# Union School of Theology Learning Support Policy

Approved by Union School of Theology (UST) Academic Board 17-01-2018

Review of Policy by Academic Board due – October 2020

## 1. CONTENTS OF POLICY

## 2. INTRODUCTION

This policy should be read along with UST's Disability Support policy in the UST Policies and Procedures Handbook.

This policy applies all Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses validated by the Open University taught at Union School of Theology, and to students seeking admission. The School is committed to ensuring that this policy is operated in an easily accessible, fair, transparent and consistent way. UST will seek specialist advice and guidance when necessary.

## 3. POLICY FRAMEWORK

This policy has been developed in accordance with the following regulations, policies and procedures. This list is not exhaustive:

- UST [BA.](#) [G. Dip](#) and [MTh.](#) Student Handbooks
- [UST Admissions Policy and Procedure](#)
- [UST Equal Opportunities Policy](#)
- [UST Data Protection Policy](#)
- [UST Disability Support Policy](#)
- [Open University Handbook for Validated Awards](#)
- The Disability Discrimination Act, 2005 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

## 4. POLICY

**4.1** UST is committed to supporting students who have Learning Support needs. Applicants are asked to disclose on their application form any known disability, health condition or additional learning support need that may affect their ability to benefit from the learning at UST. Such applications are considered without discrimination, using the same criteria as are applied for all students.

**4.2** Information disclosed is only shared in confidence with those with the responsibility for ensuring that the student receives the support that they need. Other needs might come to light during the course of the student's time at UST.

**4.3** UST is committed to support all students pastorally and academically throughout their studies and has measures in place to ensure that those with additional needs receive the help they need to be able to participate without disadvantage in all aspects of college life.

**4.4** UST policy is to provide all students with equal access to all aspects of School community life including the teaching and learning programmes, and to provide the support that each individual needs for this to take place.

**4.5** UST staff recognise that each student has unique needs and that in the case of those with a specific disability, health condition or additional learning support needs, this will manifest itself differently in each case. UST therefore aims to provide personal support to each individual as required. In many cases, this support takes place within the general teaching and learning frameworks of UST. However, some students will require additional support outside these frameworks.

**4.6** The measures in place to support those students who need support with their learning are laid out in this document. Staff also have specific guidelines on how to assist those with dyslexia-related learning needs.

## 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF NEEDS

### 5.1 New students

If a new student has a previously identified condition that may impact upon their learning experience, they will be asked to provide details. If appropriate, this may include medical evidence before their arrival at UST. This could include (but is not limited to):

- **Sensory impairments:** information on the nature and level of impairment and previous support; recommendations for particular adaptions to the college environment (e.g. guiding, hearing loops, assistive technologies) and future support (including learning and assessment).
- **Mobility difficulties:** information on the nature and level of impairment and previous support; recommendations for particular adaptions to the UST learning environment (e.g. physical access, rails, assistive technologies) and future support (including learning and assessment).
- **Health conditions:** Evidence from a medical practitioner of the condition(s) and its symptoms; details of medications; information on what to do and who to contact in an emergency; details of the conditions impact upon learning and community life; recommendations for future support (including learning and assessment).
- **Dyslexia:** Report from an educational psychologist or equivalent indicating the nature and level of the dyslexia; information on previous support; recommendations for future support for learning and assessment.

### 5.2 Students with newly identified conditions

If during their period of study at UST a student has an identified disability, health condition or additional learning support need which means they require learning support, they will be asked to provide details and evidence as above (as appropriate). Guidance as to the support available will be provided by the Academic Registrar.

## 6. TYPES OF LEARNING SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

**6.1** Depending on the identified needs of the student, additional support is available to assist with:

- Accessing learning materials for classes;
- Accessing facilities;
- Accessing medical facilities;
- Accessing external support;
- Individual learning needs;
- Study Skills;
- Assessment procedures;
- Using Information Technology (including assistive technologies);
- Using the library. If students with additional learning support needs require a study desk every effort will be made to provide one.

**6.2** As far as possible, particular needs should be disclosed and discussed at the time of the students' application and acceptance onto a programme of study, so that necessary preparations can be made ahead of their arrival. The Academic Registrar will then communicate those requirements to the relevant department(s).

**6.3** If this is not possible, students needing additional assistance are encouraged to speak to the Academic Registrar as soon as possible after arrival, so that they receive the support they need as soon as possible. The Academic Registrar will communicate the requirements to the relevant department(s).

**6.4** Students with an acknowledged additional learning support need should discuss their proof reading needs with the Programme Leader.

**6.5** Students who have English as a second or other language may request guidance on support available to improve the grammar and sentence construction of their assignments from the Programme Leader.

## 7. LEARNING SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH PARTICULAR NEEDS

**7.1 *Physical and Sensory Disabilities:***

UST is committed to enabling students with a sensory or physical disability to access all learning opportunities. UST teaching buildings are accessible via ramps for wheelchair users, and accessible toilet facilities are available.

Additional support may include:

- Allocation of appropriate and accessible accommodation;

- Provision of furniture and equipment;
- Support with using assistive technologies;
- Provision of learning materials in alternative formats – e.g. recordings;
- Extended loan periods for library resources;
- Assistance with using library facilities

**7.2 *Short and Long-Term Health Conditions:***

Those with short and long-term health conditions will be given practical and emotional support in coping with their conditions.  Support may include:

- Provision of pastoral care through the Personal Tutor groups;
- Access to counselling and health assessments;
- Assistance in accessing medical facilities;
- Exemption from certain types of learning tasks [e.g field visits].

**7.3 *Dyslexia and other learning disabilities:***

Those with learning support needs such as dyslexia are encouraged to discuss their individual needs with the Academic Registrar in order to draw up a learning support plan that is appropriate to their individual needs. This may include:

- Study Skills classes;
- One to one support with studies;
- Guidance on accessing proof-reading services;
- Provision of lecture notes and presentations ahead of classes;
- Support with using assistive technologies;
- Provision of learning materials in alternative formats – e.g. recordings;
- Extended loan periods for library resources;
- Assistance with using library facilities;
- Guidance on accessing external support.

## 8. ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, HEALTH CONDITIONS OR ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS

**8.1 *Additional Support:***

Students may be eligible for additional support with assignments and exams, depending on the nature of their disability, health condition or learning support need. [See UST Extenuating Circumstances Policy] Assessment support may include:

- Extensions to submission deadlines;
- The provision of an amanuensis for exams or assignments;
- Additional time for exams;

- Consideration of the learner's learning support needs in the assessment of spelling and grammar;
- Consideration of the learner's learning support needs in the assessment of the formatting of references, bibliographies and other citation.

**8.2 Regulations:**

Additional support with assignments and exams and other consideration in relation to assessments will be offered if the following conditions are met:

- Students must have officially recorded with the Academic Registrar as having a recognised disability, health condition or additional learning support need in order to be eligible for additional support and/or exemption from certain assessment criteria. The types of additional support and/or exemption will be decided by the Extenuating Circumstances Committee.
- Eligible students are required to submit their assignments to the Programme Leader, who will pass them on the relevant tutor with an indication of the relevant exemption.
- These considerations can only apply to assessments taking place after the student has been noted by the UST as having a recognised disability, health condition or learning support need.
- UST will arrange for additional time or an amanuensis for students who are sitting exams where there is an approved statement of needs granting this.

## 9. ASSISTANCE WITH GETTING EXTERNAL SUPPORT

**9.1** Students requiring external support with their studies should discuss this with the Academic Registrar.

**9.2** Students with disabilities, health conditions or needing additional learning support may be eligible for external funding. This may include:

- Funding for accessibility tools, photocopying costs etc through the Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA) – UK students only – [see www.disability.gov.uk
- and National Bureau for Students with Disabilities www.skill.org.uk]
- Proof-reading services;
- Assessment for additional learning support.

**9.3** UST is unable to provide these facilities but will assist students with applications for funding and locating external support e.g. assessment of additional learning support needs.

## 10. FIRST POINT OF CONTACT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Supporting students with disabilities, health conditions or learning support needs is a shared responsibility. However, certain staff will be the first point of contact and have particular responsibilities as listed below:

- **Academic Registrar** – Identifying potential students with additional needs at the application stage and notifying those conducting interviews; notifying the Programme Leaders, and relevant departments (e.g. Accommodation) of students with special needs who have been accepted for study; Notifying Pastoral Group Leaders of students with additional needs in their groups; contacting new students with learning support needs to assess the level of support needed; assisting new and current students with the assessment of their conditions and preparation of a learning support plan; provision of study skills and one to one support.
- **Library Team** – Provision of extended loan periods as required; support with photocopying materials, using the library, obtaining course content in alternative formats.
- **Tutor Group Leaders** – Supporting the progress of those with disabilities, health conditions or additional learning support needs and providing pastoral care and guidance as part of the pastoral care process.
- **Accommodation** – Provision of suitable accommodation for those with disabilities.
- **Facilities** – Modifications to improve access to college and study facilities.
- **IT** – support with assistive technology.

## 11. STAFF AWARENESS

**11.1** UST is committed to training that will enable all staff to be able to support those with Disabilities, Health Conditions or Additional Learning Support Needs.

**11.2** Guidelines on supporting students with dyslexia and other additional learning support needs have been produced by the Programme teams. Further information on supporting students with specific needs will be produced as required.

## 12. RESPONSIBILITIES, POLICY APPROVAL AND REVIEW

**12.1** This document, as well as all other policy, procedure and guidance documents relating to students studying at UST will be available to all, monitored regularly and reviewed and evaluated periodically.

**12.2**  The Provost, Programme Leaders and the Academic Registrar have overall joint responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

**12.3**  Academic Registrar will oversee the production of an annual monitoring report that addresses the issues outlined in this policy.

**12.4**  Academic Registrar has responsibility for reviewing the policy annually.

**12.5**  All staff have an individual duty and responsibility to promote and implement this policy.

## 13. POLICY COMMUNICATION

**13.1**  This document can be found in the UST 'Policy and Procedures' document which is located in the student area on the UST Cloud VLE and on the website: www.ust.ac.uk

**13.2**  Every effort will be made to respond to any request to provide this policy in a different format.

**13.3**  This policy will be included in staff and student induction.