

Union

Union School of Theology Disability Support Policy

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This policy should be read alongside the [UST Learning Support Policy](#) and [Equal Opportunities Policy](#) which are found in the UST *Handbook of Policies and Procedures*.

1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Union School of Theology is committed to being a fair and just community of learning and scholarship. We are creating an inclusive community where people are treated with dignity and respect, where inequalities are challenged, and where we anticipate, and respond positively to, different needs and circumstances, so that everyone can achieve their potential. This policy is founded on the Christian teaching that each person is made in the image of God and is of equal value and worth in God's sight.

1.2 UST is committed to ensuring that any form of direct or indirect discrimination based on disability is avoided. [See [UST Equal Opportunities Policy](#) in UST *Handbook of Policies and Procedures*].

1.3 UST is committed to providing a learning and teaching environment in which disabled students and staff members are welcomed and supported. It seeks to maximise access to its facilities for all users, and to make its teaching and learning accessible to all who have the potential to meet the aims and objectives of their chosen programme and who are in sympathy with the aims and ethos of the School. UST seeks to enable participation by students and staff with disabilities in its programmes and all aspects of its life, recognising that to achieve this may require flexibility of approaches and practice and provision of appropriate resources.

2. BACKGROUND

This policy reflects the Disability Discrimination Act, 2005 which made amendments to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to create a positive duty on public bodies to promote equality of opportunity and inclusion for people who are disabled. This duty includes making provision to ensure that people who are disabled are treated equally and are treated fairly.

Union School of Theology will seek to ensure that students, who have declared a disability and provided suitable evidence, have access to such appropriate study-related support that UST is able to provide during their study at UST.

Union School of Theology (UST) is committed to promoting good practice in this area, not only to conform to the requirements of the law but also to reflect the biblical example of Jesus Christ, as demonstrated in the New Testament.

Union School of Theology does not have a responsibility, under legislation, to meet support needs which are not related to academia (e.g. personal care, medical care and any assisted living requirements). For any non-educational support students should contact their local NHS and Social Care organisations.

Union School of Theology acknowledges that the characteristics of sites where students meet and financial limitations mean that it cannot state that any or all support needs will definitely be met.

3. PEOPLE RESPONSIBLE FOR DISABILITY SUPPORT AT UST

The following are responsible for ensuring that work and study requirements of disabled people at UST are met:

Academic Registrar

Librarian

Student Welfare Officers

Resources Officer (Buildings)

Provost of Union School of Theology (UST Staff)

4. KEY PRINCIPLES

UST is committed to the following principles:

- Demonstrating and upholding Christian attitudes and behaviours to people who are disabled (staff, students and visitors)
- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled and other members of the staff team and disabled students and other members of the staff and student body
- Challenging negative and discriminatory attitudes and stereotypes
- Promoting positive attitudes towards people who are disabled
- Eliminating discriminatory practices that are unlawful
- Eliminating harassment of people who are disabled that is related in any way to their disability
- Encouraging participation in the life of UST by people who are disabled, including by such means as assistive technology where that is available.
- Meeting the needs of members of staff or students who are disabled, and treating them more appropriately, where that is required.

5. ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

5.1 UST is committed to ensuring that not only are reasonable adjustments made to ensure that disabled people have equality of opportunity but also that measures are taken to ensure that people who are disabled are not put at a "substantial disadvantage" in comparison with non-disabled people. The areas this covers include teaching, learning and assessment, student facilities and support, accommodation, and working environment.

5.2 UST is committed to involving members of staff and students who are disabled in planning accessible and inclusive services.

5.3 UST is committed to ensuring that facilities and services are accessible to people who are disabled.

6. DISCLOSURE OF DISABILITY-RELATED NEEDS

6.1 UST encourages disclosure of disability at every stage of the student lifecycle: from preapplication, through entry/induction, to being on a programme, to enable appropriate provision and support to be given to disabled people at every point.

6.2 If a student or member of staff discloses that they have a disability UST will endeavour to offer reasonable and appropriate support as outlined in this document. Disclosure information and records will be used only for the purpose of planning and implementing appropriate support. Any information about support requirements will only be shared with the UST staff who are involved in arranging support and access. A record of written consent to share such information will be required. Anyone requiring such support should provide written medical or other evidence to the Academic Registrar in case of students, and the Provost in the case of staff.

6.3. Information disclosed by a student about any disability or additional needs is treated as sensitive and confidential in line with UST's confidentiality codes. Students will be asked to give consent to the sharing of relevant sensitive information to those in UST who need to know in order to be able to arrange or provide relevant support. Where the disability relates to a mental health condition students are advised to make themselves known to the relevant UST Welfare and Wellbeing staff.

6.4 Students with disabilities are encouraged to apply for Disabled Students Allowance – a government-funding scheme administered by Student Finance for UK home students studying on a designated Higher Education Course of a sufficient credit value. Eligibility is determined by the Student Finance authority.

7. MAKING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

UST will make reasonable adjustments to facilitate the study and work of people with disabilities. These include –

- Reallocating venues for lectures or meetings
- Adjusting the locations of student assessments or the forms they take
- Modifying of equipment
- Purchasing or hiring appropriate equipment
- Re-allocating of duties (staff)
- Alteration of working hours (staff)
- Giving time off during working hours for assessment, treatment or rehabilitation
- Providing disability support.

8. OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT

Students at UST may be entitled to a Disabled Student's Allowance from their local educational authorities. Details from Registry staff.

Useful links:

www.disability.gov.uk

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities www.skill.org.uk

9. TRAINING

9.1 UST will provide information and training to staff in order to increase awareness and monitor the effectiveness of disability support.

9.2 UST will seek specialist advice and guidance when necessary.

10. POLICY REVIEW

UST will annually review this policy and the effectiveness of its provision for disabled people, and the training needs of its staff.

Version	Author	Review Date	Reason for change	Equality Impact Assessment check (and comment)	AB Approval date *
1.1	Sheila Stephens	Sept 2024	Updated to keep in line with regulations	Checked – primary focus to support disability	27/9/22