



Foundation for International Education

ADMISSIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Policy and Code of Practice

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document sets out Foundation for International Education's (FIE) practice and procedure for admitting students with disabilities taking into consideration recent disability legislation.

The Principles of Admissions are outlined as:

FIE will assess an application using the same academic criteria that apply to all candidates.

The procedure should be a process in which consideration of academic suitability is separated from discussion centred on the applicant's other needs, and is, therefore quite separate from the academic selection process.

The principles of admissions apply to all applicants

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Disabilities Coordinator
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Policy Statement

FIE, in conformity with its mission, is committed to a comprehensive policy of Equal Opportunities.

FIE recognises that the environment, services and facilities may be 'enabling' or 'disabling' and supports the social model of disability. (The social model identifies the environment and society as disabling factors and seeks to remove unnecessary barriers.) Applications from students with disabilities or specific learning difficulties are welcomed.

Code of Practice

This Code of Practice describes in more detail FIE's commitments and points to additional information. It is supplementary to FIE's Code of Practice on Equal Opportunities for Students and the Policy and Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities.

This admissions procedure will apply to any potential student who has additional needs arising from a disability, through sensory or physical impairment, medical or mental health conditions or specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia.

The procedure applies to full-time, part-time undergraduate and postgraduate admissions, as well as admissions systems for other students applying to study at FIE, including those through individual faculties or academic departments.

Students are encouraged to declare a disability on their application form. This allows the Disability Coordinator to discuss access requirements for a course and allows time for minor adjustments to be made.

Background

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA)

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) became part IV of the Disability Discrimination Act. This Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people who have a disability.

The Act defines disability as, "a physical or mental impairment, which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities".

- "Impairments" covers physical impairments and impairments affecting the senses such as sight and hearing. It also covers mental impairments, including learning disabilities and mental illness where the condition is recognised by a respected body of medical opinion. If impairment is controlled by medication

or special aids the person is still considered as disabled for the purposes of the Act.

- “Substantial” means more than minor or trivial and includes progressive conditions where impairment is likely to become substantial, such as cancer, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy and HIV infection. People with such conditions are covered by the Act from the moment there is a noticeable effect on day-to-day activities, however slight.
- “Long-term” means effects which have lasted for at least twelve months or are likely to last for twelve months or more. Long-term effects include those that are likely to recur.
- “Day-to-day” activities are normal activities carried out by most people on a regular basis, and must involve one of the following broad categories: mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; continence; the ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects; speech; hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate; learn or understand; perception of the risk of physical danger.

Severe disfigurements are treated as disabilities even though they have no effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The Act makes it unlawful for a responsible body to discriminate against a disabled person:

- In the arrangements it makes for determining admission to the Institute or enrolments to a course.
- In the terms on which it offers to admit or enrol the person.
- By refusing or deliberately omitting to accept an application or enrolment or grounds of their disability.

FIE’s Equal Opportunities Policy

FIE has an Equal Opportunities Policy which is kept under regular review by the Equal Opportunities Steering Group with a view to ensuring that both the spirit and the content are implemented. A programme of training is ongoing which addresses key areas such as recruitment and student support services. The long-term objective is to ensure that all FIE staff are made aware of their responsibilities in relation to equal opportunities for students. The Equal Opportunities Steering Group will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Code of Practice and prioritising action in relation to equal opportunities.

Discrimination

The Act describes discrimination in two ways:

- when FIE treats a disabled person less favourably, for a reason relating to the person’s disability, than it treats (or would treat) a person to whom that reason does not, or would not, apply and that treatment cannot be justified.
- when FIE fails to make a reasonable adjustment when a disabled student is placed, or likely to be placed, at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to a person who is not disabled.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Act requires that anticipatory 'reasonable adjustments' are in place to ensure that disabled students are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in relation to non-disabled students.

Where The Act requires FIE to:

- take reasonable steps to ensure that a disabled person is not placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a person who is not disabled.
- When considering whether a disabled person or student is placed at a substantial disadvantage when compared to somebody who is not disabled, FIE will take account of:
- the time, inconvenience, effort or discomfort entailed in comparison with other people or students. A 'substantial' disadvantage is one that is more than minor or trivial.

FIE will take into account the following factors when considering what is reasonable:

- the need to maintain academic and other prescribed standards
- the cost of taking a particular step and the financial resources available
- grants or loans likely to be available to disabled students (and only disabled students) for the purpose of enabling them to receive student services, such as Disabled Students' Allowances
- the extent to which it is practicable to take a particular step
- the extent to which aids or services will otherwise be provided to disabled people or students
- health and safety requirements
- the relevant interests of other people including other students.

Unfortunately FIE's study centre and housing residences do not have access for wheelchair users. However FIE has access to other local institutions and hotels which have wheelchair access. These include: Imperial College, Baden Powell and Copthorne Tara Hotel.

Anticipatory adjustments

It is a requirement of the Act that adjustments should not simply be reactive to known current students with a disability but should anticipate the needs of disabled applicants. It is therefore important that FIE anticipate the generality of student needs by making sure routine practice is reflective of, and responsive to, a diverse student population. The anticipatory duty is an evolving one and FIE will be required to continue to improve on provision over time.

Terminology

In this Code of Practice the term "access" covers all forms of access, not just access to the physical environment. It includes, for example, access to information. "Accessible" means independently "accessible" or "accessible with minimum assistance", independent access is the ideal to which all policy and practice aspires.

Principles of Admissions

FIE will assess an application using the same academic criteria that apply to all candidates.

The procedure should be a process in which consideration of academic suitability is separated from discussion centred on the applicant's other needs, and is, therefore quite separate from the academic selection process.

Students will be provided with as much information on FIE, the course and funding as possible, in order to allow them to make an informed choice.

Confidentiality and the Data Protection Act

If a student declares a disability on the application to FIE, this information will be forwarded to the Disability Coordinator in order to assess needs, this allows time to organise any minor adjustments to the learning or physical environment. The Disability Coordinator will not forward any information regarding a specific student without the individual's consent. However, the Disability Coordinator may contact the department to establish if there are areas where access may be a problem for students with particular needs.

Applicants are advised to give their consent for details to be forwarded as this enables adjustments to be made. However, this is at the individual's discretion and if the Team member is told in confidence they still have a duty to make adjustments, however, these adjustments may be different or less satisfactory. The applicant should be made aware of this.

Monitoring and Review

This Policy and Code of Practice is monitored by the Equal Opportunities Steering Group and will be reviewed and amended as necessary.

Monitoring and review of all equal opportunities is essential so as to identify areas where change or improvements to policies may be needed.

Admissions

When FIE receives your application, the relevant academic selectors will consider it. After initial academic selection by the department, forms where a disability or medical conditions are indicated are passed to the Disability Coordinator via the Admissions Office. The outcome of the assessment is as follows.

- The Disability Coordinator will contact a student by phone or by email to discuss any requirements they may have.

Some offers made to students may be conditional on receipt of a doctor's letter confirming that a student is fit to commence studying at FIE. This is usually for a student who has indicated a recent difficulty with their health. This is to ensure

appropriate adjustments can be made for a student and to ensure that there will be no unnecessary barriers to studying.

If we have offered a place, we will also write to students to let them know.

If the offer is conditional on examination results and they meet the conditions, we will of course confirm the place. If a student's results do not quite meet the conditions we will ask the selectors to review the application to see if they can still be given a place. Our decision is made within a day or two.

Students are asked not to wait until the results are published before telling FIE of any special factors affecting examination performance, which they wish to have taken into account.

Further Information

London Tourist Board: <http://www.visitlondon.com/maps/accessibility/>

Contact Details

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