



DISABILITY STATEMENT

“Put simply, we want to avoid a viewpoint which locates the difficulty or deficit with the student and focus instead on the capacity of the educational institution to understand and respond to the individual learner’s requirement”

*Professor John Tomlinson
“Inclusive Learning – Principles and Recommendations”
FEFC 1996*

Chelmsford College is a statutory corporation pursuant to the 1992 Further and Higher Education Act

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About this statement

Each year the College is required by Law to review its policy statement on the support available for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

This document outlines what is available to students and how the services that they need can be obtained. It further provides information relating to the broader issues surrounding the College's commitment to this area of its work.

The policy statement is reviewed annually by the College's Equal Opportunities Committee and will be updated to take account of new legislation. It can be made available as enlarged text, in Braille or audio form. Copies are held at the Reception area on both College sites and in the Learning Centres. In addition this guide can be read and explained to those students who would prefer this service.

Overall Policy

The College aspires to the view that "Wherever practicable there should be no combinations of learning difficulties or disabilities sufficient to debar the individual from personal enhancement through further education."

This precept is fundamental to the belief that Chelmsford College promotes equal opportunities to all members of the Community.

Chelmsford College aims for excellence through five essential values. Included within these are "Opportunities for all – providing breadth of provision and range of progression opportunities" and "Supporting the individual – identifying specific needs and tailoring the programme for individuals"

All students are subject to the entry requirements set out in the prospectus, and we will make every effort to provide reasonable adjustments to help each student to achieve his or her qualification aim. However, there may be occasions when the College is not the most appropriate provider and we will therefore refer students either to advice and guidance or to other providers.

Identification of Need

Students will be asked to describe any particular needs, disabilities, learning difficulties or medical conditions which might affect their work at College. This information will be used to help us support the learner. It will be passed on to tutors and others involved with the learner's consent.

If a learner does not wish this information to be passed on, we may not be able to give appropriate additional support. Learners will be asked to sign a statement to the effect that this information may be disclosed to others.

If a learner feels that he/she has an individual need, he/she is asked to make this known to the College as soon as possible. There are a variety of opportunities to do this and an appointment can be requested before applying for a course. This can be done by ticking the appropriate box when completing an application form before interview. If this is done, the learner will be sent an individual needs questionnaire.

When this is returned, an interview will be arranged for him/her, if appropriate. During this interview, the nature, extent and level of support that is required is assessed. Details of the

support that can be offered are discussed and agreed. This is recorded through a signed written record of the initial assessment interview which is given to tutors and relevant support staff. The interview is conducted with sensitivity and information is held in compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

These referral procedures may delay the processing of the application. However, they are considered necessary to ensure that the College is able to meet the additional support needs of the learners.

Referral can also take place at any time after enrolment but learners are strongly encouraged to make any particular needs known as soon as possible so that support can be planned and needs responded to quickly.

These procedures are not a mechanism by which the College seeks to exclude certain categories of student.

Support is an entitlement of all learners.

Educational Facilities & Support

Support is provided in the classroom, in our Skills Development Centres and our Dyslexia support rooms

Support available includes

- Learning support assistant. 1:1 or small group support
- Personal care
- Communication Support Worker/Note taker
- Dyslexia support tutors
- Literacy and Numeracy specialist support tutors
- Mentor
- Dyslexia software including text help
- Enlarged print
- Magnifiers. Portable and fixed
- Braille printer facilities
- Specific assistive technology requirements can be discussed with ALS manager.

In addition there are Skills Development Centres, which operate on a formal or drop in basis, providing literacy and/or Numeracy & ESOL support. Wherever necessary, tutors are advised on the best means of providing an appropriate learning experience to the student. Fundamental to this is the belief that support can be the mechanism by which students achieve their potential.

The progress of students is reviewed regularly and the Support Services can assist in the diagnosis and remediation of individual problems whilst on programme.

Further, the College welcomes non-traditional students who require help from a befriender or “buddy”. Mechanisms for this may be explored through the Learning Support Manager who is regularly in contact with local support groups.

Learners themselves are the College’s greatest resource and we believe that they are best able to identify their own needs. Both access and services for people with disabilities are the subject of ongoing review and development in line with legislation such as SENDA and the Disability Discrimination Act Part 4, Disability Equality Duty, national trends and local requirements.

The College has a team of specialist Dyslexia Support tutors, led by the Dyslexia Support Co-ordinator, who provide individual dyslexia support programmes.

The College acknowledges the contributions that can be made by both voluntary and statutory agencies and seeks to work closely with other agencies to offer a comprehensive package of support to individual students.

Wherever practicable, items of equipment to support learning will be supplied to individual students for the duration of their stay at the College. These remain the property of the College and it is expected that due care will be taken of these articles.

Items include

- Lap-tops
- Dictaphones
- Alpha Smart
- Dana

The teaching staff at the College have broad experience of education and training and have a professional responsibility to render the curriculum as accessible as possible to all their learners. There are also members of staff who have specialised in the education of students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities. The College employs a number of Learning Support Assistants who are assigned to facilitate the learning goals of individual students.

Staff & Staff Development

To assist staff to build upon their expertise, “Chelmsford College aims to be responsive to the needs of students and other clients both actual and potential, in a changing environment. In order to meet these needs it is necessary to mobilise fully the talents of the staff. The aim of the staff development policy is to help ensure that the staff are efficient and effective in their work and able to support the growth and development of the College. In doing so their job satisfaction and career development should be enhanced.”

(Staff Development Policy)

Complaints & Appeals Procedures

It is the aim of the College to provide all its students and clients with a high quality service. However, from time to time problems do occur. Students have the right to pursue the resolution of any difficulties and the College will undertake to respond to their complaint with care and concern. In the unlikely event that difficulties continue to exist the ‘Appeals Procedure’ will enable learners to appeal against an internal assessment decision that they believe to be inaccurate. Appeals against external assessment decisions will be dealt with in accordance with the regulations of the awarding body.

For further information please refer to the College Charter and the Appeals Procedures Document which is available from Client Services.

Equal Opportunities Policy

Chelmsford College recognises that there are abilities in all members of the community. We seek to ensure that all at the College feel valued and able to fulfil their potential.

1.1 The College believes education should be available for all who can benefit from it.

- 1.2 The College will endeavour to ensure equality of opportunity to all students and staff regardless of age, race, disability, mental health, gender, sexual-orientation, marital status, nationality or faith.
- 1.3 The College will strive to ensure that all participants in the educational process are aware that they have a legal and moral duty to play their part in this.
- 1.4 Action will be taken to avoid any form of unlawful discrimination, paying due attention to all relevant legislation.

Copies of the full policy are available from the Learning Centres and Faculty Offices. All learners receive a summary version of the policy and an audio version for non-readers is available from Client Services. The policy is also available in the Official Documents section of the Intranet

This is one of a number of policy statements which serve to remind us all that diversity in our society is a strength and we must ensure equality and equity.

Examination Arrangements

The College is committed to ensuring that exam concessions are obtained for each student requiring this service when this facility has been clearly recommended by an Educational Psychologist, specialist dyslexia staff or a Medical Consultant. It is the responsibility of the student to inform his/her tutor and the Learning Support Manager, through the Individual Needs Questionnaire, of the concessions requested. This should be done at the earliest opportunity, as a late application for additional support/concessions may jeopardise the ability of the College to implement an effective and beneficial strategy for the student.

Further it must be emphasised that failure to disclose significant information may also serve to detract from the quality of service available to the learner.

If you don't tell us we will not be able to help.

Other Relevant Facilities & Support

The College has procedures for ensuring that welfare, guidance and careers advice are available. Further details of these facilities and others are contained in the Student Handbook.

Physical Accommodation & Access

All areas of the College are physically accessible in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act part 4.

This includes

- WCs and hoist on both sites for students with mobility difficulties
- Ramps for wheelchair users
- Auto doors to main entrances at Moulsham Street and Princes Road
- Stairway nosings and tactile paving at Moulsham street for the visually impaired
- Hand rails at Moulsham Street
- Several internal doors widened to accommodate wheelchairs
- New lift for Sports Centre
- Sports Centre showers upgraded to include shower area for wheelchair users
- Evac Chairs

- Additional disabled parking at both sites
- Pagers linked to fire alarms at all sites for hearing impaired learners
- Induction loops in arrange of classrooms at both sites, plus all reception areas and learning centres

Sources of Funding

The College has access to a range of funding sources including the Learning and Skills Council at national and local levels and the European Social Fund. Different agencies apply different criteria and therefore provide for differing needs. Detailed information about the funding available to provide additional support can be discussed during the admissions procedure.

Additional Learning Support Process

Pre-Entry

As part of the admissions process, potential learners for full-time and part time courses are asked to disclose individual needs through indicating on the application form whether or not they have a learning difficulty/disability.

Learners who disclose needs at this stage are given/sent a confidential statement of individual needs questionnaire which they are asked complete. They are asked to indicate their main disability and/or learning difficulty (using ILR categories), give details of any support they have received in the past, any special arrangements for examinations and current support needs. These forms are returned to the Additional Learning Support Manager.

Learners, who identify a current support need, are then given appointments for an initial assessment interview with the Learning Support Manager. At this interview, the learner's needs are discussed and recommendations made for appropriate support provision. Learners are asked to agree at the start of the interview that, although kept securely and in confidence, any information disclosed will be shared with others on a need to know basis. Details of the initial assessment interview are recorded on a pro-forma which is signed by both the learner and the Support Manager. A copy is given to the learner, a copy is held by Support administration and a copy is sent to course tutor via the student wallet and via email for dissemination to the course team as appropriate. When the need for dyslexia support is identified, a copy is sent to the Dyslexia Support Co-ordinator. All relevant Additional Learning Support staff including Skills Development tutors are also sent a copy. Learner details are logged on SpirALS software

The pre-entry referral process is flexible – a learner may also be referred following initial advice and guidance or an initial interview. Initial assessment interviews begin in January for prospective learners who wish to attend college in the following September. This enables planning of support provision.

On programme

Learners are given another opportunity for disclosure at enrolment through indicating learning difficulty and/or disability and completing the individual needs questionnaire indicated above. They will then be offered an initial assessment interview if appropriate. Enrolment data is also checked on a regular basis to ensure that those learners who have identified a need are either receiving support or scheduled for an initial assessment interview.

Screening/initial assessment of literacy and numeracy and language [ESOL] levels for all full-time and appropriate part-time learners on new courses takes place during the induction period. Results

are reported to the Skills Development Centre team who then identify learners who should be referred for further assessment and a support programme. Personal/course tutors are asked to refer those learners who are identified by screening/initial assessment to the Skills Development Centres and when necessary to contact the Learning Support manager to arrange for in course support to be provided by a literacy/numeracy/ESOL specialist and/or support assistant. Learners can also self refer to the Skills Development Centres or can be referred at any point during the academic year. Returns for screening/initial assessment are monitored by the Support Manager and Heads of School/Department.

Details of individual learners support needs and provision are recorded on spirALS software which is used to track additional learning support and up dated on a weekly basis. Reconciliation of spirALS data with the ILR takes place on a monthly basis.

Learners following a support programme in the Skills Development Centre have targets set as part of their individual learning plan. These targets are reviewed once a term. All learners who receive additional support are asked to complete an end of year evaluation.