ACADEMIC SUPPORT WORKERS (ASW) HANDBOOK

Introduction

The Disability and Dyslexia Team at the university play an important role in ensuring that students with disabilities are supported during their time at university, that any barriers to study that are presented by their disabilities are minimized and that they achieve their academic potential. In practical terms, this includes assisting students in obtaining relevant disability evidence, supporting students in applications for funding (such as Disabled Students Allowances), advising course teams regarding adjustments to teaching and assessment, and coordinating 121 support where appropriate.

Ongoing 121 support is commonly provided by our team of casual and freelance Non-Medical Helper (NMH) staff (including Learning Support Tutors, Mentors and Academic Support Workers) who are often funded by Disabled Students Allowances. It is this kind of support that is often most valuable for students and it has a significant positive impact on the student experience – both in terms of student satisfaction, student retention and student achievement.

This handbook provides a guide to the Academic Support Worker role, both in terms of describing its responsibilities but also some of the university processes and policies that apply to it. If you have any queries about the content of this guide, please contact SupportWorkers-Disability@brighton.ac.uk

The DSA-NMH Quality Assurance Framework applies to the way in which our 121 student support is delivered and the framework outlines the standards and principles that our service upholds.

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THE ROLE

The role of an ASW is to support a disabled student in any educational setting (the classroom, placements, field trips etc.) inaccessible to them due to their disability. This may include: note-taking in lectures/seminars, library assistance and other practical support around the campus, study assistance and enabling strategies and exam support which would also include invigilation.

The ASW is expected to liaise with appropriate staff regarding student’s support, resolving any immediate day-to-day problems and maintaining regular contact with the DDT and the student with regards to your expected work-load.

More information on the role and other Non-Medical Helper roles can be found here:

http://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/media/6192/non_medical_help_manual.pdf

DBS CHECKS

All ASWs are required to undertake a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) in accordance with the University’s safeguarding policy. It is the responsibility of the Disability & Dyslexia Team to process DBS checks, though we are able to accept an existing DBS check providing it meets the criteria. DBS checks are routinely carried out every 3 years.

BENEFITS OF WORKING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON

UniCard – a contactless smart card that allows you to access university buildings, library services and mobile printing from your laptop or device. You can also pay for services on campus instead of using cash; buy food and drink at any University of Brighton café and get 10% off.

Library Services – as an employee of the University of Brighton you are able to access the libraries on all campuses and their services.

Computer store – the University's Computer Store offers a range of equipment and software at reduced prices.

Eastbourne Power Bike scheme - https://staff.brighton.ac.uk/the-hub/Pages/Power-bikes-debut.aspx

Big Lemon Bus (Brighton only) – a regular shuttle bus operates every half hour during term time between the Grand Parade – Moulscoomb – Varley Halls – Falmer campuses, in both directions. This service is free of charge for students and staff to use – please show your unicard when you board.

NUS card – university staff can also apply for an NUS card, which provides discounts and offers at a range of local and national businesses. For more information about the benefits and to purchase a card, please see www.nusextra.co.uk

Upon receiving notification of a student’s support needs, the Dyslexia and Disability Team will contact Academic Support Workers on their database and offer work after a discussion regarding the student’s individual needs and timetable. The Disability and Dyslexia Team Administrator is the main coordinator in the provision of Academic Support Work.

When the delivery of a session has been confirmed, an email will be sent to both the Academic Support Worker and the Student confirming these arrangements and sharing contact details between the two parties.
COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK

The Disability and Dyslexia Team welcomes feedback from staff, students and other stakeholders regarding its service as this can often lead to improvements and developments.

FOR STAFF

Staff (freelance and casual) are encouraged to raise issues informally in the first instance, either through their lead Learning Support Coordinator, or to the Disability Support Services Manager (Annie Beckett a.beckett@brighton.ac.uk 01273 642885). Where feedback is received, the team aims to respond within 5 working days.

More detailed complaints can be pursued through the University’s Staff Grievance Procedure. Details of this can be found on the Human Resources pages of Sharepoint.

FOR STUDENTS

Students are encouraged to raise issues informally in the first instance, either through their lead Learning Support Coordinator, or to the Disability Support Services Manager (Annie Beckett a.beckett@brighton.ac.uk 01273 642885). Where feedback is received, the team aims to respond within 5 working days.

Where issues arise, students also have the right to request changes of staffing within their support team.

Students may also raise complaints about the service through the university’s Student Complaints Procedure. A copy of the Students Complaints and Resolutions Procedure is available on the university website.

ANONYMOUS STUDENT FEEDBACK

Sometimes students may wish to give anonymous feedback, which can also be valuable when improving our service delivery. The team carries out regular anonymous feedback surveys to collect this data. However, this type of feedback may result in limited changes for individual students and so where students have specific concerns about their support they should be encouraged to speak openly to a member of our team instead.

FINANCE

The hourly rate of pay for ASWs (2015-16) are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support Worker grade 1</td>
<td>£12.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support Worker grade 2</td>
<td>£14.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Support Worker Grade 3</td>
<td>£16.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Support Assistant</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Library Support Assistant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual Notetaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scribe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sighted Guide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proof Reader</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Assistant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examination Support Worker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia Screener</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop/Laboratory Assistant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manual notetaker where subject specialism is required</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This includes an automatic 20 minute top up allocation for every hour worked in the above posts. Payment is made a month in arrears on the last working day of each month (unless otherwise stated by the Finance Officer).
ASWs should only claim for the actual contact time spent with students. All hours should be rounded up or down to the nearest 0.25 (15 minutes) on the SS1 claim form.

Lunch breaks of up to 1 hour are unpaid.

### WAITING TIME

ASWs are entitled to a ‘waiting time’ payment up to a maximum of one hour per day.

Waiting time will be paid in the event that the ASW is working on campus and has a gap between students or lessons. Please note that lunch hours do not count as waiting time.

In order to get this additional payment you must mark the SS1 claim form by putting an asterisk and the initials ‘W.T’ and the amount of time being claimed in the ‘reason for overtime/additional hours’ box. Please ensure that the waiting time is included in your total hours for each day.

**Please note - under no circumstances should top-up or waiting time be added to the Monthly Support Record that is signed by the student.**

Please see the following examples:

1. **ASW works at between 11am – 1pm and 2pm – 3pm.**
   - Hour between 1pm-2pm would not be paid as this is a lunch hour.

2. **ASW works from 10am – 12pm and 2pm – 3pm**
   - One hour between classes would not be paid as this would be treated as lunch hour, the second hour would qualify as waiting time.

3. **ASW works from 9am - 10am, 11am – 12pm and 2pm- 3pm.**
   - One of the hours between classes would be paid as it would qualify as waiting time, the next hour would not be paid as it would be treated as a lunch hour. The third hour could not be paid, as a maximum of 1 hour waiting time is allowed per day.

If you have any queries about additional time entitlement please contact the Disability and Dyslexia Team

### PAPERWORK

Failure to provide fully completed paperwork as outlined below could result in payment being delayed until the following month, or until the correct paperwork is provided – whichever is later.

You will be expected to submit completed paperwork to the Finance Officer on a monthly basis in order to be paid. This should include:

- A completed and signed SS1 form
- Monthly Support Records completed per student per calendar month
- Missed Session forms/any documentation citing a student’s reason for absence (if applicable)

Monthly Support Records must include the student’s full name, student number, fee status and the correct description of work undertaken must be circled or highlighted. It is **essential** that the student signs the MSR after each session (please do not ask them to sign ahead of the session taking place).

Please submit paperwork as close to the beginning of the month as possible. The very last day in which pay claims can be submitted to Payroll by the Finance Officer is the 7th of each month (or the Friday before where the 7th falls on a weekend) therefore any claims submitted on that day may not be processed until the following month.
CANCELLED OR MISSED SESSIONS

In the event a student cancels a session with less than 24 hours’ notice or does not show up, the Academic Support Worker is able to claim for the duration of the sessions that day. Where a student misses 2 consecutive support sessions, the Academic Support Worker is required to escalate this with the Disability Team Administrator.

Missed Session forms must be recorded on the Monthly Support Record, accompanied with a reason as to why the student missed the session. This can be provided by either the student or the Academic Support Worker.

ANNUAL LEAVE

Annual leave is processed at the end of each term. The Finance Officer will email in advance to notify ASWs that payment is due to be issued along with any instruction in how this is paid to you.

TRAVEL

Unless agreed in advance by the Finance Officer, payment for travelling between sites is unpaid.

ESSENTIAL TRAINING, KEY COMPETENCIES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Staff employed to support students who receive Disabled Students Allowances on or after 18th April 2016 must meet the standard qualification criteria outlined on the QAG NMH webpages: http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/nmh-welcome (We have given a general link to this document rather than a specific link, as it is likely that these criteria will be updated)

All staff within the service are required to complete the mandatory Essentials Training prior to supporting students. Staff can recap on these resources at any stage by watching the online videos again (the links are included at the end of this handbook). Three online workshops provide an overview key support and service issues:

- Confidentiality;
- Data Protection;
- Health and Safety;
- Lone Working;
- Safeguarding; and
- Disability Awareness

Members of the team are furthermore required to adhere to the guidelines outlined within the DSA-NMH Quality Assurance Framework and are encouraged to read the section of this document that applies to their role, if they have not already done so.

A central record of training and development is kept within the team, and staff are asked to update the team with details of any new training or development sessions attended. This can be done by emailing supportworkers-disability@brighton.ac.uk with details of the session including:

- Training title and description
- Date of training
- Location of training
- Number of hours

As part of the university’s commitment to providing Continuing Professional Development to staff, we organize a yearly conference for Support Workers. Attendance at this event is optional, and we will add details of attendance to your staff training and development record should you choose to attend.
CONFIDENTIALITY

The service takes its responsibilities for confidentiality and sensitivity when supporting students, and its duties under the Data Protection Act (1998) very seriously.

Students are asked to sign a confidentiality statement at their first meeting with the team, so that they understand how information will be shared relating to their support and to whom. Non-Medical Helper staff must never disclose students’ disability details to anyone outside the Disability & Dyslexia Team unless express permission has been obtained and they have consulted the central team first.

All records relating to student support, both paper and electronic, should be kept securely and should be disposed of in accordance with the data protection guidelines that are included within the Essentials Training. Documents sent electronically which contain student’s personal data should be password protected. Guidance regarding password protection can be found at the end of this handbook in Appendix 1. Staff using computer/electronic equipment to download files away from the university are responsible for ensuring that their virus software protection is up-to-date.

We are suggesting that we all use the same password since this will reduce confusion. The password (case sensitive) that should be used to protect files is: DSA4ever

When meeting students for 121 support sessions, this should be delivered in a suitably confidential setting in accordance with the Quality Assurance Framework. This should not be a café nor should it include the student’s own accommodation or contact via Skype, unless this has been specifically requested within the Needs Assessment Report.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk Assessments are undertaken by university staff in order to limit the risks presented by daily operations and to identify and implement control measures that make the university a safer place. Within the Disability Team a number of Risk Assessments have been carried out that relate to the way in which our service operates – such as a Risk Assessment for staff seeing vulnerable students 121, a Risk Assessment for lone working, a Risk Assessment for evening working as well as risk Assessments for specific events such as the Aspergers Induction Day for new students and the Support Worker Conference each summer. Risk Assessments aim to balance the ‘worst case scenario’ in terms of what danger could be presented by an activity, with the likelihood of this happening. Each part of the activity is considered within this process and then proportionate systems are put in place to mitigate the risk that has been identified.

In addition to these paper assessments, which are reviewed regularly, all staff and students also have a responsibility to report any concerns that they have. This can include immediate risks to safety (or near misses), as well as more ongoing concerns or uneasiness. If you have a concern about Health and Safety, please contact the Disability Team or local Student Services reception in the first instance. We can then pass your concerns to the Departmental Health and Safety Coordinator if we are unable to resolve things ourselves. This is a nominated member of staff in Student Services who has an overview of current Health and Safety procedures and good practice.

LONE WORKING

The nature of the disability support that is provided means that often staff are working 121 with students and without direct management supervision. However, it is rare that staff would be seeing students in buildings where other members of staff (even if they are from different teams) are not present. The majority of Academic Support Work is provided in a setting where other staff and students will be present (such as within a teaching space or library).
A Risk Assessment for this type of work has been carried out, and it was felt that the risk to staff of this type of lone working is generally low risk activity. The type of support we provide does not involve using heavy machinery or hazardous materials, although at times students may be emotionally vulnerable. Academic Support Worker staff are not expected to assist students in Personal Care tasks – students should have separate personal assistants to help them where this is needed.

There are a number of control measures that are in place to support staff if they have concerns about lone working. Firstly, the Disability and Dyslexia Team reception is open Monday – Thursday 8.30am – 5pm and Fridays 8.30am – 4.30pm and can be called on 01273 643799 if you need advice/support. You can call us to discuss any concern – whether it is an immediate issue or whether it is something ongoing that you have more general concerns or uneasiness about.

If you find yourself in a more urgent situation, then in addition to our team’s support, the university emergency number and caretaking staff are available whenever the buildings are open. Contact numbers are given at the end of this guide.

If you are working outside the DDT operational hours (excluding set ‘twilight’ evenings where Student Services offices are open), then the Disability Team may be less able to respond immediately to your concerns and so you should contact the university emergency telephone number or caretakers in the first instance.

If you have concerns about seeing a student in a lone working setting or out-of-hours, please contact the team and we will help make alternative arrangements for their support.
## CONTACT DETAILS

Our address is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disability &amp; Dyslexia Team</th>
<th>Email: <a href="mailto:supportworkers-disability@brighton.ac.uk">supportworkers-disability@brighton.ac.uk</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University of Brighton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manor House</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lewes Road</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brighton</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BN2 4GA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:supportworkers-disability@brighton.ac.uk">supportworkers-disability@brighton.ac.uk</a></td>
<td>01273 643799</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## OTHER USEFUL UNIVERSITY CONTACTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internal</th>
<th>External / Mobile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Switchboard</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Internal Emergency:</strong></td>
<td>2222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Safety Officer:</strong></td>
<td>3143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Estate &amp; Facilities Helpdesk</strong></td>
<td>3139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Out of Hours</strong></td>
<td>3547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University Security Officers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I.T. Service desk</strong></td>
<td>4444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Services Site numbers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eastbourne</strong></td>
<td>3845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Falmer</strong></td>
<td>3584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Parade</strong></td>
<td>3187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hastings</strong></td>
<td>4643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moulsecoomb</strong></td>
<td>3799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caretaking Staff (During the hours of 06:00 - 21:00):</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mithras House</strong></td>
<td>4998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cockcroft</strong></td>
<td>4997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Watts</strong></td>
<td>4999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Falmer</strong></td>
<td>3547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Parade</strong></td>
<td>4996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eastbourne</strong></td>
<td>4993</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
USEFUL LINKS:

Disability and Dyslexia Team on Sharepoint: https://staff.brighton.ac.uk/ss/Pages/Home.aspx

Disability and Dyslexia Team website for students: www.brighton.ac.uk/disability

Human Resources on Sharepoint: https://staff.brighton.ac.uk/hr/Pages/Home.aspx

University Data Protection Policies: https://www.brighton.ac.uk/foi/freedom-of-information.aspx

Health and Safety website: http://staffcentral.brighton.ac.uk/safety/

Student Complaints Resolution Procedure: https://www.brighton.ac.uk/current-students/advice-and-support/problems-with-your-course/index.aspx

ASK Study Skills Website: www.brighton.ac.uk/ask


NMH qualifications guidance document: http://www.dsa-qag.org.uk/nmh-welcome

SFE Non-Medical Helper Manual:
http://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/media/6192/non_medical_help_manual.pdf

Online training videos ('Essentials Training'):

- Health and Safety & Lone working (10 minutes):
  https://media.brighton.ac.uk/CRS2/NMH_Health_Safety_-_20160415_134606_11.html

- Disability Awareness (25 minutes):
  https://media.brighton.ac.uk/CRS2/NMH_Disability_Awareness_-_20160415_133024_11.html

- Data Protection, Confidentiality and Safeguarding (19 minutes):
  https://media.brighton.ac.uk/CRS2/NMH_DP_confidentiality_-_20160415_141539_11.html

- Professional Boundaries (15 minutes)
  https://media.brighton.ac.uk/CRS2/NMH_Professional_Boundaries_-_20160419_181825_11.html
APPENDIX 1: PASSWORD PROTECTION GUIDANCE

The questions of Data Protection were raised recently in terms of emails and referrals that we send to casual and freelance staff who are accessing information from non-UoB email addresses. As these email addresses are outside the university network, we need to be mindful to send data securely, in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Initially, we were recommended 7zip as a programme for this. However, in practice this is proving extremely problematic because it requires all staff to have the programme installed locally, and it can mean that data can’t be viewed easily on some devices (and I suspect that some of our staff rely on being able to see messages on their mobile phones, for example).

We are therefore updating our guidance to allow password protection to be provided through individual document passwords in Word, Excel or PDFs.

WHEN DO I NEED TO PASSWORD PROTECT DOCUMENTS?

- Password protection must be used when sending or receiving personal information from an email address that does not end in @brighton.ac.uk

- Personal information includes any information that refers to a student’s disability (either by naming it, or by including a description of the barriers that this presents) or which contains personal contact details. For example:
  - An email that contains a student’s telephone number or address would need password protection
  - An email confirming that you will meet at 2pm on Friday in Cockcroft building but which does not contain details of the type of support being provided would not require password protection

WHAT ABOUT THE EMAIL MESSAGE ITSELF?

- If the main body of an email contains any of the sensitive data outlined above, then this would need password protection.

- This should be done by writing the contents of the email as a word document, password protecting this document and attaching it to an email with a phrase such as ‘see attached’.

WHAT PASSWORD SHOULD I USE?

- All documents should be protected with the same password which is DSA4ever (case sensitive).

- This eliminates the need to email individual passwords to staff or students, and is designed to be memorable

- Passwords should never be emailed in the same message as documents (since this would completely negate the security!)
DO I NEED TO PASSWORD PROTECT EMAILS TO STUDENTS?

- Emails should be sent to student’s university email addresses. This eliminates the need for password protection, and all students should be using their university email address.

- If you are aware that a student does not use their university email address, then it may be appropriate to send a follow-up email to a separate account saying “please log on to your university email because I have sent you further information”.

HOW TO PASSWORD PROTECT A MICROSOFT WORD OR EXCEL DOCUMENT (FOR 2010 AND 2013)

1. Click on ‘file’
2. Click on ‘Info’
3. Click on ‘Protect Document’
4. Click on ‘Encrypt with password’
5. Type in password and click on ‘OK’
6. Re-enter password and click on ‘OK’
7. Save the document

HOW DO I PASSWORD PROTECT A PDF DOCUMENT (USING ACRONYM XI)?

1. At the top right in Acrobat, click the Tools pane. Open the Protection panel.
2. Click Encrypt, and select Encrypt With Password. Confirm that you want to change the security of the document.
3. In the Password Security Settings dialog box, change the Document Open password to restrict who may open the document.
4. Click OK and confirm the password(s) chosen.
5. You must save the document to apply the new security settings. Type a name for your file, and click Save.