

THE UNIVERSITY *of York*

**Disability Equality Scheme**  
**Annual Report 2008**

December 2008

# Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report 2008

## 1 Introduction

The University of York published a Disability Equality Scheme in December 2006. This report provides information on the progress made since this date in relation to removing discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for disabled staff and students.

## 2 Progress against the Disability Equality Scheme action plan

The progress on implementing the action plan can be found in Appendix 1. Key achievements for 2008 include:

- A web portal has been created that provides a single point of access to the multiplicity of services, guidance and support available for students, staff and visitors with impairments (<http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/disability/portal/>)
- The Forum for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching in conjunction with Disability Services have developed a new resource for staff to support those teaching students with disabilities. The resource is being disseminated to and within departments.
- In September 2008 additional disabled car parking spaces were created on campus and automatic doors to a covered walkway were upgraded.
- A review of Disability Services is underway and recommendations are expected in February 2009.
- A review of the staff recruitment process has been completed and a new on-line system for applying for vacancies has been introduced which ensures data on disability is available on new appointees.

## 3 Collection of data

The University has collected information about students and staff with disabilities. The key figures are shown below.

*Student figures (home students only, not EU or overseas):*

- 8.1% (650) of the undergraduates who provided information stated that they had a disability. This compares with 7.5% (570) in 2005/6, 8.5% (611) in 2004/5 and 9.9% (605) in 2003/4.
- 10.00% (152) of the postgraduates that provided information stated that they had a disability. This compares with 10.2% (151) in 2005/6, 8.9% (121) in 2004/5 and 11.4% (127) in 2003/4.

*Staff figures:*

- 3.4% of staff declared a disability
- In the staff groups, support staff have the highest percentage at 4.8% and research staff the lowest at 1.5%
- 2.2% of job applicants and 2.3% of new starters declared a disability
- 4.3% of staff who attended training courses declared a disability

#### **4 Continuing progress on the Action Plan**

Future priority actions are to:

- Set up a forum of students with impairments to collect their views on barriers to their full-participation in teaching, learning and student life.
- Develop a Mental Health Policy for students
- Develop processes to support members of staff who have developed impairments whilst employed at the University
- Develop a University-wide Equality Impact Assessment of policies and procedures

These actions will improve disability equality at the University of York and will enable the organisation to better support disabled staff and students by reducing/lowering barriers to participation and progression.

## Appendix 1- Progress on Implementing the Disability Equality Scheme Action Plan: Oct 2007-Sept 2008<sup>1</sup>

No	Action	Progress October 07 – September 08
1	<b>Teaching, learning and research</b>	
1a	Establish protocols for communicating information about students with impairments between central services and departments, and within and between departments	- Protocols are written and awaiting dissemination to academic departments in 2008/09. These will be available on the Disability Services website and also available in hard copy.
1b	Ensure that staff involved in teaching have access to, and are aware of, resources and training to enable them to teach and interact with students with impairments	<p>- The presentation and notes are in final draft stage, and a web resource – including the presentation itself - has been developed. This can be viewed in draft form at <a href="http://www.york.ac.uk/felt/disability">www.york.ac.uk/felt/disability</a>.</p> <p>- A meeting for departmental disability officers will be organised during the Autumn Term 2008, at which the Chair of Forum for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (FELT) and the Manager of Disability Services will deliver the presentation as the first step in the ‘train the trainer’ approach.</p>

<sup>1</sup> The full 2007-09 Action Plan is available at <http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/disability/disabequal/desappendix1.htm>

		<p>Departmental disability officers will then be asked to deliver the presentation themselves at their Boards of Studies – customised to meet the needs of their particular department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feedback will be sought from staff on the presentation, notes and web resource following the initial briefing, and then again once the presentation has been delivered within departments.</li> <li>- Staff within Human Resources have been notified of the presentation’s existence, although the PGCAP and PFA programmes currently deliver their own material in this area, tailored to the participants’ needs.</li> <li>- FELT has developed an explicit action plan relating to the theme of equality and diversity in learning and teaching for 2008/09, mapping how the theme will inform the full range of its activities.</li> </ul>
1c	<p>In addition to monitoring currently undertaken, annually monitor the academic performance of all undergraduate and postgraduate students with impairments, including</p> <p>Success rates of applicants</p> <p>Entry qualifications</p> <p>Degree results</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Some of these data are currently available for home students but not EU and overseas via the Equal Opportunities Annual Report. See section 5 at the following link.  <a href="http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eo/AnnualReport0708/EO%20student%20report%2020081017.doc">http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eo/AnnualReport0708/EO%20student%20report%2020081017.doc</a></li> </ul>

	Non-completions	
1d	Establish the principles that should underpin the treatment of all students with impairments, in relation to learning and teaching, with particular reference to assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A 'special arrangements in examinations' booklet is available on our website at the following link. <a href="http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eto/exams/StudentInfo/special.htm">http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/eto/exams/StudentInfo/special.htm</a></li> <li>- The booklet is sent out to all departments each September asking them to distribute to supervisors. Also available in hard copy from Student Administrative Services.</li> <li>- The booklet is reviewed annually.</li> <li>- In relation to doctoral students, the University's Code of Practice on research degree programmes has been reviewed and the Board for Graduate Schools will be asked to approve the amendments at its October meeting.</li> <li>- The Disability Office's forum of disabled students will also be asked to look at the code of practice and provide comments when it is reconvened in the autumn 2009/10.</li> </ul>
1e	Improve the availability of appropriate facilities in teaching and research accommodation for students and staff with impairments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disability access is being overseen by the Disability Equality Access Steering Group. There is now a draft list of proposed works for 2008/09, with a budget of £250K to spend.</li> </ul>

1f	Ensure that policies and processes in relation to international student exchanges do not disadvantage student with impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exchanges are open to all students with an appropriate academic background, and for some exchanges, who have completed at least one year of study. We are aware that students with disabilities have participated on exchange in recent years.</li>   <li>- All our exchange partner institutes are sourced and vetted to ensure that they provide similar services to the University of York. This includes provision for students with impairments.</li>   <li>- Our documentary correspondence with Visiting Students invites those students with impairments to declare this. Further information and assistance is provided once the student has informed the Study Abroad team, or relevant member of staff, of their impairment.</li>   <li>- Improvements are currently in the process of being made to our printed exchange guidance.</li>   <li>- Our Study Abroad web pages are being updated to include more disability equality information for outgoing students.</li>   <li>- Decisions regarding applications for Worldwide Exchange are made by a staff panel briefed to treat all students similarly.</li>   <li>- The International Office will make reasonable adjustments to individual exchange partnerships in order to ensure that a student with an impairment can participate.</li> </ul>
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		<p>- Visiting Students are offered orientation at the start of every term to help adjust to their new University of York surroundings. They are also able to make use of all University of York services, and this includes support provision for students with impairments.</p> <p>- The Study Abroad team can apply to the British Council for additional funding to assist outgoing Erasmus students with severe disabilities or exceptional special needs.</p>
<b>2</b>	<b>Student Support</b>	
2a	Undertake a review of Disability Services in order to ensure that they are appropriately staffed and resourced	- The review is underway and aims to report to Student Services Committee in February 2009.
2b	Colleges to produce action plans for promoting positive attitudes towards students with impairments within their communities and encouraging students with impairments to take leadership roles in college life.	- The PVC for Students will meet with Provosts in early 2009 and set a deadline of the beginning of academic year 2009/2010 for a colleges action plan.
2c	Identify a funding source to support international students with impairments.	- A funding source of 8K has been added to the disability budget. The fund is to be used for International student to have an assessment of needs when they arrive at the University and pay for reasonable adjustments

		identified by the assessment (for example note taker or equipment).
2d	Include the Disability Equality Duty in training provision for undergraduate supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A meeting took place in January 2008 and it was agreed that training provision for supervisors needed to be reviewed. The PVC for Students is planning a review of the supervisory system in 2009.</li> <li>- A group of staff including the Disability Manager will look at and review what information on disability is currently available for supervisors (March 2009).</li> </ul>
2e	Include the Disability Equality Duty in developing a University code of good practice for the pastoral care of masters students	- The PVC for Students will look at the pastoral care for masters students in 2009. A revised code of practice should be in place by the beginning of academic year 2009/2010.
2f	All the student support services to assess the impact of their policies and procedures on people with impairments, and update their websites in line with best practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The update of the student support services website is part of an ongoing project to redesign the University of York's website.</li> <li>- A process to assess the impact of policies and procedures on people with impairments is currently being developed and will be in place by Autumn 2009</li> </ul>
2g	Set up focus groups of first-year students with impairments in order to collect their views on attitudinal and environmental barriers to their full	- A focus group has been established and will meet in December 2008. The Manager of Disability Services is responsible for this group and will

	<p>participation in teaching, learning and student life.</p> <p>The same groups to be reconvened in their third year in order to assess the effects of institutional changes over that period</p>	<p>report results to the Disability Equality Scheme Working Group.</p>
2h	<p>Take account of the recommendations of the Counselling Service review to ensure that we are providing effective and accessible services to students with mental health difficulties. Student Support Services will develop a University Mental Health Policy for students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of the Mental Health Policy for students is underway and should be available by March/April 2009. The policy will be disseminated after approval by the Student Services Committee.</li> <li>- There will also be a mechanism to review the policy.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Employment and training</b>	
3a	<p>Review recruitment process to ensure that there are no obstacles to the attraction of potential employees with impairments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The review of the recruitment process has been completed and a new on-line system for applying for vacancies has been introduced. The process ensures that all applicants are asked whether they consider themselves to have a disability and this information is fed through the process and eventually into the employee details for successful candidates. The application form is also available in hard copy by request.</li> <li>- The letters of invite to interview confirm the University's commitment to providing people with disabilities, with an opportunity to compete fairly for jobs and asks them to inform us if they believe they have any particular</li> </ul>

		<p>requirements with regard to the arrangements for this interview.</p> <p>Further work is on-going with regards to the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review and update the management guidance with regards to supporting candidates with disabilities by June 2009</li> <li>- Review the process and guidance for assessing the needs of disabled appointees, and making adjustments and obtaining equipment as required by December 2009.</li> </ul>
3b	Develop transparent processes to support new members of staff with impairments, co-ordinating different aspects of the 'new starter' process	- The Manager of Disability Services and Human Resources are working together to develop processes to support new members of staff with impairments. Deadline – December 2009
3c	Develop a process for supporting members of staff who develop impairments whilst employed and adopt new guidelines on how the support provided should operate between different departments	- The Manager of Disability Services and Human Resources are working together to develop processes to support members of staff who have developed impairments whilst employed at the University. Deadline – December 2009
3d	Ensure that Heads of Department and others in senior roles in the University receive awareness and practical training in relation to the Disability Equality Duty and the University's disability-related policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A revised induction process for Heads of Department was introduced in 2007, however, a specific session on Disability was not offered as it was felt it would not have addressed the specific action for practical training.</li> <li>- All Heads of Departments were kept informed of the Induction</li> </ul>

	<p>and processes.</p>	<p>Programme through regular emails and communications.</p> <p>- In 2008 the induction process for Heads of Departments was replaced by the launch of the Pilot Strategic Leadership Programme. At the moment the programme does not include a session on disability. Options are to be explored and agreement reached on the actual training required by Head of Departments in the area of Equality and Diversity.</p> <p>- All Heads of Departments have to complete an “on-line diversity module”. Completion of this module has now been added to the University Induction Procedure Checklists.</p>
<p>3e</p>	<p>Review and develop training provision needed to support the actions proposed in the Scheme, and incorporate the results into the Training and Development Operational Plan.</p>	<p>- An initial Training Needs Analysis of Statutory Training for all areas other than Health and Safety has been conducted. An awareness of disability has been identified as being appropriate to all staff. This will be covered in the Equal Opportunities session in the Central Induction and also through the online Diversity package, which new starters should complete.</p> <p>- All currently known programmes offered to staff in the area of Disability Awareness have been grouped under a single theme of “Equality, Disability and Diversity”. Courses are advertised on the web and through a regular email-communication to Departmental Training Officers. Details of courses can be found at the following link. There are 5 courses planned for 2008/09 (2 in the area of disability).</p>

		<p><a href="http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/training/pod/section.cfm?section_id=37">http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/hr/training/pod/section.cfm?section_id=37</a></p> <p>-A number of courses have been held as part of the training provision to meet more specific requirements in 2008/9, either using internal or external providers. These include:</p> <p>Dyslexia briefings</p> <p>Making it Real - the Disability Discrimination Act</p> <p>More than just Ramps - Facilitating Access for Students with Disabilities</p>
3f	Set up processes for (a) increasing the numbers of staff on whom data relating to impairments is held, and (b) regular updating of this information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From October 2008 the new web-enabled recruitment system will ask whether job applicants consider that they have a disability. This will be a single source of data for applicants' disability information. The question is non-mandatory.</li> <li>- If applicants become employees, their declared disability status is recorded on the Human Resources database.</li> <li>- From late 2008, the University will have "My View" – a web-based facility enabling staff to view and amend their personal data. Information on individuals who acquire a disability whilst in employment will be picked up through this mechanism.</li> </ul>

4	<b>The physical estate</b>	
4a	Bringing the Corporate Level Access Statement to Council for approval	No progress.
4b	Allocate £250,000 per annum to continue with disabled access improvement programme, identifying priorities through a stakeholders' group including people with impairments.	See 1e above.
4c	Ensure that all new projects include DDA consultants, that contractors adopt the Standards for Access Provision and Construction Sites and Disabled People guidelines; and that each project is overseen by a stakeholders' Steering Group charged with monitoring in respect of the Disability Equality Duty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This work is on-going as the turnover of new and existing projects is an on going item.</li> <li>- We endeavour to ensure that all new strategic projects include DDA Consultants.</li> <li>- Consultants / Contractors are now required to adopt the University's standards for Access Provision and Construction Sites Guidelines.</li> <li>- Each project is over seen by a Stakeholder / Steering group charged with monitoring it in respect of the University's Disability Equality Duty</li> <li>- The university currently asks that all works given to consultants meet all current building regulations and legislation. It does not take into account areas where the university's responsibility's under the same regulations</li> </ul>

		<p>and legislation maybe greater than the minimum building standards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All new buildings are designed to provide inclusive access and egress as a mater of routine.</li> </ul>
4d	<p>Ensure that staff and students with impairments know who to contact in Estates Services in order to report minor defects and impediments, and that these are quickly remedied.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Processes are in place and where these are informal, these processes are being formalised, with consultation with all involved.</li> <li>- If Students with disabilities let the university know in advance what assisted provisions need to be made (this is normally captured with their application to the university), the disability support co-ordinator (with Disability Services) then liaises with Estates, Campus Services, the academic departments to ensure that required provision is made.</li> <li>- Once here if the student needs minor modifications made that are specifically related to their disability, they will do this by either speaking to the disability support co-ordinator or to the college administrator, who records this on a database and then contacts the access officer within estates directly.</li> <li>- Provision for staff will follow a similar route except any special assisted provision will be flagged by the Academic department and not Disability Services. The process for reporting any works is the same as above.</li> <li>- Reported problems are prioritised in the following way; the highest priority is given to problems that relate to specific individuals and their specific</li> </ul>

		<p>needs; next-general problems that affect the largest amount of people with disabilities. Lastly, problems will be dealt with within the general system in accordance to the service level agreement.</p>
4e	<p>Ensure that the development of the Sustainable Travel Plan considers the travel needs of people with impairments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The University's sustainable travel plan can be found at the following link <a href="http://www.york.ac.uk/campusdevelopment/heseast/background/travelplan0108.pdf">http://www.york.ac.uk/campusdevelopment/heseast/background/travelplan0108.pdf</a></li> <li>- Travel routes to and from campus for people with impairments include public transport, and providers are obliged to comply with DDA requirements. We constantly work with bus companies to improve and extend the routes and the timetables, and we have negotiated tickets (e.g. monthly, termly or annual) to get favourable prices (for staff and students, not visitors naturally). All these benefits are available to people with or without impairments.</li> <li>- Disabled parking spaces are provided near to every building for those who can drive or be driven.</li> <li>- In 2008 additional disabled parking spaces were created on campus.</li> <li>- To improve access routes on campus the automatic doors to a covered walkway were upgraded in September 2008.</li> <li>- Ongoing replacement of old/faded disability parking signs</li> </ul>

<b>5</b>	<b>The University and the community</b>	
5c	Ensure that staff and student activity in the city and region is accessible to people with impairments, both from the University and wider communities, and that where appropriate, feedback is sought from people with impairments regarding their experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The York University Students Union provides a minibus that is available to all societies to transport all students to activities off campus.</li> <li>- Opportunities offered via the Community and Volunteering Unit are available to all students in line with Careers Service policies. Issues relating to disability are dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Projects supported by CAVU are facilitated by a project worker who is able to respond to students' individual needs. The project worker conducts regular reviews with student teams to resolve issues as and when they arise and collect feedback on the project as a whole.</li> <li>- Feedback is captured as part of an overall project debrief and recorded by the community and volunteering unit - we then draw on it to develop the following year's programme.</li> </ul>
5d	Ensure that our conference and letting services develop policies and processes that support the Disability Equality Duty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Key information sheets are sent to organisers. These are available in hard copy from the conference office.</li> <li>- We encourage disability/access audits by clients (for example CAB and Quakers). Examples are available from the conference office</li> <li>- Involve the appropriate staff in event organisation and preparation</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liaise with audio visual annually to ensure all meeting room induction loops working</li> <li>- Feedback from guests is collected via forms that are put in bedrooms and the following link.  <a href="http://www-users.york.ac.uk/~ed516/Feedback_Form.htm">http://www-users.york.ac.uk/~ed516/Feedback_Form.htm</a></li> <li>- Feedback is collated and circulated to all service providers and senior management in Directorate of Facilities Management</li> <li>- Online conference delegate registration services ask questions about special dietary requirements, mobility issues and special requests.</li> <li>- Conference Office has its own tactile campus map, can arrange mobility scooters for customers and provide portable induction loops at conference registration desk.</li> <li>- Allocate specially adapted bedrooms to guests with impairments.</li> <li>- Member of conference team holds stage 2 British Sign Language</li> </ul>
5e	Ensure that our procurement policies and processes support the Disability Equality Duty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The University's Procurement policies and procedures are available online at;  <a href="http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/supplies/guidance.yrk/procurement/procstrat.html">http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/supplies/guidance.yrk/procurement/procstrat.html</a></li> </ul>

		<p>and</p> <p><a href="http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/supplies/guidance.yrk/purchase_guide.html">http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/supplies/guidance.yrk/purchase_guide.html</a></p> <p>- It is an audit requirement that Procurement policies are ratified by the University's purchasing group every three years.</p>
<b>7</b>	<b>Communications</b>	
7c	Create a web portal that provides a single point of access to the multiplicity of services, guidance and support available for students, staff and visitors with impairments.	<p>- Work on the portal has been completed and the information was made live in May 2008. The url is <a href="http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/disability/portal/">http://www.york.ac.uk/admin/disability/portal/</a></p> <p>- The information is linked from the Disability Services pages and Information for Visitors.</p> <p>- There is a contact address at the foot of each page for people to mail the Web Office with comments.</p> <p>- The Communications Office needs to decide how the information will be maintained in the future, but for now it is up to date.</p>
<b>8</b>	<b>York University Students' Union and Graduate Students' Association</b>	
8a	York University Students' Union to publish its own	A copy of the York University Students' Union Disability Equality Strategy

	Disability Equality Strategy	<p>is available in hard copy from the Disability Officer.</p> <p><a href="http://www.yusu.org/uploads/welfare/disability/YUSU%20Disability%20Equality%20Scheme.pdf">http://www.yusu.org/uploads/welfare/disability/YUSU%20Disability%20Equality%20Scheme.pdf</a></p>
8b	The Graduate Students' Association will develop new structure and procedures to improve its support for postgraduate students with impairments.	No progress made
9	Impact assessments on current policies and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In 2007-08 a University-wide Equality Impact Assessment process was drafted. The process relates to all 6 equality strands.</li> <li>- In May 2008 this was discussed by Equal Opportunities in Employment Task Group. The Task Group received guidance and feedback on the draft the Impact Assessment Project Officer at Northumbria University.</li> <li>- The timetable for further consultation on the process is to be agreed but it is hoped that a further/final draft will be available by end November 2008. Equality and Diversity Committee to consider in Autumn 2009.</li> <li>- The process should be proactive in relation to students and staff but will need input from Disability Services and consultation with people with disabilities.</li> <li>- The document will make reference to relevant University documents such</li> </ul>

		as the University Corporate Plan and other strategies as appropriate.
10	E-Accessibility Forum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Forum established March 2008. Membership and terms of reference confirmed.</li> <li>- Website and VLE presence established.</li> <li>- Established contact with appropriate department on staff development issues.</li> <li>- Work-strand established on accessible teaching materials, and contact made with the Law School, about potential pilot projects in this area.</li> <li>- Contact made with Digital Recording of Lectures project, and advice provided on transcripts.</li> <li>- Disability services portal – advice provided to Communications Office on development of this.</li> <li>- Work-strand established on HTML emails and Briefing Note.</li> </ul>