



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

Accessibility: If you need this document in a different format, please contact Quality Assurance on qa@iis.ac.uk. If a student has difficulty at any stage of the procedure because of a disability, they should discuss the situation with Student Services as soon as possible.

The Institute of Ismaili Studies

Student Accessibility Policy

1 Our commitment to accessibility

- 1.1 The Institute of Ismaili Studies (the IIS) is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for all in line with Equality Act 2010.¹ We aim to nurture a learning and working environment that enables everyone to participate fully in the mainstream of institutional life, ensuring equal opportunities, diversity and inclusivity are guiding principles in our pursuit of academic excellence.
- 1.2 We are actively working towards increasing the accessibility and usability of our resources (including our website) and therefore aim to adhere to available standards and guidelines.
- 1.3 Our intention is that all our students will be enabled to access buildings, facilities and the teaching and learning experience they need, to support their success. Where users experience difficulty in accessing resources, Student Services should be informed.

2 Scope

- 2.1 The focus of this accessibility policy is disability support. This policy applies to current students and where relevant the policy will apply to prospective students. This policy applies to all validated provision at the IIS. Agreements with external providers who administer part, or all, of a validated programme may specify alternative arrangements for academic appeals; in some cases, the policy of the external provider shall supersede this policy. Quality Assurance can provide guidance on how to access all the aforementioned documents (email: qa@iis.ac.uk).
- 2.2 Definition of disability: Disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities (Equality Act 2010). Long-term means a condition that has lasted

¹ Information on the Equality Act 2010, which informs our approach to accessibility, is available with specific reference to technical guidance on further and higher education [here](#). Further information about equality law is provided [here](#).

for at least twelve months, it is likely to last at least 12 months or longer, or may even last for the rest of the person's life. People who have had a disability in the past are covered, which may be particularly relevant for people with fluctuating and/or recurring impairments. There are many kinds of disability, some more widely understood and visible than others. Many people may have a disability or long-term health condition that is covered by the Equality Act 2010 without even realising it.

2.3 A disability can arise from a wide range of impairments, including (but not limited to) the following:

- Sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing
- Impairments with fluctuating or recurring effects such as depression, rheumatoid arthritis, chronic fatigue syndrome (ME) and epilepsy
- Progressive conditions, such as motor neurone disease, muscular dystrophy, forms of dementia
- Organ specific conditions, including respiratory problems, such as asthma, and cardiovascular diseases, including thrombosis, stroke and heart disease
- Cancer, HIV/AIDs, Multiple Sclerosis (MS) are covered from the point of diagnosis, even if symptoms have yet to occur
- Specific learning differences, such as Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC)
- Dyslexia and Dyspraxia
- Mental health conditions, such as schizophrenia, eating disorders, bipolar affective disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, personality disorders.
- Depressive illnesses can amount to disabilities where they are long-term.

2.4 **Reasonable adjustment:** A reasonable adjustment is defined as a decision taken by the relevant department to allow reasonable changes to be made to standard arrangements for students in relation to their study. This may entail providing equipment or changing the study environment or facilities available to allow students to thrive. Reasonable adjustments will also apply to those applying to the relevant department for study. Please note that where possible, the department will make adjustments within its institutional capacity, although it may not be possible to accommodate all requests.

2.5 **Legislative context: Equality Act 2010:** Disability is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 and the IIS will abide by it and recognise the need to

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by or under that Act
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The role of the departments: All staff delivering courses are expected to be aware of this policy, the legal framework and how to respond to students with disabilities, in

accordance with these provisions. In particular, the Student Services Manager, the Head of Department of Graduate Studies, or other relevant Heads of Department and will be responsible for ensuring that the policy and legal framework are communicated.

- 3.2 The role of Student Services: Students can disclose any disability to Student Services; a discussion will then take place about disability-related reasonable adjustments or other support that may be required. The Student Services team will liaise, if necessary, with a respective Programme Leader; the Academic Skills Support Team, the Building Management Team and any external occupational health consultants. Students can seek advice or disclose their disability via their Academic Advisors, Programme Leaders or the Academic Skills Support Team if they prefer.
- 3.3 Disclosed information will be treated in the strictest confidence, and will only be shared with permission from the student. Student Services are able to help students inform their Academic Advisors, teachers or Programme Leaders of their needs without necessarily disclosing the nature of their disability. Communication with tutors can be facilitated by arranging a Learning Support Agreement, please see 4.2.
- 3.4 The role of the student: Disclosing a disability to the Institute is a personal matter and each student may decide for themselves whether or not to disclose, as well as when they do so. Students have no obligation to disclose a disability to the Department. There is a limit to the support we can provide if disability has been unofficially disclosed. If a disability is officially disclosed, this will allow the Department to explore opportunities to implement appropriate support. This could include, where appropriate:
- alternative exam arrangements (for example, additional time)
 - availability of screen readers
 - provision of lecture notes
 - consideration of alternative forms of assessment.
- 3.5 As part of any reasonable adjustments, students can choose to bring someone to accompany them at meetings to provide extra support if required.
- 3.6 The role of the Programme Leaders, Academic Advisors, Academic Skills Support Team and Building Management Team: Staff will assist the Student Services Team with regards to providing reasonable adjustments.

4 Prospective students

- 4.1 Application: The IIS welcomes applications from prospective students with disabilities. Specific enquiries or concerns from prospective students regarding disability will be considered by Student Services. Knowing prospective students' individual needs in advance will assist us in making appropriate provisions for the admission stages. This information will not be disclosed to the admissions team without a student's permission.
- 4.2 Applicant interviews: Arrangements can be made for anyone who may have any additional requirements during the interview and/or the entrance test that may be

necessary as part of the admissions process. All students have an additional opportunity to disclose disabilities and learning needs at interview or at enrolment.

- 4.3 All applications will be assessed on the basis of academic suitability for the programmes in question. Discussions about the support requirements of students will be separate from any academic decision. Criteria and procedures used for selecting students will relate to the requirements of the programme, including any professional and statutory body requirements. All places for taught programmes are open to all suitably qualified applicants who can assure the admissions team they can meet the learning outcomes regardless of disability.

5 Current students

- 5.1 Learning opportunities: The Institute will ensure that students with disabilities will have access to the full range of support services, appropriate to their needs, which are available to their nondisabled peers. Where existing services cannot be made accessible, the Institute will make reasonable alternative services and arrangements available.
- 5.2 Learning Support Agreement: The Department will ensure that students with disabilities will have a Learning Support Agreement in place (where applicable). The Department will also put Learning Support Agreements in place for students with temporary medical conditions that do not have a long-term effect (and therefore cannot be covered by the Equality Act 2010) but nonetheless may impede access to education on an equal basis. For example, a broken arm which affects the student's ability to write in an exam. Please read this document in conjunction with the Mitigating Circumstances policy, which may be more appropriate in certain circumstances.
- 5.3 A Learning Support Agreement is a document that contains key information about student needs, and ensures that they will not have to rearticulate those needs repeatedly to different staff members. Where students need support, it may be necessary to provide some limited details about their disability/ condition to help staff members understand their needs. This would only be after a student's agreement to share the information with relevant staff on a need-to-know basis, and after a Learning Support Agreement had been outlined.
- 5.4 The initial assessment for the Learning Support Agreement will be carried out jointly by the Academic Skills Support Team and a senior member of Student Services. If the team deems it necessary to consult an expert in a specific case, an external occupational health consultant will be used. If a student needs to discuss a temporary medical condition which may affect their studies, they should contact either the Programme Leader, the Student Services Manager or the Academic Support Programmes Manager who will discuss their concerns with them to better understand their needs. The Academic Management Committee will provide further advice and in some cases, an external expert may need to advise. After receiving the recommendations for the student, the Student Services Manager and the Academic Skills Support Team will develop an agreement in consultation with the student.

- 5.5 Programme teaching and learning materials: Teaching and learning materials (e.g. Module Outlines, required readings and marking criteria) are reviewed before teaching each year and are available in accessible formats before the beginning of the teaching term. This gives students the opportunity to consider the requirements of the module before teaching begins and, where necessary, raise with staff any questions or concerns.
- 5.6 Teaching and assessment for the module are designed to be inclusive and can be made available and accessible for all students in order to cater to multiple learning styles and our student body's diverse social, linguistic, geographical and disciplinary backgrounds.
- 5.7 Students with a disability/disabilities that may affect their learning are fully supported to achieve equality of opportunities for success in their studies. Students are encouraged to discuss their needs with Student Services.
- 5.8 Academic trips: The Institute will ensure that, wherever possible, students with disabilities have equal opportunities to access academic trips, including overseas field trips/teacher-training assignments. The Institute may seek further guidance in cases where a student requires additional support on these trips/assignments.
- 5.9 Assessment and examinations: All assessments should provide students with disabilities the same opportunities to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes as their peers. To this end, a student may require reasonable adjustments which may include extra time, separate invigilation, special seating and/or alternative assessments.
- 5.10 Progression and continuation on the programme: Where studying is disrupted as a direct result of a disability, the student may require reasonable adjustments to their assessments, etc. The Institute will ensure that the student is provided with the relevant documentation to allow them to apply for reasonable adjustments through the normal channels and, as far as is reasonably practicable, that the student's academic progress is not compromised. The Institute will make reasonable efforts to ensure a student can continue their programme of study. Where appropriate evidence is provided and the relevant regulations followed to agree the delayed completion of assessed work, non-attendance at examinations, deferral or withdrawal, which has been due to a disability-related cause, the Institute will ensure that this is recorded in non-prejudicial terms in all academic progress files and appropriate adjustments will be made.

6 Complaints and Appeals

- 6.1 The Institute has in place regulations to deal with complaints and appeals arising directly or indirectly from a student disability. Please see the Student Complaints Policy.

7 Document Control

Version	Role / Activity	Person(s) responsible	Date
Version 1	Document Owner	AMC	July 2018
	Author	Student Services Manager	July 2018
	Reviewer	Academic Support Programmes Manager	July 2018
	Consultation	HR	August 2018
	Approval	AMC	Sept 2018
	Evaluation and review	AMC	June 2019
	Amendments as necessary	AMC	June 2019
Version 2	Author	QA&E and AMC	August 2022
	Approval	Academic Council	September 2022
	Due for Review	Teaching & Learning Committee	