

A short guide to getting it right for disabled student placements

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Introduction

The context for this guidance is the preparation of disabled students and staff (academic and practice) for learning, teaching and assessment in a placement setting within a framework of inclusivity.

The objective of the guidance is to improve the development, provision and practice of placement opportunities for disabled students. Particularly where students carry a degree of professional responsibility for work carried out on placements in preparation for a professional role.

Developed by the Disability ASSIST Services (DAS) for the CEPPL, the guidance consists of sets of key questions to help set the agenda for the development of a successful placement framework. These questions address the three main groups of stakeholders:

- disabled students
- university staff working with disabled students on placements
- placement providers with responsibilities for disabled student placements

Each set of questions will approach different elements of the placement triad recognizing, where relevant, the different administrative procedures and arrangements across programmes and different placement providers. The rationale for the questions and indeed the attendant detail is derived from insights gained from interviews with over 30 disabled students on placement on a 'before' and 'after' basis.

These guidance formats target the everyday practicalities of delivering good quality experiences for disabled students during practice learning activities. They do not, therefore, cover in any depth the full breadth of the placement framework:

- course development
- the learning, teaching and assessment criteria applied
- the competence standards operated by professional bodies
- the health and safety requirements of employers.

The disability discrimination legislation stipulates that both sets of organizations at this interface - HEIs and placement providers - are governed by different parts of the Act (DDA 2005) and therefore required to adopt an anticipatory role in making 'reasonable adjustments' to all their activities to prevent disabled people experiencing unjustifiable discrimination. This does not compromise academic standards nor the application of competence standards where they can be shown to be legitimate.

It is important to stress that the main focus of this guidance is to promote the anticipatory role of all staff with responsibilities for disabled student placements; to recognize that each student is an individual and only a very few disabled students require significant direct intervention, both pre-placement and on-going.