

**DISABLED STUDENTS AND
MULTIPLE POLICY INNOVATIONS
IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

FINAL REPORT

by

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SUMMARY OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

There have been major changes in the nature and mode of operation of British higher education institutions over the past two decades. The number of students more than doubled in the ten-year period between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s, whilst the unit of resource fell by a third. The middle classes benefited disproportionately from this expansion (Archer, 2003), but there was also a growth in the number of mature and part-time students as well as those from minority ethnic and working class backgrounds. Disabled students have also benefited from this expansion, although this group continues to be under-represented, making up about 5% of home students, well below the proportion of disabled people in the population (about 16%, of the working age population, although this is skewed towards older age groups (Riddell and Banks, 2001). Although patterns of participation in relation to social class, gender, ethnicity and geographical location have been widely discussed (eg Paterson, 1997; Osborne, 1999, Archer et al, 2003; Hayton & Paczuska, 2002), the participation rate of disabled students has often been omitted from the analysis. Despite growing interest in higher education as an important arena in the distribution of life chances (Slowey and Watson, 2003), we know little about the daily lives and experiences of students and the ways in which HEIs act as sites which reproduce or disrupt existing social inequalities (Field 2003). Furthermore, little is known about the interaction of policies focusing on marketisation and managerialism, and those promoting widening access and social inclusion. This research sought to address these gaps in the literature. Disabled students pose particular challenges to higher education not only in terms of gaining physical access to buildings, but also in relation to much wider access issues concerning the curriculum, teaching and learning and assessment. For these reasons, they may be seen as a litmus test of the ability of higher education to include a diverse range of learners, an essential part of the objective of transforming the UK into a knowledge society (DfES, 2003, Scottish Executive, 2003).

During the course of data analysis, the following theoretical concerns emerged:

- (i) conceptualising social justice in relation to disabled students;
- (ii) new managerialism, legislation and equality;
- (iii) disability and identity.

Objectives

The objectives of the research were:

- To examine how policies on wider access for disabled students interact with multiple policy innovations in higher education and to analyse the effects of both sets of policies on the experiences of students with particular impairments.
- To compare the development of policy and practice affecting disabled students in England and Scotland and in different types of institution, including ways in which institutions have interpreted and implemented national policies, and to assess how local and national policies are experienced by disabled students.

- To assess the impact of wider access policies on participation levels of disabled people by integrating them into existing analyses of participation by disadvantaged groups.
- To inform the development of higher education policy and practice, particularly in relation to disabled students, by providing an independent analytical perspective on recent developments.

Methods

The following approaches were used:

1. Analysis of policy and legislation.
2. Analysis of HESA data on participation and social characteristics of disabled students.
3. Questionnaire survey with all institutions providing higher education (universities, non-university higher education institutions, further education colleges).
4. Case studies of eight institutions (four in England and four in Scotland).
5. Case studies of 48 disabled students in these institutions.

Findings & Conclusions

Higher education has been through a period of great change, with reductions in funding, increased workloads brought about through a huge expansion in the student population and greater accountability through the RAE and the requirements of QAA. In FE, changes have focused on governance and funding with the creation of the further education funding councils and latterly the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). In this changing context, institutions have been under pressure, through the publication of performance indicators, the introduction of premium funding (in HE) and the introduction of DDA Part IV, to widen access to under-represented groups and to develop policy and provision for disabled students.

In spite of this demanding context, there were definite signs of progress in provision for disabled students. Most institutions had a designated disability officer and a senior manager with responsibility for disability issues. Where they did not fully meet criteria for base-level provision, significant numbers reported 'partially meeting' them. Few could claim to be prepared in advance for disabled students, but there were signs of movement away from the reactive end of the continuum. Disabled students had been written into policies on admissions, assessments, estates and buildings and into some strategic plans. Most institutions had definite written plans for further development.

While all of these signs of progress are encouraging, there are many areas that still need much further development. Areas needing particular attention were teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluation and staff development. Teaching and learning remains an area of particular concern, with respondents stating that the kind of culture change required to really make a difference in this area will take a long time.

In general, disabled students were more likely to be white, male and to have come from the more advantaged end of the social class spectrum. The social class profile of disabled students in pre-92 universities, however, matched that of non-disabled students, although these institutions have the worst record on access to under-represented groups in general anyway.

Analysis of student experience indicated that many disabled students were isolated and lacked the social networks in which much informal learning takes place. They struggled to persuade often reluctant staff to make reasonable adjustments. The culture of some institutions and subject areas was particularly hostile, with staff expressing fears over the erosion of standards as a result of the requirement to accommodate disabled students. The label 'disabled', which students must adopt to qualify for the Disabled Students Allowance and the protection of the DDA, did not sit easily with many students' self concept. This may prove a barrier to the effectiveness of equality legislation in this area in the future.

FULL REPORT OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

Background

There have been major changes in the nature and mode of operation of British higher education institutions over the past two decades. The number of students more than doubled in the ten-year period between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s, whilst the unit of resource fell by a third. The middle classes benefited disproportionately from this expansion (Archer, 2003), but there was also a growth in the number of mature and part-time students as well as those from minority ethnic and working class backgrounds. Disabled students have also benefited from this expansion, although this group continues to be under-represented, making up about 5% of home students, well below the proportion of disabled people in the population (about 16%, of the working age population, although this is skewed towards older age groups (Riddell and Banks, 2001). Although patterns of participation in relation to social class, gender, ethnicity and geographical location have been widely discussed (eg Paterson, 1997; Osborne, 1999, Archer et al, 2003; Hayton & Paczuska, 2002), the participation rate of disabled students has often been omitted from the analysis. Despite growing interest in higher education as an important arena in the distribution of life chances (Slowey and Watson, 2003), we know little about the daily lives and experiences of students and the ways in which HEIs act as sites which reproduce or disrupt existing social inequalities (Field 2003). Furthermore, little is known about the interaction of policies focusing on marketisation and managerialism, and those promoting widening access and social inclusion. This research sought to address these gaps in the literature. Disabled students pose particular challenges to higher education not only in terms of gaining physical access to buildings, but also in relation to much wider access issues concerning the curriculum, teaching and learning and assessment. For these reasons, they may be seen as a litmus test of the ability of higher education to include a diverse range of learners, an essential part of the objective of transforming the UK into a knowledge society (DfES, 2003, Scottish Executive, 2003).

Theoretical context

Some of the following theoretical concerns informed the writing of the proposal and some emerged during the course of the research.

Conceptualising social justice in relation to disabled students

The research project was underpinned by an exploration of theories of social justice (Goodlad and Riddell, 2003) and their implications for widening access to higher education for disabled students. According to Miller, social justice provides a rationale for 'how the good and bad things in life should be distributed among the members of a human society' (1999, p1). Social justice may be conceptualised in relation to the distribution of social goods (Harvey, 1992), hence our concern with rates of participation of disabled students in higher education and their social profile with regard to gender, social class and ethnicity. We also wished to explore the amount and quality of support in different institutional contexts. Social justice is also concerned with cultural claims, associated with the 'politics of recognition' or 'identity politics' (Fraser, 2001). We therefore investigated how disabled students constructed their own identity and were regarded by significant others. In addition, we explored the overall approach of different institutions to promoting social justice for disabled students and other

under-represented groups. Conceptions of social justice are based on values, both in relation to beliefs about what constitutes a social good and how social goods and burdens should be distributed. It is evident that the social value of higher education has been increasing, with mounting competition for entrance to the 'best' universities. We were therefore concerned to examine the values which came into play when decisions were made on admitting disabled students to higher education, and the subsequent distribution of learning support resources. We considered the extent to which disabled students' needs were recognised during the admissions process and during their subsequent academic career. In addition, we investigated the extent to which support was allocated on the basis of merit or need. Finally, we explored the extent to which institutions were committed to equality and whether it was conceptualised in terms of procedure, outcome or status.

New managerialism, legislation and equality

As indicated above, we wished to examine the impact of the 'new management' (specifically the QAA *Code of Practice* and the Research Assessment Exercise) and disability equality legislation in bringing about social change. There are ongoing debates about whether 'new managerialism', using devices such as audit and regulation, is capable of achieving social justice goals (Clarke et al, 2000; Exworthy and Halford, 1999). The QAA *Code of Practice for Disabled Students* is clearly associated with a managerialist paradigm, and we therefore wished to explore its effects within institutions and in relation to the interactions between lecturers and students.

There are also ongoing debates about the potential of disability equality legislation to enhance the position of disabled people in the UK (Gooding, 2000; Meager, 2003). The Disability Discrimination Act was seen as of great symbolic importance in recognising the political claims of disabled people. However, there is ongoing discussion about the definition of disability within the Act, the justifications for failing to make reasonable adjustments or providing less favourable treatment, and the extent to which the legislative route is an effective way for disabled people to achieve justice. The research therefore examined the early impact of Part 4 of the DDA on the higher education sector and considered the future potential for legislation to bring about significant social change for disabled people.

Disability and identity

Classical social science saw identity as being stable and shaped by an individual's position within wider economic and social structures. Theorists of late modernity (eg Beck, 1992; Lash & Urry, 1993) have questioned the notion of an essential self, emphasising instead the self as a social construct, constantly defined and redefined in a range of social contexts. Managerialist and legislative measures designed to improve provision for disabled students in higher education clearly operate with the notion of a fixed disabled identity and with the expectation that institutions will be able to provide data on the number of disabled students within an institution and their progress. We were concerned to investigate the ways in which individuals accepted the identity of 'disabled student' and how this fitted with other aspects of their social location and experience.

Objectives

The objectives of the research were:

- To examine how policies on wider access for disabled students interact with multiple policy innovations in higher education and to analyse the effects of both sets of policies on the experiences of students with particular impairments.
- To compare the development of policy and practice affecting disabled students in England and Scotland and in different types of institution, including ways in which institutions have interpreted and implemented national policies, and to assess how local and national policies are experienced by disabled students.
- To assess the impact of wider access policies on participation levels of disabled people by integrating them into existing analyses of participation by disadvantaged groups.
- To inform the development of higher education policy and practice, particularly in relation to disabled students, by providing an independent analytical perspective on recent developments.

Methods

Review of policy and legislation & key informant interviews

Key policy documents and legislative developments were analysed. Fifteen key informant interviews were conducted with stakeholders in the Funding Councils, the Scottish Executive Department of Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, the Department for Education and Employment, the National Co-ordinator of disability initiatives in Scotland, a member of the National Disability Team in England, Institute for Teaching and Learning representative, a representative of Skill, senior managers of HE institutions and disabled students. Key informants' views contributed to the policy analysis summarised below.

Analysis of higher education statistics for England and Scotland

Using Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) data for academic year 1999-2000, the research compared patterns of participation in higher education of disabled students with those of non-disabled students, investigating whether their 'social profile', in terms of gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status was similar or different to that of non-disabled students.

The dataset used for the analysis was supplied by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). It covered all enrolments in higher education institutions as at 1 December 1999. In addition, we were supplied with a number of tables giving information on numbers of disabled students over time. The HESA data do not provide a complete picture of the numbers of disabled students, because only those students declaring a disability on the UCAS form or at registration are recorded. We were informed that data available on enrolments in FE (from the Further Education Survey (FES)) did not include accurate information on disability. These data were therefore not analysed.

Higher education institutions were divided into three categories for comparison: pre-1992 institutions, post-1992 institutions and non-university HEIs. This division was intended to reflect differences between new and old universities in terms of their histories of governance, funding and degree-awarding powers. The number of institutions in each category in the dataset used in this paper were as follows:

Table 1: English and Scottish higher education institutions by type of institution

| | Pre-1992 institutions | Post-1992 institutions | Non-university HEIs |
|----------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| England | 51 | 36 | 45 |
| Scotland | 8 | 5 | 5 |

Non-university HEIs comprise the most diverse category, as they include colleges teaching specialist subjects, such as art, nursing and music, as well as more general colleges of higher education.

Survey of all institutions delivering HE in England and Scotland

A survey of further and higher education institutions was carried out between March and August 2002. The aim of the survey was to gain an overview of policy and provision for disabled students and to understand the relationship between policy for disabled students and other institutional priorities. Questionnaires were sent to all higher education (HE) institutions in England and Scotland and those further education (FE) colleges with a reasonable number of HE students. In England, these were identified as all FE colleges receiving funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). In Scotland, FES data was used to exclude those colleges with 5% or fewer of their enrolments at HE level.

The response rates for Scotland were particularly good (Table 2), with about two-thirds or more of institutions completing questionnaires. Just over half of English HEIs responded and a rather disappointing 23% of English FE colleges. This was in spite of an extensive process of telephone and email reminders. This low response rate could have been due to the fact that some of the FE colleges were in receipt of relatively small amounts of HEFCE funding, suggesting that they only had small numbers of HE students. Furthermore, FE in Scotland is known to provide a more significant share of HE places than in England and this may be reflected in the relatively higher response rate from Scotland.

Table 2: Questionnaire response rates

| % | Number sent * | Number received | Response rate |
|-------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| HE Scotland | 19 | 15 | 79% |
| HE England | 136 | 75 | 55% |
| FE Scotland | 43 | 28 | 65% |
| FE England | 217 | 50 | 23% |

* Excluding those returned uncompleted because of merger or change of status.

The questionnaire was sent to institutional principals with a request that it be filled in by a member of senior management, with assistance from a specialist disability officer, if necessary. This was because the questions did not relate solely to provision for disabled students, but asked about the broader policy context as well and because we were particularly interested in the management perspective on disability issues. In practice, the majority of questionnaires were filled in by senior or middle managers, with assistance in about one-third of cases, from disability-related or student services staff in HE and learning support or other staff in FE.

Stage 4: Case studies of institutions & students

Case studies were undertaken of eight institutions, four in England and four in Scotland. The institutions varied in relation to their age, culture and organisation of learning support services. They were selected following the analysis of the questionnaire, and on the basis that some interesting developments appeared to be taking place within them. The support of the Principal, a senior manager and head of the disabled students' advisory service was also required. Four of the universities were pre-92, three were post-92 and one was a college of further and higher education (see Table 7). In each institution, key policy documents were gathered and interviews conducted with a senior manager, the disabled students' adviser, other staff involved in learning support and members of academic staff. Data relating to HEFCE performance indicators were also gathered.

We intended to undertake case studies in relation to 56 students (eight in each institution). In the event, 48 case studies were completed. This was partly as a result of some students leaving their course or deciding they no longer wished to participate in the research. However, in one institution the disabled students' adviser, who had acted as gatekeeper, was off on long-term sick leave and other members of staff were less willing to facilitate the research. The case studies and interviews with key informants had already taken place, so we decided we had invested too much time in this institution to abandon it and begin again elsewhere. Some difficulties were also encountered conducting research at a distance from the researcher's location. For example, sometimes students failed to turn up for meetings or lecturers were too busy to participate in discussions after the lecture or seminar.

Each student was shadowed during three events during the course of a week, with events selected to represent a range of typical experiences. Shortly after each event, the student and the lecturer were interviewed. In addition, each student was interviewed at length about their experience of entry to higher education, formal teaching, learning and assessment, informal learning, social life, barriers encountered and support available. We selected students with a range of impairments and social locations (see Table in Appendix 1). Most were in Year 2 of their course of study, but we included a few post-graduates to contrast their experiences.

Findings

Analysis of policy and legislation

Prior to 1993, higher education was largely inaccessible to disabled people and any adjustments made were at the good will of staff and students (Barnes, 1991; Leicester and Lovell, 1994). Since 1993, Scottish and English Higher Education Funding Councils offered special initiative funding to institutions to improve their provision for disabled students.

In England, the funding was used to support particular initiatives in selected institutions, whereas in Scotland it was distributed more evenly across institutions. In 1994, SHEFC established the post of National Co-ordinator, whereas the English equivalent, the eQuip team, was not established until 1997. The Funding Councils have now moved towards mainstreaming funding for disabled students. Premium funding was introduced in 1999-2000 in England and 2000-01 in Scotland. The funds are paid on the basis of the number of

students within the institution claiming Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). Funding streams are therefore now channelled to both the institutional and the individual student level.

The Disabled Students Allowance was established in 1990. Following an assessment, the DSA is paid directly to the student to cover costs incurred as a direct result of the disability, the costs of any special equipment and the costs of non-medical personal help with study. The DSA was originally means-tested and only payable to students qualifying for a local authority award. Following the publication of the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997a), means-testing of the DSA was abolished and it was extended to all students

There have been considerable difficulties in getting the needs of disabled students incorporated into mainstream higher education policy and practice. The reviews of higher education carried out by the Dearing and Garrick committees (NCIHE, 1997a, 1997b) did not initially include disabled students in their terms of reference. However, due in part to pressure from the voluntary organisation Skill (the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities), a number of disability-related recommendations emerged from these reports, including the need to fund learning support in higher education institutions, the need for the Institute for Learning and Teaching (ILT) to include the learning needs of disabled students in their programmes and the extension of the DSA (Hurst, 1999).

The Quality Assurance Agency's Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities was published in 1999 and implemented in 2000. The 24 precepts were intended to ensure that 'students with disabilities have a learning experience comparable to that of their peers'. Institutions were also encouraged to adapt it to their 'own needs, traditions, cultures and decision-making processes'. Since December 2002, HEFCE has published benchmark data relating to disability, indicating the percentage of disabled students in each institution and comparing participation with comparable institutions.

The legal duties of higher education institutions towards disabled students have increased over time. The Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 1992 required further and higher institutions to 'have regard to the needs of disabled students'. Similar measures applied in England. Education was originally exempt from the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, although Part 4 required institutions to publish disability statements indicating policy, provision and future plans for disabled students. The DDA was amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Discrimination Act 2001, whose provisions were implemented in 2002. The new Part 4 DDA made it unlawful to discriminate against disabled students. Discrimination was defined as a failure to make reasonable adjustments or providing less favourable treatment to a student for a reason relating to their disability without justification. Institutions were expected to carry out anticipatory adjustments, rather than simply responding in an ad hoc way to the needs of individual students. The bulk of our fieldwork took place as institutions were gearing themselves up to comply with the legislation.

Analysis of higher education statistics for England and Scotland

There has been an increase in the proportion of students declaring a disability on entry to higher education over time (Table 3). This can be explained to some extent by an increasing propensity among disabled students, especially those with dyslexia, to disclose a disability to their institutions. A breakdown by type of impairment (Table 4) shows a large increase in the proportion of disabled students declaring dyslexia between 1995-6 and 1999-2000. Incentives

for such students to disclose a disability have increased as support and provision available have improved.

Table 3: Percentage of first year UK domiciled HE students known to have a disability by level of study 1995/6 – 1999/2000 (source HESA)

| | 1995/6 | 1996/7 | 1997/8 | 1998/9 | 1999/2000 |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|
| All first year students | 3.1% | 3.5% | 3.8% | 3.9% | 3.9% |
| First degree | 3.7% | 4.4% | 4.7% | 4.9% | 4.8% |
| Other undergraduate | 3% | 2.9% | 3.3% | 3.4% | 3.5% |
| Post graduate | 1.7% | 2% | 2.4% | 2.6% | 2.9% |

Table 4: First year UK domiciled undergraduates known to have a disability by type of impairment 1995/6 – 1999/2000 (source HESA)

| | 1995/6 | 1996/7 | 1997/8 | 1998/9 | 1999/2000 |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Total known to have a disability | 15754 | 19337 | 20486 | 22469 | 22290 |
| Dyslexia | 17.9% | 19.9% | 23.1% | 25.5% | 32.7% |
| Unseen disability | 48.6% | 42.8% | 45.1% | 39% | 29.7% |
| Blind/partially sighted | 3.9% | 3.8% | 3.4% | 3.3% | 3.5% |
| Deaf/hard of hearing | 7.1% | 6.4% | 5.9% | 5.8% | 5.8% |
| Wheelchair user/mobility impaired | 4.9% | 7.1% | 4.1% | 4.6% | 4.4% |
| Personal care support | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.3% | 0.2% | 0.3% |
| Mental health difficulties | 1.8% | 2.5% | 2.2% | 2.8% | 3.3% |
| Multiple disabilities | 3.6% | 4.9% | 5.1% | 6.7% | 7.3% |
| Other disability | 11.9% | 12.4% | 10.7% | 12.1% | 13% |
| Total first year undergraduates | 448199 | 491474 | 479329 | 522887 | 525140 |
| Not known/sought | 56517 (12.6%) | 29746 (6%) | 20970 (4.4%) | 17829 (3.4%) | 31860 (6%) |

Initiatives to widen access to higher education to under-represented groups have typically not included disabled students. For this reason, we were keen to examine the ‘social profile’ of disabled students in terms of their gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status, comparing this with that of non-disabled students.

Gender

Overall disabled students were more likely to be male than non-disabled students (% male: disabled students 49%, non-disabled students 44%, all 44.5%*) (Figure 1). This was largely explained by the fact that males were more likely to have dyslexia than females and those with dyslexia made up the largest group of those known to have an impairment.

* Significantly different at the $p < 0.001$ level using chi-square test.

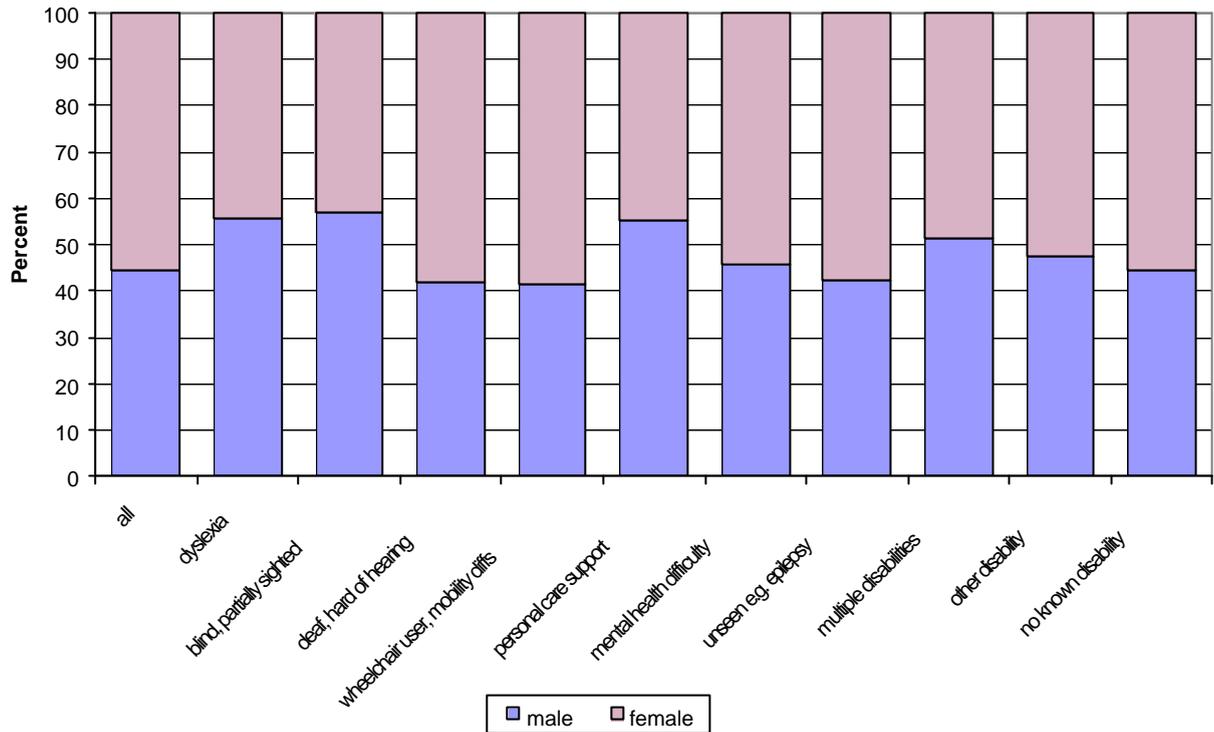


Figure 1: First year, full-time, UK domiciled undergraduates (Scotland and England only) by gender and disability (N=266,494)

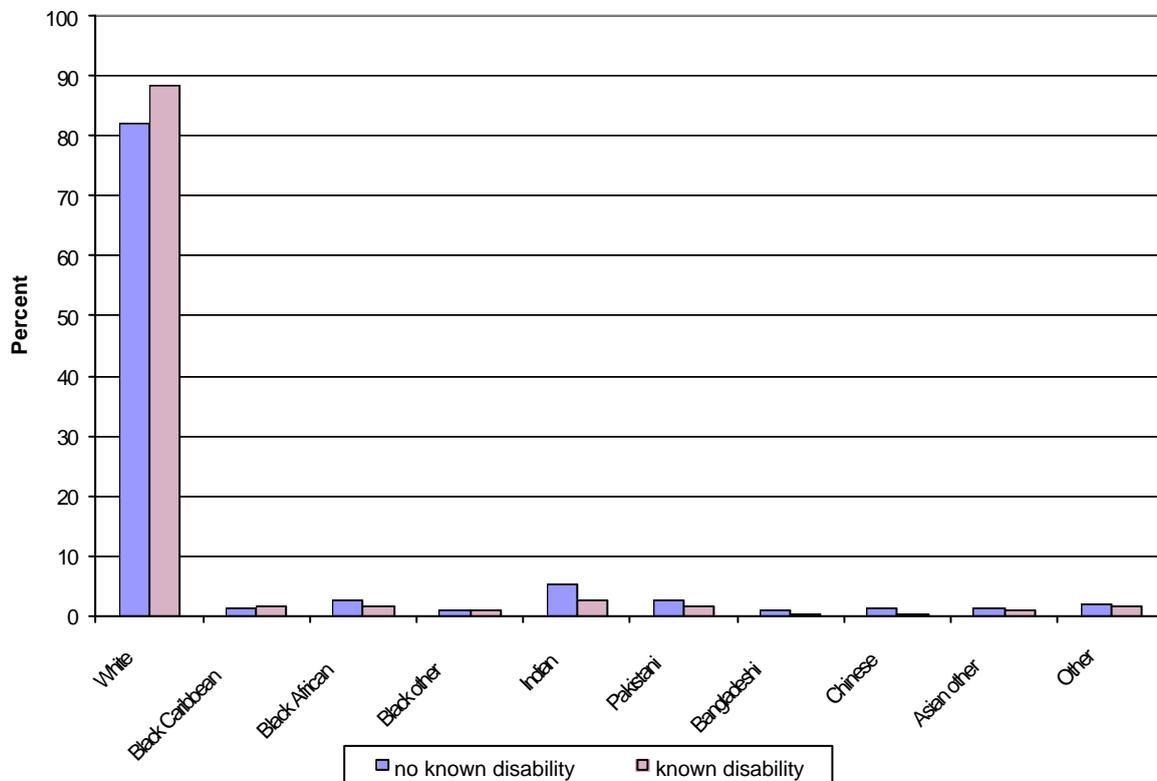


Figure 2: First year, full-time, UK domiciled undergraduates (England only) by disability and ethnic background (N = 221,376)

Ethnicity

Overall disabled students were less likely to have come from minority ethnic groups than non-disabled students and there were more non-white students (both disabled and non-disabled) in English than in Scottish institutions (% non-white England: disabled students 12%, non-disabled 18%, all 17.7%^{*}; Scotland: disabled students 3.3%, non-disabled 4.4%, all 4.3%^{**}). Figure 2 shows the breakdown by ethnic background of disabled and non-disabled students for England. The numbers were too small to repeat the analysis for Scotland.

Social class

Data on the socio-economic status of students was problematic, because information was missing for 66.3% of students. The following analysis can only serve as a guideline, therefore. Information relates to the occupation of the applicant's parent/guardian or, where entrants are aged 21 or over, the occupation of the person contributing the highest income to the household.

In old universities, there were no marked differences in participation of disabled and non-disabled students by social class (Table 4). In new universities and non-university HEIs disabled students were slightly more likely to have come from the more advantaged end of the spectrum than non-disabled students.^{*}

Table 4: First year, full-time, UK domiciled undergraduates (Scotland and England) by disability, social class and type of institution (columns do not sum to 100 because of rounding errors)

| | n | Professional | Managerial, Technical | Skilled-non manual | Skilled- manual | Partly skilled | Unskilled |
|---------------------|-------|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Pre92 | | | | | | | |
| No known disability | 67713 | 21 | 47 | 12 | 12 | 6 | 1 |
| Known disability | 2816 | 22 | 48 | 12 | 12 | 6 | 1 |
| All | 70529 | 21 | 47 | 12 | 12 | 6 | 1 |
| Post92 | | | | | | | |
| No known disability | 40691 | 11 | 41 | 15 | 20 | 11 | 3 |
| Known disability | 2273 | 13 | 41 | 15 | 17 | 11 | 3 |
| All | 42964 | 11 | 41 | 15 | 19 | 11 | 3 |
| Non-university HEIs | | | | | | | |
| No known disability | 15850 | 10 | 43 | 15 | 19 | 10 | 2 |
| Known disability | 1046 | 13 | 47 | 15 | 15 | 9 | 2 |
| All | 16896 | 11 | 43 | 15 | 19 | 10 | 2 |

Analysis of survey of further and higher education institutions

Policy and provision for disabled students is being developed within a demanding context. The most important influences on general policy-making in HE in the past five years were seen as the overall decrease in funding, the increase in accountability through QAA (quality assurance agency) and the RAE (research assessment exercise), the expansion in student numbers and the wider access/social inclusion agenda. In FE, wider access/social inclusion, funding issues and changes to the funding body had been the most influential developments. All of these were seen as affecting the development of policy and provision for disabled students either directly or indirectly.

There were signs of a marked improvement in staffing and structures for disabled students in 2002, compared with the findings of earlier evaluations (HEFCE/HEFCW, 1999; Brown *et al*, 1997; Hall and Tinklin, 1998). Most institutions had at least one disability officer, with

* Significant at the $p < 0.01$ level using chi-square test.

** Marginally significant at the $p < 0.1$ level using chi-square test.

administrative support and a designated senior manager with responsibility for disability matters. More than seven out of ten disability officers had permanent posts. The majority of institutions had committees with a particular remit for disability issues. Structures for supporting disabled students were very different in FE to HE, with some FE colleges reporting employing over 30 specialist professional staff to work with disabled students.

Respondents were asked to rate their institutions against the criteria adopted by HEFCE/W in 1999 as defining 'base-level provision' (HEFCE/W, 1999). Table 5 shows that most HE institutions had a comprehensive disability statement, admissions procedures that addressed the needs of disabled students and arrangements for the assessment of individual student needs. Percentages of institutions meeting the other criteria tended to be fairly low or to vary across types of institution. Areas needing further development in most institutions included monitoring of statistics and services for disabled students and staff development. It is encouraging to note that, where institutions did not fully meet criteria, significant numbers of them often stated that they partially met them.

Table 5: Extent to which institutions met base-level provision

| % answering 'meets' or 'meets and surpasses' (% answering 'partially meets') | England | | | Scotland | | |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|----------|---------------------|---------------------|----------|
| | Pre-92 universities | Post-92/ other HEIs | FECs | Pre-92 universities | Post-92/ other HEIs | FECs |
| Comprehensive disability statement | 97 (3) | 87 (7) | 84* (14) | 100 | 86 (14) | 57* (29) |
| Admissions policy and procedures that specifically addresses the needs of disabled students | 83 (10) | 78 (16) | 64 (22) | 63 (25) | 86 (14) | 50 (46) |
| Monitoring of stats. about application/enrolment rates for disabled students | 67 (13) | 47 (42) | 62 (18) | 25 (63) | 57 (43) | 43 (32) |
| Arrangements for the assessment of indiv. student needs | 80 (20) | 89 (7) | 90 (8) | 100 | 100 | 89 (7) |
| These arrangements being well-publicised | 73 (23) | 73 (22) | 76 (16) | 75 (25) | 72 (29) | 57 (32) |
| Target times for completion of arrangements for assessing individual needs | 37 (50) | 42 (40) | 70 (20) | 50 (38) | 43 (0) | 57 (21) |
| Provision of services to meet assessed needs | 70 (13) | 56 (36) | 78 (16) | 50 (50) | 57 (43) | 61 (32) |
| Arrangements to monitor the provision of support services that have been agreed following professional assessment | 50 (27) | 51 (38) | 74 (14) | 50 (38) | 43 (14) | 61 (32) |
| Access to networks of trained support workers | 53 (37) | 56 (33) | 78* (16) | 100 | 29 (43) | 43* (46) |
| Code of practice on confidentiality of information | 60 (20) | 56 (29) | 64 (16) | 38 (25) | 43 (43) | 43 (39) |
| Clear internal communication and referral policies | 53 (40) | 56 (36) | 78 (16) | 63 (25) | 57 (43) | 64 (29) |
| An institution-wide policy and procedure covering exams and assessments, which addresses the needs of disabled students | 70 (27) | 73 (22) | 72 (18) | 50 (38) | 57 (29) | 57 (39) |
| Staff development progs. covering info. about disabled students and support available to them | 50 (40) | 56 (36) | 52 (44) | 25 (63) | 29 (43) | 50 (43) |
| The inclusion of these staff development progs. in induction and training of new staff | 43 (50) | 45 (31) | 34 (48) | 63 (25) | 29 (29) | 32 (46) |
| Procedures to regularly monitor the impact and effectiveness of policy and provision for disabled students | 60 (20) | 45 (33) | 36 (42) | 13 (38) | 29 (43) | 43 (43) |

* Significantly different at $p < 0.05$ level, using chi-square tests: Scottish and English FECs were compared with each other, the two types of English HEI were compared as were the two types of Scottish HEI. Asterisks indicate which columns are significantly different from each other.

Base-level provision is not a concept that has been applied to FE. However, because it provided a useful tool for assessing current provision, FE colleges were asked to rate themselves against the criteria in relation to their students and applicants on HE programmes. The column for English FECs in Table 5 suggests that the majority of institutions met most of the criteria, however it should be remembered that this represents only about one-quarter of colleges. The vast majority of Scottish FECs had arrangements for the assessment of individual student's needs, but only about half had disability-friendly admissions processes or assessment procedures. They were somewhat better at monitoring their services and providing disability-related staff development than Scottish HEIs, but there was still room for development in this area. Over half lacked a code of practice on confidentiality.

Where written policies existed for areas such as admissions, teaching and learning, complaints etc., the majority of them either referred explicitly to disabled students or the area was covered by a written policy for disabled students (table not shown). Notable exceptions to this were complaints, quality assurance and staff development. At least half of institutional strategic plans referred to disabled students. While this suggests that disabled students have been written into institutional policies in a number of areas, the questionnaire also provided evidence that, in practice, provision for disabled students still remains largely the province of student support services.

Institutions were far from meeting the requirements of legislation to be 'prepared in advance' for disabled students. However, very few institutions considered their provision to be completely *ad hoc*. In fact, about one-third of institutions rated their provision as '2' on a continuum of '1 proactive: prepared in advance' to '5 reactive/*ad hoc*'. Most institutions had plans to mainstream disability. However, few had set time limits on meeting any of the component parts of this objective (Table 6). The majority of institutions had definite written plans to raise awareness amongst all staff of disability issues, to ensure that they met the requirements of new legislation, to provide all information for students and applicants in accessible formats and to embed policy and procedures for disabled students into all institutional procedures. Fewer institutions (but still over half) had written plans to remove all possible barriers in the physical environment. Only about four out of ten English, but more Scottish institutions, had plans to identify and remove barriers to accessing the curriculum.

Table 6: Future plans with regard to disabled students

| % definite written plans/ % time limit set to meet this objective | England | | | Scotland | | |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------|-------|------------------------------|------------------------|-------|
| | Pre-92 univers- sities | Post-92/ other HEIs | FECs | Pre-92 univers- sities | Post-92/ other HEIs | FECs |
| Remove all possible barriers in the physical environment | 77*/40 | 51*/29 | 57/42 | 63/13 | 57/71 | 54/25 |
| Raise awareness among all academic staff of the needs of disabled students | 83/13 | 71/22 | 62/30 | 75/13 | 86/29 | 75/41 |
| Raise awareness among all non- academic staff | 80/10 | 73/22 | 60/32 | 75/13 | 71/29 | 75/36 |
| Ensure provision meets requirements of legislation | 73/20 | 67/20 | 70/44 | 88/0 | 71/14 | 71/25 |
| Provide all information for students/applicants in accessible formats | 70/13 | 67/22 | 60/30 | 63/0 | 86/29 | 57/18 |
| Identify and remove all barriers to accessing the curriculum | 43/0* | 42/13* | 42/32 | 50/0 | 71/14 | 61/14 |
| Embed policy and provision for disabled students into all institutional procedures | 67/3 | 62/13 | 56/24 | 75/0 | 71/14 | 61/25 |

* Significantly different at $p < 0.05$ level, using chi-squared tests: comparisons as for Table 5.

Teaching and learning was highlighted by the survey as an area of particular concern, with percentages of respondents considering their institutions prepared in advance to work with disabled students in this area particularly low.

We were interested in the extent to which the implementation of Part 4 of the DDA had provoked significant activity in further and higher education institutions. Our findings certainly suggest that institutions had taken note of the amendments. Over 90% of HE and 70% of FE respondents reported having a good understanding of the changes and their implications for further and higher education. In response to the changes, higher education institutions were most likely to have undertaken information gathering and review activities and less likely to have actually changed practices.

Analysis of case study institutions and students

Table 7 summarises information in relation to case study institutions. Institutions had very varied social profiles. Two pre-92 institutions drew only 60% of their undergraduates from state schools. This had a profound impact on their ethos and operational priorities. Pre-92 universities generally had less well-developed learning support systems. Scottish College 1 was the most socially inclusive institution, drawing 36% of its students from the most socially deprived backgrounds.

The number and percentage of disabled students varied greatly between the institutions. Table 7 includes information in relation to the number and percentage of students known to the Disabled Students' Service and the percentage in receipt of the Disabled Students Allowance. In some institutions, only a quarter of known disabled students were receiving the DSA. The biggest discrepancy was in Scottish university 3, where 6.6% of students were known to the Disabled Students' Service, but only 0.5% received the DSA. This reflected the fact that a high proportion of students in this institution had dyslexia or mental health problems, and either did not qualify or did not wish to be assessed for the DSA.

The number of staff working as Disability Advisers varied between institutions, and staffing levels did not appear to be related to the number of disabled students or the percentage receiving DSA. Many Disabled Students' Advisers felt they were under great pressure in attempting to respond to the needs of many disabled students. They often experienced difficulty in getting academic staff to respond to the needs of disabled students; in many institutions there was a tendency to see disabled students as the sole responsibility of the disability service. Developments were taking place in many institutions, with planned increases in disability support staff in response to premium funding. Some institutions had developed specialist support for students with dyslexia or mental health problems.

Institutions differed in relation to the extent to which support services (eg counselling, disability, effective learning) were integrated or operated autonomously. In line with findings from the questionnaire survey, the RAE was seen as having a particularly strong influence on institutional priorities in pre-92 universities. In Scotland, SHEFC had funded a review of the extent to which institutions were operating according to the QAA's *Code of Practice for Disabled Students*. A negative report had spurred one institution into action.

Compared to the universities, Scottish College 1 exemplified a more holistic approach to learning support. It had a very well staffed learning support faculty with 20 lecturers, and offered specialist learning support to deaf and visually impaired students.

Table 7: Summary of institutional case studies

| Institution/ Type of institution | Campus description | Learning support/ disability office staff | Disability policy/planning | DDA response | Impact RAE/QAA | Approaches to Teaching and Learning | Recent developments |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| Scottish University 1 Post '92 UG FTE: 12,329 Disabled: 251 (2.3%) DSA: 0.9% State school: 96% | Relatively new city centre campus with reasonable accessibility but difficulties remain. New build programme set to make vast improvement. | Large learning support structure with links to disability officers – staffing 2 FTE DO, 1 FTE admin support worker, dyslexia support worker. | Disability recognized at a high level but policy implemented in ad hoc manner. Equal Opportunities Working Group established. | Expectation by DO that DDA would make inroads into improving teaching and learning. Cost of full access seen as prohibitive. | VP believed research income as of only marginal importance in relation to teaching. Concerns of affordability of all aspects of QAA precepts but major effort made to comply. | Some innovation in lecturing with instant subtitles in process of being developed. Some lecturers have strong political commitment to inclusion. | Functions of the disability adviser separated into different posts. Post 1 – casework, Post 2 – staff development & policy. Additional staffing to be provided via premium funding |
| Scottish University 2 Ancient UGFTE: 17,998 Disabled: 617 (3.9%) DSA: (1.2%) State school: 60% | Largely West End of the city, Victorian with many older buildings inaccessible. | Temporary disability officer in SEN service. Three disability officers left service at same time. | Little contact between Effective Learning Service, Counselling Service and Disabled Students Service. Formerly little involvement of senior management, but staffing crisis prompted renewed commitment to developing effective service. New Disability Advisory Committee established. | Limited training offered to academic/ administrative staff. Cost of physical accessibility deemed prohibitive. | QAA report critical. DO felt RAE had negative impact on widening access agenda. Research prioritised. | Innovation in medical faculty Problem Based Learning easier for dyslexic students. | After end of research period, new Senior DO appointed with responsibility for high-level policy. Two other DOs to be appointed. |
| Scottish University 3 Ancient UGFTE: 5,070 Disabled: 282 (6.6%) DSA: 1.2% State school: 60% | Many old and listed buildings. Serious barrier to many potential disabled students | One disability officer, dyslexia support co- ordinator and new appointment to support students with MH difficulties | Disability advisory group (DAG) chaired by senior manager convened to inform on disability issues | Senior management believed improvements for disabled students good for all students. | Disability Advisory Group formed in response to SHEFC review of QAA Code. RAE seen as positive in bringing more cash to University. | Some resistance to giving out lecture materials in advance, seen as attacking traditional methods. | Re-structuring underway after strategic planning review, moving from ad hoc structures to more managerial approach across the board. |
| Scottish College 1 HE: 2,500 Disabled: 4% Most deprived area: 36% | 3 main campuses with number of community learning centres. Mixture of 60s and newer buildings accessibility fair to good. | Learning support has 20 FTEs P/T lecturers in 3 schools. Specific support for deaf & visually impaired students. Students have Personal Support Plan. | Head of learning support is a VP and on senior management committee | DDA not viewed by VP as particular concern. Some anxiety re access to buildings. Emphasis on 'inclusiveness' rather than specifically disability | Not applicable | Small class sizes <20 generally facilitate better lecturer response | None – but continued ethos of inclusion |

Table 7: Summary of institutional case studies (contd)

| Institution/ Type of institution | Campus description | Learning support/ disability office staff | Disability policy/planning | DDA response | Impact RAE/QAA | Teaching and Learning | Recent developments |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| English University 1 Pre-92 UG FTE: 6,200 Disabled: 222 (3.9%) DSA: 0.9% State school: 80% | Main campus relatively new in compact area outside city centre – recent audit on physical access financed by HEFCE. Largely accessible but some buildings inaccessible. | 1 DO, 1 FTE support worker, dyslexia support worker | Limited to impact of DO – no direct route to senior management. DO argues this is necessary and that she has sole responsibility for disability issues. | Limited to DO's personal efforts – some senior management concern. Support for staff training - limited. DO feels personal negotiation, not anticipation, remains effective means of support | Effort by DO to help departments implement parts of Code of Practice – far from complete at present. | DO role to educate academic staff – some departments have appointed disability reps | Extensive access audit carried out with recommendations being implemented |
| English University 2 Post '92 UGFTE: 10,639 Disabled: 341 (3.9%) DSA: 0.7% State school: 97% | 2 main campuses with newer one particularly accessible – some older buildings inaccessible to wheelchair users but these in process of being upgraded | 1 FTE Disability services manager with 1 FTE support worker 1 FTE administrator - named disability support tutor in each school | Disability Working Group established - involved senior managers and was working out in detail institutional responses to the legislation. | DO felt DDA would effect change in academic practice. Capacity of university to meet legal requirements limited by resource availability | Senior manager felt that the QAA & RAE were disciplinary mechanisms used unfairly against new universities. | Central point for collection of lecture notes ineffective – increased use of web by some departments | Developing close support between local health and social work teams to support students with mental health problems. |
| English University 3 Post '92 UGFTE: 17,162 Disabled: 650 (3.8%) DSA: 1.2% State school: 93% | 3 main campuses – new buildings are fully accessible but older buildings inaccessible. 73% General Purpose Teaching Rooms – accessible. | Extensive – Disability Support Service Co- ordinator, DO, Administrator, Mental Health Development Officer, Mental health Support Worker, 2 Dyslexia Support Specialists. | Head of student support services committed to developing disability agenda and strong representative in senior management – disability advisory group reports directly to Vice Chancellor's Equal Opportunities Advisory Group. | Senior manager – DDA would not affect everyday practice as complaints likely to be dealt with internally – staff to take more responsibility. | Senior manager concerned that RAE had distracted academic staff from supporting disabled students due to time constraints. QAA Code useful in highlighting issues. | T&L experience of disabled students dependent on their identifying themselves. Problems with low disclosure (particularly mental health problems). | Developing mental health support, access centre status. |
| English University 4 Ancient UGFTE: 12,313 Disabled: 202 (1.6%) DSA: 1.5% Sate school: 60% | Very diverse campus with mix of old and new buildings. Access for those with mobility impairments restricted. | All students primarily the responsibility of academic departments but with support of Access Unit when required. Tradition of Deaf Studies. | Autonomy of academic departments restrictive in terms of planning but group formed to consider DDA Part 4 implications. | University has established a working group to consider the implications of the DDA Part 4 with disabled people having strong representation. | Director of the Access Unit believed DDA deliver some principles of the QAA. Pressures of RAE affected time available for individual students. | Deaf students permitted to use BSL in exams | Disability coordinators to be appointed in each academic department |

Data from student case studies are summarised in Appendix 1.

The university and course choice of many students was affected by their impairment. Some were ‘cooled out’ by universities which felt they could not provide the level of support required. Some opted for small universities which they felt would offer more personal support, or institutions close to home where they could draw on family and social networks for support. There was some blurring of selection criteria, and it appeared that in some cases selection was not solely on academic grounds.

Assessments were somewhat ad hoc and there were often long delays. This led to a time-lag in the delivery of equipment, and as a result the student often started their university course at a disadvantage. For students with mental health problems and/or dyslexia, assessment did not take place until the student had experienced overwhelming difficulties.

Most students experienced access problems relating to the physical environment or teaching and learning. Adjustments to teaching and learning were very difficult to obtain and lecturers were particularly reluctant to provide notes in electronic format prior to lectures. Lecturers, particularly in the pre-92 universities catering for a less homogeneous group of students, felt that adjustments to teaching and learning would lower standards and give unfair advantage to disabled students. In all institutions, academic staff felt they were under pressure and were unable to devote time to individual students.

Disabled students who received financial support from parents and DSA tended to have few problems. Some disabled students, particularly those who were mature, managed a precarious package of state benefits and student support funds. Financial support for students with high support needs was invariably inadequate.

Many disabled students lacked social networks and were uninvolved with extra-curricular activities, thus reducing opportunities for informal learning. This was particularly the case for students who lived at some distance from the university, those with mental health problems and those with high support needs, who spent much time with their personal assistants.

Many disabled students did not identify with the term ‘disabled’ and regarded other aspects of their identity as more salient (eg being a single parent, gay, a Christian). Many students wanted to ‘pass’ as non-disabled and therefore did not tell students or lecturers about their impairment. Students with a diagnosis of dyslexia or a mental health problem sometimes rejected the term ‘disabled’, associating it with being a wheelchair user or having a sensory impairment. Some were prepared to use the term pragmatically to obtain the DSA, but did not incorporate it into their sense of self. Most students were unaware of the DDA and said they were unlikely to seek legal redress.

Conclusions

Higher education has been through a period of great change, with reductions in funding, increased workloads brought about through a huge expansion in the student population and greater accountability through the RAE and the requirements of QAA. In FE, changes have focused on governance and funding with the creation of the further education funding councils and latterly the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). In this changing context, institutions have been under pressure, through the publication of performance indicators, the introduction of premium funding (in HE) and the introduction of DDA Part IV, to widen access to under-represented groups and to develop policy and provision for disabled students.

In spite of this demanding context, there were definite signs of progress in provision for disabled students. Most institutions had a designated disability officer and a senior manager with responsibility for disability issues. Where they did not fully meet criteria for base-level provision, significant numbers reported 'partially meeting' them. Few could claim to be prepared in advance for disabled students, but there were signs of movement away from the reactive end of the continuum. Disabled students had been written into policies on admissions, assessments, estates and buildings and into some strategic plans. Most institutions had definite written plans for further development.

While all of these signs of progress are encouraging, the student case studies revealed gaps between policy and practice and showed that significant barriers remain to the participation of disabled students in higher education. Areas needing particular attention were teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluation and staff development. Teaching and learning remains an area of particular concern, with respondents stating that the kind of culture change required to really make a difference in this area will take a long time.

In general, disabled students were more likely to be white, male and to have come from the more advantaged end of the social class spectrum. The social class profile of disabled students in pre-92 universities, however, matched that of non-disabled students, although these institutions have the worst record on access to under-represented groups in general anyway.

Analysis of student experience indicated that many disabled students were isolated and lacked the social networks in which much informal learning takes place. They struggled to persuade often reluctant staff to make reasonable adjustments. The culture of some institutions and subject areas was particularly hostile, with staff expressing fears over the erosion of standards as a result of the requirement to accommodate disabled students. The label 'disabled', which students must adopt to qualify for the Disabled Students Allowance, and the protection of the law, did not sit easily with many students' self concept. This may prove a barrier to the effectiveness of equality legislation in this area.

Furthermore, the project findings suggest that the emphasis remains too much on providing disabled students with individual support to get round institutional barriers, rather than on more fundamental change. Disability remains a fairly distinct policy area, mainly addressed by student support staff and its relocation, particularly in teaching and learning, will demand a significant commitment on the part of all institutions.

The research revealed contradictions at the heart of institutions' approach to social justice. Most institutions express a commitment to widening access, but elite institutions invested relatively little of their resources in providing learning support services. All institutions were committed to identifying the needs of disabled students, but particularly in elite institutions this was not matched by a willingness to adapt teaching and assessment practices. Many academics in pre-92 institutions worried that giving additional support to disabled students contravened the fundamental values of the university, which was to distribute rewards on the basis of merit, construed as academic performance, rather than need. The case study of the College of Further and Higher Education provided an example of a system much more attuned to channelling resources and support to those with the greatest need. The impact of the Research Assessment Exercise in pre-92 institutions was to focus academics' energy on research, reducing the time available for teaching developments and reinforcing the need to

recruit the most able and socially advantaged students who would require the least support. There appeared to be a need for policy-makers and practitioners in higher education to examine the tensions and internal contradictions set up by the simultaneous pursuit of goals relating to widening access and increased selectivity in the allocation of resources.

Activities

The research team maintained a web site (www.ed.ac.uk/ces/Disability/index.htm) and electronic contact list of everyone who expressed an interest in the project (more than 500 people). All working and published papers were posted on the website. Throughout the life of the project, efforts have been made to communicate with practitioners, voluntary organisations and disabled students as well as academics. We conducted workshops at the Skill conferences in 2003 and 2002, presented to SHEFC's Disabled Students' Advisory group and to the Disability Rights Commission's reference group on the implementation of DDA Part 4. Articles have been published in practitioner as well as academic journals (see below).

Sheila Riddell worked as a drafter on the DRC's Post-16 Code of Practice for disabled students and analysed responses to the draft code for the DRC. She was involved in the evaluation of Scottish higher education institutions' compliance with the QAA's Code of Practice conducted by Skill in 2001 and evaluated SHEFC's Teachability project based at Strathclyde University in 2003.

A dissemination conference entitled Disabled Students and Social Justice is to take place on 4th February 2004 at Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh.

Outputs

Published articles and forthcoming publications:

Riddell, S., Wilson, A. and Tinklin, T (2002) 'Disability and the wider access agenda: Supporting disabled students in different institutional contexts' *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning* 4, 3 13-26.

Riddell, S., Tinklin, T and Wilson, A (2002) 'Disabled Students in higher education: the construction of subject knowledge, teaching and learning', Joint ESRC and ESCalate research seminar *Towards a Sociology of Higher Education – disabled students in higher education; the pedagogic practices of teachers in HE*. <http://www.escalate.ac.uk/diary/reports/22Novindex.php3>

Riddell, S, Tinklin, T and Wilson, A. (2003) 'Disabled students in higher education: legislation, teaching, learning and assessment' in M.Slowey and D.Watson (eds) *Higher Education and the Lifecourse* Society for Research into Higher Education and Open University Press.

Riddell, S, Tinklin, T and Wilson, A. (2003) 'The social characteristics of disabled students in higher education: issues for policy and practice' Issue Number 77, *The Skill Journal: the journal about education, training and employment for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities*.

Tinklin, T., Riddell, S and Wilson, A (2003) 'Disabled students and multiple policy innovations in higher education' Research briefing for Learning and Teaching Support Network website <http://www.ltsn.ac.uk>

Tinklin, T., Riddell, S and Wilson, A. (forthcoming 2004) 'Policy and provision for disabled students in higher education: the current state of play' *Studies in Higher Education*.

Riddell, S., Tinklin, T. and Wilson, A. (forthcoming 2004) 'Disabled students in higher education: a reflection on research strategies and findings' in C.Barnes (ed) *Implementing the Social Model of Disability: Theory and Research*, Leeds: The Disability Press.

Riddell, S., Tinklin, T. and Wilson, A. (2004 forthcoming) *Disabled Students in Higher Education*, London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Tinklin, T., Riddell, S and Wilson, A (submitted for publication to British Journal of Guidance & Counselling) 'Support for students with mental health difficulties in higher education: the students' perspective'.

Impacts

The impact of the work is evidenced by the number of hits on the project website, requests to speak to policy and user organisations, presentations at ESRC funded seminars (ESCalate, 2002 and Disability Studies seminar, Leeds, 2003) and involvement with policy development at a national level (eg involvement in drafting the DRC's Post-16 Code of Practice).

Future Research Priorities

Sheila Riddell is a grant-holder on the project Enhancing the Quality and Outcomes of Disabled Students' Learning in Higher Education, which is part of the ERSC's Teaching and Learning Programme. The project will track cohorts of disabled students in four UK universities throughout their degree programmes, examining their experiences and learning outcomes.

A project is being planned which will examine disabled students' labour market experiences.

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Appendix 1: Summary of disabled student case studies

| Case study | Impairment | Application Issues | Assessment | Access issues | Teaching and learning Experience/DDA awareness | Financial situation | Engagement with institution/ Social experience of university | Identity |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| Andy Aged 17 English University 1 Year 2 English 1 | Illness/ heart condition | Discomfort with 'special needs interview' – felt admission should have been on academic grounds. | DSA assessment – laptop & software provided by LEA. Disabled students' accommodation dingy & isolated – ground floor accommodation with non-disabled students preferred. | Some lectures too far from each other and upstairs so inaccessible. Problem building social networks. | No specific problems, but difficulties accessing some teaching accommodation. | Receives DSA and otherwise supported by professional parents | Virtually no social involvement – argues illness responsible for this but disappointed by university response – very reluctant to disclose and seek support - not active in disability movement. Spends much time watching TV in room. Many visits home. | Preferred to be seen as ill rather than disabled due to fluctuations in condition. Wanted to merge with others. Referred to 'rubbish body'. Saw disability as signalling spoiled identity. Unaware of DDA Part 4. |
| Peter Aged 18 English University 1 Year 1 History 2 | Mobility difficulties as result of progressive condition. Peter uses a wheelchair and has weakness in his muscles. | Positive experience of university accommodation service. But spends all leisure time with PAs rather than other students – disappointed that this is the case. | DO preliminary interview. | Extensive use of 2 PAs to avoid difficulties. One PA paid for by LEA, one funded through ILF. | Positive - primarily lectures & seminars. Personal assistance essential to allow participation. | Mixture of ILF and DSA funds full-time personal support | Involved in different social groups -university newspaper. Not active in a disability organisation (but father very involved in voluntary organisation for condition). Spends much time with PAs. | Having impairment has not had negative effect on life. Some advantages, e.g. orange parking badge. Vital to tell people about it and 'to get stuff sorted out'. Not aware of DDA. |
| Clare Aged 18 English University 1 Year 3 Chemistry 3 | Mobility difficulties. Initially walked with splints – now uses wheelchair. | Primary reason for application was academic status of university. Didn't get in to first choice. Another university tries to get her to withdraw application. | Early assessment by disability officer and close involvement by department | Physical access problematic, especially library. Labs do not have wheelchair accessible benches. Clare notes that neither would future employer. | Mixed experience of lecturers, difficulties with note-takers Withdrawn from labs due to illness and health & safety implications of fainting. Some lecturers refused to give notes or asked her to pay. Considering taking leave of absence from course for further assessments. | Difficulties in affording University accommodation - solely reliant on benefits. Disabled students' accommodation is in highest price bracket. Wrote to DRC to question whether this was lawful. | Involved in a number of social groups, active in student union as disabled students representative. Confident in seeking support, but disheartened by obstacles. Does not get support from family. | Comfortable with being 'disabled' but feels it is label given to her by others. Engages in political struggle within university because feels personally responsible and no one else will. Aware of DDA but does not think university will be able to anticipate full range of individual needs. |

| Case study | Impairment | Application Issues | Assessment | Access issues | Teaching and learning Experience/DDA awareness | Financial situation | Engagement with institution/ Social experience of university | Identity |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| Ronald Aged 19 English University 1 Chemistry Year 1 4 | Severe visual impairment | Chose small friendly university - impressed by initial response of disability office | Effective in terms of support identified – some reservation by student in identifying himself to lecturers. Initiated assessment before arrival. | Difficulty studying lab based subject. Some mobility difficulty due to building works on campus. | Some academic staff had awareness of Ronald's needs and adapted their teaching methods to accommodate him (notes in advance etc). But generally mixed experience. Health & safety concerns in lab – danger of spills. Supported by PA with knowledge of subject area (MSc student). | Supported by professional parents for rent – no student loan but works in bar part-time. | Involved widely in social activities but not active in disabled peoples' organisation – reluctant to draw attention to impairment but felt it necessary to gain support | Doesn't identify as 'disabled' – pragmatic approach to seeking assistance. Wants to pass as 'normal'. Unaware of DDA Part 4. |
| Sheena PhD student Aged 32 English University 1 MSc Psychology Year 1 5 | Dyslexia. Problems with short term memory, spelling, writing | Keen on university due to closeness to home. Initially more important than its reputation. | Student had grave concerns about assessment process – angry at how she was informed about her dyslexia. Lecturers did not involve her in discussions. | Access to subject hindered by dyslexia – advised she lacked appropriate analytical & verbal skills to tackle PhD. | Staff awareness of dyslexia poor – supervisor inexperienced. Improved after supervisor started writing notes. Student felt insufficient allowances made for dyslexia. | Self supporting having saved prior to study. | Finds social life of university difficult– more established outside of university - not active in a disabled persons organisation. Angry at disclosure of her impairment within department without her consent. | Relieved to be diagnosed as dyslexic but does not see it as disabling in relation to other impairments. Feels some stigma still attached to disability & dyslexia. Unaware of DDA Part 4. |
| Rosie Aged 65 English University 1 Year 3 Applied Social Science 6 | Illness/ Arthritis. Fluctuating condition. | Access route. Academic preference for university | DSA assessment Satisfactory but difficulties due to changing nature of illness | Assumed newness of university meant it was accessible. Difficulty with walk across campus. Now has PC in room. | Difficulties with written work eventually solved by technology/ extensions. Student reluctant to seek assistance from lecturers. Support for Disability Officer – 'absolute gem'. | Financed course by re-mortgaging her house. Reliant on benefits/hardship loan and student grant which was initially withheld due to her age. 'Peculiar' financial difficulties for over-55s. | Sees herself as too old for such involvement Slight isolation due to age regular weekends at home to care for partner - not active in disabled peoples' organisation – initially reluctant to seek support as 'disabled person' | Preferred 'damaged' to term 'disabled' Unaware of DDA Part 4. |
| Maureen Aged 67 English University 2 Part-time History Year 2 7 | Chronic Rheumatoid Arthritis | Access route. Reluctance to seek special assistance. | DSA assessment Heavy reliance on technological support | Some problems with mobility around campus. | Process of meeting student needs dependant on weak communication system between disability office and lecturers. Lecturers largely not being aware of necessary adjustments to be made to their own practice. Friend assists with note-taking. Strong praise for efforts of D.O. | Reliant on DSA and state benefits. Partner also a student | Some social involvement with other students Reliance on fellow student for academic support - not active in disabled peoples' organisation – reluctant to disclose impairment | Not willing to see herself as 'disabled' – term for more severely impaired people. Unaware of DDA part 4 |

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| Paula Aged 19 English University 2 Psychology & Sociology Year 2 8 | Blind | Impressed with support offered by university. Several interviews before arriving | DSA assessment Provision of familiarisation training with guide dog and technological assessment. Initial assessment underestimated number of reader hours required. | Insufficient LEA/SAAS funding for necessary equipment. Reader available at start of term, but equipment arrived after Christmas of first year. Guide dog vital to access but problems cleaning up dog mess security staff would point how where mess was, but not with clearing up. | Generally OK but access to visual material before lectures patchy. Heavy course reading not broken down to essentials hence reader difficulties. Course texts required 3 weeks in advance – organisational difficulties. Impeded by problems mastering technology, slow arrival of equipment and limited reader hours. | DLA plus parental support and DSA. Unwilling to take student loan – serious personal financial problems incurred by exceeding DLA allowance for reader hours – charity responded positively. | Not active as 'disabled person'. Confident approaching lectures on an individual level - Flat situation not ideal due to need to remain in same building in year 2. Much involvement in extra-curricular activities (e.g. swimming, gym). | Mixed – more strongly Scottish in England than disabled – primarily 'blind'. Describes family as coming from working class, but not rough, area. Aware of DDA in general but not new Part 4 provisions. |
| Roland Aged 18 English University 2 Psychology Year 3 9 | Dyslexia | Keen on specific course and impressed by support offered in university. | DSA assessment . Assessment by psychologist conveyed to academic staff. Student concerned that it referred to 'dyslexic-type difficulties' rather than dyslexia. | Lectures were 'a bit of a sensory assault'. | Positive experience of psychology department – offers tutorial support. Lecture notes in advance. Extra time for assignments 'double edged sword'. Benefit of one to one support from dyslexia unit. Dyslexic students meet once a week as supportive 'workshop group'. Questions about whether other students could benefit from this level of support – issue of fairness. | Parental support and DSA. Has student loan, but tries not to worry about debt – will pay off quickly once working. | Not affected by impairment beyond extra time needed to study – confident approaching lecturers individually. Used to be reserved socially but now more out-going. | Preferred 'minor disability'. Positive view of dyslexia – aware that dyslexics may be very creative. Describes family as middle class and supportive. No awareness of DDA Part 4. |
| Dermot Aged 27 English University 2 Year 2 Psychology Course suspended 10 | Chronic pain syndrome | Positive impression of department and their response to disabled students | DSA assessment. Did not identify himself early enough to disability office. Long delays in getting internet connection at home. | Problems getting to lectures because of fluctuating condition. | Some difficulty attending other tutorials/ Seminars than those designated due to lecturers' attitude. Difficulties with inflexibility of assessment process – no extensions pin Psychology, c.f. dyslexic student's experience. Good, availability of notes/handouts – use of web based materials. | Reliant on DLA and other state benefits - DSA | Not strong due to absences but friendly with other disabled students – reluctant to 'play disability card' when negotiating with lecturers. | Can identify with disabled people but not strongly. Individual view of impairment. Sees himself as mixture of identities with gay community and church etc. Describes self as 'mildly disabled' but would be 'silly' to say everything is 'perfectly normal'. Vague awareness of DDA. |

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| <p>Chloe mature student</p> <p>English University 2 Business information technology by distance learning (part time). Year 2</p> <p>11</p> | <p>Borderline personality disorder, (+ unassessed visual dyslexia)</p> | <p>Distance learning offers the flexibility she needs</p> | <p>She didn't tell the university about BPD until her first exam. She needed extra time and a support person. This led to an assessment at an access centre, an application for the DSA and one to one study skills support</p> | <p>Her main needs are flexibility, computing equipment, extra time and personal support in exams.</p> | <p>This seems to be going OK. She enjoys her course and gets on with the work at her own pace. Recently she's felt better and wanted to attend some classes but this has been refused because she is a distance learning student. A study skills class for students with dyslexia has proved more useful than her one to one tuition because it's more structured. However, she has taken someone to court in the past and would only do this if she felt sure that she could prove her case, because she felt she was treated like a liar even though she was the victim.</p> | <p>It took 4 months for her LEA to provide DSA for computer equipment. She is still waiting for money for books, special glasses and internet access.</p> | <p>She doesn't feel like a 'proper student' because she does not attend classes and lectures. She is resident in a supported housing project for people with BPD. This requires her to attend individual and group therapy and house meetings. It is an intensive therapy experience in itself. The time commitment required has slowed down progress on her course.</p> | <p>She is aware of stigma attached to BPD and will not disclose it to future employers. Not aware of DDA Part 4.</p> |
| <p>Mark English University 2 aged 23 Accountancy and Business Year 2.</p> <p>12</p> | <p>'Eyesight problem' (central vision blindness) developed after his 'A' levels..</p> | <p>Applied through clearing after period of employment in a supermarket.</p> | <p>Contacted by student support services and met with them few weeks before start of course. Needs were assessed, DSA applied for, extra time in exams arranged.</p> | <p>Difficulties using library by self, needs enlargement equipment for text/books. Needs copies of overheads/ handouts in advance</p> | <p>Email from SSS failed to produce handouts from lecturers. He now tells them himself, having to remind them constantly because they 'forget' his copies/handouts in advance: a constant bugbear.</p> | <p>DSA provided computer, enlargement software, CCTV, opti (hand held enlarger), laptop. Fund built up by his work and mum's work when he developed disability also supplied some of this equipment. Still has lot of money in fund.</p> | <p>Engaged to be married; has part time job. Has friends at university.</p> | <p>Likes to pass as non- disabled, tells people when necessary if he can do something. Disability still stigmatised. Likes them to know him first to overcome prejudices. Says he doesn't have a problem with his 'eyesight problem'. Doesn't mind being classed as disabled but doesn't like to draw attention to it. Unaware DDA Part 4.</p> |

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| Ellie Mature student English University 3 Conservation and countryside management Repeating 1st year 13 | Depression and anxiety | Found out had a place 2 weeks before start. Has 4 yr old daughter, single mum. Stayed in temp accomm, got very behind, dad died, eventually dropped out. Repeating 1st year | Tutor referred her to mental health support service | Difficulties with concentration, motivation, attendance, memory and anxiety in groups. Accessing library/computer facilities difficult because of this. | Main problem lecturers' lack of understanding. Dismissed as experiencing 'normal stress'. Doing a presentation was a 'terrible experience'. Can now give presentations to the lecturer only. Staff have better understanding now because of intervention of MHT. | Longwinded process to get DSA for computer to avoid using library/computers at uni. Application finally rejected. Mother loaned her money for it – a big help. Receives mature students' grant and allowances + loans. Help from financial services at uni. Support of MHT weekly through DSA. | Initially reluctant to discuss difficulties with tutors. Their lack of understanding - She travels far to university on public transport, has a 4-year-old daughter to get to and from childcare. Therefore no time for socialising. Accommodation services were not helpful in finding her child-suitable accommodation - With support from MHT, now more open. Also 3 way meeting between MHT, herself and course leader established responsibilities and made easier for Ellie to approach course leader | First generation to go to university. Half the students at her school went. Doesn't consider herself disabled. Not heard of DDA, would bring legal action as a last resort. |
| Rena Straight from school, English University 3 Sciences and computing, Year 4 14 | Dyslexia Clinical depression Intermittent kidney infections. | Chose this institution because of the dyslexia support available and because liked city and course. | Dyslexia assessment early on, but no support other than computer, because 'not available to first years'. Repeated 2nd year due to depression. Tutor 'frog-marched' her to doctor in third year when depression came to a head. | In first year, difficulty taking notes in lectures and meeting deadlines. One lecturer refused to give out lecture notes because it would disadvantage other students. She then got note-taker and study skills support. | Gets the support of a mental health tutor, once/week who helps her to organise and structure her work, sets short term goals and just listens if necessary. This has been invaluable. She attributes her depression largely to the instability and lack of routine at university. | Has a computer and software, a note-taker, a book allowance, the support of a mental health tutor and study skills support through the DSA. Parents pay for her rent, food and fees. Receives minimum student loans and 'struggles'. | Felt isolated in the past because she lived out of town. Now lives in town, but doesn't have much time to socialise because of workload. Has been very reluctant to tell lecturers about difficulties. However, with the support of the MHT, has now told most of them. Hates asking for extensions, but MHT does this for her sometimes. | Hates to tell anyone about her difficulties because she doesn't want 'special treatment'. In the past has tried to cope by herself and sees this as her downfall. Now realises she needs support. She was expected to go to uni by school and family. Unaware of DDA Part 4. |
| Joan Aged 42 English University 3 Human Services Year 3 15 | Arthritis | Application determined by location and specific interest in course offered. Has 4 children – youngest still at home. Worked as aerobics instructor prior to onset of arthritis. Ambition – to be accepted for teacher training. Invited in for discussion with DO following application – unclear if academic & access issues treated separately. After acceptance, DO liaises with academic department. | Uncomfortable with disclosure but encouraged to 'tell truth' by access tutor. Required notetaker and lift keys offered | Physical environment tiring due to distances, doors etc | Generally OK but anxiety in telling lecturers of her difficulties – failure of communication process. Positive experience of support – note-takers & technology particularly helpful. Standard 2 week extension on all assignments. | Struggling financially - unable to balance need to work with adequate study time. Husband is also a student. Receives DSA. University invoices her for notetaker – she passes invoice to LEA. Paid by cheque which is passed to university. Requires taxi to get to university but not reimbursed. | Positive – use of fellow students in taking notes and accessing missed handouts. | Aware of effects of impairment but no association with disabled identity. Finds condition difficult & frustrating. Unaware of DDA Part 4. |

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| Jill Aged 23 English University 3 Photography Year 2 16 | Dyslexic | School only noticed dyslexia at final exam time – too late. Turned down for physiotherapy (believed as result of dyslexia). Then studied radiotherapy & worked abroad. Decided to do course based on visual/creative rather than linguistic skills. | Standard university response to dyslexia – DSA application and personal support. Dyslexia Assessment Test used in university – but questions raised about validity. | Final year dissertation problematic for dyslexic students. Longer loan for library books & free photocopying. Some photography tutors dyslexic – sympathetic. | Mixed impression of academic staff. Some give excellent consideration to difficulties, others poor. Argue that allowing dyslexic students to have notes would breach copy right and disadvantage other students. Heavy reliance on one to one support of dyslexic tutor. Difficulties in coping with 10,000 word dissertation at end of 2nd year in otherwise practical based course | DSA. Financial support from parents. P/T job in holidays. | Confident addressing academic staff - Positive social experience. | Positive attitude to dyslexia, but regards it as pigeon-holed in disability category. Sees self as having learning difficulty, not disability. Disability includes students with sensory & physical impairments. Perceives self as very intelligent person 'who can't bloody write'. Unaware of DDA. |
| Mike Aged 24 English University 3 Agriculture Year 3 17 | Dyslexia | Left school & did BTec in Agriculture at college. Then National Certificate & National Diploma. College became part of university. Application influenced by location and high level of support. | DSA assessment. Long delay in psychological assessment causing hold up in supply of PC and software. | Finds course quite demanding & needs support. | Individual lecturers have assumed considerable responsibility for adapting teaching/teaching materials - may be a legacy from more intimate previous FE college structure. Powerpoint seen as helpful for all students. Student had heavy reliance on one to one support of dyslexia tutor and learning support. Entitled to one hour additional support per week from dyslexia support tutor. Extra time in exams (25% extra). Scribe available if required. | DSA, works part-time and supported by parents. | Shy in declaring dyslexia but feels it necessary - Positive social experience not significantly impacted by dyslexia. Mum corrected work at college and he still likes to be close to home. | Was 'tormented' at school and would be reluctant to 'broadcast' dyslexia, but friends know. Was in bottom set at school but knows he is 'not thick'. Sees 'disabled' as term for people with severe physical impairment. No awareness of DDA. |
| Tony Aged 19 English University 3 Accountancy & Finance Year 3 18 | Dyslexic | Application determined by grades. Not first choice university. | Reading/behavioural difficulties at school. Assessed as dyslexic. University psychologist assessed him as not dyslexic - reassessed by school psychologist & university accepted this diagnosis. | Difficulties with essay writing – mainly structuring ideas & using correct grammar & syntax. | One to one support with Dyslexia Support Tutor considered essential to coursework. Some lecturers particularly considerate in their practice, others not. Handouts provided prior to most lectures but little on web. Limited number of essays set in exams to reduce time pressures. | DSA, financial support from parents. | Confident addressing academic staff but unsure as to their capacity to help. Dyslexia has limited impact of dyslexia in social life | Confident declaring as dyslexic. Doesn't identify as disabled – confused over terminology, but forced on occasion to use the term for administrative purposes. Not aware of DDA Part 4. |

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| Pete Aged 38 English University 3 From Nigeria, married with family. Civil Engineering Year 3 19 | Depression. Problems with eyesight. | Applied because his wife needed to move to area for medical reasons. Only applied to one university, liked 2 people he met there and decided to come. | Struggled in his first 2 semesters, failed one exam 3 times, was getting more and more vocal and angry. This led him to be put in touch with the mental health tutor (MHT). | Needs extensions/flexibility, used to have panic in exams. Needed individual support to organise work, manage time, cope with stress. | Some lecturers have failed to recognise his difficulties even when the university officially recognises them. The MHT is the only reason he has got this far. He describes a very poor learning environment which he feels has exacerbated his difficulties. | DSA pays for MHT support every week. He has a tape recorder. Receives mature students' grant with dependents' allowance. Cannot afford university accommodation, so lives in council flat. | Used to struggle to speak to his lecturers because he felt the culture was not one in which it was OK to be struggling. With backing of MHT now speaks to them and feels entitled to extensions although he rarely takes them now. Felt racially discriminated against by one lecturer. | Sees himself as disabled and as black man. Feels it is a culture which does not accept difference and this has made it really hard for him. He used to feel it was all his own fault. The MHT has helped him to see that it is cultural. Unaware of DDA Pt IV. |
| Eve Aged English University 4 PhD student Geography Late 20s 20 | Deaf, but not diagnosed till after school. | After school worked as gardener Applied to EU4 because of support for deaf students. Lived nearby & had family commitments. Social Policy degree, PhD Geography | Not identified as deaf till after school. At university open day, needs assessed – received DSA from LA. Paid for person to type lectures. | Seminars continue to be a problem. Has tried teaching but difficult to lip-read so many students (example of impairment effect linked to disability). | Most lecturers helpful. But in seminars questions not repeated. Radio aid draw attention to self – not always welcome. Conferences difficult – can't hear question so answer makes no sense. | DSA relatively generous (£10,000). Looking forward to earning after PhD – has 2 children & mortgage. | Doesn't engage with student group – has independent friends in village. Mature student - relates less to younger age group. Can lip read on one-to-one basis, but large groups difficult. | Has only recently learnt sign language – only partially relates to deaf community in city. Not aware of changes to DDA, but was told about developments to Geog. Curriculum to make it more accessible. |
| Nancy English University 4 Maths Year 3 21 | ME – occurred after gap year. Took 15 months to realise that not well. | Applied to Bristol because good for Maths – not ill at this point. | Found out about Access Unit by chance. Had been elected Disabled Students Officer on Students Union- was seeking disabled parking space. Directed to Access Unit. | Individual learning support not available. If morning lectures missed, no way of catching up. | Some lecturers allow for absence & late submission – others don't. Not allowed to do degree part-time. Support limited – lecturers refuse to 'teach course twice'. | Got DSA for part of final year – paid for computer, printer & adapted chair. Has note taker's allowance for lectures, but doesn't often use it. Middle class background & parental support | Became involved in SU by chance – friend pointed out vacancy for disabled students officer. Difficult relationship with access unit – refused to help her make contact with other disabled students. | Has only recently identified with disability issues, but relieved to get diagnosis of ME. Doesn't define herself through condition, but doesn't keep it hidden. Aware of DDA because of role in students' union. |
| Terry Aged 27 English University 4 MSc Deaf Studies 22 | Deaf | Previous university experience poor – English 4 straightforward | Assessed by signer of low grade which led to inaccuracies in assessment despite having requested signer of higher grade. | Availability of signers extremely poor – difficulties concerning payment of signers and DSA support. | Some course assessments to be made in sign language – major concession by University. | Describes himself as 'privileged' class wise but determined to be self sufficient – works part-time to pay for studies – major financial worry over having to sign to pay for signers before assurance of extent of DSA support. | Very active politically as representative of deaf students – prepared to challenge University on a number of issues – social life restricted by availability of signers to mostly deaf community only. | Primarily seen as Deaf – but 'disabled' in certain circumstances – recent member of deaf community by learning sign language – currently pursuing legal action against University under DDA Part IV |

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| Fiona Aged 34 Scottish university 1 Social sciences Fourth year out of 5 ½ 23 | Mobility, speech difficulties | Applied very late, This uni her first choice. She would have started a year later, but got in before the end of student grants. Wishes she'd waited so that more was in place. | DO invited her for chat very early on. But this did not prevent severe access issues in first year. | Severe in first year. Lecture theatre inaccessible. Almost gave up. Low attendance, but compensatory pass because her work was fine and university admitted it was their fault. Library difficult to access, limited toilet facilities, difficulties with parking. | Main issues around PAs – had 20, many difficulties because of unsociable hours, difficulties of finding suitable people, keeping over summer break. PA involved in all aspects of study. Difficulties with one lecturer, others OK. Sociology great – doing teachability, disability aware. Psychology terrible – deny knowledge of her continuous extensions. Issues about over-long exams with extra time. Aware of DDA and would take action if necessary although sees no need at moment. | Getting cheques from SAAS to pay PAs an issue. Received computer, laptop, tape recorder, money for PA. Funding may become an issue as she's taking longer to completed | Very proactive. She says: 'if you shout, you get' at this university. Disabilities officer with SRC. - Difficulty making friends because of low attendance in first year. Bonded with two students last year who completed course before she did | Describes self as activist. Used to be active in disability movement. Proud to be a disabled person. Fighting for rights of other disabled students through SRC. |
| Danny Aged 22 Scottish University 1 Occupational Therapy, Year 3 24 | Dyslexia | None related to dyslexia | Discovered dyslexia in first year after failing first 2 assessments. Guidelines for academic staff drawn up by disability service not followed by academics | Difficulty taking notes in lectures, accessing books in library because of numerical system. Describes lot of stress at university. | Doing really well on placement. Received excellent support from dyslexia support tutor. Academic departments not recognised/ understood dyslexia, not provided e.g. handouts in advance. Extras time in exams but not assignments. Complained about one lecturer. Very difficult getting through course. Had not heard of DDA | Received DSA, computer, software, extra time in exams. Has been refused extensions on assignments. Says computer not really useful. He can't use some of the software and received no training. | Very vocal about his dyslexia. Feels he's had to 'shout' to get things. Not ashamed to tell anyone about it. Already complained and would use grievance procedures. | Proactive and unashamed of dyslexia. Gay and positive about that. Sees stigma but refuses to take it on board. Would take legal action.. Wants to promote positive dyslexic role models, will appear on uni website as case study. |

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| Jan Aged 19 Scottish University 1 Electronic business Year 1 25 | Illness: lupus (sore joints and tiredness) | Took gap year due to illness. Came through clearing. Chose course, illness not a factor | Proactively contacted disability service, discussed needs, had assessment. No problems | Easier to type than to write. Missed an exam through illness, got doctor's note and re-sat. Unpredictable tiredness the main issue. | Disability service lent her a laptop, until she got the DSA. Only in 2nd term of 1st year. No problems so far. | Laptop through DSA, which she finds very useful. No problems getting DSA. Extensions: not used yet. Very positive about disability service. Had not heard of DDA. | Disability service wrote a letter for lecturers. She took it to head of dept. Doesn't know who else knows. | Does not consider herself disabled. Would not use legal action. |
| Phil Aged 35 Scottish University 1 Social Work Year 2 26 | Visual | Left school with no qualifications. When daughter went to school, did Access course, then HNC, then won place at university. | DO preliminary interview. Involved in arguments with SAAS re having his equipment paid for and in place in time for the start of his course | Difficulty reading OHPS. Lecturers don't cover all points on acetate. Needs much support from fellow students and help from reader in accessing articles/books from library. Access assisted by improvements in voice recognition software & scanning. | Primarily lectures & seminars. Reliant on other students for access to material presented during the class. Placements not willing to provide technological assistance. Access to course material limited by poor technology on campus & poor quality of handouts. SAAS unwilling to pay for reader in holiday period | Supported by DSA and partner working. | Negotiated difficulties directly with tutor – confident in doing this No organised involvement as 'disabled person' but frequent casual coffee & drinks with fellow students. | Awareness of social model, gained through contact with vis. impaired lecturer in Year 1. Has political & social relational view of disability. Expectation that environment can & should change. |
| Shelly Aged 19 Scottish University 1 Psychology Year 2 27 | Cerebral palsy/ mobility difficulties. | Took 2 years out after leaving mainstream school because initial choice of university turned out to be inaccessible. | DO invited her to preliminary interview. Reliance on self rather than disability office to keep lecturing staff informed of her needs. | Restricted use of PA. One PA (from CSV) couldn't take notes & hadn't been to university. Also needed scribe. Problems with new scribe in exam – couldn't understand her. Spanish dept found speech difficulties difficult to deal with – set separate work. | Primarily lectures & seminars but some labs. Participation in Spanish classes restricted. Lab classes difficult - lack of lecturer awareness. | Financed by student loan and parental contribution. Receives DSA. Incurred serious difficulties in paying PA due to slow processing of claims by SAAS. | No organised involvement as 'disabled'. Reluctantly assertive in academic environment - Positive experience socially but restricted by limited use of PA – cost issue | Desire to be seen as an ordinary student but comfortable with disclosing impairment when necessary. Was seen as 'guinea pig' in mainstream school. |

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| Ricky Aged 22 Scottish University 1 Information Technology Year 4 28 | Hearing impairment uses lip- reading. | Aware that with support he could succeed at university. Attended post-92 university in England & then Scottish college prior to starting present course. Benefited from greater maturity. | Relied on advice and support of RNID as to needs re technology, notetaker etc | No support till after first term. Poor availability of notetakers. Lacked subject knowledge. Now other students think he has an advantage! | Generally good. One lecturer pioneering voice recognition software giving live subtitles to lecture. One lecturer's notes available on web. Prefers to get notes at start of class. | Financed by student loan and parental contribution – DSA for laptop & notetaker. | Assertive in dealing with academics and DO - Close network of established friends little obvious impact of impairment. Travels from home 20 miles away each day. | Lip reader with no strong affiliation to deaf community or disabled people. Likes to be seen as 'just one of the guys'. |
| Liam Aged 22 Scottish University 2 Year 4 Film & TV studies 29 | Dyslexia | Dyslexia not diagnosed till university – felt annoyed that school had not acted. | Psychological assessment after referral to disability officer in Year 2. | Great difficulties writing consistently high standards essays – sometimes attempted 20 drafts. | Mixed. Some lecturers refused to make accommodations (e.g. looking at draft essay) on academic grounds, others extremely helpful. English unfriendly – Film & TV helpful. Difficulties with assessment process –disappointed with exam result (2.1 rather than 1st). Felt he should have asked for oral assessment rather than exam. | DSA – parental support and student loan | Assertive in academic situation - only evidence of impairment is extra time needed to study and problems with structuring ideas, leading to need for multiple drafts. | Relief at diagnosis. Didn't adopt disability identity. Likened discrimination he had experienced as dyslexic to racism – felt he'd been cheated of opportunity to do funded PhD. Wrote letter to university castigating unfairness of exam system, which structurally disadvantages dyslexics. |
| Sally Aged 24 Scottish University 2 French & German (changed from Marine Biology after stroke) Year 4 30 | Physical – stroke | No illness on initial application. Checked out quality of courses in prospectuses and compared. Wanted to go to a high status institution (‘I'm a bit snobby really'.) | DSA assessment. Disability office assessment with help of Rehab (voluntary organisation). | Changed course after stroke – felt languages less problematic than lab-based subject. | Withdrew from original course due to nature of impairment. Access assisted by IT and library staff. | DSA – parental support and student loan | Reasonably assertive in seeking support initially but does not identify strongly as disabled person. Friends were curious, but now treat her as normal. Some people don't notice she has an impairment. No obvious impact of impairment on social life in university. | Feels disability category is for more severely impaired people. Spent first 22 years of her life as non-disabled person. Has had to cope with sudden change in status and identity. |

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| Christine Aged 21 Scottish University 2 General Science degree (several course changes) Year 3 31 | Mobility – wheelchair user requiring PA. | Not interested in open day. Wanted personal negotiation with DO. | DO preliminary interview. Encouraged by DO to delay application. | Access to classes problematic due to times/distances/lift operator. Said that she was an anxious person and worries about accessing courses made her more anxious. Asked to choose CSV on basis of a number of CVs – not a good way of doing it. CSV highly problematic & excessively priced – but no other organisation around to provide that level of support. | Primarily lectures & seminars - PA difficulties due to lack of experience. Fieldtrip not accessible/little assistance. Problems with technology - not available till Christmas. When PA sick, Christine misses university or supported by mother. Demonstrators assisted with labs and operation of lift (janitors said it was not included in their job description). Some lecturers won't hand out notes (believed to encourage non- attendance at lectures) V able student (top 20%) but restricted by access difficulties. | No particular issues – DSA and parental support. | Reluctant to be active in asserting needs resulting in difficulties e.g. fieldtrip - Strict commuting schedule (1 hour each way from home) hindered social life , Not involved in disabled students' group or any other extra- curricular activity. | Strong perception of self as 'different', isolated, unable to discuss issue with researcher. Went to special needs secondary school, because thought she would be dependent on help from others in local mainstream school. Unaware of DDA Part 4. |
| Maurice Aged 25 Scottish University 2 Medicine Year 2 (previously completed degree in Physiology & Sports Science) 32 | Dyslexia | Not diagnosed prior to university, but difficulties in reading at school. Helped by mother (a teacher). | In year 2, professor recognised discrepancy between written & oral work. Professor approached Disability Office & suggested psychological assessment. Relieved by diagnosis. | V good oral work but problems with written work, particularly structuring ideas. | Experienced some negative attitudes to dyslexia but supervisor supportive. Thought dyslexia was 'fashion' but recognised problem. Innovative problem based learning of medical faculty more accessible. Some suspicion of request for extra time in exams – dyslexia seen by some medics as 'excuse'. Suggestion that many students would benefit from oral examination. | No particular issues – DSA and parental support. Works in hall of residence & is financially independent. | Confident in seeking support - No significant impact of impairment on social relationships. Friends mildly curious. | No association with 'disabled' relieved not to be wheelchair user. Being bracketed with wheelchair user is 'almost offensive'. But label 'dyslexia' shows he is not thick and brings advantages, e.g. extra time in exams. Thought allowance should have been made in finals – almost got a first but was not allowed viva – a bit bitter about this. |

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| Karla Aged Scottish University 2 Fourth year Sociology & Politics. 33 | Acquired physical impairment – restricts mobility. Sometimes uses wheelchair. | Travelled after school. Did two year course at college before coming to SU2 – long access route. Chose SU2 because of desire to become 'more middle class'. Had to prove ability before admission. | Discussion about physical access needs before coming to uni. | Only issue is accessible rooms. Secretary in Politics phones up to check with K that rooms are accessible. Handrails fitted to assist access to old building – done quickly. | Major problem – child & mortgage. Assessment favours middle class students who don't have to work and people without family commitments. Disability not major problem. | Difficult – child & mortgage. Works at museum during holidays. Sometimes regrets time spent travelling after school. | Mature student – has friends outwith university. Can't get out at night. | Disability not main part of identity – being single parent, working class, more salient. Doesn't identify with disabled people's groups. Thinks she would feel differently if born disabled. Hates being placed with other disabled people in theatre. Knew about DDA but would be reluctant to bring case – premised on US view of individual rights which she questions. |
| Kirsty Aged 20 Scottish University 2 34 | Visual/ hearing | Influenced by need to be close to home/support of mother | DO preliminary interview. Disagreement with disability officer re use of signer. Extensive student involvement in this process | Able to access teaching easily. | Primarily lectures & seminars - Lack of staff awareness in Labs and lectures. Would have preferred viva but university prevented this happening. Use of demonstrator in labs very limited not a positive experience. Course material available and not a problem | No particular difficulties – DSA and parental support | No real problems socially – desire to meet other disabled students but could not find avenue for organised involvement as 'disabled person' – confident addressing academic staff | Particular association with similarly (genetic) impaired individuals |
| Lynne Aged 19 Scottish University 2 Year 1 Law & Spanish 35 | Blind – Braille user | Wanted to live at home. Could choose between 2 local universities. Chose SU2 after visit – seemed eager to discuss and negotiate. No assistance offered to attend open days. Sister worked at SU2 and could act as travel companion. | Preliminary interview with DO. Meeting with Law admissions tutor. Extensive faculty involvement. | Difficulties moving round campus – assisted by school friend and sister. Faculty suggested she attend seminar groups in most accessible location, but idea rejected by student. Preferred to choose seminar on basis of friendship group/topic/ tutor. | Preliminary lectures and seminars positive – communication by email. Essential texts downloadable or emailed in advance. One lecturer caused difficulties. But Braille of essential course materials not completed – extra work resulting. | No particular difficulties – DSA and parental support. DSA did not fully cover cost of Braille Lite machine. | Confident addressing difficulties and seeking their resolution – no problems socially but restricted by travel – no organised involvement. | Self-perception as ordinary student. Wanted to 'pass' as normal and move round campus unassisted. Admissions tutor comments that L. makes 'no fuss' – some students don't know she is blind. |

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| Robbie Aged 18 Scottish College HND Multi Media Year 2 36 | Deaf | Straightforward – only 1 college applied to. College 1 has reputation for working with Deaf students – particularly 'clever' ones. Funded as resource for Deaf students. Important to have peer group. Seen as half-way house between school & university. | Preliminary interview with special needs adviser. | Good coverage of interpreters (2 full time), although national shortage creates difficulties. Policy – to put in plenty of support & then withdraw it gradually. Departments very supportive – deaf students seen as part of mainstream clientele – not special. All staff invited to deaf awareness classes. | Primarily lectures & seminars but small (<20) classes. Positive experience. Adaptation of communications classes. Staff informed of accommodations required informally. Problem – interpreters have to leave class promptly – doesn't allow for questions. Difficulties – lecturers talk whilst writing on board. Small classes help. | No particular problems. DSA, supported by parents. | Confident addressing lecturers but limited by interpreter availability - No problems socially but limited to Deaf community only. Problems communicating with hearing students. | Not aware of social model of disability. Strong association with Deaf community. Identified as Deaf rather than disabled – latter term not used. Both mother & father Deaf – father works for Deaf vol org. Disabled refers more to people who has mobility impairment or is blind. People think of deaf people as stupid – dumb. |
| Megan Aged 18 Scottish College HNC Health, Fitness & Exercise. (previously NC in advanced sport & performance) 37 | Dyslexia | Application determined by location/nature of course. Wanted small, friendly college - no specific regard to support | Originally diagnosed in primary school Had Record of Needs. Student reluctant to disclose – assessment by learning support but lecturers largely unaware. Assessment for DSA at another college. | Chose course because mostly practical. Writing is V difficult – has scribe in exams. 1 lecturer doesn't know she has dyslexia – gets nothing from these lectures. Notes are unreadable. Meetings with dyslexia support tutor used to plan when scribe will be needed. | Student very reluctant to disclose, leading to difficulties – lecturers who knew provided notes etc. Main form of support from college learning support – visit every 2 weeks. Extra time awarded in exams. Mother helps with reading. | No particular problems - works part-time and supported by parents | Very reluctant to declare dyslexia to academic staff – some staff still unaware of it - No evidence of affect of impairment in social situation | Aware of significant impact of dyslexia but not sure whether this is 'disability' – term refers to people with more significant impairments. No awareness of DDA Part 4. |
| Catherine Aged 45 Scottish College HND Administration & Information Management (previously HNC) 38 | Visual impairment from birth. | Entered college after 20 years working in leisure centre. Disclosed impairment on application form – college telephoned to arrange meeting. Known level of support from previous course studied – college was local | Intensive early assessment by college and VST – student confident in level of support. DSA provides laptop, minidisk player & 10 hours of reader services. | Excited by potential of new technologies to improve access to education & employment. Uses range of software, e.g. Zoomtext & Jaws. Lecturers who talk a lot & are easy to understand are best. Doing own research is difficult. | Each student has individual learning support plan. High level of support from visual support tutor (VST) –lecturers' material adapted, e.g. figures redrawn, large font size etc. Difficult with part-time staff. Hope to make lecturers more responsible. Extra time awarded. Curriculum made accessible largely by work of VST rather than lecturers | No particular problems – Receives DSA and is supported by partner | Reliant on visual support teacher – Socially 'the best time in her life' happy with support and meeting other visually impaired people for first time | Initially reluctant to declare impairment now comfortable identifying as 'disabled'. Recognises impact of impairment – eye strain in lectures. Necessary to obtain support. Believes mother has difficulty recognising impairment. Attended mainstream school. Being student is 'best time in her life'. Has developed strong affinity with other vis. Impaired people. Would like to work in this area. |

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| Donny Aged 34 Scottish College HNC Multi-media computing Year 1 39 | Acquired physical impairment – motor cycle accident. | Made redundant from job after accident. College known to student as 'accessible' and taught course of interest - wanted local college. | Frontline lecturers expected to identify students needing support – not applicable to Donny in academic terms. | Building generally accessible but series of irritating difficulties – lifts, parking, keys to toilets. Student has Individual learning Plan which identifies individual learning needs. | Student had excellent experience of course but some access difficulties re bench heights. Plays active role in class. | Advised by DEA that course counted as Training for Work – could therefore claim JSA. Qualified for DLA plus other disability benefits. Travel expenses are paid. Wife works full time. | Confident addressing staff and raising issues. Break times and meal times difficult but enjoying student company. Students make sure he's included in outings to pub. | Active in disabled issues – Director of vol org for people with spinal injuries – talks to people in hospital. Aware of political nature of disability. Rejects personal tragedy view . |
| Carly Aged 34 Scottish College HNC Business 40 | Mobility – adult-onset arthritis. Uses crutches. | After school, undertook voluntary work. Hip replacements meant she could consider more ambitious goals. Location crucial factor – close to home. Felt college would offer accessible environment. | Frontline lecturers expected to identify students needing particular support – not applicable to Carly in academic terms. | Building generally accessible but series of irritating difficulties – lifts, parking keys to toilets | Student had excellent experience of course. | Receives state benefits – Course fell within remit of Training for Work – qualified for Jobseekers Allowance plus £10 & travel expenses. | Declared impairment on application otherwise little need to address it - Cautious of socialising with other students due to painful problems in walking, moving around – embarrassed to ask location of meetings and request changes | Some discomfort with declaring herself 'disabled' particularly in company of more severely impaired people. In '20s had denied impairment and withdrawn from social life. Now accepts she has to use crutch, but would rather pass as normal. Has empathy with other disabled people. |
| Lucy Aged 19 Scottish College HNC Web Development 41 | Hearing impairment – partially deaf. Uses lip-reading & BSL. | Local college and identified in deaf community as accessible. | Initial assessment by dedicated learning support tutor – high level of support advised in early stages. DSA provides home PC, software & video camera. | Interpreter in class – they may take notes if lecturer is too fast. | Generally good in terms of lecturer awareness and use of visual material – availability of signers good but occasional non appearances – assisted by small class sizes. Problems with slow delivery of equipment. | Receives DLA, DSA and other state benefits but not particular problem. | Confident in declaring impairment but would not request lecturers to change practice – e.g. face her to assist lip reading - Strong social life with other deaf students. Has recently moved out of parental home and into flat with other Deaf students. | Prefers to be called Deaf rather than disabled. Grew up in Deaf family – strong connections to Deaf community. Attended mainstream school with unit for Deaf children. Chats to Deaf people on Internet – the local Deaf community is a bit small. Made aware of DDA through local Deaf forum. |

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| Sara Scottish University 3 Scottish History & Classics Year 2 42 | Dyslexia – diagnosed at local primary school. Contacted psychologist through Dyslexia Institute – paid for assessment. | Helpful response to initial approach. Given lower offer because of dyslexia. | Went to Access Centre at Dundee for assessment. Computer arrived at Easter, 6 months after starting university. | DSA pays for PC & special software. Voice recognition software doesn't work very well. Also entitled to scribe & extra time in exams. Feels dyslexia affects performance in many ways – Can't express subtle ideas. | Some tutors much more helpful – want to be told what allowances they should make. Others not interested. PhD students may lack knowledge & confidence to make reasonable adjustments. Lecturers don't know whether they should adjust marking. Concern in university about 'dumbing down'. | Middle class background – supported by family. DSA sufficient to meet support needs. | Lives in womens' hall – quiet, domestic life. Enjoys traditional aspects of student life. V involved in Christian Union. | Doesn't conceal dyslexia, but doesn't draw attention to it. Not involved in dyslexia support group. Considers herself as 'person with dyslexia – not disability. |
| Lara Scottish University 3 Social Anthropology & History of Art Year 2 43 | Diabetes since age 3. Gap year – picked up virus & became ill with ME in first year. | Straightforward – did not have ME at time. Had friends & family at SU3. | Had to leave university because of illness – contacted ME society. | Has to miss many lectures – some lecturers reluctant to accept late work or give out handouts. | University is 'nothing special' – will leave with ordinary degree. Great variation between departments – some unhelpful. Student support services v. understanding. | Family financial difficulties – has been awarded grants from university hardship fund in addition to DSA, which pays for dictaphone & laptop. | Me has had impact on involvement – has missed a lot of time. Involved with local Christian group. Lives out of town with small group of friends. | Doesn't relate to university disabled students groups. Thinks ME self help group would be depressing experience. Officially disclosed disability, but generally associates disability with physical or sensory impairment. |
| Sheila Scottish University 3 Geo-Science Year 2 44 | Severe congenital visual impairment – identified when very young. | Strong learning support at school. Met with Special Needs Support officer before applied – reviewed support needs. Small town better for orientation. Family had house in town. | As result of specialist assessment, has magnifiers, special software, telescope for looking at overheads. | Enlarged handouts generally supplied. Geo-Science particularly supportive – interested in making curriculum notes more accessible. | Geo-Science supportive but VI make some aspects of course very difficult eg close examination of fossils. Many lecturers want to help but don't understand nature of problems. | Support from middle class family. Income from sub-let rooms in family house. DSA pays for equipment. | Involved with Christian group (father is a vicar). Involved in university working group on disability. Wants to make things better for disabled students who come to university later. | Identifies as disabled and committed to making things better for others. Wants to engage with institution and work for change within it. |

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| Val Scottish University 3 Modern History & German Year 2 45 | Visual impairment. Neurological, not physical problem | Received support at open day from Special Needs Adviser. Lot of contact through e-mail prior to arrival. | Assessment at Dundee – great parental effort to have support in place for start of term. Took a lot of nasty letters and e-mails. | Physical environment reasonably accessible because of small town atmosphere. Year abroad v. difficult – going to school for children with VI. | Problems with German department. Promises of adjustments, e.g. enlarged text, not delivered. German lecturers say disabled students cannot have special learning support because this would give them unfair advantage. Has struggles with the work. German lecturers believe problems with foreign language due to VI – may be insurmountable. Reading is V slow – no allowances made. Library will not allow longer loans. | Support from middle class parents. Has to pay for additional German grammar lessons – may have to stop because of cost. DSA pays for specialist equipment. | Lives in womens hall and socialised with small group of students. Little engagement with wider university life. | Not involved in disabled students' groups – not V sociable. Doesn't like groups. Tries to minimise significance of impairment – doesn't want to be labelled - 'Just try to blend in, you don't try and make yourself special. Would be reluctant to bring case under DDA – father has pushed on her behalf. |
| Owen Scottish University 3 repeating 2nd year, started geology, now general arts Aged 21 46 | Depression and dyslexia | Applied because of parental expectations, later decided at wrong university on wrong course | Was being assessed for dyslexia, when MH difficulties developed. Breakdown and dropout in 2nd year. On return disability adviser (DA) has regular meetings with him to monitor progress | Difficulties getting motivated, used to lead to absences and failure academically. Since return to university, doing well and keeping up. Coped with dyslexia at school by good memory, strategy didn't work at univ. | Misjudged by some lecturers as 'lazy'. He puts this down to ignorance of MH issues. | Regular support from DA, describes her as a 'god-send'. DSA for computer and software – very helpful, means can study in room when feeling depressed. | Some difficulties through students being patronising on his return. Complaint brought against him for hitting another student under provocation. | Breakdown because of existential crisis: loss of identity following transition from school and following parents wishes rather than his own. Hates lack of class mix at SU3, even though from private school himself. Finds it too narrow. Not aware of DDA. |
| Mary Scottish University 3 Aged 19 Classics Year 2 47 | Partially deaf, cannot hear high frequencies, lip-reads | Met with student support services at an open day and was reassured that support would be in place and that class sizes would be small enough. But chose the Uni on academic grounds and because based in town rather than city. | Spoke to SSS once received offer, to check things would be in place. They also helped get suitable accommodation. Also discussed needs with department disability contact (DC) in first week. He passed on info to other staff. SSS been very helpful she says. | She has difficulty lip-reading and taking notes in lectures, so has a note-taker (fellow student). It's easier if seats in horseshoe in tutorials. She accepts she won't always hear everything. | Generally positive. Staff are very willing to help. They forget to look at her when they talk, but the note-taker helps with this. A couple of minor difficult experiences due to lecturers' lack of awareness. | DSA paid for note-taker, computer equipment, recording equipment, touch typing course. She may get hearing aids too. There was a delay in receiving DSA from her LEA. She feels it is adequate for her needs. | She prefers not to draw attention to her impairment. But would tackle a lecturer if an issue arose because of it, because they should know about it anyway. She prefers not to tell other students until she knows them. She doesn't want to be singled out. | Doesn't think of herself as disabled. Went to private school. SU3 was first choice (<i>because majority of students from private school perhaps?</i>) |

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| Leslie Scottish University 3 History Year 1 48 | Left school 8 years ago Accident 2 years ago damaged his brain. He has difficulties with balance, walking and writing | Was on an access course when accident happened. In hospital for a year, advised to do access summer school, then started Univ. Chose this one for geog. reasons | He was in contact with univ while still in hospital – his mum made most arrangements with disability adviser (DA), re DSA for example | He has not experienced any barriers to physical access. The DA advised me that he would not manage a spiral staircase, of which there are a few. | He gets scribes, a computer, a special chair, an organiser, extra time in exams, and speaks exams. With that in place, he has no problems academically. Says things are working out well and he did well in his exams. | DSA provides things listed under TLA. University organised employment of scribes including payment. | Not really integrated socially. Puts this down to being 'quiet' and 'boring'. Describes fellow students as very clever. | Says he has problems with balance and walking and is not disabled. Vaguely aware of DDA. Would bring legal action if it suited him. |

