

Anticipatory duty

Planning ahead to meet disabled students' needs

The University has an equality duty to not just respond to student need, but to anticipate needs wherever possible. We must think ahead about the common barriers to study anyone within a cohort might experience and remove them, without reference to the needs of specific students.

This means that no part of the University should wait until it is asked to consider what adjustments should be made, but should be ready where feasible with solutions to overcome disadvantages. This creates a more inclusive environment for all students and can also contribute to a greater sense of belonging for disabled students, who feel that the learning environment has been planned to include them from the beginning, without special accommodations needing to be made.

The disability lead in each unit has a responsibility to ensure that accessibility, inclusivity and the need to take anticipatory action is properly incorporated into the planning cycle.

See the [Roles and responsibilities: Disability Leads and Disability Coordinators](#) page for more information.

This is also a more strategic approach in the long-term because it will reduce the need to make individual adjustments which can be required at short notice or at significant cost.

For instance, if a college which has steps up to its entrance admits a student with mobility difficulties, it will need to provide a step-free alternative route. Where this does not already exist, the college may need to invest additional human and financial resources into the issue – seeking planning permission, carrying out work at short notice – in order to ensure there is a step-free entrance in time for the new academic year. The additional resource implications of this work is avoided when a college anticipates that disabled people will need a step-free entrance and incorporate this requirement into a broader programme of work.

This principle applies to all areas of the University's services and infrastructure for students, including all teaching and learning activities.

Even when anticipatory adjustments are made to make the learning environment as accessible as possible, there will always be a need to make some adjustments for individual needs. See next section:

[Implementing a Student Support Plan.](#)

See [Teaching and learning: reasonable adjustments](#) for more information about inclusive teaching practice and anticipatory adjustments.

More information in carrying out anticipatory adjustments can be found in the Equality Challenge Unit's [Guidance on managing reasonable adjustments in higher education](#), and Chapter 7 of the [Equality Act 2010 Technical Guidance on Further and Higher Education](#).