

Case Study 1

Don't wait, anticipate!

1. Has your Estate's Department recently conducted or commissioned an access audit? This is recommended as a good starting point in the process of making improvements. It would assist the institution with anticipating need and allow plans for improvement to be made and prioritised.
2. Is there a working group specifically dedicated to the area of improving the accessibility of the estate? If so, how effectively does it operate? Does it include the views of disabled students? Who/what committee does it report to? Does it have input into the institution's strategic planning process? What authority does it have to make decisions? How are budgets allocated?
3. On what basis is work prioritised? According to buildings which have greatest usage? Buildings which would be cheapest to make accessible? Buildings to which an existing student needs access?
4. Do you fully capitalise on the opportunity which is created by refurbishments?

Case Study 2

Management of Buildings

1. Where adaptations are difficult to introduce, how is the space managed to ensure maximum accessibility? Do those responsible for timetabling and room-booking systems have information about the accessibility of different rooms/buildings? Does this information include the presence of loop systems, other equipment and fixed or moveable seating?
2. Do timetabling/room-booking systems ensure that classes for students with mobility difficulties are held in accessible venues?
3. Do staff ensure that accessible entrances and toilets are kept open and operational? Do staff ensure that circulation routes within buildings are kept clear of obstructions that might inhibit the movement of those with mobility or visual impairment?
4. Do staff ensure that signs are kept up to date and in good order and that light bulbs are replaced in a timely way?
5. Are staff trained in how to make adaptations and respond to disabled students' needs?

Case Study 3

Making Individual Adjustments

1. Are there systems in place for making specific adjustments for an individual student? Do staff/students know how to make such requests and to whom?
2. Is there a budget set aside for making individual adjustments? Does this include a contingency for last-minute/unforeseen adjustments? Whose authority is needed for this budget to be used in individual cases? What happens if an adjustment is required for a student but this budget has already been spent?
3. Are the following adaptations possible?
 - Adaptations to students rooms to improve accessibility, including installing hoists, flashing doorbells/fire alarm systems?
 - Allocating parking spaces in a staff car park for a student who may have mobility difficulties but does not have a badge to access the wide-bay spaces? How are the wide-bay spaces managed? Are there enough of them and are they in appropriate locations?
 - Can students be provided with keys/swipe cards to side entrances if that is a means of providing level access?

Case Study 4

Buildings with Special Status

1. The fact that premises are owned by someone else or are subject to other regulations does not mean that the institution has no responsibility to make adjustments. Does your Estates Department seek permission from freeholders/landlords to make adjustments? Would your department negotiate conditions imposed by landlords on adjustments?
2. Similarly, the fact that a building has listed building status does not remove the institution's responsibility to make adjustments. Does your Estates Department consider the options for making adjustments to listed buildings? Do you liaise with the relevant authorities to negotiate permission to make adjustments? Do you ensure that adjustments to these buildings are sensitive to historic or aesthetic requirements as well as access?
3. Where a particular adjustment might jeopardise health and safety, do you consider the possibility of alternative adjustments, even if these may be considered to be 'lesser adjustments'?

Case Study 5

Staff Development is a Defence in Law

1. Have staff training needs on disability and the Act been assessed?
 - Is there a strategy to meet expressed needs?
2. Do all staff (including part-timers, temporary and contract workers) know their responsibilities under the Act?
 - Do staff and agents' contracts make clear what is expected regarding treatment of disabled students?
 - Do they know how to avoid discriminating against disabled students?
 - Are procedures in place to ensure that discriminatory treatment is picked up on and dealt with appropriately?
 - Do departments have the funds to provide staff with the necessary training to be able to identify and implement reasonable adjustments?
 - Do review and appraisal procedures address staff training needs on disability issues; and reward staff appropriately for innovative practice or high quality service in this area?