct and process before each lecture;
- glossary of key terms for each module;
- wheelchair access and table/desk risers;
- printed materials in large font and/or on coloured paper/screen;
- exam questions in accessible formats;
- extra time and/or rest breaks in exams and timed assessments;
- alternative assessments;
- additional breaks (to aid concentration);
- use of induction loops;
- access to SpLD extensions;
- personal emergency evacuation plans.

3.4 In addition, if Moorlands College is named as the supplier of Study Skills Support (whether for Autistic Spectrum disorder or SpLD) or Specialist Mentor Support on a student's DSA award letter, the Learning Assistance team can provide the following:

- an Individual Learning Support Plan that identifies key difficulties experienced by the student and outlines a plan to embed strategies and skills to help overcome them.
- support for students in developing employability skills needed during placements and beyond graduation;
- provision of one-to-one individualised targeted support to enable independent learning.

3.5 However, the Learning Assistance Team cannot:

- discuss course funding;
- provide personal care;
- order DSA equipment;
- provide subject-specific support.

4. Support for students entering the College with RPL

4.1 The Learning Assistance Manager is responsible for the following provision for the indicated groups of students.

Direct entry students commencing their studies at the College with APL to start at an undergraduate level above 4	Coordination of induction to the particular academic expectations of the College, including referencing, submission and student-impacting policies (typically 2 hours and delivered by academic and academic support staff)
Students commencing their studies with module credit, who do not participate in the normal study skills sessions of their programme	Coordination of a bespoke package of study skills training relevant to particular student(s) (typically 2 hours and delivered by the Learning Assistance Team)
Students commencing their studies with non-standard qualifications	Coordination of a bespoke package of study skills training relevant to particular student(s) (3-6 hours and delivered by the Learning Assistance Team)

4.2 Study skills material may be delivered face-to-face, online or by video.

5. Supplementary study skills sessions

5.1 In certain cases, when a student fails an assignment they are entitled to additional study skills support. (See Supplementary Study Skills Policy for details.)

6. Expectations of students

6.1 The Learning Assistance Team expects prospective and current students to take responsibility for their learning⁵ and:

1. if a student thinks they will need additional support — they should contact the Learning Assistance Team as early as possible, since reasonable adjustments and one-to-one support at Moorlands College are tailored to meet individual needs and may

⁵ Quality Code, Advice and Guidance: Enabling Student Achievement, Guiding Principle 7.

need time to arrange (students should note that, if a disability is not disclosed at application, there may be a delay before any support can be offered or assessment adjustments can be made);

2. provide valid evidence of any disability, medical or mental health condition, or SpLD;
3. provide Learning Assistance staff and the DSA assessor with an accurate account of difficulties and support requirements;
4. fully engage with the individual learning programme;
5. be respectful of themselves and of Learning Assistance staff, co-operating positively with the support strategies and reasonable adjustments;
6. if unable to attend appointments — notify the Learning Assistance Team as soon as possible, and certainly with at least 24 hours' notice;
7. arrive at all booked appointments punctually;
8. reply to communications from the Learning Assistance Team promptly;
9. raise any potential support requirements for practice/placements/field trips with the Learning Assistance Team in sufficient time to allow appropriate arrangements to be made;
10. raise any accessibility requirements that may affect accommodation, learning spaces, or lecture theatres, such as induction loops, lifts or alternative formats, in sufficient time to allow appropriate arrangements to be made;
11. keep contact details up to date and notify the Learning Assistance Team if there are any changes in circumstances.

7. Feedback and reporting

- 7.1 The Learning Assistance Manager is responsible for reporting on Learning Assistance.
- 7.2 A report on the support of relevant students accessing DSA-funded Learning Assistance is submitted to each Course Committee meeting following the end of each term.⁶ This report:
 - a) analyses formal feedback given by these students via an anonymous survey;
 - b) analyses ad hoc feedback given through a student's Learning Assistance Tutor, the Learning Assistance Manager or (anonymously) through a cohort rep;⁷
 - c) records numbers of students who have been recommended to have diagnostic tests, the uptake, and the total financial support provided for this.
- 7.3 A report on the support of relevant students entering the College with RPL is submitted annually to each Course Committee, normally at the first meetings after Christmas.
- 7.4 A report on the provision of Supplementary Study Skills Support to relevant students is submitted annually to each Course Committee, normally at the first regular meeting of each academic year, and also to the Student Journey Enhancement Group, annually in July.
- 7.5 A report summarising the activities of the Learning Assistance Team with the various groups of students is submitted annually to the Academic Board, normally to the last meeting of each academic year. Academic Board is responsible to comment on the health of this aspect of the provision.

⁶ Quality Code, Quality Practice 10.

⁷ Quality Code, Quality Practice 5.

8. Document history

28 November 2018	Complete revision approved by Academic Board
11 September 2019	Approved by Academic Board: switch of titles from “Learning Support” to “Learning Assistance”, clearer definition of those eligible, using the Equalities Act (2010), switch to common term “Specific Learning Difficulty”.
4 December 2019	Proposed to Academic Board but put on hold: incorporation of all material covering students entering under APL (RPL); addition of reporting requirement; alignment to Quality Code 2018; separation of material for different groups of students; addition of glossary section, material relating to supplementary study skills, and support for NMH study skills and specialist mentoring.
20 January 2020	Approved by Academic Board: the above and further amendments relating to terminology for RPL; detailing of reporting expectations.