



# **Supporting Disabled Staff Manager and Employee Guide 2013**



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## 1. Purpose and Definition

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### Purpose

Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) is committed to creating an environment where disabled staff can achieve their full potential.

It is part of our duty under the Equality Act 2010 to be proactive in supporting disabled staff.

This handbook is for disabled staff and their managers. It provides information about the support available, how to make reasonable adjustments and where to find relevant information.

### What is a Disability?

A disability is defined by the Equality Act as ‘a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on someone’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. ‘Long term’ means likely to last for twelve months or more.

The following are examples of ‘Day-to-day activities:

- ❖ Mobility
- ❖ Doing something with your hands
- ❖ Physical coordination
- ❖ Continence (controlling your bladder or bowels)
- ❖ Ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects
- ❖ Speech, hearing, or eyesight
- ❖ Memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand, or
- ❖ Perception of the risk of physical danger

### Examples of conditions that may give rise to a disability

A disability can arise from a wide range of impairments, including (but not limited to) the following:

- ❖ Sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing
- ❖ Impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as depression, rheumatoid arthritis, chronic fatigue syndrome (ME) and epilepsy
- ❖ Progressive conditions, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, forms of dementia
- ❖ Organ specific conditions, including respiratory problems, such as asthma, and cardiovascular diseases, including thrombosis, stroke and heart disease
- ❖ Cancer, HIV/Aids, Multiple Sclerosis (MS) are covered from the point of diagnosis, even if symptoms have yet to occur
- ❖ Learning difficulties, such as autistic spectrum disorders (ASD), dyslexia and dyspraxia

- ❖ Mental health conditions, such as schizophrenia, eating disorders, bipolar affective disorders, obsessive compulsive disorders, personality disorders. Depressive illnesses can amount to disabilities where they are long-term.

Further advice can be obtained via the Occupational Health Service -OHS  
(see page 8)

## 2. Reasonable Adjustments

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### QMUL's responsibilities

QMUL is required to make reasonable adjustments.

In determining what is reasonable, QMUL will take into consideration:

- ❖ The disabled person's views on what they need
- ❖ Any General Practitioner or occupational physician's views on effective help
- ❖ How effective the adjustment would be in overcoming the disadvantage
- ❖ How practical it is to make the adjustments
- ❖ The extent of any disruption e.g. service delivery,
- ❖ Sustainability
- ❖ Financial and other costs incurred (although a decision cannot be made on cost alone)
- ❖ Proportionality of the adjustment proposed

Examples of common reasonable adjustments are provided on page 6.

### Managers' responsibilities

Managers have an important role in ensuring disabled staff are appropriately supported to perform the duties within their role.

Managers have responsibilities to:

- ❖ **Respond to requests** from disabled staff members for reasonable adjustments
- ❖ **Arrange reasonable adjustments** for members of staff (if possible in the first 6 weeks of employment for new starters who declare a disability)
- ❖ **Ensure local practices do not contravene** the Equality Act. This includes preventing discrimination and ensuring staff work in an environment free of harassment
- ❖ **Periodically review** staff needs to ensure that adjustments are fit for purpose

Please note that staff may acquire a disability whilst working at QMUL and it is essential to periodically review all staff needs.

### Making Reasonable Adjustments

In establishing whether a member of staff needs reasonable adjustments, it is recommended to **carry out an initial meeting** with the person to find out:

- ❖ Whether and how the member of staff is affected by their disability in the workplace;
- ❖ Whether they would benefit from specialist equipment/software;
- ❖ Whether they would benefit from adjustments to their working arrangements;
- ❖ Whether they need a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).

In making decision on which reasonable adjustments could be required, the line manager can refer the employee to OHS or Human Resources (HR) for further advice.

QMUL does not expect managers to be expert in disability issues. Sources of advice are described on page 8.

Note:

If an employee declares a disability in confidence, in the law, the College as a whole is deemed to be aware of it.

If the employee wishes to keep it confidential, the manager needs to explain that this will limit the actions the College can take and should send a note to the employee confirming the discussion. However, a situation may arise where the manager will have to contact the HR department, for example where the Health and Safety of the employee or others could be at risk and should inform the employee of their actions and the reasons.

## Employee's responsibilities

- ❖ Advise line managers, human resources, occupational health and/or the diversity team that they have a disability or short term impairment or any other changes to their status. The College can only provide assistance with a disability, if it is aware of it
- ❖ Make an application to Access to Work if relevant (see page 7). Access to Work can only be accessed by the employee and will trigger the assessment and funding if necessary. It is essential that the employee contact Access to Work as soon as they join QM or acquire a disability.

## Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

- ❖ Providing specialist equipment: assistive computer software, specialist keyboard, adjustable height desk, specialist chair
- ❖ Providing reading material in alternative formats: large print, audio, electronic version
- ❖ Adjusting premises: building a ramp, fitting power-assisted doors, ensuring meeting are in accessible venues
- ❖ Allowing the disabled person to be absent during working hours for assessment or treatment: therapy, hospital appointments
- ❖ Reallocating tasks: for example, if a job involves occasionally moving boxes, this can be transferred to someone without a muscular/back problem
- ❖ Providing flexible working/modifying working hours: for instance to allow additional breaks or travelling at different times of the day
- ❖ Assigning the disabled person to a different place of work: different premises, work from home

## 3. Funding Reasonable Adjustments

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Not all adjustments will have a cost, e.g. change of working hours, working from home. There are a number of sources of funding.

### Access to Work

Access to Work is run by the Department of Work and Pensions to provide support to disabled people to help them overcome work-related obstacles resulting from their disability.

An application to the Access to Work scheme should be made **by the disabled employee** within six weeks of starting work for Queen Mary (or when they accept a position). If an application occurs promptly, Access to Work will pay up to 100% of the costs of adjustments. Staff working part-time or full-time, on permanent or temporary contract may be eligible for Access to Work support.

Disabled people needing help with a communicator at a job interview can also get help from Access to Work.

Existing staff members who are or who become disabled are eligible to apply for a grant from Access to Work irrespective of the length of time at Queen Mary, though in these cases the Access to Work Scheme may expect the employer to meet a proportion of these costs.

If an application is made after the initial six week period, Queen Mary would be expected to pay the first £1000 and then 20% of additional costs up to £10,000. Access to Work would pay the other 80%. Access to Work will however pay up to 100% of the approved cost of equipment, or adaptations over £10,000.

### Funding for reasonable adjustments

Where Access to Work will not fund reasonable adjustments, it is the responsibility of the department to do so.

## 4. Sources of advice

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### Internal Sources

#### Human Resources

- ❖ **Diversity Team**  
Provides advice and support to disabled staff and their managers.  
[hr-equality@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:hr-equality@qmul.ac.uk) Tel: 020 7882 5585/5519
- ❖ **HR Business Partners and HR Assistant Business Partners**  
Provide advice and support to disabled staff and their managers.  
Please check the HR website to find out who to contact

Location: Room WG9, Queen's Building, Mile End

#### Occupational Health and Safety Directorate (OHSD)

With the employee informed consent, the OHSD, can provide comprehensive advice to your Human Resources Adviser and manager on reasonable adjustments in regard to a disability arising out of a medical condition.

This advice will be based on a clinical assessment in response to an Occupational Health Referral Form from your manager / the appointed Human Resources Adviser. Where indicated from the assessment, Occupational Health will provide a report advising on the equipment/work place modifications recommended.

OSHD can also provide advice on workstation set-up etc. Guidance is available on the OHSD website e.g. workstation issues: <http://qm-web.ohsd.qmul.ac.uk/occhealth@qmul.ac.uk>

Tel: 020 7882 8700 - Ground Floor Geography Mile End

Disabled staff with mobility and sensory impairments are strongly advised to contact the Health and Safety/Fire Service as they may need to have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).

Tel: 020 7882 8966 - 404 Bancroft Road, Mile End E1 4DH

[Hs-helpdesk@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:Hs-helpdesk@qmul.ac.uk)

#### Dyslexia Advice

Please contact Cheryl Measures in the Learning Institute for advice on dyslexia and screening. Tel: 020 7882 3998 [c.l.measures@qmul.ac.uk](mailto:c.l.measures@qmul.ac.uk)

#### Access to Lifts

Disabled staff with mobility impairments who use lifts should register with security to ensure they are granted the appropriate access on their staff card.

## External Sources

### **Access to Work:**

Offers practical advice and help to disabled staff.

Provides funding for reasonable adjustments (including, in some case, transport costs).

[atwosu.london@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:atwosu.london@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk) Tel: 020 8426 3110

Textphone: 020 8426 3133

### **Remploy**

Remploy is a provider of employment services. Helping to support disabled jobseekers and working with employers and partners in regard to both physical and mental health disabilities

0845 155 2700

<http://www.remploy.co.uk>

### **Advice about Mental Health**

[Mind](#) – advice and support

[Mindful employer](#) - managers guide

### **Advice about Dyslexia**

[British Dyslexia Association](#)

### **Advice about Visual and Hearing impairments**

[Royal National Institute of Blind People](#)

[Action on Hearing Loss](#)

### **Advice about Autism**

[National Autistic Society](#)

### **Workplace Options**

Confidential employee assistance service. The service is telephone based and in addition to counselling offers an information and advice service on issues including health, family matters, finance and debt; the law, education, housing, and childcare. This is an entirely confidential service and no personal information is released to the QMUL.

Free Phone: 0800 243458 (24 hours a day, 365 days a year)

## 5. Reasonable Adjustments Funding Process

Please note: not all reasonable adjustments will require funding. However it is recommended that disabled staff contact the OHS or apply to Access to Work to have a workplace assessment.

