



Your Potential, Unlocked: Disabled Students Guide

SUSU

Southampton University
Students' Union



University of
Southampton

At the University of Southampton and Southampton University Students' Union, we are passionate about ensuring that all students can get the most out of their university experience but recognise that many students face barriers in achieving this.

To address these challenges, we have created the Disabled Student Guide, a resource to help you navigate student life at the University of Southampton with confidence and support. This guide has been co-designed with disabled students to provide tailored information, advice and guidance to help you thrive personally and professionally whilst with us at Southampton.



Key Contacts

General Disability Enquiries

Your first point of contact for any questions that are related to student inclusion and disability

studenthub@soton.ac.uk

Study Skills Support

Online resources and bookable sessions for 1:1 practical study advice and support

[Study Skills Support](#)

Student Disability and Inclusion SharePoint

The Student Inclusion & Disability webpage directing to relevant services and resources

[Student Disability and Inclusion Team Sharepoint](#)

Disabled Student Allowance Support

Support with applying to Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

[Disabled Students Allowance](#)

ADHD & Autism Workshops

Workshops focused on developing skills to manage ADHD & Autism

[Workshops](#)

FAQ'S

Frequently asked questions answered by the Student Disability & Inclusion Team

[FAQs](#)

Student Disability and Inclusion:

First Point of Contact for Disabled Student Support

The Student Disability and Inclusion Team provides a range of services designed to create an inclusive and accessible study environment. This includes recommending adjustments for course and study, creating Student Support Recommendations (SSRs) to ensure that your course is accessible to your needs, and providing student support appointments with their specialist practitioners.

You can contact the team via email at studenthub@soton.ac.uk.

Remember, no question is too small or insignificant, so don't hesitate to reach out whenever you need support! Click here for more information: [Student Disability and Inclusion Team Support](#)



Transition to University:

We know that going to university can be a big change. The Student Disability and Inclusion Team provides support for prospective students and offer holders so that students can feel supported from the start of their academic journey. Once you receive an offer to study at the University, you will typically be sent a health questionnaire. You are encouraged to share information about your disability/health condition. You may then be invited to a transition programme, which offers a number of optional welcome activities and support sessions designed to help you settle into university. You will also be contacted by the team and offered a student support appointment which will look at the ways the university can support you with your specific needs throughout the duration of your studies.



The Student Disability and Inclusion team create a Transition Calendar every academic year with suggestions of what to do over the first few months at university to get settled in. Remember, these are only suggestions and you should only sign up to what you are able to do and feel comfortable doing.

If you miss a session or do not wish to attend in-person events, you can request for the slides or notes to be sent and review in your own time.

Practical Support

Student Support Recommendations

Student Support Recommendations (SSRs) are one of the most important ways you can be supported during your time at university. You will be invited to meet with a Specialist Practitioner to discuss your accessibility needs and how these can be met. This chat is informal and held in a relaxed environment, either in-person or via online, depending on your preference. After the meeting, an SSR document will be produced outlining recommendations for adjustments and support.

You will be able to request a copy to make any changes before these are shared with your department. It is important to note that this document is confidential within the University; it can be shared on a need-to-know basis. SSRs are important in ensuring that your needs are met, so try and get one in place as soon as possible! Student support appointments can be booked at any time of the academic year, just email studenthub@soton.ac.uk.



Applying for DSA

If you are eligible for a student loan with Student Finance England, you may also be eligible for Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). DSA offers financial support to help with the extra costs of studying that arise due to a disability, including purchasing specialist equipment, study support mentoring hours, and help with travel expenses. The allowance is tailored to individual needs and does not need to be repaid.

“ DSA provided me with a new laptop, noise cancelling headphones and a printer to help make studying more accessible to me. This was life changing as I was finally able to focus on my work and have a laptop that would support the assistive technology that I needed to study.

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The Student Disability and Inclusion team can support enrolled students with making a DSA application. It is advisable to apply for DSA as soon as possible so that support can be put in place from the beginning of your studies. For more information, [you can book a 15-minute drop in or find in-person drop-in sessions here.](#)

Specialist Study Support

After having a 1:1 appointment with a Specialist Practitioner arranged by completing the Request for Support form or by emailing studenthub@soton.ac.uk, you may be referred to Specialist Study Support. This could include being paired with an Inclusive Support Ambassador (ISA) to support you with settling into university and navigating low-level mental health concerns. You could also be referred for support from a Learning Support Assistant (LSA). LSAs can help with supports such as note-taking, study assistance, and practical lab support.

Specialist Study Skills appointments also provide practical study advice and support for students with specific learning differences (such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or slow cognitive processing) and students who identify as neurodivergent. Specialist Neurodiversity Practitioners can help you to develop the skills needed for effective study. This includes exploring your strengths and current study methods, as well as helping you to

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Through DSA, I was able to access the assistive technology programme Glean, which allowed me to have my lectures recorded and transcribed. This was especially helpful with completing assignments later down the line.

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put in place strategies for managing the areas you may find more challenging. It is highly recommended that you book a session at the beginning of each semester to ensure that you are able to meet the demands of your course. The link to book [30 minute sessions can be found here](#) and, for more in-depth support, [hour-long sessions here](#).

Additional Exam Recommendations (AERs)

You may be entitled to additional exam arrangements such as extra time or rest breaks. Click here for more information: [Specialist support and additional exam arrangements](#).

Clarkson Rest and Study Room

The Clarkson Rest and Study Room is a designated quiet space for students with disabilities or long-term health conditions. It is located in [Building 6](#), Room 1085 (Nuffield Theatre, Highfield campus). The space includes four smaller rooms and locker availability. All rooms have a computer, height adjustable desk and ergonomic chair. Access to this space is given by the Student Disability and Inclusion Team, usually following on from a student support appointment, where reasonable adjustments

have been discussed. It requires your University ID card for access and is open 7 days a week 8am-11pm. Once you have access, the room can be booked [using this booking form](#).



Academic Support

Personal Academic Tutors (PATs)

All undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate taught (PGT) students will be allocated a PAT in the first term of starting Southampton. They are often an academic staff member from your subject area or a related field who provide guidance and support throughout your university journey, helping with both academic and personal challenges. You can also reach out to a Senior Tutor for further support. Find out more using this link: [Your Personal Academic Tutor](#).



Senior Tutors

UG and PGT students will also have access to a Senior Tutor (or equivalent for postgraduate research (PGR) students) in your discipline or Faculty. Your Senior Tutor is another experienced member of the academic staff who offers an additional layer of support for you as a student. While your PAT should always be your primary point of contact, you may also arrange to meet with your Senior Tutor to discuss any matter which may be affecting your academic progress.

“Coming from a culture that looks down upon reaching out for help and sees it as a weakness, it was refreshing to know that getting help is encouraged by everyone and that my attempt to reach out was taken seriously.”

Pause in Studies

While we expect that your studies will go smoothly, sometimes unexpected things can happen, and you might need to take a break in your studies. A Pause in Study is an agreement between you and the University, allowing you to pause your studies for up to 12 months at a time.

If you are considering pausing your studies, you should first discuss your reasons for wanting to do so with your PAT. The Student Disability & Inclusion team can also support your decision by providing evidence for the break in your studies if it is related to your disability and you have engaged with the team previously.

If you think you need to take a pause in your studies, please refer to [this guide](#).

Special Considerations

For any issues that have affected your academic performance but do not require a pause in study, you can utilise the special considerations. This process is designed to support students who face unexpected challenges, such as illness or flare ups of long-term conditions, that may affect their ability to perform well in assessments.

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It was reassuring to find out how much support they were willing to provide me with. It was especially helpful to know that support with extensions and special considerations was available as it really gave me the time to recover.

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You can find the [Special Considerations form](#) here. If you have had more short-term disruptions to your studies, such as minor illnesses or flare ups of your condition, you can apply for an extension for up to 10 working days. You can find the [extension form here](#).

Academic Skills Service

For students with disabilities or additional needs, the Academic Skills Service can work with you to adapt study strategies that suit your individual requirements. Whether it's planning essays, preparing for exams, or managing a busy workload, they'll support you in finding the best approach. The team are based in Hartley Library (Highfield Campus) and run informal support events throughout the semester, such as Writing Cafes, Academic Skills Drop-Ins, and Math's & Stats Drop-Ins. Further information can be found [on the Academic Skills Service website](#).

Wider Support

Wellbeing Support

The university offers a 24/7 Wellbeing Team, based in Building 37 on Highfield Campus. Whether you're dealing with stress, anxiety, or other challenges, the Wellbeing Team offers a range of services to help you feel supported and connected. This includes one-on-one support, group sessions, and workshops on managing stress, building resilience, and improving wellbeing. You can reach out for confidential support by emailing studenthub@soton.ac.uk, calling +44(0)23 80599 599, or using their [online chat](#).



SUSU Advice Centre

The SUSU Advice Centre offer free, confidential support on a range of issues, including academic problems, housing, finances, and disability-related concerns. Whether you're dealing with academic appeals, need help understanding your rights, or just want to talk through a problem, the team is there to guide you. You are welcome to drop in to their office in Building 40 (Highfield Campus) or email them at advice@susu.org with any general enquiries. Further information can be found [on their website](#).

Student Inclusion Team

The Student Inclusion Team is committed to supporting underrepresented students at the university feel supported and engaged throughout their studies and to help these students take up the opportunities on offer to them. Review more information on [their webpage](#).

Community

Student Accessibility Network

The Student Accessibility Network has been set up for disabled students to connect with each other and offer input into various accessibility projects that are going on at the university. [You can access the Network here and join the dedicated Teams site here](#). This site is a safe space where students can raise concerns, stay updated on what the network is working on, and connect with other disabled students.

SUSU Clubs and Societies

The University of Southampton's Student Union (SUSU) has over 300 student societies and sports clubs to get involved with. Each of these clubs and societies will be made up of a committee that must consist of (amongst other roles) a Welfare Officer. A Welfare Officers role is to support their members' mental and physical wellbeing, and making sure any activities and events are accessible to all members. Find out more using this link: [SUSU - Clubs & Societies](#)

If you are looking for a society that focuses on the disability & neurodiversity community, the Neurodiversity & Disability Society offer a space for students who identify as disabled to learn more about the disability space and meet like-minded individuals.

Find out more using this link: [Neurodiversity & Disability Society](#).



External Community Support Groups

Outside of the university community, there are several community groups and services available in Southampton that are tailored to individuals which need ongoing support for their mental health issues. A full range of services can be found via the links below:

- [Community Mental Health Services](#)
- [Solent Mind](#)
- [Southampton City Council](#)

Career Development Opportunities



University is not just about getting a degree – it is a fantastic place to develop your employability skills and try out what different career paths might be like before you graduate. Check out the [Careers & Employability webpage](#) here.

To search for paid opportunities and internships, including those specific to Southampton students, [access the MyCareer portal](#) here.

It is also important to note that there is specific careers support for available for disabled students. For example, the Careers, Employability and Student Enterprise team run Disability, Disclosure and Employability workshops to raise awareness of your right to fair treatment and reasonable adjustments within the workplace.

Financial Support

Going to university can be a big change and a challenge. It may be the first time you have had to manage your finances, juggle commitments, whilst managing flare ups in your condition with your studies.

The University of Southampton offer [support for your financial wellbeing](#), whether it is learning how to budget or accessing financial support. This includes specific support with costs related to your disability which are not covered by the NHS or University Health Services. You can receive a discretionary grant to help with these challenges via the [Health & Wellbeing Fund](#).

Disability - Specific Support

The following resources aim to provide specific support for the following types of disabilities and differences: Neurodiversity, Physical and Sensory Disabilities, Mental Health conditions and Long-term Health conditions. We acknowledge that it is common to have one or more types of disability, and we encourage you to seek help from a number of sources linked below.

Neurodiversity

The Student Disability & Inclusion Team runs several ADHD and Autism peer support sessions which can be accessed via emailing studenthub@soton.ac.uk. These are great places to meet others who may have similar experiences to yourself. Support for other neurodiversity's such as Dyslexia and Dyscalculia can be accessed by [requesting specialist support here](#).

Many students come to university without a formal diagnosis of ADHD and Autism. The Disability team has support available for self-diagnosed students. However, if you wish to explore receiving a formal diagnosis, it is advisable to contact your GP to get on the waiting list as soon as possible.. You can also use the [Right to Choose scheme](#) which can help you choose a Mental Health provider with a shorter waiting list.

“ It has been useful to see the development of accessible toilets on campus.



Physical Disability

If you have a disability that limits your mobility, you may be worried about your ability to navigate campus easily. A Specialist Practitioner will discuss appropriate adjustments for you to ensure you can access campus and these will be outlined in your SSR document. Additionally, most University campus buildings also feature on the [AccessAble website](#).

The University is also committed to making sport accessible, so consider getting involved in sports clubs as the necessary accommodation can be made in order for you to participate. Including free BeActive sessions designed to get a wide range of students interested in sport. The BeActive sessions can be booked via the University of Southampton's app.

“ The University offers a tremendous amount of support and understanding of neurodiverse students' needs – regardless of whether they currently have a diagnosis or not. This led to me getting the assistive technology and mentoring support I needed to continue with my degree despite being on a two-year waiting list with the NHS. ”

Sensory

If you have registered your disability with the University, you can be granted access to the University's Sensory Room found in the Health Services building (Building 48) on Highfield Campus. This is a space designed for relaxation and sensory stimulation. You can book the room on an individual basis, or you can invite up to four other students to join you if you wish. Contact the team via studenthub@soton.ac.uk.

SUSU also has a society dedicated to learning sign language. The Sign Language Society promotes the use of British Sign Language (BSL), offering non-professional classes for students and associates of the University of Southampton: [Signsoc](#)

Mental Health

The University Student Wellbeing team offers emotional, practical and short-term counselling support to students with a range of wellbeing concerns.

You can email studenthub@soton.ac.uk, call +44(0)23 80599 599, or use their online chat.

If you wish to speak to someone in person, visit Building 37 on Highfield Campus.

Steps2Wellbeing is a free NHS Talking Therapies service for adults over 18 years old in Dorset and Southampton. Support can be accessed via a self-referral form or the digital assistant available on the [Steps2Wellbeing](#) website.

“ I have found the autism and ADHD peer support sessions really useful in helping me navigate neurodiversity at University. ”

“ Despite lacking an official diagnosis, I wasn't questioned at all, and the Student Inclusion and Disability team helped me access the assisted studies space in the Library and schedule some counselling sessions that really helped me! ”

Long Term Health Condition

If you have a long-term health condition, it is important to sign up to your local GP in Southampton as soon as possible. This can help you access repeat prescriptions and refer you on to the appropriate Hospital team if this is a necessary part of your ongoing treatment.

You can choose to continue to receive support in your hometown, but it is advisable to be supported locally in case of emergencies. Help with signing up to your GP can be found on the [Register with a local doctor](#) website.

Current students have also found it helpful to meet other people who have a similar condition to themselves. A top tip is to look for online support groups such as Facebook communities or local charities that work with people who have your condition.

Report and Support

We understand that sometimes things can go wrong and if you ever experience harassment and discrimination at the university, please report it via the [Report and Support Service](#). This can be done anonymously if you do not feel comfortable disclosing your personal details.

Report and Support is an online service at the University of Southampton that helps students, including those with disabilities, report any incidents of bullying, harassment, or discrimination they might experience or witness. It's a safe and confidential way to share concerns, and you can choose to remain anonymous if you prefer. The platform also offers support, whether you need advice, emotional help, or information on how to take things further.

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It was reassuring to find out how much support they were willing to provide me with. It was especially helpful to know that support with extensions and special considerations was available as it really gave me the time to recover.

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Connect with us



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