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| Support Workers’ Recruitment Information | 2014-15 |
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# Introduction

The Disability Service advertises for Support Workers at the beginning of each academic year and keeps a register of students and professionals who act as Support Workers, providing study-related support.

This information has been produced by the Disability Services as a brief introduction to the roles and responsibilities of a Support Worker. At UWE we are working towards ensuring high standards for all the support that is provided for disabled students and are committed to developing professional standards for support workers.

# Who are Support Workers?

In Higher Education, Support Workers provide individual assistance to disabled students to try to ensure equal access to the curriculum and the learning opportunities provided by the institution. They are there to remove some of the barriers that prevent equal opportunity. Examples of Support Workers include notetakers, Sign Language Interpreters and Library/Research Assistants. More information on the specific tasks undertaken by Support Workers can be found below.

The majority of disabled students have their support needs funded through the Disabled Students’ Allowances. For DSA purposes Support Workers are referred to as Non-Medical Helpers. For various reasons we prefer to refer to you as Support Workers, not the least being because you are not there as “helpers”, you are employed to provide a professional service.

For some categories of Support Worker e.g. Sign Language Interpreters and Lipspeakers, there are professional qualifications that individuals must have in order to perform that role. For other categories, e.g. notetaker, there are qualifications but the demand for the service so far exceeds the number of qualified people that unqualified but suitably experienced individuals have to be recruited to fill the role.

# What is required from a Support Worker?

Current students providing support work are employed through UWE’s Temporary Staff Unit (TSU). Support workers are required to read and comply with the **Disability Service Support Worker Guidelines.**

The Support Worker Service will obtain **references** for all support workers.

Support workers must complete a **contact details/availability form** so their details can be entered and held on the Support Worker Service database. (This information would never be given to students).

Support workers should pass on any later changes to availability/ contact details to the Disability Support Co-ordinators so the database can be updated.

**Self-employed support workers** who operate terms and conditions that are different to those of the Support Worker Service must submit a copy of these to the Support Worker Service before any work is agreed. This includes cancellation charges and minimum charges for assignments.

Support Workers should arrive **promptly** at the agreed location for their assignment, having, where relevant, prepared adequately for the session.

Support Workers should arrive with all the **materials** they require from the assignment e.g. paper (available from the Support Worker Service Room 1D15), pens, record sheets, timesheet.

# How are Support Workers paid?

Funding for support for disabled students is provided by a variety of funding bodies, including Student Finance England, NHS, Local Authorities and UWE. No students fund their support themselves. The Support Worker Service at UWE employs support workers, processes timesheets and pays the support workers, reclaiming the money from the funding body.

Some students nominate their own support worker but ask us to handle payments. In this case the Support Worker Service is not responsible for the quality of the support being provided.

The support worker must complete and sign a **monthly timesheet** provided by the Support Worker Service, one per student per month.

Support workers recruited through the Temporary Staff Unit (TSU) are asked to submit their **bank details** so they can be paid via direct transfer (using the BACS system).

Support workers (apart from self-employed) are recruited through the TSU. Your contract pack will come from the TSU and completed forms from the pack must be returned to the TSU.

**Self-Employed Support Workers**

The Support Worker Service will check with support workers to establish that they are **self-employed**. This is a legal requirement. Self-employed support workers should be aware that no deductions for tax and National Insurance are made by the University. Support workers are paid only for agreed hours. Support workers should contact their local tax office or telephone the national helpline to discuss their liability for income tax and National Insurance.

Self-employed support workers are covered by the University’s personal accident insurance. Self-employed support workers **must** arrange their own public liability and professional indemnity insurance to cover them for any damage done to others when carrying out their work.

**Cancellation Arrangements**

Less than 1 week’s notice of cancellation by the student or the DS (i.e. 5 working days): Full fee payable to support worker unless alternative work is found, in which case the support worker receives the fee for the new booking or for the original (whichever is the greater amount).

# What support is provided to students?

**General Support** may included a variety of tasks, such as assisting a wheelchair user, guiding a visually impaired student, carrying belongings, locating books and carrying out practical tasks under the direction from the student. When general support is required in a laboratory or in other practical situations, Support Workers should attend the safety lecture at the beginning of the year with the student you will work with.

**Manual Notetaking** covers taking notes in lectures and taught classes for students, typing directly on to a laptop which can be provided by the Disability Service, subject to availability. Notetakers are also required to review notes at the end of the lecture, ensure they are in a suitable format for the student to access effectively and provide the student at the end of the lecture with a copy of the notes on their memory stick or send the notes to the student by email (and copy to support.service@uwe.ac.uk) within 24 hours. Minimum 60wpm typing speed required (tested during interview).

**Library/Research Support** means assisting a student with identifying library resources on a specified topic. This may include summarising resources. It also includes working under the student’s direction to make these resources accessible e.g. scanning text.

**Audio Transcription** includes making electronic notes from a recorded lecture, notes from another audio source or typing a verbatim transcript of audio material.

# How are students supported?

Support Workers will facilitate the student’s participation in a course of study but will not complete any of the work associated with that course of study. For example, if you have been asked to type a dictated assignment or a handwritten piece of work you should not change the grammar in any way. (The student may direct you to use the spellchecker function but this should be done in conjunction with the student who will advise on lexical choice for errors that are not simply typos.)

Support worker and student are advised to respect professional boundaries and maintain a professional working relationship and are not expected to meet off-campus, socialise or do unpaid work outside of agreed work sessions. Support workers are not required to give students their telephone numbers, e-mail addresses or other contact details.

The Disability Support Co-ordinators will contact support workers to offer work and let the disabled students know what support is provisionally booked.

Typically you will be offered bookings for a term/semester. If you are available for all but a couple of the slots please let the Disability Support Co-ordinators know when you accept the booking.

You may also be offered one-off bookings, perhaps when the usual support worker is ill or if a lecture time has changed.

Please note that sometimes assignments may be offered to more than one support worker at once. You may find that when you reply, the work has already been allocated - we apologise for this but at busy times we have to send out emails/texts to more than one support worker.

If you are offered an assignment, please reply as soon as possible. If we have not heard from you after 24 hours – or less if the booking is at short notice—the work will be offered to another person.

The support worker may withdraw from the arrangement, without notice, if they feel threatened, harassed or consider the student is acting in breach of University regulations, criminal law or human rights.

The Support Worker Service encourages students and support workers to meet at the Support Worker Service office (room 1D15) prior to the first session to discuss the working arrangement. The Disability Support Co-ordinators will introduce students and support workers if possible.

Support workers should keep a low profile in classes e.g. they should not volunteer their own opinions or interact with other group members, and should never speak on behalf of the student.

The Disability Services website contains general information to support workers on a range of impairments including dyslexia: <http://www1.uwe.ac.uk/students/studysupport/disabilityservices>

# Is training available?

Support workers will have to complete the induction and training programme, but may start work before completing the training. We encourage all support workers to attend the training.

Our induction and training programme provides basic disability equality training and guidance on roles and responsibilities. All blocks of training are 2 hours long and will be offered in Sept/Oct and possibly again in Jan/Feb depending on demand.

Induction and Health & Safety will cover all the basic processes associated with being a Support Worker, e.g. how to complete your timesheets.

Disability Equality will explore the barriers that disabled people face, with a particular focus on disabled students, considering both barriers to study and how disabled students may be excluded from the wider student experience.  This session will examine our use of language around disability and will help us to begin to understand how the words we use can shape our attitudes and behaviour towards others.

The Introduction to Support Work will help you to understand the role of a support worker and how to avoid or deal with many of the situations you may face.

The Notetaking sessions will cover some of the skills you are likely to need as a notetaker: taking notes in different styles, different formats, dealing with diagrams etc.

The Final Review Session is an opportunity to reflect on the previous sessions and to make links between the theory and your work as a Support Worker at UWE.

Support Workers will be paid to attend the induction and training.