



Peter Alldridge Role Model Profile

Drapers' Professor of Law

What is your role at Queen Mary? What do you do?

I am Peter Alldridge, the Drapers' Professor of Law at Queen Mary. In 2018, I was President of the Society of Legal Scholars, which is the legal academics' trade association. My principal area of research is financial crime, but I also do some work in legal history and in disability law. I teach Evidence to undergraduates, Corruption and Money Laundering Law to postgraduates and I have a number of PhD students.

I have been active since the 1980s in universities in what is now called EDI.

I have a condition which has never definitively (ie by DNA analysis) been diagnosed, but is a genetic degenerative neuromuscular condition – either Charcot-Marie-Tooth or similar. The effect is that the myelin sheaths around the motor nerves do not develop properly, on the nerves do not function properly, and muscles waste from the extremities inwards. I have no functioning muscle below the knee and seriously weakened hands and lower arms. I use crutches and expect to use a wheelchair more at work when we emerge from Covid.

What is your experience of being disabled at Queen Mary (or in your life more generally)?

My experience of being at Queen Mary is very positive. It has an excellent, collegial Law Department of which I'm proud to be a member. As to 'being disabled at Queen Mary', when I lecture, I do it from a sedentary position. It has taken some time to get the relevant IT kit in all the lecture theatres that I use, but that has been accomplished now.

Over the past few years I have found travelling for work to be increasingly difficult. One of the positive effects of the Covid interlude has been to show that many meetings which previously were held in person could be held remotely. Early in 2020, I was asked to examine a PhD at a northern university, and I asked whether it could be conducted remotely. I was told it could not. The travel would have been arduous for me and so I did not do it. Now, invitations come in from all over the world, for meetings which I am able to attend remotely. I have done seminars all over Europe and, later this month, I'm doing a session for a committee of the Brazilian parliament dealing with revision of their money laundering law.

How does Queen Mary support you?

When I moved to London in 2003, I was still quite mobile. I walked with a walking stick. I knew that the condition was going to affect my mobility more seriously as I got older. The then Principal, Adrian Smith, agreed to write into my contract a parking space for my sole use. I would not have

been able to accept the job otherwise. I now also have an electrically operated office door and all my teaching is scheduled to take place in the Law Building.

How could Queen Mary better support its disabled community?

I'm not sure if it makes any sense to talk about a 'disabled community'. The broad moniker 'people with disabilities' can cover such a range of conditions that the relevant people may have very little in common. So far as concerns people with mobility challenges, the most important thing is 'universal design' – all new buildings to be built to allow access to the widest possible range of people, and efforts to be made to bring the older buildings up to standard. It is now some time since my being in it, and it may have changed, but the Queen's Building was always particularly bad.

If there is a single major improvement which Queen Mary should try to achieve, better to support mobility-challenged students and staff, it would be to secure step-free access at Mile End tube station. In the noughties Mile End was deprioritised by TfL on its waiting list for step-free access. I do not know why that was done. There should be a lift from the street to the booking hall, and a lift from each of the platforms to booking hall level, and level access to trains. [Local residents campaign](#) on this from time to time. I would like Queen Mary to be much more active on this issue and work with TfL to achieve step-free access at Mile End.

Why do you want to be a disabled role model? Why do you think role models are important?

I don't really know whether role models are important, but I thought that if I could be of use I would like to be.

What do you want staff and students at Queen Mary to know or understand about disability and the disabled community?

That they should not avoid talking about disability. People with disabilities are usually more than happy to talk about disability. There is more to treating disabled employees well than reasonable adjustments, but even on the issue of reasonable adjustments, I would like to see the [University's guidance](#) changed. The onus is placed upon the person with the disability to contact their line manager, and they might very well not wish to be the person who always triggers those conversations. Anyone who manages someone they know to have a disability should ask them about it, and what Queen Mary should be doing.

How can staff and students be a better ally to the disabled community?

If somebody looks as though they might need help, ask them what you can do, but let them say.

Is there anything else you want to share about your experiences, life or work?

There is still prejudice against people with disabilities.

There is an overlap between anti corruption law and anti discrimination law. To some extent they are susceptible to the same antidote – transparency. That is, procedures designed to avoid discriminatory or non-diverse appointments or allocations of resources should operate to prevent corrupt appointments or allocations of resources, and *vice versa*.