

Disabled Student Commitment



The Disabled Student Commitment

The Disabled Students' Commission (DSC) was established by the Universities Minister and funded by the Office for Students (OfS) in 2020. The Disabled Student Commitment (DSC) was published by the Disabled Student Commission in spring 2023.

The purpose of the Commitment is to secure an enhanced and improved experience for disabled students within higher education and is a call to the sector and sector bodies to make the step change that is required to create a more inclusive environment. The Commitment calls on Higher Education Providers (HEPs), Government, funders, agencies, regulators and professional, statutory and regulatory bodies to look at what they currently do, what innovative practice they can share, and how they can change. All of these organisations have legal duties towards disabled students. The Commitment does not seek to replicate or replace legal duties but asks organisations to do more by focusing on how they can improve the disabled student experience.

The University became a signatory in September 2024 and published its first action plan in spring 2026.

Foreword - Jim Irving



Jim Irving
Pro Vice-Chancellor
Students & Governance

At Southampton Solent University, our strategy is rooted in a clear ambition: to provide an outstanding, inclusive student experience that enables every learner to succeed, regardless of their background or circumstances. This commitment to inclusion is central to who we are as a university and how we deliver education, services, and support.

Our Disabled Student Commitment reflects this ambition in action. It sets out how we will continue to remove barriers, improve accessibility, and embed inclusive practices across all aspects of university life. Importantly, it recognises that accessibility is not the responsibility of a single team, but a shared responsibility across the entire institution.

We know that meaningful change requires both strong systems and a strong culture. That is why we are investing in improvements to how we share information, how we design our curriculum, and how we ensure that support is in place from the very start of a student's journey.

Alongside this, we are strengthening staff capability and accountability so that inclusive practice becomes the norm, not the exception.

This commitment is also shaped by our students. Their experiences, feedback, and insights are critical to ensuring that what we do is relevant, effective, and impactful. We are committed to working in partnership with our students to continually improve.

While we are proud of the progress made so far, we recognise that there is more to do. This document represents both a statement of intent and a framework for ongoing improvement. Through collective effort, we will continue to create an environment in which all students are empowered to achieve their full potential.

Foreword - Tania Struetzel



Tania Struetzel
Director of Student Success

At Southampton Solent University, our Access and Participation Plan sets out a clear commitment: to ensure that all students, particularly those from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds, can access higher education, succeed in their studies, and progress into meaningful outcomes.

Disabled students are a key part of this commitment. We recognise that barriers to access, continuation, and success can be experienced at multiple points in the student lifecycle, and that addressing these requires a proactive, whole-institution approach.

This Disabled Student Commitment brings together the work already underway across the university and sets out how we will go further. It reflects our focus on early identification of support needs, timely and effective interventions, and a more joined-up approach to delivering support that places the student experience at its centre.

A core priority within our Access and Participation Plan is improving outcomes and reducing gaps for students who

may face additional challenges. For disabled students, this includes ensuring that support is in place from day one, that teaching and assessment are inclusive by design, and that students feel confident in accessing the support available to them.

We also recognise that student success is about more than academic achievement alone. It is about belonging, confidence, wellbeing, and the ability to navigate both university and future employment. Through this commitment, we are strengthening how we support students to develop these capabilities, including through transitions into and out of university.

This work is ongoing. It requires collaboration across professional services, academic teams, and, most importantly, with our students and the Students' Union. By listening, learning, and responding, we will continue to build a more inclusive and supportive environment for all.

Our Commitment

At Southampton Solent University, we are committed to creating an inclusive, accessible and supportive environment where disabled students can thrive. We recognise that every student's experience is unique and are dedicated to working in partnership with students to remove barriers, enable participation, and ensure equitable outcomes.

This commitment outlines how we will:

- Support disabled students throughout their journey
- Embed inclusive practice across teaching and support services
- Ensure transparency, fairness, and accessibility in all processes

1. *Sharing information*

Our commitments

- You will only need to share your disability information once wherever possible
- You will be asked for clear consent before your information is shared
- We will improve how support information is stored and accessed by staff
- We will ensure your information is used to provide support - not to create barriers

What this means in practice

- Your support plan will be visible to relevant staff so you don't need to repeat your needs
- You will understand who can see your information and why
- Systems (such as Gateway) will allow information to be shared more effectively across teams
- Staff will be better equipped to respond without asking for duplicate evidence

2. *Choosing a course*

Our commitments

- We will provide clear, accessible information about disability support to all applicants
- We will ensure outreach, open days, and recruitment activities are inclusive
- We will improve transparency about course requirements and any potential barriers
- We will raise awareness of support available before students arrive

What this means in practice

- You can easily find information about support on our website and at events
- Open days and applicant experiences will be accessible and inclusive
- You can make informed choices about your course and understand any requirements
- You'll know how to access support before you enrol

3. *Transition into Higher Education*

Our commitments

- Support plans will be developed as early as possible
- Support will be in place from day one wherever possible
- We will provide inclusive welcome, induction, and transition activities
- We will ensure policies are fair, transparent, and aligned to good practice

What this means in practice

- You can meet with the Disability Advice Team before starting your course
- Your adjustments (e.g. exam arrangements, teaching support) will be ready early
- Welcome week and transition events will consider different needs and preferences
- You won't have to repeatedly provide evidence for processes like appeals or extensions

4. *On-course Experience*

Our commitments

- We will embed inclusive practice in teaching, learning, and assessment
- Staff will be trained to understand and implement your support plan
- We will improve access to placements, facilities, and campus spaces
- We will support your wellbeing through a whole-university approach
- We will ensure you can access and participate in all aspects of student life

What this means in practice

- Teaching materials and approaches will be more accessible to all students
- Staff will understand your support needs and how to apply them
- You can access classrooms, services, and facilities with appropriate adjustments
- Mental health and wellbeing support will be visible and accessible
- You will be supported during placements and assessments without unnecessary barriers

5. Moving Forward (*Progression and Employment*)

Our commitments

- We will support you in preparing for employment and life after university
- We will provide guidance on disclosure, adjustments, and workplace support
- We will work with employers to promote inclusive opportunities
- We will help you develop confidence, independence, and advocacy skills

What this means in practice

- You can access tailored careers support that understands your needs
- You will be supported to explore tools like the Student Adjustment Planner
- You'll be better prepared to talk to employers about support
- You will graduate with the confidence and skills to succeed in employment



Working together

Delivering this commitment is a shared responsibility across the university. Every member of staff plays a role in creating an inclusive environment.

We will continue to:

- Invest in training and development
- Improve systems and processes
- Work collaboratively with students and the Students' Union

Contact and Support

Support is available through:

- Disability Advice Team (DAT)
- Student Hub
- Solent Careers
- Students' Union

Further details are available via the university website and student portal.