Information for External Study Needs Assessors

This document provides some information that assessors from external centres may find helpful when assessing a University of Oxford student.

Non-Medical Helpers (NMH)

The service has an in-house team of **specialist mentors** and tutors providing **specialist one-to-one study skills support (SpLD)**, who have a significant understanding of the specific pressures experienced by students at the University of Oxford. The current rates are £57.50 per hour for our specialist mentors, and £58 for the specialist one-to-one study skills support (SpLD), but please ensure you check the DSA-QAG NMH Register for the most up-to-date information.

Visit www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability/resources for a link to the University of Oxford's current NMH rates.

Accommodation

In instances where College accommodation cost exceeds that of standard College provision as the direct result of disability related need, the difference in cost will be met by the institution.

Contacts

Disability Advisers within the Disability Advisory Service are assigned to different Colleges, listed as 'Disability Advisory Service contact' in the College Disability Contact webpage.

Students will also have a contact within their College and department, and support should be co-ordinated through these three points. Generally, the Disability Adviser would be the main point of contact for any queries from needs assessors.

Course Structure and Length

Most undergraduate courses are taught through lectures and tutorials, with some additional classes for subjects such as languages.

Tutorials are weekly meetings with a tutor and one or two other students, and students are usually required to complete an essay or problem sheet beforehand. With two tutorials a week being a fairly standard workload, this means students will often have to write two essays or complete two lengthy sets of problems each week.

Students on a Masters course do not usually have tutorials, and their course structure is generally composed of lectures and seminars or classes.

Undergraduate and Masters courses run for three eight-week terms (called Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity) per year. Students undertaking a DPhil (Oxford's term for a PhD) work throughout the year, usually with only a few weeks off.

Exams and Assessment

Exams are the predominant form of assessments for all taught courses at Oxford. Some courses may have one or two additional extended essays to be completed, and there is often a dissertation or research project to be completed in the final year, but exams always feature heavily. First year exams are often referred to as 'mods' and 'prelims' depending on the course.

In addition to the formal university exams, undergraduate students also sit 'Collections' at the beginning of each term. These are College exams which do not contribute to the final degree, but help check students' progress. With regard to support, it means that students have lots of opportunities to try different types of support before sitting formal exams.

Arrangements for exam support can only be made by the university Proctors' Office, and so we request Assessors refrain from including specific recommendations in their reports. Link to alternative examination arrangements page

HEI Provision

The following paragraph can be used to complete section A-4 of the needs assessment report:

Information from the University of Oxford states that at present the institution does not guarantee provision of assistive software or technology as standard for all students. There is some limited provision of assistive software within certain libraries within the University, however, this is not widespread or for sole use by disabled students and may be located in shared public spaces.

A subscription to Microsoft Office is available for free to all Oxford students, or can be purchased outright through the university's IT services at a significantly discounted price (about £10). For both options, students will need to sign in to the university's Academic Software Fulfilment Centre.

Lectures and Travel

While considerable time and resources have been invested into implementing lecture capture technology across the university, it is very much used on an ad-hoc basis. Lecturers have the option to use the system but it is not mandatory, nor is it available in every lecture location.

Lectures are held within both Colleges and departments, meaning that students may travel a reasonable distance from their College to their department. There is little in the way of effective public transport in central Oxford, and most students will either walk or cycle. Students receiving an allowance to fund taxis will therefore rarely have an equivalent public transport amount to deduct.

Printers and Scanners

Most students will have access to printing and scanning facilities within their Colleges and departmental libraries.

There is rarely sufficient time to warrant the scanning of textbooks to use with text-to-speech software – students will need strategies that allow them to complete sufficient reading to complete two essays a week, so sessions with a study skills tutor to develop more effective reading techniques is often the best form of support.

For students using College or departmental printing and/or photocopying facilities to support difficulties relating to their disability will be eligible for reimbursement from their College, up to a reasonable limit, taking into account individual circumstances.