

Applicants with disability specific needs in relation to college membership, accommodation and / or accessing an academic programme of study

At Durham University, we are proud of our excellent student support provision. We aim to provide an inclusive, welcoming and supportive service and our support network is designed to ensure that wherever you access support, you receive an informed and efficient response.

We encourage applicants with disability related needs to provide all relevant information to our support team as early as possible in the application process. This enables us to fully assess your needs and provide any reasonable adjustments necessary for you to engage with your studies, in a timely manner and in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.

Occasionally, we receive additional disclosures not pertaining to disability-related support. As a service, Disability Support are unable to process any recommendations or requests in relation to non-disability specific circumstances but wherever possible, any request of this nature will be referred appropriately to the relevant team in the University.

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How to let us know about your disability related needs

Every applicant holding an offer from Durham University will automatically receive an email from our student support team inviting completion of our Disability Disclosure Form. This will happen when our process opens in March To ensure disability related needs can be met, it is essential that applicants disclose their requirements when requested and by no later than 30th June, so that our team can assess applicants' needs in relation to college membership and accommodation, as well as specific academic programmes.

As an applicant, if you do not provide relevant information by 30th June, but do so at a later stage, while every attempt will be made to accommodate your needs

promptly, the University cannot guarantee that all required adjustments will be in place in time for you to commence your studies.

As part of the process for college membership and accommodation, applicants are asked to rank preferences for college membership. You will also be asked to confirm whether you wish to apply for college accommodation. Any disability related information provided as part of the Disability Disclosure Form will potentially inform decision making around college membership and accommodation, in line with the University's legal duty.

We strongly recommend that you take some time to review college website information and read through our college-specific AccessAble guides before submitting any college preferences. This will enable you to make an informed preference submission, having reflected on accessibility provision and support available in our respective colleges. Please note that several Durham colleges are historic buildings and therefore some aspects of accessibility may differ from site to site.

Providing permission for a third party (i.e. parent) to speak to us about your application

You can inform us (in writing to disability-support@durham.ac.uk) that you wish a parent or supporter to be copied into our discussions with you. Without this written permission from you, we are unable to discuss your application with anyone except you. This permission applies only to the applicant stage of your admissions process and is specific to your disability support discussions. In providing permission, you are providing your consent for Disability Support to speak with the named individual about any aspect of your disability support, while you are an applicant. You can withdraw this permission at any time by contacting disability-support@durham.ac.uk in writing. Please note that this permission only relates to Disability Support discussions and is not applicable to other departments or processes of the University

College membership and accommodation

If the nature of your disability necessitates provision of specific adjustments in relation to access and / or accommodation, please ensure that you inform us as soon as possible. If you do not provide relevant information when it is requested and by no later than 30th June, the University cannot guarantee that a suitable room will be available upon commencement of your programme. Requests for adjustments submitted at very short notice will be considered but cannot be guaranteed as college and accommodation allocations will have already been made.

Once your disability related needs have been assessed in terms of your college membership and accommodation allocation, and decisions made in relation to any adjustments required, this will be communicated to you. This information will be shared with the University's College Membership & Accommodation team who will then communicate with you regarding your college membership and accommodation.

While the University endeavours to meet college preferences, it is a legal requirement for the University to ensure that you are safe and not disadvantaged by your college membership or accommodation allocation. Following completion of the Disability Disclosure Form, where your accommodation needs are determined by the University to require a specific room type or location, and these needs cannot reasonably be met by your preliminarily allocated college, the University reserves the right to reallocate your college membership to a college that can best meet your needs. College membership allocation is made at the sole discretion of the University and if reallocation is deemed necessary by the University, the decision is final.

How your disclosure and supporting documentation are assessed

Any information you submit as an applicant shall be handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and as set out in the [University's Privacy Policy](#)

For the purposes of the Disability Disclosure Form, information submitted is assessed by a team of support practitioners working under the oversight of the University's Disability Support department. Where any applicant request is deemed to be not required by the assessor on disability needs grounds, this request is escalated for second review to an alternative assessor who has no prior knowledge of your information. If both reviewers agree with the decision, this decision is confirmed as final and is communicated to you. If the reviewers differ in their decisions, the request will be escalated to the Head of Disability Support for final confirmation. Once a decision is confirmed as final, there is no opportunity for appeal. There is no complaint process available to applicants and / or third parties in relation to the DDF process; if an applicant subsequently registers as a student at the University and remains dissatisfied with some aspect of their experience after they commence their programme, they can access the University's student complaints process at that stage.

Once all information has been assessed and a decision confirmed as final, this process will not be repeated. However, we recognise that in a small number of cases, medical or disability related needs may change after a final decision has been confirmed to you. If you feel this applies to you and you have recent supporting documentation (not already supplied previously) to confirm this change in circumstance, please contact disability-support@durham.ac.uk for further discussion, stating 'Change to Disability Disclosure Form' as the subject header. A member of the Disability Support Team will then contact you directly. Please note that we receive an extremely high volume of emails over the summer; we will respond as soon as we are able to do so.

Learning and teaching on your academic programme

The Disability Disclosure Form provides an opportunity for you to inform us of any disability related needs and this information will also be assessed by our Disability Support team in relation to your academic programme. This allows us to ensure that any necessary adjustments can be put in place so that you can access your programme. If the team require any additional information from you, they will contact you directly and discuss your needs further.

Supporting documentation

To make any adjustment in response to a disclosure made to the University, we require approved supporting documentation to be submitted alongside your disclosure. Any applications submitted without supporting documentation will still be considered, however provision of adjustments will be subject to receipt of supporting documentation; if supporting documentation is provided at a very late stage, the University cannot guarantee that all adjustments will be in place at the commencement of your studies.

If supporting documentation is not provided prior to your arrival at the University, the University may not be able to accommodate you appropriately. If you are experiencing difficulties in obtaining supporting documentation, please contact disability-support@durham.ac.uk and an Adviser will be happy to discuss this further with you. Please note that we experience extremely high numbers of emails over the summer period; we will respond as swiftly as we are able to do so.

Approved supporting documentation should meet the following criteria:

- Be written in English
- Clearly indicate that the information provided pertains to you – i.e. any documentation should include confirmation of your name and any other relevant personal details.
- Be written on official headed/stamped paper from a professional body/practitioner
- Health related requests must be provided by a medical professional (GP, consultant, specialist nurse) and should clearly state your diagnosis and detail the impact of your health issues on a day-to-day basis.

If you are requesting a specific room type, your needs will be assessed by the University based on the information you provide and any approved supporting documentation.

You can find additional guidance around supporting documentation here: [Supporting Documentation for Disability Support](#)

Specific accommodation adjustments available

While accommodation adjustments will sometimes differ for individual applicants, the Disability Disclosure Form provides a brief list of adjustments that are typically requested by applicants each year. If the adjustment you require is not listed, please don't worry; there is a free text box included where you can provide more information for us to assess.

The University is currently producing new guidance on Assistive Service Animals. This will be published on our webpages as soon as it is completed. If you are an applicant with a registered service animal, please contact disability-support@durham.ac.uk and we will be happy to discuss your needs further.

Durham University is committed to supporting applicants who may experience financial difficulties relating to additional en-suite accommodation charges being incurred because of a disability need. Please see [here](#) for further information.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) & Emergency Medical Conditions

Applicants are provided an opportunity within the Disability Disclosure Form to inform the University of any disability / medical condition that may mean they cannot evacuate a university building independently and quickly, in the event of a fire or other emergency.

If you feel this may be applicable to you, please indicate this at the relevant stage of the form, and you will be contacted to discuss the creation of a **Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan**; this will be created for both accommodation (if appropriate) and learning and teaching venues and will provide you with a personalised plan for evacuation in the event of an emergency situation.

The Disability Disclosure Form will also ask you to identify any **emergency medical conditions**. By this, we mean any medical condition that may require emergency intervention, for example:

- an allergy potentially causing anaphylactic shock and requiring use of an EpiPen or medical intervention;
- A medical condition potentially causing seizures;
- A medical condition that may potentially involve loss of consciousness.

This is not an exhaustive list. If you believe that this may be applicable to you, please indicate your needs clearly on the Disability Disclosure Form and you will be contacted to ensure that we can provide any reasonable adjustments in relation to this. Your safety is our primary concern so please make sure you provide all relevant information to enable us to assess your needs fully.

Accommodation adjustments we cannot provide

Please note that the University is unable to provide:

- alcohol free accommodation
 - accommodation solely occupied by vegetarian / vegan occupants, or those with a specific dietary preference
 - a guarantee of 'quiet' accommodation; while some colleges are smaller than others, all offer communal residential communities and as such, have associated, reasonably expected noise as standard
 - recommendations for college transfers in relation to applicant preference, for example, a desire to be accommodated with friends or closer to academic departments. Teaching takes place across our campus and Disability Support do not typically make any recommendations for accommodation or college membership based on a request to be closer to other individuals or a certain location.
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We hope that this information has been helpful to you during your application to Durham University. If you have not been able to find the disability related information you require, please see [Disability Support - Durham University](#) for more information or contact Disability Support at disability-support@durham.ac.uk / 0191 3348115.