Developing an inclusive curriculum: a guide for Heads of Department and Course Leaders

INCLUSIVE · CURRICULUM · PROJECT
<www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/icp/>

The Inclusive Curriculum Project (ICP) aims to develop, disseminate and embed resources for supporting disabled students studying geography, earth and environmental sciences in higher education and to transfer the generic lessons widely to subject-based academics, educational developers, learning support staff and disability advisers. Its primary outputs include:

- the ICP Guide series - Nine complementary guides, aimed primarily at staff in geography, earth and environmental sciences, and one guide aimed at students:

  1. Issues in developing an inclusive curriculum

  2. Developing an inclusive curriculum for students with mobility impairments

  3. Developing an inclusive curriculum for visually disabled students

  4. Developing an inclusive curriculum for students with hearing impairments

  5. Developing an inclusive curriculum for a) students with mental health issues; b) students with Asperger Syndrome

  6. Developing an inclusive curriculum for students with dyslexia and hidden disabilities

  7. Developing an inclusive curriculum: a guide for heads of departments and course leaders

  8. Developing an inclusive curriculum: a guide for lecturers

  9. Developing an inclusive curriculum: a guide for departmental support staff (i.e. administrators and technicians)

  10. To a Degree: a guide for students with specific learning difficulties, long-term medical conditions or impairments

- a student survey report: 'The experience of disabled students in geography, earth and environmental sciences of teaching, learning and assessment in HE';

- a set of case studies on the experience of disabled students of teaching, learning and assessment in HE, and the experience of departments and disability advisory units of supporting the learning of disabled students.

All of these outputs are available via the GDN website at <www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/icp/>. Both the Guide series and the survey report are also available in hard copy format via the GDN Publications Office. A complete set of the ICP Guides will be distributed in hard copy to all Higher Education institutions in England and Northern Ireland at the end of the project.

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About the author

Margaret Harrison is a Principal Lecturer in Human Geography at the University of Gloucestershire. She has over 25 years' experience of teaching in higher education. During that time she has been a course leader and key contributor to curriculum developments in the University and its predecessor Colleges. In the mid 1990s she participated in the GeogCAL project and more recently, she has been involved in various Geography Discipline Network projects and Higher Education Academy GEES Subject Centre-funded small research projects on reflective learning and dissertations. She is a member of the core team for the Centre for Active Learning, a Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning, at the University of Gloucestershire. In addition, Margaret is the Chair of one of the Faculty Academic Standards and Quality committees at the University.

Margaret has written and published material on pedagogic developments in geography as well as articles linked to her research in Development Studies. She has contributed to the work of the Quality Assurance Agency through the production of example programme specifications, and by acting as a subject reviewer and workshop leader.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all colleagues and students of the Department of Natural and Social Sciences at the University of Gloucestershire. Our discussions and my experiences gained over many years of working in the Department have greatly assisted me in writing this guide. I would also like to thank my family and friends and, in particular, Sue Maynard, who made me realise just what are some of the key issues a disabled person faces whilst at University and then in professional life.

Margaret E. Harrison

Editors' Preface

This guide is one of a series of ten published by the Geography Discipline Network (GDN) as part of the **GDN Inclusive Curriculum Project** (ICP), a three-year initiative running from January 2003 to December 2005, funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England's *Improving Provision for Disabled Students* programme.

The ICP Guide series is written primarily for academics, educational developers, learning support staff and disability advisers supporting disabled students studying geography, earth and environmental sciences in higher education. In addition, one guide is aimed at helping disabled students to optimise their experience of higher education. The project builds on the success of an earlier HEFCE-funded GDN disability project, *Providing Learning Support for Disabled Students Undertaking Fieldwork and Related Activities*. This project, unbeknown to us at the time, broke new ground. Adams (2002), the Director of the National Disability Team (NDT), subsequently stated that:

> '*The Geography Discipline Network project was, for a variety of reasons, an extremely important project:*
>
> *a.   It was one of the first disability-funded projects that exclusively addressed issues concerned with teaching, learning and assessment.*
>
> *b.   It was led by academic staff in partnership with disability practitioners – this kind of partnership has signalled a real shift in thinking regarding disability issues.*'

The project, as is the current one, was undertaken by the Geography Discipline Network, a consortium of old and new universities based at the University of Gloucestershire, whose aim is to research, develop and disseminate good learning and teaching practices in geography and related disciplines.

At the beginning of the Inclusive Curriculum Project, we wanted to capture the student voice. Accordingly, we undertook a survey of disabled students studying geography, earth and environmental sciences in the consortium institutions (Hall & Healey, 2004). The survey was supplemented by case studies of the learning experiences of disabled students and the different ways in which departments and tutors have supported them, which are also available on the GDN website at <www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/icp/>.

Awareness of the need to develop inclusive practices, which provide equal opportunities for disabled students in various elements of their courses, is spreading throughout Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the UK. This has been stimulated by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) *Code of Practice - Students with Disabilities*, published in 2000, and the extension of the Disability

Discrimination Act (1995) to education through the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001), later incorporated into Part IV of the DDA and the Disability Discrimination Act (2005).

The ICP project focuses on the fundamental principle of inclusivity, whilst addressing the day-to-day practical realities of supporting students with a wide range of specific physical and mental difficulties. Although the series is written from a disciplinary perspective and some guide titles address particular areas of disability, the project provides guidance which offers transferable lessons for what is good practice throughout teaching and learning in higher education.

Despite using medical categories for describing impairments, we are committed to emphasising a social model to exploring disability, which examines the barriers to disabled students which society creates. The distinction between the medical and social model is important because it shifts the responsibility for improving the provision for disabled students from the individuals themselves to society, and the strategies and policies that higher education institutions and their constituent departments develop and enact. However, we support recent modifications to the social model which emphasise the reality of the lived experience of disabled people, and we are sympathetic to calls to construct a more adequate social theory of disability which recognises that everyone is impaired (Shakespeare & Watson, 2002). The focus of this series of guides is on identifying the barriers that disabled students face to participating fully in the curriculum and the ways in which institutions, departments and tutors can help to reduce or overcome them.

The GDN ICP team comprises a well established group of discipline-based academics, educational developers and disability advisers. Each guide has been written by a specialist author or team of authors, based on outline content and structure discussed by the team as a whole, and has been reviewed in detail by nominated representatives from the team. Each draft was also circulated to the whole team and a panel of external advisers for comment before final editing.

Rather than adopt an imposed standardised format across the series, each authoring team was given freedom to develop their guide in the way they felt most appropriate. This also applied to the much-exercised question of appropriate language. Editing, therefore, has been intentionally a 'light touch' process, so individual guides in the series may vary from time to time in relation to language protocols adopted. In terms of layout and presentation for both printed and web-based versions of the guides, however, the editing team has attempted to follow nationally-established accessibility guidelines as set out, for example, by the National Disability Team <www.natdisteam.ac.uk/ Accessible%20printed%20documents.doc> and TechDis <www.techdis.ac.uk/ index.php?p=9_4>.

The project was undertaken in consultation with the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Geography Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES). It has the strong support of the main professional associations and representatives of Heads of Department in the geography, earth and environmental sciences sector:

- the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers (RGS-IBG)

- the Geological Society (GeolSoc)

- the Conference of Heads of Department in Geography in Higher Education Institutions (CHDGHE)

- the Committee of Heads of Environmental Sciences (CHES)

- the Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES)

- the Committee of Heads of University Geoscience Departments (CHUGD).

We would like to thank the many individuals who have contributed to the ICP project and to making this series of guides possible. In particular, we recommend to our readers the stalwarts of the Geography Discipline Network project team, many of whom have over many years uncomplainingly devoted more of their time than we could reasonably expect to producing high quality materials and sound advice. We would also like to acknowledge the project Advisory Panel, the National Disability Team and the numerous colleagues who helped to keep the project on track and provided additional resources when necessary.

The net outcome of recent quality assurance and legislative changes is that HEIs need to treat disability issues in a more structured and transparent way. In particular, we may expect to see a relative shift of emphasis from issues of recruitment and physical access to issues of parity of the learning experience that disabled students receive. The implication of this shift is that disability issues 'cannot remain closed within a student services arena but must become part of the mainstream learning and teaching debate' (Adams & Brown, 2000, p.8). But there is an opportunity here as well as a challenge. As we become more sensitive to the diversity of student needs, we can adjust how we teach and facilitate learning in ways which will benefit all our students.

Michele Hills and Mick Healey

University of Gloucestershire
October 2005

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1 Setting the scene

1.1   Purpose and structure of this guide

This guide has been written as an *aide-memoire* to help Heads of Department (HoDs) and Course Leaders (CLs), as Academic Leaders (ALs), think through some of the fundamental issues and concerns about disability that impact on day-to-day interaction between staff and students. The principal focus of the guide is on how staff, and students, work together to ensure consistency, parity and equity for all when considering the needs of disabled students.

ALs play a pivotal role in the development, delivery and management of the curriculum in Higher Education (HE). Whilst recognising that the nature of departments and courses varies from institution to institution, ALs hold responsible and accountable positions. They make decisions that affect staff and students, and therefore their knowledge of and engagement with legislation and how it impacts on the day-to-day management and organisation of the curriculum is critically important. For example, they can be highly influential in how national initiatives and imperatives such as the Disability Discrimination Act Part IV (DDA) are implemented to ensure that an inclusive curriculum is provided for all students.

ALs will be members of both internal and external committees. They may hold positions in national discipline fora, operate as external examiners, be members of validation panels and participate in the work of professional organisations. Therefore, they can contribute to the dissemination of good practice across the sector. As individuals, they function from the middle-out (Trowler, Saunders & Knight, 2003), working both bottom-up and top-down and acting as a conduit for the upward and downward dissemination of policies and information. Within an institution, HoDs have many responsibilities including oversight of financial matters and research activities, as well as a concern for the quality of the student learning experience. A key role for the HoD is the maintenance and enhancement of academic standards which should be verified by internal and external quality assurance principles and procedures.

There are just four chapters, a reference list and four appendices in this guide. Various prompts and scenarios are provided in the guide, all designed to stimulate thought about attitudes, values and changes in practice necessary to promote an inclusive curriculum. Scenarios are in chapters 2 and 3; some are drawn from real life whilst the author has created others. Appendix 1 contains brief guidance notes on each scenario and can be used as the basis for action or for further consideration. Readers are encouraged to tease out the issues involved

in each scenario before turning to Appendix 1. The guide is supported and cross-referenced to the other staff guides in the series. There are five guides, each focusing on a specific disability, plus a guide for lecturers, one for support/ technical staff and finally an overview guide. Guides in this series contain material, evidence and examples which have the ability to cross disciplinary boundaries and thus promote an inclusive curriculum in all disciplines. Certainly, Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences (GEES) subject areas are ideally placed to forge links with many other disciplines given that GEES subjects embrace the arts, the sciences and the social sciences, as well as including a rich diversity of teaching and learning styles and a variety of assessment methods.

1.2   Aims

The aims of this guide are to support ALs in:

- reviewing DDA Part IV compliance and legislation;

- considering a series of prompts and scenarios to stimulate thought and reflection when working with staff, and disabled and non-disabled students;

- appreciating, through information and examples, how change can be managed to meet the needs of a disabled student;

- thinking beyond the need for DDA Part IV compliance and considering how one works towards a truly inclusive curriculum.

1.3   Assumptions

In writing this guide several assumptions have been made.

- The social model of disability is applied in this guide (see Appendix 2).

- The access and widening participation issue is being addressed by all departments.

- All institutions have policies and procedures about DDA Part IV compliance, and that the structures and resources are in place to support compliance.

- All institutions have a Disability Adviser or team of advisers who provide guidance to students who wish to apply for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA).

- All ALs recognise the need to be compliant with DDA Part IV legislation.

- ALs are instrumental in leading curriculum development, change, delivery and review.

- HoDs are line managers of staff but CLs may not be.

- HoDs are budget holders but CLs may not be.

- There is a willingness in teaching teams to promote an inclusive curriculum but it may be limited by uncertainty about what to do.

1.4   Context

Institutions, courses and students are diverse, and one aspect of student diversity is disability. In recent years, the number of disabled students entering HE has increased considerably. Table 1 below illustrates what occurred between 1994-95 and 2003-04. In 1994-95 2% of all students were known to have a disability, but by 2003-04 this figure had risen to 5%. More significant was the near fourfold increase in the absolute number of students known to have a disability. Not all students will declare a disability and so the actual number of disabled students nationally and locally is unknown, however data in Table 1 would appear to suggest that the declaration of a disability has become more common over time.

Table 1: The total number of disabled HE students (all years of study and from all locations, e.g. UK domiciled and International) on UK HEI programmes.

Year	Total number of students	Total number of students known to have a disability	Total number of students with no known disability	Total number of students where disability status not known/ sought
1994 - 1995	1567315	31395	1004215	531700
1995 - 1996	1720095	46600	1348885	324615
1996 - 1997	1756180	58100	1500200	197875
1997 - 1998	1800065	66520	1605950	127595
1998 - 1999	1845755	72090	1681735	91930
1999 - 2000	1856335	77480	1649085	129765
2000 - 2001	1990625	86250	1825845	78530
2001 - 2002	2086075	98030	1933270	54775
2002 - 2003	2175115	110770	2010555	53795
2003 – 2004	2247440	121080	2076535	49825

The thicker black line between academic years 1999/00 and 2000/01 denotes when there was change in the student population used by HESA.

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited (HESA)

From Table 2, it is evident that there have been significant increases in specific disabilities such as in dyslexia, mental health difficulties and multiple disabilities over time. By far the largest category is dyslexia, which is more than twice the size of the next largest category, unseen disabilities.

Table 2: The total number of disabled HE students on UK HEI programmes by impairment

Year	Dyslexia	Blind/ Partially sighted	Deaf/ Hearing impairment	Wheelchair user/ Mobility difficulties	Personal care support	Mental health difficulties	An unseen disability[1]	Multiple disabilities	Other disability
1994-95	4860	1530	2270	2910	85	745	13630	1820	3540
1995-96	7305	1945	3400	4165	95	1175	20120	2425	5965
1996-97	10635	2325	3885	4730	115	1400	24665	2720	7620
1997-98	13590	2505	4205	2795	145	1400	28000	6350	7530
1998-99	16780	2505	4190	3100	160	1685	28515	6590	8570
1999-2000	21615	2685	4355	3295	190	2015	26835	7090	9400
2000-01	27580	2885	5020	3830	225	2790	25975	7165	10775
2001-02	35435	3160	5580	4380	280	3490	25295	8340	12075
2002-03	43665	3320	5985	4870	295	4525	24590	9605	13920
2003-04	49945	3405	6120	4930	260	5270	24340	11965	14840

[1] For example, diabetes, epilepsy or asthma

The thicker black line between academic years 1999/00 and 2000/01 denotes when there was change in the student population used by HESA.

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency Limited (HESA)

A Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN) data set for 2000-01 (Gravestock, 2006) provides details of the number of disabled students per subject area. Amongst GEES students, 6.9% were registered disabled, a figure higher than the average of all subject areas. Certain subject areas such as Art, Design and Communication, and History, Archaeology and Classics have relatively high percentages (>10%) of disabled students. All categories of disabled students were registered as studying GEES subjects; however, special learning difficulties and unseen disabilities accounted for just under 75% of all disabled students in 2000-01. A special tabulation of HESA data for GEES, Table 3, uses slightly different categories; nevertheless 57% of disabled students were accounted for by dyslexia and unseen disabilities.

Table 3: LTSN-GEES disabled students (2001-02), (based on special
tabulation of HESA statistics)

Disability category	Percentage of UK disabled students in LTSN – GEES 2001-02
Dyslexia	38.1
Unseen disability	19.4
Wheelchair user / Mobility difficulty	6.0
Mental health difficulty	4.6
Deaf / Hearing Impairment	7.3
Blind / Partially sighted	3.1
Multiple disability	9.2
Other disability	11.9
Asperger Syndrome / Autism	nsi
Total	100

nsi – not separately identified

Source: Hall & Healey, 2004 p.5.

It is useful to know what some of the disability categories cover. For example,
special or specific learning difficulties include dyslexia, dyspraxia (impairment
or immaturity of the organisation of movement) and dyscalculia (mathematics
difficulty). As highlighted by SWANDS (2002), people with specific learning
difficulties are not a homogeneous group 'They are all individuals and the
impact of their dyslexia (dyspraxia and dyscalculia) will vary according to their
degree of difficulty, the recency of their diagnosis, their particular strengths,
their choice of study and their coping strategies.' (p.119).

Personal care support, as in Table 2, can refer to students with Autism or
Asperger Syndrome. Their neurological differences become prominent during
face-to face meetings and therefore a dedicated support worker may be
made available to help them. 'Mental health difficulty' refers to mood-related
disorders (depression), anxiety-related disorders (phobias, panic, post-traumatic
stress, compulsive behaviour), psychosis (schizophrenia), eating disorders
(bulimia, anorexia nervosa) and personality disorders (SWANDS, 2002).

'Unseen (or hidden) disability' covers asthma, diabetes, epilepsy and myalgic
encephalomyelitis (M.E.). There is also the 'catch all' term 'other disabilities',
which may incorporate some disabilities referred to previously. This is because
these data represent the individual student's disclosure of a disability; different
people may categorise their disability differently to others.

1.5   Terminology and appropriate language

Throughout this guide, the term 'disabled students' is used to be inclusive of all disabilities. However, all staff need to be aware that some disabled people and organisations prefer to use the term 'impairment'. These two terms can be defined as:

Impairment

Lacking part or all of a limb or having a defective limb, organ or mechanism of the body.

Disability

The disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by a contemporary social organisation which takes little or no account of people who have physical impairments and thus excludes them from participation in the mainstream of social activities. Physical disability is therefore a particular form of social oppression.

(UPIAS, 1976)

Given that the social model of disability is applied in this guide it is recognised that people have impairments not disabilities (Appendix 2). A person is disabled by barriers in society and the environment (Demos, 2003) and not solely by a medical condition. When talking to a disabled student, staff need to be sensitive to her/his needs, and realise (s)he may prefer the term 'impairment'. Language is constantly changing and staff should be encouraged to keep up-to-date. A more detailed discussion of language and terminology can be found on the BBC disability website Ouch! at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/em/fr/-/1/hi/magazine/3708576.stm>.

> **Prompt:**
> - Consider what language and terminology we use in everyday life when talking about disability. Ask the institution's Disability Adviser to include a section on language in any staff or student disability awareness workshops.

1.6   Overview of chapters

Chapter 2 focuses on some of the internal and external factors of which ALs need to be mindful when aiming for compliance with the DDA Part IV. ALs will need to draw everything together, tease out any tensions and conflicts, and help to eliminate any contradictions. It is particularly important to remove any form of resistance to disabled student inclusion. ALs should be confident that the learning experience of all students is appropriate and standards are maintained.

Having set the context, chapter 3 concentrates on line management issues – when does an AL become involved in an issue? Scenarios provided raise issues, evaluate existing practice and consider what action, if any, needs to be taken.   It draws on evidence from other institutions. The guide ends with a brief chapter which includes additional points to consider on how to develop further an inclusive curriculum. Appendices 1 to 4 contain valuable supporting material such as commentaries on each scenario, a summary of the social model of disability, website addresses, and a checklist for planning, validation and review.

2 Things to be aware of

Many internal and external factors influence ALs' engagement with the access and widening participation debate. Riddell, Wilson and Tinklin (2002) in analysing this debate consider the case of disabled students. They suggest that knowledge of pre-existing structures and the institutional 'habitus' is essential to understand student attainment. To understand the impact of external factors, one also needs to appreciate the internal 'local' factors. Whilst this guide can provide ALs with information about external factors, it is for ALs to contextualise these factors and embed them in the local setting.

2.1   DDA legislation

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) became law in September 2002. This act is an amendment to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995, and is known as Part IV. All HEIs in the UK since 1st September 2002 have a duty not to treat people 'less favourably' for a reason related to their disability, and are required to make 'reasonable adjustment' to ensure that a disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared with a non-disabled person. Moreover, it is the institution's responsibility to make sure that 'reasonable adjustment' is anticipatory to disabled people generally, not to individuals.

Anticipatory action and knowledge of what is a reasonable adjustment are particularly important. It is not sufficient to only react to the needs of known disabled students. All staff in a department should be proactive and anticipate that a disabled student could potentially be in any class. 'Determining what is reasonable is an objective test, and regardless of what the governing body thinks, it is for the court to determine on an objective basis.… the governing body is, ultimately, the responsible body under the Act' (SKILL quiz, available at <www.skill.org.uk>).

Factors that should be considered when defining what is reasonable include maintaining standards, meeting health and safety requirements, and practicalities. Financial resources are available to help disabled students via Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA), a fund which students can access as individuals. When making a reasonable adjustment, the cost and the interests of other students should be considered. Also, any action leading to a reasonable adjustment should be structured, transparent, systematic and part of ongoing day-to-day operations. It should not be something undertaken just to satisfy the DDA Part IV or QAA compliance at one point in time.

The scope of the DDA Part IV covers:

- lectures/tutorials/practicals/fieldwork;

- curriculum design;

- e-learning;

- distance learning;

- information technology and other learning resources;

- libraries and information centres;

- career services and all types of student support services;

- examination and assessment procedures.

Virtually every aspect of a student's academic life at University is comprehensively covered by the DDA Part IV. By embedding the principles of an inclusive curriculum (all elements of teaching, learning and assessment) in a department it will go a long way towards meeting the needs of all students – non-disabled and disabled. This is particularly relevant when one considers that not all disabled students disclose their disability, and a non-disabled student can experience learning difficulties for a variety of social, educational and health reasons. Thus, what is good practice for disabled students is good practice for all students.

The definition of what constitutes a student is wide ranging and includes full-time, part-time, undergraduate, postgraduate, home, EU, international, campus-based and distance learners. In addition, students taking extra-mural classes/courses, short courses and access and taster courses, as well as visiting students from another institution, are equally covered by the Act.

Various amendments to the DDA Part IV have been specified or are proposed for the future. For example, from September 2003 institutions were required to make adjustments involving auxiliary aids and service. These are items or services, such as specialist equipment and note taking, which enable a disabled student to access HE activities and services. In October 2004, an amendment to the DDA Part II that required non-discriminatory practice by qualification and professional bodies and placement providers became law (Waterfield, West & Chalkley, 2006). It is proposed that by 2006, the definition of disability will be extended to include people with HIV, cancer and multiple sclerosis. More important will be the duty to promote disability equality in the public sector. For further information see: <www.parliament.uk/bills/draftbills.cfm> and <www.disability.gov.uk>.

2.2   Quality Assurance

Since the mid-1990s, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), in association with other UK HE organisations and professional bodies, has played a significant role in influencing UK HEI activity. The publication of the QAA Code of Practice, the Subject Benchmark Statements, and the review of subject and institutional audit have all had a major impact on HEIs. At the heart of the current UK quality assurance process is an emphasis on students 'in terms of the quality of the information they receive about their programmes of study, the ways in which their learning is facilitated and supported, and the academic standards they are expected to achieve, and do achieve in practice.' (QAA, 2002 p.1)

The QAA Code of Practice, Section 3: Students with disabilities, was issued in 1999 and is in accord with DDA legislation even though it pre-dates SENDA. There are 24 precepts in Section 3 covering issues such as physical environment, applications and admissions, registration and induction, teaching and learning, assessment, staff development, access to facilities, specialist support systems, complaints and monitoring and evaluation. All precepts are addressed to an institution. However, each HEI will have implemented its own procedures to ensure that compliance has filtered down to departments and courses. Precept 1 states:

> *'Institutions should ensure that in **all** their policies, procedures and activities, including strategic planning and resource allocations, consideration is given to the means of enabling disabled students' participation in **all** aspects of the academic and social life of the institution'*
>
> (QAA, 1999, p.6 [author's emphasis]).

In practice institutions are the responsible body, but all who work for the institution should be aware of and address the precepts relevant to their particular role. Under the DDA Part IV all staff have a duty to comply.

Of particular importance to GEES subjects is precept 11 which states:

> *'Institutions should ensure that, wherever possible, disabled students have access to academic and vocational placements including field trips and study abroad'*
>
> (QAA, 1999, p.14).

This precept should be read in association with precept 5 of Section 9 of the Code of Practice: Placement Learning, which states:

> *'Institutions should ensure that students are provided with appropriate guidance and support in preparation for, during and after their placements'*
>
> (QAA, 2001, p.7).

ALs play a key role in ensuring colleagues appreciate that institutional quality assurance policies, procedures and practices have been informed by QAA policies and practices, and are inclusive of all students.

2.3   External agencies

Many GEES degree programmes offer students the opportunity to obtain or work towards accreditation or membership of a particular relevant professional organisation. The requirements of these organisations should also have been informed by recent legislation, including the DDA and equal opportunities.

2.4   Institutional policies and services

Incorporating the requirements of the DDA Part IV into institutional policies and procedures will cover issues as varied as accessibility to lecture rooms, teaching, learning and assessment procedures, publicity, support systems and pastoral and personal care details. An AL should ensure that academic and learning support staff are familiar with these policies and procedures, as well as the structures, facilities and services established to implement them.

The Disability Adviser and his/her team of advisers play a key role in disseminating information to colleagues and ensuring they keep abreast of disability issues. In addition, many departments in the UK have identified someone to be a disability liaison person.

Prompts:

- Does the department have a disability liaison person? If not, should one be appointed?

A designated disability liaison person might wish to consider the following questions:

- Where can one access the institution's policy on disability?

- What are the main areas covered by the policy?

- How does one access and maintain regular contact with the institutional Disability Adviser?

- Who are the disability liaison staff in other departments, and are there opportunities to share good practice?

- Can one, and should one, have access to the institution's database on disabled students?

Good communication flows are essential for the disability liaison person, and the institutional Disability Adviser and/or team of advisers. All staff in a department should know what the procedures are, even if the department has chosen to have one person acting as the recipient and disseminator of disability information. When disseminating information, it is particularly important that the liaison person complies with the Data Protection Act.

2.5   Institutional QA procedures

DDA compliance and satisfaction of QAA Code of Practice precepts will most probably be embedded in institutional curriculum planning and validation procedures, as well as the internal annual and periodic review of courses and programmes. A helpful tool for checking course and programme planning, validation and review is provided in Appendix 4.

Prompts:

- Do institutional guidelines on programme planning, development, validation and review make specific reference to DDA compliance and the QAA Code of Practice precepts?

- Are the guidelines regularly updated?

2.6   Dismantling barriers

In order to provide an inclusive curriculum for all students, departments should try to dismantle any barriers that prevent inclusion. There are three forms of barrier:

- physical;

- attitudinal;

- institutional.

2.6.1   Physical barriers

Physical barriers include problems with buildings and site access, equipment, room layout and acoustics, but also teaching resources such as handouts, books and journals. Most institutions have worked hard to ensure that disabled students have physical access to rooms and services. Some adjustments are just not reasonable or affordable; however, one should note that there is evidence from across the UK that even universities with listed buildings have made adjustments (Riddell, Wilson & Tinklin, 2002). Therefore, what one institution considers to be a reasonable adjustment may not be viewed similarly in another institution.

Prompts - rooms:

- Does the institution have a database of room accessibility and facilities, and how does one access it?

- Have the rooms in the department been audited to accommodate the needs of all forms of disability, including hearing loops and the quality of the acoustics and lighting?

- If no audit has occurred, what action should an AL or disability liaison person take?

Prompts - teaching resources:

- Have staff in the department had the opportunity to attend workshops on how to provide accessible resources for courses/modules?

- Are staff aware of any institutional guidelines on providing accessible resources?

- Does the disability liaison person maintain a database of websites which provide guidance notes on producing accessible resources?

- Does the department possess the other Inclusive Curriculum guides produced as part of this HEFCE project? All guides are available via: <www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/icp/>.

- As a specific example, does the institution/department have a policy that allows disabled students to record lectures?

2.6.2 Attitudinal barriers

Attitudinal barriers are probably some of the hardest to deal with because one may be challenging behaviour and routine practice. Kowalsky & Fresko (2002, p.260) state:

> *'Although many institutions have made the accommodations necessary to ensure accessibility of buildings and other physical facilities, staff members tend to be relatively uninformed about the nature of the different disabilities and of disabled students' needs. Students with a disability are often met with negative attitudes on the part of the teaching staff and other students who often suspect them of using their problem as a way of gaining preferential treatment'.*

Similarly Rushton & Smyth (1999, p.5) state that 'Changing what academics do within the lecture room/laboratory is, however, not an easy matter'.   Trowler, Saunders & Knight (2003) highlight just some of the axioms about change which ALs might face. Of particular note are the following (p.32):

> *'Existing cultures are extremely tenacious: cultural sensitivity is extremely important in devising change strategies. This makes the transfer of innovation hard.'*

> *'Mandated changes may produce compliance, but professionals have considerable scope for compliance-without-change, resistance and subversion.'*

Prompts:

- What is the nature of DDA compliance in the department?

- Are issues of attitude toward disabled students addressed in annual staff review interviews?

- Does the department or course provide colleagues with staff development opportunities which allow them to discuss their 'attitude' toward disabled students?

- Are there, or should there be, opportunities for non-disabled students to review their attitudes towards disabled students and vice versa?

Drawing on the LTSN material, here are some suggestions for how to deal with attitudinal change and how to work with colleagues who might be resistant to change.

- Identify existing good practice and work with it.

- Don't identify deficiencies – this only alienates people.

- Accept that there is no single, simple way of bringing about change.

- Take account of a lecturer's identity, beliefs and current practices.

- Focus on groups in the department or course and not individuals.

- Remember context and know where colleagues are 'coming from'.

Colleagues may be resistant to change because they believe existing practice is adequate and sufficient to meet the needs of disabled students. Or they may consider the driver for change, compliance with the DDA Part IV, actually prioritises the needs of disabled students over those of non-disabled students.

A useful starting point to engage department staff is to ask them to complete the SKILL quiz: *How clued up are you?* (available at <www.skill.org.uk/ dda_quiz/index.asp>). Detailed answers are provided for each question and the quiz can stimulate discussion about key issues.

> ### Scenario 1: Annual staff review interview
>
> At an annual staff review interview between the HoD and a senior colleague in the department, they discuss the institution and department policy on the identification of examination scripts and coursework from students with dyslexia: coloured stickers are attached to all work. The colleague states: 'I see the sticker and ignore it.'
>
> What action should the HoD take?

This is very much a 'live' and contentious issue for colleagues. Here is a summary of what one respondent with dyslexia in the Inclusive Curriculum Project survey noted when discussing feedback:

> *Tutors showed a very great range of responses when marking his work; there was little evidence that they knew how to respond to, for example, spelling mistakes in his work even though he reminded markers about his dyslexia by means of brightly coloured stickers provided by the university. One tutor corrected a huge number of individual mistakes on one script, and another even appeared to dispute the whole notion of students with dyslexia in higher education, although the university has clear policies and procedures to welcome and support them.*
>
> (Case study 2, Inclusive Curriculum Project)

Then there are situations where staff appreciate the need to make anticipatory reasonable adjustments but are too eager.

> ### Scenario 2: Anticipatory action
>
> A lecturer in your department knows that her material is not accessible and she is eager to rectify the matter. However, she wants to cover every eventuality – this is anticipating the needs of any disabled student. At her annual staff review she asks for resources to convert all her teaching material. The department simply does not

have the finances to do this. The lecturer is advised that she should prioritise her requirements, but she seems incapable of doing so.

As HoD, can you suggest what her priorities should be?

2.6.3   Institutional barriers

Institutional barriers that constrain the development of an inclusive curriculum may be course requirements, time constraints and regulations. Breaking down some of these barriers may seem slow, time-consuming and difficult. Nevertheless, an AL may need to lobby on behalf of disabled students or at least challenge existing policies and practices and urge the institution to become more flexible; this can be seen as pushing at barriers to ensure the institution is open and accommodating, and possibly innovative in responding to the challenges of DDA Part IV.

ALs need to ensure that any information or communication received from the centre or colleagues is conveyed to the right people. Colleagues need to be kept informed and have the chance to review, reflect and consider how they as individuals, and collectively, work with disabled students.

Prompts:

- Are disability issues a regular item on the agenda of department and course teaching meetings?

- Has someone from the institution's disability advisory team spoken at a department/course meeting?

- How are colleagues kept informed of changes in institutional policies which directly relate to disabled students?

- Is the brief for the role of department disability liaison person clear, and does the person in post have sufficient support, resources and time to keep all in the department up-to-date on disability issues?

As part of DDA Part IV compliance, institutions will have addressed publicity, recruitment and induction. These issues are covered in the other Inclusive Curriculum guides and are therefore not included here. Nevertheless, the overriding principles of availability and accessibility of information, activities crucial to marketing and recruitment, are equally important when discussing curriculum delivery.

3 Developing and delivering the curriculum

This section starts with brief guidance on the development of the curriculum, including delivery, auditing and engagement with students, followed by case study scenarios.

3.1 Developing the curriculum

Reviewing, revalidation or validation of courses all provide an opportunity to ensure that the requirements of all students, non-disabled and disabled, are met by designing an inclusive curriculum.

Prompts:

- Does the department have detailed records to demonstrate how it has responded to institutional policies on disability?

- Have the department's curricula been designed with the diverse teaching, learning and assessment requirements of all students firmly in mind?

3.2 Audit of existing practice

Most institutions have made commendable changes as a consequence of the DDA Part IV by undertaking an audit of existing practice. Waterfield, West & Chalkley (2006) stress that GEES departments should possess a coherent and well-arranged approach to meeting the requirements of a diverse student group – this includes auditing practice.

Prompts:

- Are all areas of the department's activities DDA Part IV compliant, from advertising and admissions through to transition to employment?

- Are the core requirements of modules/courses DDA Part IV compliant?

- If neither of the above, what action should be taken?

- What curricular changes are needed to make courses and modules more accessible?

An audit can reveal many examples of existing effective practices. The challenge here is to distribute these more widely across the institution.

Prompts:

- What examples of good practice already exist in the department?

- How does the department disseminate details of good practice?

Examples of where effective audits have been undertaken include the Universities of St Andrews and Aberdeen. The School of Geography and Geosciences at the University of St Andrews completed an audit/analysis of its curriculum in Geology and Geosciences in 2000/2001 in terms of accessibility to disabled students. Within the audit, the School identified the core requirements of courses, and recognised that 'recent efforts to cater for various disabilities have shown that alternative routes to the same learning outcome are possible, often without much extra demand on resources' (Simpson, 2002, p.15). Various proposals for improvement were suggested; as a result, the Head of School recognised that 'with some thought and modest resources, a lot more is achievable.... it will be to the benefit of the subject and to society at large when barriers to accessing the Geoscience curriculum have been removed, or at least made manageable.' (Simpson, 2002, p.15)

At Aberdeen, they conducted a detailed survey of staff development needs on disability issues which led to a set of eight recommendations <www.ideas-project.org>. Whilst appreciating that time, energy and resources are required for an audit, a focused audit, say, of departmental fieldwork, may well be more manageable and something which staff will buy into if they can see obvious benefits from undertaking the exercise.

Prompt:

- Are there any activities in the department/course that would benefit from an audit and how can colleagues be encouraged to undertake the audit?

The special edition of *Planet* in April 2002 was devoted to SENDA and learning and teaching guidance for GEES. It included examples of good practice from across the UK <www.gees.ac.uk>.

3.3   Disclosure and knowing your students

Creating the right environment to encourage students to disclose a disability is very important. Disclosure does not mean that everyone needs to know all the details, and indeed the Data Protection Act is a safeguard against this happening. Students may disclose a disability on their Universities & Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) application form, and there should be other opportunities at recruitment, registration, induction and at the beginning of each course/module to encourage disclosure. As with many things, it is all a matter of judgement and setting the right tone; being proactive and encouraging such that students feel comfortable and able to disclose their disability.

ALs need to ensure that the department has recognised procedures to encourage disclosure, be they through a personal tutor system or lecture programme, so that all students will be treated fairly and equitably whatever the issue.

Prompt:

- Do course guides and module details provide students with the opportunity to disclose a disability?

A student has the right to ask a member of staff not to disclose his/her disability to anyone. This of course can put the member of staff in a difficult position, as they must respect the student's wishes. Nevertheless, the member of staff is advised to encourage the student to disclose a disability – this will not mean everyone in the department will automatically know about the student's disability – tutors will most probably be informed on a need-to-know basis. This is important as only when a disability is registered centrally can the proper University procedures be implemented to ensure that the student receives whatever assistance and support is necessary. By not disclosing the disability to the disability advisory team, the student will not be registered and thus unable to claim support and special rights/privileges.

Scenario 3: Disclosure when on the course

In preparing for a field trip at department X, students have a series of introductory lectures, complete health and safety forms, and receive a detailed guide on what they will do on the trip. The students then go off with two members of staff for one week to Norway. On this particular trip, the group will be staying in three

different locations and students are expected to walk about 4 to 6 miles each day. On day two, a student discloses to one member of staff that she has a disability – she has never told this to anyone before – and she knows she will not cope with the walking. She claims the guide issued to students prior to the trip did not specify how much walking was required. Not knowing what to do, the member of staff gets out his mobile phone and calls the HoD in a panic. He outlines the situation and asks for immediate guidance on what to do.

What advice should the HoD give?

What action needs to be taken by the HoD to ensure this situation does not occur another time?

Also, remembering what was stated above about disclosure, should the member of staff have told the student he would be talking to the HoD?

3.4   Teaching and learning

As already indicated in earlier sections, ALs are responsible and accountable for ensuring that teaching and learning, including fieldwork and the delivery of Personal Development Planning (PDP), are accessible to all. Through oversight of human and physical resources, and as a budget holder for activities such as fieldwork, HoDs should work with colleagues both in the department and institution to guarantee that staff are aware of and know how to access guidance notes and advice on providing accessible teaching and learning material (see other guides in this series).

> **Prompt:**
> - What should HoDs do if a member of the teaching team simply refuses to provide accessible teaching and learning materials?

Students find fieldwork to be one of the most rewarding experiences of their course in GEES disciplines (Hall, Healey & Harrison, 2002). However, fieldwork can pose problems.

Scenario 4: Fieldwork locations

Tutors leading a departmental field trip tell the HoD that destinations have been chosen because students will undertake fieldwork at sites where the very best examples of particular physical and human features are to be found, thus providing students with the best fieldwork experience in their opinion. However, the HoD learns that this means that some sites are not accessible to all, and reasonable adjustments have not been made to meet the needs of disabled students.

What action should the HoD take?

Working with others is an important skill developed in the GEES disciplines. However, group work can produce certain tensions and difficulties.

Scenario 5: Group work

A module tutor comes to see the CL and wishes to discuss what she and her fellow tutors should do. One element of assessment in the module is a group work project; and students are able to self-select their own groups. It is the tutor's understanding that in a group of 20 students due to take the module there are two students with dyslexia and another has Asperger Syndrome. These three students, together with one non-disabled student, have formed a group for a project. The module tutor is concerned that this group will require so much assistance that the other student groups will suffer (i.e. receive less tutor assistance), and that other student groups might perceive that one group is receiving preferential treatment. Also, the teaching team think the non-disabled student will 'carry' the others in the group, which will not be fair on this student. The module tutor turns to the CL for advice and a possible solution to what the teaching team perceive to be a difficult situation.

What advice should the CL give?

Laboratory work is another key feature of GEES work. In most institutions, laboratories will have been converted recently to accommodate the needs of disabled students. Nevertheless, one must still establish and negotiate with the individual disabled student his/her particular needs when conducting laboratory work.

Scenario 6: What is a reasonable adjustment?

The laboratories in the department have recently been converted to accommodate the needs of disabled students. As an environmental scientist, and HoD, you use the new laboratories in your Level II module. The institutional Disability Adviser contacts you to arrange a meeting between you and a student with very limited vision who wishes to take your module. At the meeting, a learning contract is drawn up. All agree that all the necessary reasonable adjustments have been made to accommodate the needs of the student, and that the student will be able to achieve the learning outcomes of the module. Half-way through the module, a colleague takes over from you to deliver the rest of the module. The student approaches your colleague and states that, after several weeks of grappling with the module, he realises that the learning contract is inappropriate and he cannot achieve the module learning outcomes. He knows that the HoD is a very busy person and he was reluctant to speak to the HoD. The student has spoken to the institutional Disability Adviser and she claims nothing can be done because a learning contract was agreed at the start of the module. Your colleague comes to see you to discuss the matter.

Can anything be done to help this student?

What should you, as HoD, do next?

Does the department have a standard learning contract template for all students and for all modules?

Work experience and placement learning are increasingly incorporated into courses. ALs, the disability liaison person and placement tutors will need to work closely with the disability advisory team and potential employees to ensure health and safety and equal opportunity issues are addressed, as well as compliance with DDA. Many of the issues highlighted with fieldwork, group work and practical (laboratory) work are applicable to work experience and placement learning.

3.5   Assessment

Assessment, and the ability to offer alternative forms of assessment for disabled students, is probably the most difficult and contentious issue an AL will encounter. Staff may be reluctant to change tried and tested ways of assessing students, and formalising the setting of equivalent alternative forms

of assessment can be time-consuming and challenging. Evidence suggests that alternative forms of assessment can be beneficial for all students (Healey, 2003). It is worth remembering that when providing alternative assessment, the same set of learning outcomes should apply. Most probably an AL will report alternative or modified assessment at the examination board. Each institution is likely to have its own set of regulations concerning alternative assessment. University of Gloucestershire details can be accessed at <www.glos.ac.uk/adu/clt>. Similarly, the Disability Rights Commission provides guidelines on good practice with examinations and assessment via <www.drc.org.uk/publicationsandreports/pubseducation.asp>.

Dealing with assessment issues can highlight staff attitudes and values towards disabled students. Consider the following case as reported by Baty in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* in May 2004. A student with a spinal condition was in severe pain when sitting examinations. He had to lie on his back at regular intervals to recover from the pain when in an examination. One member of staff objected to this policy because he considered it discriminatory in favour of the disabled student - 'He was still able to think when lying down'.

> **Prompt:**
>
> - Use this case study as a discussion point in a department meeting – what are colleagues' views?

Providing alternative forms of assessment can cause colleagues to review learning outcomes and existing practices and to question how standards and quality are maintained. Consider the following two scenarios.

Scenario 7: Alternative assessment

A colleague decides to offer an alternative form of assessment - an oral presentation - in his Level II module to meet the needs of several students with dyslexia, although the tutor does not know when setting the work whether there are any students with dyslexia registered to take the module. The module guide is issued to the 40 students taking the module. Each student has to give a 15 minute presentation which will count for 40% of the assessment. The CL brings to the attention of the HoD that this is completely unworkable both in terms of staff hours required, staff availability and timetabling. The assessment requires in excess of 20 hours of tutor time; the University assessment specifications indicate that oral presentations must be conducted in front of 2 members of staff.

The module tutor is insistent that this form of assessment must take place – he considers his action to be anticipatory and good practice.

Does the HoD have a solution?

Is this anticipatory action good practice?

Scenario 8 : Fieldwork - maintaining standards

For some time now, a department has run two field trips for a first year physical geography module to satisfy the needs and interests of all students. One trip involves short stops at mainly roadside and urban locations in an area relatively close to the University. The other trip goes further afield and students go to more remote locations. Both trips focus on geology, landforms and quaternary history. Students choose which trip they wish to take. The learning outcomes for the trips are identical and the staff running the module firmly believe the student experience is essentially the same. A new External Examiner has been appointed and she has read a sample of work for both trips. She reports at the examination board, which is chaired by the HoD, that she considers the more local trip to be less challenging intellectually. In fact she goes so far as to state that in her opinion, student work from the local field trip is sub-degree level. She tells staff that she recommends major changes and she will say so in her report.

What response should the HoD give to these comments? Note: This is a particularly sensitive issue because the standard of student work may have nothing to do with disability access issues but somehow the two issues have become conflated and disentangling them may be difficult.

4   What next?

4.1   Working towards an inclusive curriculum

In two recent studies, Hall & Healey (2004) and Fuller, Healey, Bradley & Hall (2004) have illustrated that the student learning experience can be enhanced and improved through DDA Part IV compliance. Disability issues are now part of mainstream teaching and learning debates and not the preserve of student services (Adams & Brown, 2000). An inclusive curriculum aims to consider the needs of all students.

There are certain essential issues underpinning the provision of an inclusive curriculum:

- flexibility and variety in teaching, learning and assessment;

- parity and quality for disabled and non-disabled alike;

- access to information and good communication between staff and students;

- staff and student attitudes and action towards DDA Part IV and disability in general.

These issues can be incorporated into department practices as it seeks to maintain academic standards and assure the quality of curricula, services and procedures. Evidence of how a department and/or course meets the needs of disabled students may be required for institutional audits and discipline audit trails. Moreover, good record keeping and clear procedures help staff and students and may prove invaluable for potential legal cases. 'Good normal working practices are at the heart of an ability to reach out to any policy priority and incorporate it within the department's portfolio' (Trowler, Saunders & Knight, 2003, p.35).

Many GEES departments have accomplished a great deal in terms of meeting the needs of disabled students (see the special edition of *Planet* in 2002 available at <www.gees.ac.uk> and <www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/disabil/index.htm>). Staff should be given credit for all that has been achieved to date, especially when one considers that HE was not covered by the initial DDA legislation in 1995 (Parker, 1998). Nevertheless, more can and should be done. Staff should not feel daunted by all that should occur, but should be reassured that institutional policies and procedures are in place to provide assistance via ALs, the institutional Disability Adviser and/or team, and the departmental disability liaison person. In addition, the material and guides produced in this

project can be consulted as well as the websites and support material available from a whole range of organisations (Appendix 3).

The student body is incredibly diverse and disability is equally diverse (Hall and Healey, 2004); as a result, it is actually wrong to talk of 'disabled students'. Disabled students are not a distinct identifiable group, there are many disabled student populations.

> *'The issue of diverse disabled student populations has serious implications for policy and practice and it is important that the experiences of disabled students in their full variety and their lived knowledge of teaching, learning and assessment in higher education should input and mould the development of policy and practice to a much greater extent than is currently the case.'*

<div align="right">(Fuller et al, 2004, p.315)</div>

4.2   Change and imagination

Working towards DDA Part IV and QAA compliance offers departments and courses the opportunity to revisit and revise the curricula and consider new and varied styles of delivery. ALs should encourage colleagues to be imaginative, creative, think about innovative ways to alter existing teaching and learning practices and to change the curricula.

Prompts:

- Urge colleagues to think about the core requirements of the curriculum – what are the essential learning outcomes?

- Ask colleagues to identify and explain proposed changes (in relation to the needs and expectations of disabled students), and how they will evaluate this change.

- Consider running an interdisciplinary workshop facilitated by the Disability Adviser on different teaching and learning methods.

Through talking to disabled students and negotiating learning contacts with them, the department and/or course will accumulate a wealth of material on alternative teaching, learning and assessment methods, all of which can be incorporated into a department database or archive for future reference and guidance. Colleagues in any future curriculum development projects could use some of this material. As Healey (2003, p.26) states:

*'One unintended consequence of this [disability] legislation is that
as departments and institutions introduce more flexible learning and
alternative ways of assessment for disabled students, demand is
likely to rise for giving greater flexibility for all students. Disability
legislation may prove to be a Trojan horse and in a decade, the
learning experiences of all students may be the subject of greater
negotiation.'*

4.3   People first!

We need to treat people as individuals; no two disabled students are alike,
neither are two colleagues nor two non-disabled students. Staff and students
may or may not have disabilities and yet all can contribute towards a positive
learning experience. Good communications between staff, and between staff
and students as well as amongst students, are essential. Keeping people
informed about policy and procedural changes is also good practice. Finally, an
honest and open environment can help to prevent anxiety about issues relating
to disability. In this way both staff and students can feel valued and enjoy a
positive learning experience.

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Appendix 1

Commentary notes per scenario

These notes are provided to help you think through each case and establish
certain generic topics for future reference. They cannot provide perfect or
complete solutions to every case but can indicate what action could be taken.

A1.1   Annual staff review interview

- Ask the colleague to attend a staff development workshop on dyslexia
  and/or disability awareness.

- Alternatively, ask the department disability liaison person to arrange
  a department development workshop on dyslexia and suggest the
  colleague participates. Targeted sessions for a department often work
  better than centrally organised staff development sessions because
  they allow colleagues to work together and share common ideas and
  concerns from the perspective of the same or cognate disciplines.

- Urge the colleague, via department moderation and marking
  procedures, to team up and work with another member of staff who is
  sensitive to dyslexia issues.

- Encourage the colleague to submit some discussion points about
  dealing with the work of students with dyslexia to you. You will then
  circulate them to all colleagues via email asking for comments. Once
  the online discussion has run its course, ask the colleague to produce
  a summary of key issues. Present the summary as an agenda item at
  a general department staff meeting.

- Ask the department disability liaison person to send out a memo to all
  colleagues reminding them of the legal rights of disabled students and
  indicate what might form the basis of a student appeal.

A1.2   Anticipatory action

- Encourage the colleague to recognise that she can start small and over
  time improve her practice. In the first instance suggest she makes all
  her lecture handouts, Powerpoint slides, overhead transparencies etc.
  available electronically. If she needs help, ask her to contact technical
  services. Also, urge her to make sure all her handouts are presented
  in an accessible format (for example: 12 point, Arial or other San Serif,
  left justified and beige paper). Also, consult the other guides in this
  series for more specific guidance per disability.

- Ask the colleague to contact the disability advisory team to find out if she will have any disabled students in her modules. Remind the colleague that she should not respond just to the needs of these students.

- Recommend that as part of her course/module introductory sessions, she gives students the opportunity to disclose a disability. Further adjustments could then be made through negotiation with the student, the disability advisory team and/or the department disability liaison person.

A1.3 Disclosure when on the course

- Technically, this situation should not have occurred in the first place, but oversights and omissions do occur. The field trip module guide and pre-trip guidance documentation should have made it quite clear to students what was expected of them. Students should have been provided with an opportunity to disclose a disability, the consequences of non-disclosure should have been outlined, and they should have had a chance to talk to a member of staff about anything that concerned them. If the trip had run previously, former students could have been called upon to advise students preparing to go on the trip.

- The immediate solution is difficult, can the field trip leader find some way of transporting the student from location to location? The student would most probably have to pay for any transportation – was this covered in the pre-trip guidance documentation and what are the insurance issues? If the student does not agree to this solution and if no transportation can be found, the student will have to make her own way back to the UK.

- Alternatively, the student can stay at the first location if accommodation is available, and work independently on negotiated fieldwork. At the end of the week, the student can either make her way to the final destination of the trip and then travel back with the rest of the group to the UK or she will have to make her own way back to the UK. Does the department have a moral duty to try and help the student get transport to the final destination?

- In all probability, insurance will not cover the repatriation of this student if she had a known disability and did not disclose it until on the field trip.

- Prior to departure, the field trip leader should submit the names of all participants to the disability advisory team and ask them to confirm if anyone on the list is registered with them. Most probably the disability advisory team will have already supplied the field trip leader with a list of names.

- Given what was said above, it is good practice if a department or course regularly offers students the opportunity to disclose a disability and not just for field trips.

- The department may wish to review all module and pre-trip documentation to guarantee cases like this are covered.

A1.4   Fieldwork locations

- Field trip leaders should always go into the field with details of possible alternative sites which could be visited. Even the very best sites may from time to time have restricted access and therefore field trip leaders need a list of back-up sites.

- Consult the guides on fieldwork produced by the GDN at <www2.glos.ac.uk/gdn/publ.htm#other>.

- As HoD, you can ask the field trip leaders to establish the core requirements of the trip and review the learning outcomes. Ask them to consider if alternative sites would dramatically affect the achievement of the learning outcomes and seriously alter the learning experience.

- If resources are available, ask the teaching team to consider producing a virtual field trip – make a video of the trip and use this to produce an independent field trip. The beauty of a virtual trip is that students can learn at their own pace, go over topics they find difficult and normally access other additional resources which might not have been available on the field trip itself. In creating a virtual field trip staff may wish to consider how they incorporate an element of group work.

A1.5   Group work

- The disabled students may already, via the DSA, be in receipt of various forms of assistance and aids to support their study. The module tutor should be able to check this out with the disability advisory team. Also, the tutor could ask these students through negotiation if they require any additional assistance.

- The module tutor could ask the disabled students if they have told the non-disabled student in their group about their particular circumstances.

- If an extension is given to the group, this will cover the non-disabled student as well; if it did not, this would be discriminatory practice.

- If an alternative form of assessment is set for the group, the module tutor needs to negotiate this with all members of the group. Written records should be kept of all meetings, including details of any decisions taken. It is possible that the form of assessment per student may vary.

- Most probably institutional procedures will require the module tutor and CL to place on record, at an examination board, the nature of any alternative assessment and confirm its equivalence to 'normal' assessment methods used in the module.

- In this case, it is important to maintain good communications with all students. Other students should not be disadvantaged, in fact, what action is taken should be for the benefit of all. The module teaching team may wish to consider if the alternative form of assessment is offered as an option to all student groups.

- A general department guide should contain details of procedures for alternative assessment. This ensures all students are informed and should know what is department practice and that they are being treated fairly and equitably.

A1.6   What is a reasonable adjustment?

- First of all, make absolutely sure that the institutional Disability Adviser is correct that nothing more can be done, is she certain that the learning contract was sufficiently flexible to incorporate changes and was it reviewed regularly?

- If she is confident nothing can be done then suggest a meeting as soon as possible for all concerned. The student might like to involve the Students' Union or bring a friend to the meeting. At this meeting try to find some way forward, - has the student completed any work for the module? If he has, can he be assessed on this work? Can he continue to attend the module and then have a new alternative form of assessment?

- However, if further adjustments are required, will there be time for the student to complete the module – are these further adjustments going beyond what is reasonable?

- If the student has not done any work and cannot complete the work, despite the best efforts of all concerned, then most probably his module registration should be wiped from his records. He will be allowed to take another replacement module at no extra cost.

- To avoid the situation where students think the HoD is too busy to see them, either make sure all students know your student office hours or hand over the module tutorship to your colleague.

- Keep on file details of what happened with this module. Whilst recognising that all students are individual and no two cases are the same, your experience with this student should inform future practice. For example, within the learning contact there should have been time set aside on a regular basis to review the student's progress and consider whether any further adjustments were necessary.

A1.7   Alternative assessment

- Check that the module tutor has made a change to assessment in accordance with agreed institutional procedures. Are assessment details consistent with those published in student guides and University websites?

- Can the assessment be changed such that pairs of students can give 10 minute presentations, would a change be permitted at such short notice?

- The presentations could be recorded on tape and video thus freeing up at least one member of staff.

- The teaching team need to confirm that the assessment for the module aligns with the learning outcomes.

- The module tutor should not assume that oral presentations are the preferred option of assessment for disabled students, therefore negotiate alternative forms of assessment with any disabled student taking the module.

- Any alternative assessment should be practically achievable. Consider holding a departmental discussion session on alternative assessment and develop a departmental database/list of alternative assessment briefs. These could be based on examples of good practice from elsewhere. It is very important that the resource implications of alternatives are highlighted.

A1.8   Fieldwork - maintaining standards

- HoD and the department staff must acknowledge what the External Examiner states in her report. If she includes recommendations in her report then the department will need to provide a formal response.

- Most probably the teaching team need to conduct a review of the field trips, analysing the assignment tasks set, the work undertaken on each trip and align all marking to the department grade descriptors.

- Consider how either field trip could be adapted to accommodate the needs of disabled students.

- Module learning outcomes must be met in both trips.

- A virtual field trip might be developed for all students such that all students 'attend' the same field trip and thus have the same learning experience.   Are the teaching team able to present a robust argument that the virtual trip is equivalent to an actual trip?

Appendix 2

A social model of disability

(extract from ICP Overview guide: Section 6.5)

'In contrast to (and in reaction to) these disempowering approaches to disability, a number of disability activists and disabled academics have developed a social model of disability. From this perspective disability is seen as a form of oppression. In the same way that women, people from ethnic groups and gay people have been held back by a society that cannot cope with diversity, disabled people form another disadvantaged group. The focus shifts from what is 'wrong' with an individual, to the barriers that prohibit their participation in mainstream activities. At a very simple level this can be in the barriers faced by a wheelchair user when trying to access a building that can only be approached via a flight of steps. However, barriers exist at many levels beyond the environmental e.g. attitudinal, social, economic and political. Disability theorists point out that societies tend to be organised on the basis of assumptions of what is 'normal' (Finkelstein, 1993; Oliver, 1990). Those who do not fit the stereotype will find it difficult to participate. Rather than trying to make disabled people 'normal', the social model of disability asserts that society needs to recognise and celebrate difference. From this have arisen campaigns for civil rights not charity.'

Appendix 3

Useful websites

There is a plethora of agencies operating in the area of disability. Here are just some which can be easily accessed to provide you with valuable information and advice on disability issues. If a link is no longer active, go to the home website and access the internal search system.

Accessible Assessment
<www.shu.ac.uk/services/lti/accessibleassessments/>.

Demos: Online Materials for Staff Disability Awareness
<http://jarmin.com/demos/>.

Disability Rights Commission
<www.drc.org.uk>.

Guidance on base-level provision for disabled students in higher education institutions (1999) Higher Education Funding Council for England
<www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/HEFCE/1999/99_04.htm>.

SKILL: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities
<www.skill.org.uk>.

SWANDS: South West Academic Network for Disability Support
<www.plymouth.ac.uk/assets/SWA/Welcome.pdf>.

Teachability: Creating An Accessible Curriculum For Students With Disabilities
<www.teachability.strath.ac.uk>.

Techdis: An organisation which aims to enhance access for people with disabilities to learning, teaching and research
<http://techdis.ac.uk>.

NB

All web addresses in this Guide last accessed 25.08.05

Appendix 4

Checklist for course/programme planning, validation and review

Adapted from *Developing an inclusive curriculum for students with dyslexia and hidden disabilities* (Waterfield, West and Chalkley).

Policies and frameworks for curriculum development	Comments e.g. key reference documents and action points
What is the procedure for ensuring that anticipatory 'reasonable adjustments' will be made to make the broad curriculum accessible, through the development, approval and review of courses/programmes?	
What are the procedures to ensure that all staff involved in course/programme development, approval, review and delivery are aware of their responsibilities under the DDA Part IV?	
How will responsibilities under DDA Part IV be monitored and reviewed?	
Development, approval and review of programmes and courses in HEIs	
Is the Disability Adviser consulted about course /programme development, review and delivery issues on a regular basis?	
Do approval panels include a member who is knowledgeable about disability to address issues of DDA Part IV compliance?	
Do members of the approval panel have opportunities during the approval process to inspect programme-related facilities/resources for disabled students? Or is detailed evidence provided to the panel?	
Do reports from the approval panel identify the fact that satisfactory and/or unsatisfactory measures are in place for disabled student access? In what ways is approval contingent upon satisfying such criteria?	
Are disability issues regularly considered at course/ programme boards, and as part of the periodic review?	

Programme/Course teams	Comments e.g. key reference documents and action points
Has the course team demonstrated that the learning, teaching and support elements of courses/programmes are accessible to disabled students?	
Is it made clear in the resource base and specialist facilities underpinning the programme/course what is available to support the delivery of the curriculum to disabled students?	
In the mapping of assessment to learning outcomes, is there clear evidence of the availability of alternative assessment tasks to meet the needs of disabled students?	
Is the range, loading and timetabling of assessments suitable for disabled students?	
What procedures are used to ensure that 'reasonable adjustments' have been made to non-campus locations for accessibility? e.g. fieldwork - off-site and overseas, and placement?	