

About This Document

This is the full text of the University of Wolverhampton Disability Equality Scheme; a demonstration of the University's commitment to promoting equality for disabled people.

A summary version of this document is also available upon request.

Both this full version and the summary version are available in a variety of alternative formats upon request, such as electronic, Braille or large print.

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Acronyms used in this document

CSU	Communication Support Unit
DAG	Disability Advisory Group
DCO	Disability Consultative Officer
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DES	Disability Equality Scheme
DRC	Disability Rights Commission
ELSG	Equality Legislation Steering Group
EO	Equal Opportunities
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
SEC	Student Enabling Centre
SECM	Student Enabling Centre Manager
SENDA	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001
UQC	University Quality Committee

A – Introduction

1. This is the full text of the University of Wolverhampton Disability Equality Scheme (DES); a demonstration of the University's commitment to promoting equality for disabled people.
2. The Disability Equality Scheme was reported to the Board of Governors on 23 November and approved by the University Executive on Monday, 27 November 2006. Executive has responsibility for the overall management of the University and is therefore responsible for approving documents of this type.
3. The scheme has been written in response to the new Disability Equality Duty, introduced by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005.
4. This legislation places the following new duties on all public sector bodies, including the University.

A general duty¹ to have regard, when carrying out its functions, to the need to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Act
- eliminate disability-related harassment
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life; and
- take steps to take account of disabled persons' impairments, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other persons².

5. A specific duty to produce a Disability Equality Scheme, outlining how it intends to comply with the above general duty.

6. The following regulatory constraints also apply:

- the DES must be published by 4 December 2006 (reg.2(6))
- the DES must include³ details of:
 - the way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the Scheme
 - methods for impact assessment
 - a three year action plan
 - arrangements for gathering information in relation to employment, delivery of education and other functions
 - arrangements for putting the information gathered to use
 - an annual up-date report

¹ Ref DDA 2005 s.49A

² From 'The Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice – England and Wales', Disability Rights Commission 2006, currently posted at http://www.drc.gov.uk/Docs/Code_19_10_mp_marked.proofed_CA.doc or see www.drc.gov.uk

³ The Disability Discrimination (Public Authorities) (Statutory Duties) Regulations 2005, SI No. 2966, regs 2, 3 and 4

7. The DDA 2005 allows public bodies such as the University to publish a separate Disability Equality Scheme or to incorporate the information in a wider document, such as an Equality scheme covering all equality strands such as race, gender, disability, age, religion and sexual orientation.

8. At this stage the University has not yet made a long-term decision on whether to continue publishing separate equality schemes in response to the various current and future legislative requirements, or whether to publish a single equality scheme which incorporates all equality strands such as race, gender, disability, age, religion and sexual orientation. In this instance we have therefore published this Disability Equality Scheme as a single document in order to meet the deadline for publication of 4 December 2006.

What is meant by disability?

9. The legal definition of disability is currently the definition contained within the original DDA, which was passed in 1995;

10. 'Disability is a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

11. Since the introduction of this definition, a number of regulations have been passed to clarify its scope. The University acknowledges the problematic nature of this definition, particularly in relation to the social model of disability. More details of this political context are outlined in the next section of this document.

12. The University supports the definition of disability and associated terms as outlined in the Government document 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People'⁴.

13. 'Disability should be distinguished from impairment and ill health.

14. ...'Disability is defined as... disadvantage experienced by an individual resulting from barriers to independent living or educational, employment or other opportunities that impact on people with impairments and/or ill health.'

15. Impairment is described as a long-term characteristic of an individual which affects their functioning and / or appearance and may give rise to pain, fatigue or communication difficulties.

16. Ill health is described as the short-term or long term effect of disease or sickness⁵. Many people who have an impairment or ill health would not consider themselves to be disabled.

⁴ Improving the life chances of disabled people, Prime Minister's strategy Unit 2005, currently posted at http://www.strategy.gov.uk/downloads/work_areas/disability/disability_report/pdf/disability.pdf

17. However, we acknowledge that, like most other Higher Education Institutions, we need to bring about a cultural change within our institution to achieve a common understanding of disability, impairment and restricted health.

The University and its Vision

18. In 2004/5 the University had more than 23,000 students, 3.9% of whom had declared themselves to be disabled.

19. The University's new vision and mission statement encompasses the promotion of equality for disabled people and other groups that have been traditionally underrepresented in higher education.

20. 'The University of Wolverhampton is a learning community promoting excellence, innovation and creativity. It is committed to being:

- An agent for social inclusion and social change.
- An arena for the development of ideas and critical thinking.
- A strategic force driving educational and cultural strategy for the City and the region.
- An educational hub supporting the economy through employment, entrepreneurship, creativity, knowledge transfer, research and development.' (University of Wolverhampton draft strategic plan, 4 October 2006)

Equality and Diversity

21. The University's strategic priorities in relation to equality and diversity are outlined in Section 8 of the Strategic Plan;

22. 'The University has progressively put in place policies and plans to fulfil its positive duty to promote equal opportunities and to take active steps to prevent discrimination occurring. It will consolidate and embed these developments in the context of the anticipated single Equalities Act, which will standardise legislation across the six separate strands of the current framework (Race Relations; Disability; Sex Discrimination; Sexual Orientation; Religion or Belief; Age).

23. This will mean ensuring that:

- the University complies with the legislation and has strategies to address each of the six strands;
- there is training relevant to people's jobs which supports them to engage with equality and diversity issues;
- planning, monitoring and review processes are in place which provide informed evaluation of the effectiveness of the University's policies and plans;
- outcomes of impact assessments are reported and, where appropriate, acted upon.

Strategic objectives:

- Through support for equality and diversity, to become known as a leader in the sector.
- Maintain and enhance respectively the diversity of student and staff populations.
- Consolidate and embed the University's response to developments in the national diversity and equality legislative framework.'

24. Links between the various sections of the Disability Equality Scheme and the above strategic aims and objectives will be made throughout the document.

25. Issues for enhancement and development outlined in this scheme have been linked wherever possible to other strategic aims and objectives outlined in our strategic plan to ensure that equality issues are considered as part of the mainstream activities of the University.

26. Overall responsibility for development and implementation of the scheme and action plan rests with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who was allocated responsibility for equality and diversity issues within the University in early 2006 in recognition of his active support for this work over a number of years.

27. The scheme was drafted by the Student Enabling Centre Manager, who has responsibility for promoting equality for disabled people together with personal experience of disability, supported by key individuals and committees.

28. The involvement of disabled students and staff has formed, and will continue to form, a key principle in the development of this scheme.

29. Disabled staff representing a variety of impairment groups, schools and central services, have been involved at all stages of the production of this scheme. Thematic focus groups with disabled students have been piloted and will continue throughout the life of the scheme to inform our action plans and impact assessment priorities.

30. Plans are being developed to involve more disabled students, disabled applicants and disabled people from the wider community in the planning processes associated with the scheme.

31. We hope that our scheme demonstrates the University's commitment to being an agent of social inclusion and social change for disabled people.

32. This scheme should be seen as a documented continuation of our journey towards promoting equality for disabled people. We would welcome feedback on any aspect of the document, and hope that you will be able to engage with one of our future events, details of which will be made available on our website.

B – The social and political context

33. This section summarises some of the most significant changes in disability related legislation, societal perception of disabled people and other standards and initiatives, which have informed the University's actions in relation to disability policy and provision over the past 15 years.

34. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 was the first major piece of disability legislation to impact on the University in relation to its employment, service provision and education functions. In relation to employment and goods and services, the Act made it unlawful to discriminate unjustifiably against those disabled people who were covered by the DDA 1995 definition of disability. In relation to education, the DDA 1995 did not outlaw discrimination at this stage; it required educational establishments to produce a disability statement, outlining its policies and provision in relation to disabled students.

35. Although it was welcomed as an important step towards establishing antidiscrimination legislation in the area of disability, the DDA 1995 did not meet the expectations of those disabled people who were part of the disability movement.

36. In particular, the disability movement rejects the traditional approach to disability, which is often called the medical model, the tragedy model or the individual model of disability. Whichever term is used to describe the traditional approach, it is characterised by an assumption that the cause of the problem lies with the disabled person because s/he has an impairment that may result in a loss of ability to 'do normal things'.

37. Disabled people favoured a social model approach to disability that focuses on identifying and breaking down disability related barriers, whilst still acknowledging the functional loss associated with many impairments. As highlighted in the introduction to this document, the social model was recognised in the Government document 'Improving Life Chances of Disabled People'.

38. The social model is further re-enforced in the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) Code of Practice on the DDA 2005. 'The poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by many disabled people is not the inevitable result of their impairments or medical conditions, but rather stems from attitudinal and environmental barriers. This is known as 'the social model of disability....'⁵

39. The University supports the social model of disability and will consider ways in which it can be promoted.

40. The University has a number of academic materials on the social model of disability, which have been produced since the 1960s by disabled authors such as Mike Oliver and Vic Finkelstein.

⁵ The Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice, England and Wales, Disability Rights Commission 2005, paragraph 1.6, currently posted at http://www.drc.gov.uk/Docs/Code_19_10_mp_marked.proofed_CA.doc

41. Within the higher education context, the most significant publications relating to disability standards were published in 1999.

42. Firstly, the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) issued 'Guidance on base-level provision for disabled students in Higher Education Institutions'⁶, which outlined the funding council's minimum expectations on specific disability related policies and provision that should be in place within each higher education institution (HEI).

43. The base-level provision described presented a significant challenge to the University and to many other HEIs. Special initiative funding was provided to assist HEIs to meet the base-level provision. However, the University of Wolverhampton was not successful in accessing this funding.

44. Published in the same year was the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of Practice on disabled students⁷. This code has 24 challenging precepts covering the following:

- General Principles
- The physical environment
- Information for applicants, students and staff
- The selection and admission of students
- Enrolment, registration and induction
- Learning and teaching, including provision for research and other postgraduate students
- Examination, assessment and progression
- Staff Development
- Access to general facilities and support
- Additional specialist support
- Complaints
- Monitoring and evaluation

45. HEFCE established a performance indicator on disability and publishes annual details of universities' performance against the indicator⁸.

46. Within the legislative framework, a review of the DDA 1995 undertaken by a Disability Rights Taskforce in 1999⁹, resulted in the passing of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) in 2001.

47. SENDA formed the new Part 4 of the DDA 1995 and applies to all university activities that are provided wholly or mainly for students. The Act makes it unlawful for a responsible body to discriminate against disabled people or students.

⁶ See HEFCE 99_04, posted at http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/hefce/1999/99_04.htm.

⁷ QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in HE; Section 3: Students with Disabilities, posted at http://www.qaa.ac.uk/public/COP/COPswd/COPswd_textonly.htm.

⁸ See HEFCE circular letter 13/2002, posted at http://www.hefce.ac.uk/Pubs/Circlets/2002/cl13_02.htm

⁹ From Exclusion to Inclusion, posted at http://194.202.202.185/drtf/full_report/index.html. The Government's response to this report is posted at http://194.202.202.185/drtf/towards_inclusion/index.html.

Significant amendments to the DDA 1995 were introduced earlier this year, in September 2006.

48. The requirement to produce this scheme was introduced in 2005, following the passing of the new disability equality duty element of the DDA 1995.

The University of Wolverhampton context

49. The University of Wolverhampton is a teaching intensive university, which:

- provides high quality teaching and learning facilities, as confirmed by the institutional audit by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in 2005,
- has excelled in providing high quality education to students from diverse backgrounds,
- engages in social and economic development
- has an international profile and reputation, supporting over 1000 international students each year
- supports research in selected areas of strategic importance, including pedagogic research
- ensures that all academic staff engage in scholarship.

Developing specialist support

50. The successful development of the University's degree in British Sign Language (BSL) provided an ideal opportunity for the University to establish the Communication Support Unit (CSU) in 1993 to enable BSL users to study the degree of their choice at the University with the support of BSL/English interpreters. The University was the first higher education institution to make available BSL interpreters via a deaf support unit and the CSU quickly developed into a centre of excellence for this provision.

51. The University continued to develop its specialism in deaf support until 2000, when the new post of Student Enabling Centre Manager was created to develop co-ordinated specialist support services for other disabled students.

52. The Student Enabling Centre has developed to provide the following generic services:

- Direct student support
- Administration of the special admissions procedure for deaf applicants
- Outline assessment of needs to identify urgent support requirements
- Advice and guidance on applications for the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs)
- Recommendations on the adjustments to be made by the University
- Dissemination of information on support needs to responsible schools and/or departments
- Provision of specialist support workers

- Troubleshooting
- Loan of equipment
- Staff development
- Evaluation of the University's position against published codes and legislation
- Advice on disability-related matters
- Participation in key University committees and groups, such as the Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC), Equality Legislation Steering Group (ELSG), Disability Advisory Group (DAG), Safety Policy Committee and the Fire Strategy Group (FSG) (see paragraph Y).

53. The following University-level policies and guidance documents relate specifically to disability issues;

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Access Policy for Disabled People
- Procedure for Applicants Declaring a Disability
- Bullying and Harassment Policy
- Confidentiality and Necessary Disclosure of Disability-related Information
- Supporting Students with Mental Health Needs
- Principles Governing the Assessment of Disabled Students
- Guidelines on special examination arrangements
- Guidance on Assessing Deaf Students
- Dyslexia Assessment Policy
- Guidance Relating to Placements for Disabled Students

Improvements to the physical environment

54. On all its major building projects, either new – build or refurbishment, the University ensures that design teams have the necessary expertise to ensure that access issues are given appropriate consideration. Where that expertise is not evident, the University will commission an access audit to inform the design process.

55. In addition the University has recently introduced a process whereby representatives from the Student Enabling Centre are able to meet with Architects at the early stages of a project to advise further on accessibility.

56. In terms of minor works programmes, all Deans and Service Heads including the Dean of Students, who has responsibility for the Student Enabling Centre, are invited to bid annually for improvement works, which may include required improvements to access for disabled students, staff or visitors.

57. The minor works programme is ultimately agreed by the University Executive. When the programme is agreed the Student Enabling Centre will be invited to advise on detailed project implementation.

Staff with specific responsibility for disability issues

58. The following post holders within the University have specific responsibility for engaging with disability issues.

- The disability admissions adviser administers the University's specific admissions procedure for disabled applicants.
- In recognition of the need to progress an agenda for inclusivity, the University created a role within the Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) to work with schools to promote inclusive learning practices for all, including disabled students. This role is particularly significant since the post holder not only sits on the Equality and Diversity Committee, but also on the University Learning and Teaching Committee.
- In each of the University's academic schools and there is a designated member of academic staff with specific responsibility for advising on school-related disability issues and supporting the disabled students in the school. The role of these staff, currently called Special Needs Tutors (SNTs), was created a number of years before the development of centralised support services via the Student Enabling Centre (SEC).

59. In recent years, an important function of the SNT role has been to provide a link between SEC and schools of the University. This enables information on disability issues in general, policy development and consultation, and specific details of individual disabled students' support requirements to be communicated to schools via a specific contact. In schools where the strategic and policy oriented role of the SNT has been embraced, a two way dialogue is also facilitated.

60. From the disabled student perspective, the SNT should assist with implementing any adjustments required at school level and with troubleshooting should any difficulties arise.

61. The nature of the role of Special Needs Tutor has therefore evolved significantly over the years. Other factors, such as the increase in numbers of disabled students and the increase in numbers of students with significant support requirements, have also contributed to changes in the role.

62. Since 2001 the Student Enabling Centre has gathered substantial anecdotal evidence, supported by feedback through structured surveys, of the variability in disability related support at school level. Specifically, this issue was highlighted in the Student Enabling Centre surveys of dyslexic students in 2005 and 2006.

63. Since the appointment of the Student Enabling Centre Manager, a number of attempts have been made to reach agreement on a core set of tasks to be undertaken by the Special Needs Tutors (SNT). Unfortunately, this work has not yet been completed for a variety of reasons. The post holders have changed a number of times and the amount of time available for individual SNTs to engage with this development work and the role itself continues to vary significantly.

64. During 2006 the Disability Consultative Officer has been undertaking research to establish the current position for each SNT and the current matters that require addressing. This research has now been completed and the resulting report presented to the SNTs. Two SNTs have agreed to produce a paper for

consideration by senior management as a result of this work. During 2007 it is hoped that this work can be concluded to enable the University to achieve parity of experience across its schools.

Specific support for disabled staff

65. The Occupational Health Service of the Department of Risk Safety & Health is concerned with enabling the University to work towards a healthy and efficient workforce. Through health promotion, risk assessment and close liaison with all levels of staff and management, its aim is to encourage understanding of the effects of work on health and quality of life.

66. By facilitating a range of services Occupational Health Service aims to ensure that the University complies with all legislative requirements in relation to employee health and welfare, but also to affect attitudes of both employer and employee to be more pro-active in their approach to health, safety and welfare.

67. Specifically with regard to staff with impairments, all services are available and where appropriate are altered to meet their needs. Working closely with colleagues in Personnel Services and Schools and Service Departments, Occupational Health assists in the identification of appropriate adaptations. This will where appropriate included facilitating the Access to Work process; a scheme currently run by the Department for Work and Pensions to provide specific support to disabled people in employment.

Developing and Promoting the Disability Equality Agenda

68. Equal Opportunities and Fairness at Work is one of seven key strands of the University's HR Strategy and this is specifically expressed through the Personnel Services Department Diversity Action Plan in the following ways;

- The Plan includes provision for staff profiling and monitoring (including disability)
- There is also a range of standard training provision relating to diversity issues with a number of courses relating specifically to disability (see paragraph 69)
- Other training provided addresses how equality and diversity issues are incorporated into HR processes and policies and their application e.g. recruitment and selection; disciplinary & grievance; bullying & harassment
- The University is currently implementing impact assessment training to ensure all policy and strategy development, including HR, fully addresses all strands of diversity

69. The University's Corporate Staff Development Programme includes the following training programmes and courses;

- Disability Etiquette – Communicating Effectively with Disabled People
- Supporting Disabled Students – An introduction for new members of staff
- Disability legislation in HE – exploring the implications via a mock trial

- Policy/Legal Briefing on Disability (DDA)
- Admissions – Dealing with admissions for students with a disability
- Introduction to British Sign Language
- Introduction to Basic Deaf Awareness: Academic Staff
- Introduction to Basic Deaf Awareness: Support Staff
- Teaching and Assessing Deaf Students
- Dyslexia: Theory, Practice and Policy
- Understanding Dyslexia in HE

70. In recognition of the need to develop the University's mainstream policies and procedures in addition to specialist disability support services, a number of papers have been presented to key University committees by the Student Enabling Centre Manager.

71. In particular, an evaluation of the University's position against the standards outlined in Section 3 of the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) Code of Practice was presented to the University's Executive in early 2002.

72. In November 2002 a paper was presented to the University's Board of Governors, outlining the context in relation to disability standards and legislation. The paper further recommended the use of the evaluation of the QAA Code of Practice Section 3 as a development tool to enable the University to plan systematically to improve its performance against disability related standards and legislation.

73. Following approval from the Board of Governors, an annual update report is presented to the University Quality Committee, highlighting the improvements made during the previous year and outlining priorities for the coming year.

74. The process of developing disability related action plans is therefore already well established within the University and this work has been led to date by the Student Enabling Centre Manager, who is a disabled person. Nevertheless, we recognise that more specific action is required in relation to the wider involvement of disabled people in this process (see section C on involvement).

75. In relation to learning and teaching issues, the University's Equality and Diversity Committee has prioritised work to consider how equality issues could be incorporated more effectively within the curriculum. Funding for a specific project on this issue has been made available by LATEE, the Learning, Assessment and Teaching: Encouraging Engagement – a sub-group of the University's Centre of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). An interim report on the initial phase of this research is currently being compiled.

76. It is hoped that this project could make a major contribution to the promotion of disability equality within the curriculum, within mainstream subject areas in addition to the disability specific subjects currently taught by the University within the School of Education and the School of Humanities, Languages and Social Sciences.

University channels for specific discussion of disability related issues

77. We acknowledge the need to ensure that consideration of disability issues is embedded within all University structures. All schools and central services are required to consider disability issues as standing item within their committee structure.

78. The following paragraphs provide information on the specific committees, groups or individuals within the University with University-level responsibility for considering disability issues. This consideration may form part of the wider consideration of equality issues.

79. The University's Board of Governors includes a member with specific responsibility for equality issues.

80. The locus of senior management responsibility for equality issues falls within the responsibility of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

81. The Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator is responsible for the whole range of equality issues within the University, incorporating both staff and student issues.

82. Since 2000, disability related developments and policy issues have been undertaken by the Student Enabling Centre Manager, although this remit has not officially included staffing issues to date.

83. The University's Equality and Diversity Committee, chaired by the deputy Vice-Chancellor, includes representation from schools, central services and recognised Trade Unions. (Insert terms of reference).

84. The Equality Legislation Steering Group was established in 2004 by the current Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who at that time was Chair of the University Quality Committee. The group's terms of reference are:

85. (paste in ELSG terms of ref)

86. Currently the group includes the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator and the Student Enabling Centre Manager.

87. The Disability Advisory Group (DAG) is a subcommittee of the Equality and Diversity Committee, and includes representatives of all schools, major central services and the Students' Union.

88. (paste in DAG terms of reference)

89. Over the years the group has discussed a wide variety of disability issues, affecting primarily disabled students within the University. Since the group has no decision-making authority, its recommendations are passed on for consideration by the appropriate committee or responsible member of staff within the University.

90. DAG is currently chaired by the Student Enabling Centre Manager, who is also a member of the Equality and Diversity Committee and represents DAG on the University Safety Policy committee and Fire Strategy Group.

91. Unfortunately, due to the wide variety of subjects discussed by DAG and the potential impact on decisions that are taken at senior level, the group is often unable to influence appropriately or effectively the decisions it seeks to inform. The discussions of this issue took place at the Equality and Diversity Committee meeting in June 2006, at which it was decided to consider further the role of DAG. Subsequent discussions have taken place at the Equality Legislation Steering Group and DAG itself. Proposals are currently being developed for implementation in 2007, including measures to improve disabled student representation, which has been problematic over recent years (see paragraph A on involvement).

92. This document does not seek to outline the channels for discussion of disability issues at school or service level due to the varying practices in operation. More information on this aspect of school and services were may be obtained by contacting the appropriate disability contact (see appendix Z - list of SNTs and other disability contacts).

Developing the University's Disability Equality Scheme

93. Below is a summary of the key processes undertaken to produce this Disability Equality Scheme. More details on the specific involvement of disabled people are contained in the next section.

94. The following actions have been taken by the Student Enabling Centre Manager, who has been leading the work, unless otherwise specified.

- A paper on the anticipated requirements of the Disability Discrimination Bill was presented for information to the Equality Legislation Steering Group and the Disability Advisory Group in September 2004, and the Equality and Diversity Committee in November 2004. The potential requirements were noted.
- In February 2005, as part of the annual update by the Student Enabling Centre Manager to the University Quality Committee, the scope of this update was broadened to include the potential legislative requirements. The paper made proposals on how the duty could be implemented and integrated with the University's standard planning cycle. The proposals were accepted.
- Following the passing of the Disability Discrimination Act in April 2005, updates were provided to the above committees and groups. At this point it was decided to devote the next Biennial Equal Opportunities Conference to the theme of promoting equality for disabled students (see paragraph B), and to create the new post of Disability Consultative Officer (see paragraph D).
- Proposals for consultations with disabled students were presented to the meeting of the Equality and Diversity Committee in November 2005. The proposals included the engagement of an External Consultant to assist with this work. This led to subsequent discussions with the Deans Group and the Services Group in December 2005 and January 2006 respectively. The

discussions favoured a central lead to identify disabling barriers at the institutional and school/service level.

- By the end of January 2006, an External Consultant had been identified to assist with the consultation process.
- Following advice from the consultant, the thematic approach to consultation was developed and subsequently approved by the Disability Advisory Group and the Equality Legislation Steering Group.
- Details of the thematic approach, together with proposed pilot themes and a draft outline for the Disability Equality Scheme were approved by the Equality and Diversity Committee in June 2006.
- The consultation process with disabled staff was undertaken between July and September 2006 (see paragraph E).
- The pilot student focus groups are on health and safety, adaptive technology and admissions were undertaken in October 2006.
- This draft scheme was presented for approval to the Equality and Diversity Committee on 2 November, the Services Group on 3 November and the University Executive on 27 November 2006.

95. On 4 December 2006, the date by which the final scheme must be published, a joint event is due to take place involving the University, Wolverhampton City Council, Wolverhampton Primary Care Trust and the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, to launch the disability equality schemes produced by each of these public bodies. This is the first working day following 3 December, which is designated as the United Nations International Day of Disabled Persons. In addition to the formal scheme launches, workshops will also take place for disabled people to explore the social model of disability and disability related entertainment will be provided in the evening at the Arena Theatre, by a partnership between various bodies, including the University, Wolverhampton City Council and the Arts Council.

96. It is hoped that similar events will be organised in future years to mark the International Day of Disabled Persons and the need for organisations to publish their annual updates or revised schemes. Such events could be used to encourage the involvement of a wider group of disabled people in our scheme and to communicate with relevant stakeholders regarding the actions we have undertaken and our future plans.

C – Involving disabled people

97. The requirement to involve disabled people in the development and implementation of the DES is a fundamental principle that underpins the duty to promote equality for disabled people.

98. The University is required to produce a specific statement on involvement and to demonstrate involvement throughout its DES.

99. We recognise and support fully the requirement for involving disabled people as opposed to consulting them. Involving disabled people means that they form an integral part of all key processes, including planning, identifying areas for improvement and possible solutions. Consultation does not include disabled people at these stages; it seeks their views on proposals that have already been formulated. In short, involvement includes consultation, but consultation does not necessarily include involvement.

100. Prior to the introduction of the requirement to involve disabled people, the University has recognised the importance of involvement in order to identify disabling barriers and potential solutions.

101. Some historic examples of past involvement of disabled people in key decision making and influencing processes include;

- Deaf people were involved at all stages of the development, validation and implementation of the University's degree in British Sign Language (BSL).
- A disabled member of staff was identified to help shape and implement the University's specific admissions procedure for disabled applicants.
- In 1999 a visually impaired consultant from the RNIB was asked to undertake an audit of the University's policies and provision for disabled students and make recommendations for improvement.
- Based on the above audit, a new post of Student Enabling Centre Manager was created and a disabled person appointed.
- The umbrella department with responsibility for specialist support for disabled students was named the 'Student Enabling Centre' in preference to the 'Disability Service' as a result of feedback from deaf and dyslexic students who would not choose to identify with a 'disability service'.
- In April 2004 the Students' Union Representative for Students with Disabilities organised a 'Disability Awareness week', during which a number of events took place to raise awareness of the barriers facing students with a variety of impairments. Input and support was provided by the SEC Manager and the National Union of Students' Officer for Students with Disabilities. A report was written by the Students' Union representative, who is disabled herself, with support from other Students' Union officers. The recommendations in the report were taken forward via the Equal Opportunities Committee and Safety Policy Committee.
- A 'Dyslexia Action Group' on the University's Walsall Campus was established in 2004 following dyslexic students' participation in a feedback session

organised by the School of Education as part of the SU Disability Awareness week outlined above.

- The Student Enabling Centre Manager is a member of the Equality Legislation Steering Group, which was formed in 2003 and now chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor. The group monitors compliance with all strands of equality legislation.

Involving disabled people in the Disability Equality Scheme

102. The process of producing the DES has been driven by disabled people and involved disabled students and staff via a variety of methods. The key elements of involvement are described in this section. However, we hope to demonstrate through all sections of this document that disabled people have been involved at all key stages.

103. In relation to this DES, disabled people have been involved in the following ways:

- Planning and promoting the work
- Authoring the scheme
- Communicating with stakeholders
- Contributing to a conference
- Participating in a focus group for disabled staff or providing written responses
- Completing student feedback questionnaires
- Participating in three pilot thematic focus groups for disabled students
- Determining the priorities for future thematic investigations

Planning and promoting the work

104. There has not been a static planning group for the DES, although the Disability Advisory Group (DAG) has provided a forum for discussion and a vehicle for feedback from the University's schools and central services.

105. The Student Enabling Centre Manager has provided information on the legislative requirements, DES plans and priorities to DAG for feedback and approval. DAG is a sub-committee of the University's Equality and Diversity Committee, which reports direct to the Board of Governors.

106. Current DAG membership covers representatives from central specialist services, school and service level key disability contacts and the Students' Union. Eight of DAG's members consider themselves to be disabled, including the current chair and the Students' Union representative.

107. We recognise that this process has only provided limited opportunities for the involvement of disabled students. The Students' Union Representative of Students with Disabilities has not been able to attend many meetings, so we need to consider ways of supporting this role holder and the SU in general to involve disabled students with a variety of impairments in the on-going work for the DES (see action plan). In addition to exploring ideas around establishing school and site-related

disabled student representatives, we hope to work with the Student Voice Project to increase awareness of disability issues amongst non-disabled student reps and encourage more disabled students to take up mainstream representative roles.

Authoring

108. This scheme and all its drafts have been written by the Student Enabling Centre Manager, who is a disabled person.

Communicating with stakeholders

109. The Student Enabling Centre Manager has provided information on the disability equality duty and progress reports on the work to produce this scheme to various internal groups, including the following:

- Equality Legislation Steering Group
- Disability Advisory Group (DAG)
- Deans Group
- Services Group
- Executive.

110. The final draft of the DES was issued for comment to One Voice, Wolverhampton's organisation of disabled people and to Wolverhampton City Council's Disability Steering Group, which is made up of disabled people.

111. In June 2005 the University created the new post of Disability Consultative Officer (DCO), to be held by a disabled person, to provide on-going communication with key stakeholders on the DES development and to gather feedback from disabled students and staff on the barriers to equality that they face.

112. Although we have specific staff with responsibility for disseminating information on the adjustments required by individual disabled students and assisting with troubleshooting if problems arise, we felt that discussions to inform the DES should be separate from discussions about individual barriers and reasonable adjustments required. This approach is supported by the Disability Rights Commission publication on evidence gathering.

113. Our initial aim has been to involve those disabled students who demonstrate an interest in how the University operates and/or those who indicate a willingness to discuss issues in a wider context than their individual situation. Many students who have overcome barriers themselves or with support from specific services, express the wish to make sure that other students do not face the same barriers again. Students in this position can be given information on how to discuss matters further with the DCO.

114. The Disability Consultative Officer has publicised her role via extensive networking with key staff within the University and the Students' Union who are likely to have substantial contact with disabled students. Prior to taking up this role, the

current post holder had worked with in a central function of the University for a number of years; and therefore the required contacts were already in place when the new post was created. Information on the new role and the University's work to produce of the DES has also been made available to all staff within the University forum the University's online staff newsletter Insight and its paper-based equivalent.

115. Students have either made direct contact with the DCO or been referred via the Student Enabling Centre or key disability contacts. Discussions with disabled students have been deliberately unstructured and focused on the issues of concern to the students in question. Following the discussions, and subject to the student agreement, the Disability Consultative Officer has followed up specific issues with appropriate University staff. The issues raised in these discussions have been fed back anonymously to the Student Enabling Centre Manager to inform the order in which we propose to carry out our more detailed thematic investigations (see paragraph X).

116. General communication has taken place with the University's partner colleges via the Collaborative Quality Forum meetings, which take place three times a year. Work to engage with the University's partners should enhance the subsequent schemes produced by all parties.

The Disability Equality Conference, April 2006

117. In 2004 the University's Biennial Equal Opportunities Conference examined key aspects of existing and proposed legislation in the six key equality strands, including disability. In particular, the challenges of the Disability Discrimination Act and the proposed Disability Equality Duty were outlined in a keynote address by a disabled solicitor specialising in disability law. This contribution set the context for the development of equality plans at school and departmental level, which include specific consideration of disability issues.

118. In recognition of the importance of the disability equality duty and the need to engage academic and support staff at all levels, the University's Biennial Equal Opportunities Conference for 2006 was devoted to the theme of disability equality. This was initially proposed by the Equality Legislation Steering Group and subsequently approved by the Equality and Diversity Committee.

119. The Conference was co-ordinated by the Student Enabling Centre Manager, based on ideas and suggestions from a member of the Disability Advisory Group who has dyslexia. The event included a keynote speech on the legislation by a former chair of the British Council of Disabled People (BCODP) – an umbrella organisation of groups run by and for disabled people. The student perspective was highlighted by five disabled students with a variety of impairments, who outlined their experiences, barriers faced and good practice during the plenary session. The aim was to encourage mainstream consideration of disability issues.

120. Over fifty staff from all schools and major service departments attended the event.

Determining the views of disabled staff

121. In June 2006 an e-mail to all University staff was issued by the Deputy Vice Chancellor inviting those who considered themselves to be disabled to attend a focus group. The invitation explained that an external consultant would be running the event to ensure that staff felt comfortable to respond openly and provided information on how disabled staff could contribute via a written questionnaire or face to face interview if they were not able to attend the focus group event.

122. The external consultant was a member of the Higher Education Funding Council's National Disability Team, who has experience of running similar events in other institutions. The questions to be used were agreed with the Student Enabling Centre Manager and Disability Consultative Officer and piloted at a 1:1 interview with one member of disabled staff.

123. The Student Enabling Centre Manager and the Disability Consultative Officer were able to input their views as disabled staff via a written questionnaire because it was recognised that their presence at the focus group may have deterred other staff from contributing fully.

124. The report from the focus group and associated questionnaire contains a number of recommendations, which were presented to the University's Services Group by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor on 3 November 2006. Heads of Service have been asked to respond to the recommendations relevant to their areas of work in their annual equality plans due for submission in February 2007. The actions completed and actions to be taken forward will be detailed in our up-dated action plan in December 2007.

Student Feedback

125. In addition to the informal feedback gathered by the Disability Consultative Officer, the Student Enabling Centre issues annual questionnaires to the students it supports. Each section of the department uses its own questionnaire tailored to the needs of its user group; therefore a specific questionnaire is issued to dyslexic students, deaf students and disabled students.

126. A number of deaf student forum meetings have taken place in the past to enable a more direct exchange of views in British Sign Language.

127. The frequency of the barriers highlighted in students' responses has informed the order in which we plan to seek more detailed views on specific themes. Otherwise, the questionnaires will continue to be used to inform service improvements.

Pilot disabled student focus groups

128. Many universities report major difficulties in getting students to participate in consultation exercises of any type. It therefore follows that securing participation from disabled students will prove equally challenging.

129. In all cases we will make sure that students understand the use that we will make of their contributions and the confidentiality of their responses.

130. Following advice from our external consultant, we have taken the following steps to encourage disabled student participation in our consultation exercises.

- We are seeking students' views on specific themes in order to encourage those who have a view on a specific topic to take part in the event relating to that topic.
- We will issue specific invitations via letter, e-mail and/or telephone as appropriate to those disabled students who are known to the Student Enabling Centre to be affected by the issue under discussion. This group of students may be very large, for example, when we discuss assessment and examination issues, or it may be smaller, e.g. when considering new entrants to the University.
- Further publicity in the form of posters and information to key contacts will help ensure that those students who may not have identified themselves as disabled or those students who have not received a specific invitation have the opportunity to contribute if they wish.
- The external consultant will run the focus groups with no University staff present, using appropriate inclusive methods.
- Students will be able to contribute in a variety of ways; by attending a focus group meeting, completing a written or electronic questionnaire or attending a face to face interview.
- Participants for any activity will be asked to identify any specific requirements to enable them to participate effectively and arrangements will be made to meet identified requirements.
- Access requirements will be clarified by the external consultant at the start of each focus group.
- A voucher incentive will be provided to all participants, who will also be entered into an annual prize draw to win an I-Pod or mobile phone.
- Lunch will be provided as a further incentive.
- Focus group events will only last an average of one hour.

131. Unlike traditional consultations, we will not begin the process with predetermined ideas of the issues that should be addressed or the ways in which we should tackle them. Instead, we will determine our actions based on the recommendations made in the report from each thematic consultation.

132. We have plans to consider the various sources of numeric data that we hold, as outlined in the next section of this document; however we have decided to focus on issues directly articulated by disabled people to form our primary evidence base.

133. We have determined the themes that we wish to examine based primarily on the whole of the student life cycle and the precepts in the QAA Code of Practice Section 3;

- Strategic issues
- The physical environment
- Access to information
- Admissions
- The first semester
- Learning and Teaching – delivery
- Learning and Teaching – assessment
- Learning and Teaching - placements
- Services - Academic
- Services - Other
- Health and Safety
- Adaptive technology
- Monitoring, evaluation and complaints
- Specialist services
- Staff development

134. Three pilot themes on adaptive technology, health and safety and admissions have been undertaken to test the effectiveness of this approach. The pilot topics were recommended by the Student Enabling Centre Manager and agreed by the Disability Advisory Group on the basis of the potential to link the resulting recommendations into mainstream activities that are currently planned or underway.

135. Initially we had hoped to use examination and assessment as a pilot theme; however this was not possible within the available timescale because this theme is best explored immediately after the majority of formal examinations, which take place in May and June of each year. This theme is therefore prioritised for 2007. The theme of adaptive technology was identified following feedback from the Disability Advisory Group and a separate University working group considering an overall strategy for adaptive technology within the University.

136. Due to the tight timescales involved we have not yet received the final reports on these themes. Detailed consideration of the resulting outcomes will be outlined in our up-dated action plan in December 2007.

137. A survey of disabled students has been used to supplement existing information to determine the order in which we will address our other themes over the next three years. Details of our planned consultations between 2007, 2008 and 2009 are contained within paragraphs Y - Z.

138. Some of the actions included in our action plan relate to matters that we know require action based on our internal assessment of our level of compliance with existing standards and legislation. However, the majority of elements have been included as a direct result of feedback from disabled people.

Further plans

139. We have noted above the need to take action to increase the involvement of disabled students in the work to produce the scheme itself and make planning and prioritisation decisions.

140. In some instances we have not been able to attract sufficient numbers of disabled students to attend our focus groups. However, we have been able to supplement the information gained during the focus groups with information provided by students who wished to complete electronic questionnaires.

141. We will continue to offer a variety of methods of participation for disabled students. We acknowledge that a significant amount of lead in time is required to ensure that publicity for focus groups is disseminated to interested students. Unfortunately, we may not have allowed sufficient time for this activity to date, and will therefore ensure that we plan and set thematic focus group dates a year in advance to address this problem. This forward planning will enable us to publicise the focus groups on a number of occasions in a variety of ways, including, for example, publicity in the Students' Union magazine.

142. We need to consider further how to involve disabled people from the wider community in our work. Although there are many organisations for disabled people in Wolverhampton and its surrounding areas, there are very few self-organised groups of disabled people. Unfortunately, some disability groups that used to exist in the region, such as Disability West Midlands and the Shropshire Disability Partnership, have folded due to lack of funding.

143. The Wolverhampton Disability Network is currently being formed and developed as an organisation of disabled people. The Student Enabling Centre Manager is currently a director of the network. Unfortunately the network has not yet had sufficient time to determine its core purpose and the relationship that it wishes to have with local public bodies such as the University.

144. It is hoped that the position of the network will become clearer during 2007. From the University perspective we will therefore seek to engage with the network if appropriate during 2008.

145. We will focus efforts in 2007 on engaging internal disabled individuals who have an interest in the work of the University.

146. In relation to the consultation with disabled staff, a detailed summary report and recommendations has now been provided by the external consultant. This report has been passed on by the Student Enabling Centre Manager to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, who has discussed the recommendations with appropriate senior managers within the University. Deans and Service Heads have been asked to respond to the recommendations in their annual equality plans, which are due in March 2007.

147. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor will monitor the responses from Deans and Service Heads against the recommendations and agree with the Student Enabling Centre Manager the specific actions to be included in our updated action plan in December 2007.

148. Once the institutional response to the recommendations from the disabled staff consultation is known, it will be communicated initially to those disabled staff who were involved in the original consultation and subsequently to a wider audience in our general update event scheduled for October 2007.

149. Similar processes will be used following receipt of the reports on our other thematic focus groups.

150. In relation to disabled staff, consideration will be given to the most effective mechanism for establishing and maintaining a dialogue. A number of options exist, following for example the well established model currently in use within the University for consultation with black and ethnic minority staff. More recently, a group of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender staff has been created and supported proactively by the Equal Opportunities Coordinator and the wider Equality and Diversity Committee.

151. We acknowledge that individuals often have multiple identities and therefore may face simultaneous oppression; for example, disabled people from black and ethnic minority groups, disabled women, lesbians or gay men etc. We need to consider ways of ensuring that our work to engage with individual equality strands does not become so compartmentalised as to create barriers for those with multiple identities.

152. Close working relationships between the equal opportunities coordinator and the Student Enabling Centre Manager should ensure that other equality related consultations are accessible to disabled people.

D – Evidence gathering

153. The disability equality duty requires the University to gather data on the effects of its policies and procedures on;

- the impact of its policies and practices on the recruitment, development and retention of its disabled employees
- the educational opportunities available to – and on the achievements of – disabled students.

154. In order to comply with this duty, the University will need to gather and analyse a variety of data from a wide range of sources.

155. There are two main types of data; quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data is numeric information, which can be analysed using standard statistical techniques. Examples of quantitative data include the numbers of disabled students at the University or the numbers of students who require wheelchair accessible teaching rooms.

156. On the other hand, qualitative data is not numeric and can take a variety of forms. Examples of qualitative data include summary reports produced by the disability consultative officer on discussions with individual disabled students and reports produced following focus groups or individual interviews.

157. In order to identify and subsequently address the barriers to equality for disabled people, it is necessary to use both quantitative and qualitative data.

158. This section of our scheme will consider the data that the University already has, our current methods for analysing this data and our plans for gathering additional data and conducting further analysis where necessary.

159. By way of introduction, the University has been developing its systems over the past few years, initially in order to analyse data relating to people from different ethnic groups, as required by the Race Relations Amendment Act (RRAA) 2001. We anticipated that data relating to other potentially underrepresented groups, such as disabled people, would be required to meet future legislative demands and therefore took steps to ensure that our data gathering systems were designed and developed to enable data to be analysed by a variety of categories, including disability and impairment group.

160. A new post of Equal Opportunities Monitoring Officer was created specifically for the purpose of data production and analysis. The post holder has been able to respond to requests for specific sets of data as well as produce data for planning and monitoring purposes.

161. A range of reports have been developed to enable individual users to access up-to-date data on a variety of subjects, including the participation of disabled students, retention rates and degree classification results. This includes information in respect of applications to University, and course and module registration, to help

Schools plan for disabled students requirements. More details of this work will be outlined throughout this section.

Applicants

162. An applicant can apply to study at the University in one of the following ways, depending on the nature and level of their chosen course of study;

- Through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS),
- Via the General Teacher Training Route (QTTR)
- Through the Nursing and Midwifery Admissions Service (NMAS)
- Direct to the University using a University application form.

163. Whichever route an applicant uses, s/he will be asked a specific disability related question, although the question itself may vary from agency to agency. Those applicants who indicate a disability are asked to indicate the category of impairment form and list of options.

164. For UCAS the current categories are:

(paste in UCAS codes)

165. All disabled and non-disabled applicants are recorded on the University's student records system, together with the outcome of the application from the University's point of view, i.e. the applicant may be rejected, made a 'conditional offer' dependent on exam results or given an 'unconditional offer'.

166. We also record the applicant's response to our offer. An applicant may choose to accept our offer, either as their first choice institution or their 'insurance place' where have they would only come to our University if they did not meet the necessary conditions to attend their first choice institution. Otherwise, an applicant may decline our offer in favour of other institutions.

167. This data will assist us to determine whether there are any significant variances between the rates for disabled and non-disabled applicants, and any differences between impairment groups.

168. Following discussions between the Student Enabling Centre Manager and the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Officer regarding the requirements of the disability equality duty, a new set of reports have been written to enable us to draw together this data.

169. We are conscious that there is still likely to be significant underreporting of disability by disabled applicants and that the reasons for this underreporting are likely to be complex. Some evidence of this underreporting is apparent from the work undertaken by the Student Enabling Centre to support students who disclose disability issues post enrolment. Anecdotal evidence of fear of being discriminated against at the application stage has been reported. We hope to address this issue in our investigation of admissions issues and will develop appropriate actions as a

result of our findings. As highlighted in paragraph X, publicity for this admissions consultation will be made available throughout the University, enabling those individuals who did not indicate disability at the application stage or those who subsequently disclosed to participate if they wish.

170. Last year the University conducted a decliner survey to gain feedback from those applicants who declined the University's offer of a place. The results of this survey could not be disaggregated by disability, so we are taking steps to ensure that future surveys of this type can support data analysis by disability.

171. The University's Academic Registrar is due to undertake a comprehensive review of admissions within the life of this scheme. Provided that our plans are consistent with the results of this review, we will undertake a consultation exercise in 2009 with those applicants who declined the University's offer.

Students

172. Like all other higher education institutions, the University is required to gather a substantial amount of quantitative data in order to complete its returns to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). Therefore the disability related data we gather has to conform to HESA categories, although the categorisation used may not conform to the framework preferred by disabled people. We hope that this issue will be addressed by HESA in its Disability Equality Scheme.

173. Data showing the participation rate of disabled students at the University in comparison with the position of other institutions competing locally informed the decision to create and develop the Student Enabling Centre (SEC). Statistical updates have subsequently been provided in regular reports by SEC and made available to schools to inform their planning decisions. Our plans to make more systematic use of the available data are outlined in our action plan.

174. Despite the University's reputation for widening participation and our high participation rate for deaf and hard of hearing students, our overall percentage of disabled students is significantly lower than the percentage one would expect for an institution with a strong widening participation reputation. Measures to improve the University's position in this respect will be considered by the head of planning during 2007.

175. The data comparing participation rates at the University to the rates of other institutions will need to be developed in view of the University's new strategic aim to develop a national profile in addition to its regional profile. The HESA/HEFCE performance indicators (Table T7 – Participation of students in higher education who are in receipt of Disabled Student's Allowance (DSA)) can be used to compare participation rates of other HE Institutions. The most appropriate comparisons should be made with institutions whose benchmarks are the same as those for our University. We may decide to use the same institutions to compare other disability statistics published by HESA.

176. Reports on the non-completion rates of disabled and non-disabled students have been available for analysis by individual schools and the University as a whole for the past two years. This data, together with comparative data for other equality strands, was presented to the Equality and Diversity Committee in 2004 and 2005. In relation to disabled students, the data for both years showed that those students recorded as disabled were more likely to continue their course following their year of entry than their non-disabled counterparts. Although it would be interesting to carry out further investigations to determine the factors that could contribute to disabled students' continued participation, this work will not be a priority for this scheme because we need to focus on breaking down barriers at this stage.

177. The EO Monitoring Officer has prepared analysis of Good degrees Classification (1st Class and Upper Second). This shows that students with a known disability have gained a higher proportion of Good Degrees than students with no known disability for the years 2002/03, 2003/04 and 2004/05. However there are performance differences between impairment groups and we will identify areas of good practice which we will disseminate across the University. Detailed Analysis by Schools and impairment groups is available internally at the University via ready available reports.

178. In relation to qualitative data, the University has a variety of mechanisms for gaining feedback from students in general. These include thematic surveys, for example on students' experiences during Welcome week, module evaluation questionnaires and the annual Student Satisfaction Survey.

179. We are taking steps to ensure that all questionnaires at least provide the opportunity for students to indicate if they are disabled to enable us to compare the experiences of disabled and non-disabled students. We are encouraging those who produce questionnaires to consider including specific disability related questions.

180. In relation to the Student Satisfaction Survey, the EO Monitoring Officer produced a report for the Equal Opportunities Coordinator and the Student Enabling Centre Manager to highlight specific issues relating to the experience of disabled students. This data can only inform our investigations into the barriers faced by disabled students and staff because respondents to the survey are assured that their comments will not be attributed to them personally and no direct follow-up undertaken.

181. The University Quality Committee has produced a plan for 2007, which includes actions to ensure that appropriate consideration of disability issues is included within the annual monitoring information provided each year by each subject area.

182. Wherever possible we will make use of existing mechanisms to gain feedback from disabled students. However, we recognise that we need to undertake specific measures to gather evidence from disabled students on their experiences at the University throughout all stages of the student lifecycle.

183. We have therefore piloted a thematic process of qualitative evidence gathering, based broadly on the themes used for the precepts in Section 3 of the QAA Code of Practice. (See the section on involvement).

184. The student consultations undertaken to date on health and safety, adaptive technology and admissions have provided significant amounts of data, on which a report will be produced with recommendations for action. Unfortunately, due to the short timescales involved to these reports and will therefore include appropriate details and agreed actions in our scheme update in December 2007.

185. The following consultations are scheduled to take place during 2007:

- Learning and Teaching - assessment
- Staff development
- The physical environment

186. In 2008 the following consultations will take place;

- Learning and Teaching - delivery
- Learning and Teaching - placements
- Access to information
- The first semester

187. The consultations scheduled for 2009 are

- Specialist support services
- Services - Academic
- Services – General
- Monitoring, evaluation and complaints

188. At the end of this current scheme, we will therefore have undertaken consultations with disabled students on all aspects of the student lifecycle. As highlighted in previous sections, the actions recommended in the resulting reports will directly inform our subsequent action plans.

189. At present we anticipate being able to continue working with our external consultant on all of our planned focus groups and we recognise the benefits of this approach. However, should the resources for this work become limited, we would explore alternative mechanisms, hopefully in conjunction with the Students' Union.

Staff

190. The latest version of the University's job application form includes an opportunity for applicants to indicate whether they consider themselves to be disabled, and outline if appropriate any support needs.

191. This enables the Personnel Services Department to produce statistics showing the percentage of disabled applicants who are short listed and appointed in comparison to non-disabled candidates. Data of this nature has been presented to the Equality and Diversity Committee on a six monthly basis for the past year, together with any analysis possible. Unfortunately, due to the variety of definitions of disability in use, it has not been possible until recently to identify any suitable

comparative data against which the University could measure its position. The recently published HEFCE report on staff in higher education provides some helpful data, which will be used by our personnel services department to inform analysis of our current data.

192. In 2002, in order to comply with HESA requirements, the University conducted a census of all its staff, including part time, 'casual' and sessional staff, to gather a variety of data, including whether staff consider themselves to be disabled. Further information to break down the data further was not requested at this stage. The census data enabled the University to update all its staff records and establish the number of disabled staff at the institution at that time.

193. We are able to break down our data by category of staff, e.g. academic, APT&C and manual, and by school or service department to enable us to gain an overall picture of the comparative profile of disabled and non-disabled staff.

194. A number of years ago the University introduced a set of 'desired staffing profiles', which established staffing targets for schools and central services in relation to gender, ethnicity and disability. These targets are considered as part of the appraisal of Deans and Heads of Services.

195. As noted above in relation to disabled applicants, we acknowledge the fact underreporting of disability is likely to be a factor at our institution, given that it has been reported as a national issue. We will consider measures to develop an environment in which staff feel comfortable to give information about their experiences as disabled people due to the supportive culture of the institution.

196. We acknowledge the need to gather and analyse more quantitative data which compare uptake rates for staff development between disabled and non-disabled staff

197. In order to gain qualitative feedback from disabled staff on their experiences at the University, we ran a focus group for disabled staff in July 2006.

198. During the consultation, disabled staff were asked to comment on the areas that should be prioritised for impact assessment (see section E). Responses received have formed the basis of our timetable for impact assessment.

E – Impact Assessment

199. The concept of impact assessment may appear abstract, intangible and complex to many readers. Documents produced by people working within the field of equality will also vary significantly in how they describe impact assessment.

200. This section aims to demonstrate the importance of impact assessment in relation to the promotion of disability equality and to outline the University's initial steps to comply with its duties in this regard.

What are impact assessments and how are they carried out?

201. The following description of the processes involved in impact assessment is based on the draft guidance 'Seven Steps to an equality impact assessment' produced in early 2006 and endorsed by the Disability Advisory Group.

202. Impact assessments are at the heart of the Disability Equality Duty. Public sector employees and managers are required to actively promote equality of opportunity in all their decisions and practices. This is vital because discrimination often takes place through thoughtlessness rather than malice, and because, when we plan our work, we rarely ask ourselves: How can I actively promote equal opportunities through this practice?'

203. The purpose of the *Seven Steps* is to provide a clear methodology that is sustainable and effective because it has, built into it, four key principles: mainstreaming, relevance, proportionality and accountability.

Who should carry out the assessments?

204. All those responsible for the formation and delivery of policies¹⁰ should be directly involved in the assessment process. It is not the role of an equalities specialist.

Step One: Assessing or Screening for relevance to equality

205. The first step is to decide how relevant an existing or proposed policy or activity is to the promotion of equality across each of the six equality strands of the University's policy. To do that the following questions should be asked:

- What are the aims of the policy or function?
- Who is responsible for defining and implementing the policy?
- How important is it to the organisation?
- What is the scope for it having an adverse impact on particular groups?
- What is the scope for improving equal opportunities in some way?

¹⁰ 'Policies', here, are broadly defined as decisions that include strategies, procedures and unwritten practices

206. At this stage it is only necessary to make quick judgements on the basis of readily available information.

207. For existing policies and activities, the answers to these questions will enable a decision to be made on the recommended priority for this assessment in relation to the other assessments required.

208. For proposed policies, the answers will help in deciding how much effort should now be put into the impact assessment itself.

209. If no further information is required to complete a draft impact assessment report, go straight to Step Four.

Step Two: Gathering information to assess impact

210. To assess impact it is necessary to consider a wide range of sources providing both qualitative and quantitative information. A key consideration will also be whether existing data is reliable, or whether further investigation is needed.

Step Three: Assessing impact before consultation

211. After gathering all the information required, an assessment is made on the impact and what action, if any, should be taken. If the assessment shows the policy is likely to have an adverse impact on a particular group, it is necessary to consider ways of tackling this issue – especially if the adverse impact may be unlawful. This would include: changing the policy, or considering an alternative that achieves the same aims without the adverse impact.

212. Although it is important to focus on avoiding an adverse impact, it is also necessary to consider how the policy could have a positive impact on equalities. The avoidance of adverse impact is rightly stressed in much published advice; but it is not the sole purpose of assessments.

Step Four: Consulting those most likely to be affected

213. Consultation is vital to the success of any equality impact assessments. Ideally, staff should be in informal contact with their key stakeholders from the very beginning; but formal consultation should certainly take place when the assessment has been completed and an outline of recommended action has been produced. Whenever possible, explore opportunities for co-ordinating consultation work with other departments or schools. Again the principle of proportionality will help to decide the scale of that consultation.

214. The consultation may conclude that more information is still needed, the assessment can be amended or the original assumptions were correct. Whatever the outcome, it is important to record the details of the consultation and give direct feedback to the consultees.

Step Five: Taking a decision

215. If the outcome of the assessment and consultation is that no further information is needed, a decision can be taken on the actual (in the case of existing policies or functions) or likely (as with proposed policies) impact on equalities and the appropriate action to be recommended.

216. If an adverse impact is identified, it is necessary to ensure that it is not directly discriminatory. If the assessment shows that the policy or function could be indirectly discriminatory, those conducting the assessment must be confident that –

- The policy is essential to allow the University to carry out its duties, and
- There is no alternative policy that can achieve the same aim with less discriminatory effect.

Step Six: Monitoring impact in the future

217. The impact assessment report should also outline arrangements for monitoring the actual impact of the policy or function. If no systems are in place, decisions must be taken on how this is going to be tackled. Otherwise, the exercise can be used as an opportunity to consider whether the existing systems need to be improved in any way.

Step Seven: Publishing the results of the assessment

218. The assessment report should conclude with recommendations on how to publish the results. And again, the principle of proportionality should apply. For example, if the policy were assessed as having a low relevance to the promotion of equality, then a brief statement in the University's annual progress report will suffice. On the other hand, if the policy was deemed highly relevant, you might want the School/Dept./University to say much more through press releases and a whole range of different media.

219. Whatever the chosen approach, publication should be seen as an essential part of the University's responsibility to make itself publicly accountable for its performance on equalities.

The University's planned action

220. The University has recognised that staff require further training and guidance on the issue of impact assessment to ensure that they become competent at identifying the instances in which an impact assessment is required and carry out an effective assessment where necessary.

221. Following a tendering process involving the Equal Opportunities Coordinator, SEC Manager and Personnel Manager, a company has been identified to deliver this training and provide tools to assist staff with impact assessment. Training is scheduled to take place in 2007.

222. The process of prioritising areas for impact assessment and establishing appropriate monitoring mechanisms can only be completed effectively following the delivery of this training and tool kit.

223. In the meantime, we intend to link the impact assessment process to the thematic consultations with disabled students and staff, as outlined in the section on evidence gathering.

224. These consultations will provide some insight into the impact of existing policies, practices and procedures on the experiences of disabled students and staff. Following the issue of the report on each consultation it should be possible for policy owners and other relevant staff to use the information in the report to inform subsequent impact assessments.

225. As a guide therefore, it should be possible in 2007 for the following areas to be impact assessed:

- Personnel policies and procedures
- Some aspects of staff development
- Admissions
- Adaptive technology
- Health and Safety

226. The above priorities take into account the views expressed by disabled staff during their consultation activities in 2006.

227. The following priority assessments for 2008 and 2009 may need to be amended in the light of the results of thematic consultations that have not yet taken place.

228. Indicative assessments for 2008:

- Specific examination arrangements for disabled students
- Policies relating to capital projects, refurbishments, physical access improvements and car parking
- Guidelines on inclusive learning

229. Indicative assessments for 2009;

- Placement learning
- On-line and paper-based information
- The StartRight Project (relating to students' first semester at the University)
- Complaints

230. We recognise that the above timetable does not cover all the University's policies. Further information will be provided in our scheme review in 2007, following completion of our training programme.

231. Empowering University staff to undertake effective impact assessments should contribute significantly to our aim of mainstreaming responsibility for disability issues. It should also help to identify and resolve problems before they arise, leading to improved experiences for disabled students and staff.

232. Despite the potential significant benefits of impact assessment, we acknowledge that meeting our duties in this area represents one of our most significant challenges.

Action Plan

233. This section includes two versions of the University's action plan for 2007 to 2009. The information is the same in both versions; the first non-tabular version is likely to be more accessible to visually impaired people and those who are non-visual thinkers. The second tabular action plan these and more traditional representation of the information, which may be preferable to those who are familiar with tabular formats, and those who prefer more visual information.

234. The action plan should be read in the context of the previous sections of this document.

235. In response to our statutory duty, we will publish an update to this action plan in December 2007.

Action plan – non-tabular version

Note to readers – the non-tabular version has not been produced in full here. An illustrative example is shown below.

Ref: S1

Action: Develop closer links between the Disability Advisory Group (DAG) and the Students' Union

By Whom: SEC and SU

By When: Mar 07

Output: Increased and regular SU representation on DAG

Outcome: Increased involvement of disabled students in DES work and improved communication between UoW staff with a disability brief and appropriate SU officers

Para: 106, 107

Action plan – tabular version

Students

Ref	Action	By Whom	By When	Output	Outcome	Para
S1	Develop closer links between the Disability Advisory Group (DAG) and the Students' Union	SEC and SU	Mar 07	Increased and regular SU representation on DAG	Increased involvement of disabled students in DES work and improved communication between UoW staff with a disability brief and appropriate SU officers	106, 107
S2	Make available disability-related data relevant to the University from the National Student Survey	Head of Planning	Jun 07	Data to EDC	Consideration of this new source of data, leading to additional actions if appropriate	178
S3	Run a focus group for members of the Walsall Dyslexia Action Group to consider all three pilot themes addressed in 2006 (i.e. health and safety, adaptive technology and admissions)	External Consultant via SEC	Jun 07	Report	Engagement with students with dyslexia studying on the Walsall Campus	128 - 131
S4	Provide refresher training for members of the Disability Advisory Group on how to access data relating to disabled students in individual schools	EO Monitoring Officer	Jun 07	Item in DAG minutes	Increased use by schools and services of the disability-related data available, in relation to the provision of reasonable adjustments, identification of potential barriers and planning	160, 161
S5	Undertake a consultation with disabled students on learning and teaching - assessment	External Consultant via SEC	Jul 07	Report	Additional specific action points relating to examination and assessment issues in future up-dates of this plan	126 - 131
S6	Undertake a consultation with disabled students on staff development issues	External Consultant via SEC	Jul 07	Report	Additional specific action points relating to staff development issues in future up-dates of this plan	126 - 131
S7	Run a focus group for deaf students to consider all three pilot themes addressed in 2006 (i.e. health and safety, adaptive technology and admissions)	External Consultant via SEC	Aug 07	Report	Ensure that deaf students have the opportunity to participate in a focus group specifically structured to meet their communication needs	126 - 131
S8	Establish targets for the recruitment of disabled students	Head of Planning	Sep 07	To follow in subsequent action plans	Increased overall percentage of disabled students at the University	173, 174
S9	Undertake consultations with non-disabled staff with an interest in admissions, adaptive technology and health and safety issues	External Consultant via SEC	Oct 07	Report	Qualitative data from relevant internal stakeholders to contribute to the data gained from disabled	126 - 131

					students	
S10	Devise a campaign and on-going guidance to encourage students to provide disability-related information	SEC and SU	Sep 07	Campaign and guidance document	An environment in which students and staff feel comfortable to provide disability-related information where appropriate	169, 174
S11	Up-date the University's Placement Learning Handbook to incorporate information on the promotion of placements for disabled students	UQC	Sep 07	Revised Placement Learning Handbook	Improved disabled student experience on placement	138
S12	Review the impact of the improved provision of equality-related data on the annual monitoring reports produced by schools.	UQC	Sep 07	Up-date to UQC	All annual monitoring reports demonstrate appropriate consideration of disability equality issues	255
S13	Review the feedback received through the equality and diversity sections of annual monitoring and explore mechanisms to ensure dissemination of good practice and highlight areas for improvement and enhancement	UQC	Sep 07	Up-date to UQC	A deeper consideration of disability equality issues in annual monitoring reports	255
S14	Produce a policy document on the language of assessment for deaf students	CSU	Sep 07	Policy document	Formal clarification for deaf people on the University's position on the language of assessment	138
S15	Investigate the use of SITS or an alternative package to facilitate dissemination of information on disabled students support requirements	SEC Manager in conjunction with Registry	Sep 07	Access to relevant data for Key school and service Disability Contacts	Contribute towards the mainstreaming of responsibility for disability issues, particularly the provision of reasonable adjustments	138
S16	Undertake a consultation with disabled students on physical access issues	External Consultant via SEC	Nov 07	Report	Additional specific action points relating to physical access issues in future up-dates of this plan	126 – 131
S17	Develop an on-line questionnaire to collect feedback from students returning from placement. The questionnaire will include questioning on the student's experience while on placement in relation to disability and other equality issues	UQC Placement Learning Forum	Dec 07	On-line questionnaire	Specific data on the experiences of disabled students on placement	255
S18	Review the admissions procedure for disabled applicants within the overall admissions review	Academic Registrar	Dec 07	Report	The procedure will be consistent with all aspects of the DDA	138
S19	Explore options for improving the questions asked in the University's Student Satisfaction Survey in the light of the Disability Equality Duty	Academic Registrar	Feb 08	Amended questions	Improved data on the disabled student experience of specific disability issues	178 – 180
S20	Undertake a consultation with disabled students on learning and teaching – delivery issues	External Consultant via SEC	May 08	Report	Additional specific action points relating to learning and teaching delivery issues in future up-dates of	126 – 131

					this plan	
S21	Undertake a thematic enquiry into equality issues as part of a periodic review	QASD with support from SEC Manager	Aug 08	Summary of findings in validation documentation and report to UQC	Increased engagement with equality issues at subject level	138
S22	Building on the existing dyslexia assessment policy and guidelines for assessing deaf students, produce a common policy applicable to all relevant impairment groups	SEC with QASD and CELT	Sep 08	Policy document	Parity of adjustments for students from a variety of impairment groups	138
S23	Up-date and up-grade to a policy the guidelines on special examination and assessment arrangements for disabled students	SEC Manager and Registry	Sep 08	Policy document	Improved satisfaction with the process of making reasonable adjustments to assessments	138
S24	Undertake a consultation with disabled students on placement issues	External Consultant via SEC	Nov 08	Report	Additional specific action points relating to placement learning issues in future up-dates of this plan	126 – 131
S25	Undertake a consultation with disabled students on access to information	External Consultant via SEC	Nov 08	Report	Additional actions relating to student access to information will be included in future up-dates of this plan	126 – 131
S26	Undertake a consultation with disabled students on the first semester experience	External Consultant via SEC	Feb 09	Report	Specific actions relating to disabled students' needs in the first semester will be included in future up-dates of this plan	126 – 131
S27	Undertake the following consultations with disabled students during 2009: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring, evaluation and complaints Specialist support services Academic and other services primarily for students 	External Consultant via SEC	Sep 09	Report	Actions in respect of these themes will form part of the new action plan for the revised DES, due for publication in December 2009	126 – 131

Staff / Employees

Ref	Action	By Whom	By When	Output	Outcome	Para
E1	Respond to the recommendations in the report from the disabled staff consultations	Deans and Heads	Mar 07	Identification of specific actions	Improved experiences of disabled staff More detailed actions in next action plan up-date	124, 245
E2	Provide dyslexia-related staff development events specifically tailored to the needs of academic staff	Dyslexia Co-ordinator	Mar 07	Training event	Improved satisfaction of students with dyslexia in relation to learning	138

					and teaching support	
E3	Provide a staff development event for key personnel on supporting students with epilepsy or other seizure-causing impairment	SEC Manager with Risk, Safety and Health	Mar 07	Training event	Key personnel are equipped to carry out informed and non-discriminatory risk assessments in relation to applicants or students with uncontrolled epilepsy or other similar impairment.	138
E4	Provide briefing sessions for the Board of Governors and the University Senior Management Team on equality impact assessments	Personnel Services	Apr 07	2 Briefing events	Senior management appreciation of the IA process and its implications for their areas of responsibility	220 - 222
E5	Establish a forum for consultation with disabled staff, drawing on existing models of good practice	ELSG	May 07	Regular meetings	On-going dialogue with disabled staff to identify barriers, possible solutions and assess the effectiveness of actions undertaken	133, 134
E6	Establish targets for the recruitment of disabled staff	Director of Personnel	Sep 07	To follow in subsequent action plans	Increased overall percentage of disabled staff at the University	194, 195
E7	Provide 1 day staff development sessions for key personnel on equality impact assessments	Personnel Services	Sep 07	10 x 1 day training sessions	Key personnel have the knowledge and tools necessary to carry out equality impact assessments	220 - 222

Various

Ref	Action	By Whom	By When	Output	Outcome	Para
V1	Establish a set of core tasks to be undertaken by 'Special Needs Tutors'	ELSG	May 07	Web and paper-based information	Parity of support for disabled students in all schools. Clarity of internal roles and responsibilities	59 - 64
V2	Amend the Open Day feedback form to enable responses to be broken down by disability and consider including a disability-related question if possible	Director of MER	Jun 07	Analysis by disability of the feedback provided	Improved data on the experiences of disabled applicants who attend University Open Days	179
V3	Complete the process mapping exercise in relation to Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) and gain formal approval of the process via the University Safety Policy Committee	Head of RSH	Sep 07	Policy document	Improved information for all stakeholders on the evacuation of disabled people with	138
V4	Arrange an annual follow-up, feedback and planning session for disabled staff and students to inform the scheme review and new DES	SEC Manager	Nov 07 and yearly	Event and summary report	Increased involvement of disabled people in the scheme	138
V5	Incorporate disability equality issues into the	Dean of Students	Dec 07	Strategy	Improvement in institutional	138

	communications strategy			document	communication	
V6	Incorporate positive images of disabled people within web-based and paper-based University marketing materials	MER, Deans, Heads	Dec 07 and on-going	Positive images	Increased visibility of disabled people within University marketing materials	138
V7	Amend the Decliner survey to enable responses to be broken down by disability and consider including a disability-related question if possible	Academic Registrar	Dec 07	Analysis by disability of the findings	Improved data on the views and experiences of disabled applicants who decline an offer to study at the University	170
V8	Publicise the scheme review and subsequent schemes as part of Wolverhampton's activities in relation to the UN International Day of Disabled People, 3 December annually	SEC Manager	Dec 07 and yearly	Event and external publicity	Increased awareness of the University's scheme and increased involvement of disabled people	138
V9	Require evidence of robust equality impact assessment within all proposals for new projects or developments	Executive, Deans, Heads	Jan 08 and on-going	Records of IAs	Integration of IA processes within all aspects of planning	220 – 222
V10	Implement PEEPs for relevant disabled students and staff	Head of RSH	Mar 08	Individual PEEPs		138
V11	Establish Key Disability Contacts within central services to complement the contacts within academic schools	Heads of Service	Aug 08	Web and paper-based information	Improved communication between central specialist support services and mainstream central services	138
V12	Investigate establishing appropriate links with the Wolverhampton Disability Network	SEC Manager	Nov 08	Minutes of meetings	Increased involvement of disabled people from the wider community who have an interest in the work of the University	142 - 144
V13	(Subject to the admissions review and clarification of data protection issues) undertake a specific consultation exercise with those disabled applicants who declined an offer from the University	SEC Manager in conjunction with Registry	Nov 09	Report	Qualitative data on the reasons why disabled applicants decline offers from the University	170 – 171

Implementation

Implementing Equality Actions at School or Service level

236. We have taken steps to ensure that consideration of equality issues is integrated into our mainstream planning processes, which is outlined below. We will continue to make use of this process where possible to implement the actions outlined in this Disability Equality Scheme.

237. In order to comply with the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act, the University produced and published a University level Race Action Plan, which Deans and Service Heads were required to take into account when developing their school or departmental race action plans.

238. Schools and departments are required to submit a variety of plans and reports, including their Race Action Plans, to the University Executive as part of the annual budget setting process.

239. In anticipation of the requirements of the disability equality duty, recommendations have been issued to schools and departments to extend the scope of their race action plans to cover wider equality issues such as disability.

240. The Biennial Equal Opportunities Conference in 2004 provided a variety of information to assist schools and departments in this process, supported by specific advice and guidance from the Equal Opportunities Co-ordinator and Student Enabling Centre Manager.

241. This preparatory work will have created solid foundations on which schools and departments can build to produce their equality plans for 2007, which will now be required to consider the implications of the University level action plan contained in this document and any actions specific to their school or service resulting from their own consultation and involvement activities.

242. The University Executive will consider the plans submitted by schools and services as part of its annual planning processes.

Implementing the Disability Equality Scheme

243. The University Executive is responsible for approving this scheme and future schemes. It is also responsible for allocating resources to enable the action plan to be implemented.

244. Resources are in place to ensure completion of the actions scheduled for 2007. Actions scheduled for subsequent years will be subject to the allocation of resources from Executive.

245. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor has overall responsibility for the implementation of this scheme.

246. The Equality Legislation Steering Group will monitor progress towards achieving the action plan and provide an annual up-date to the Equality and Diversity Committee. In relation to planned thematic consultations, it will receive all consultation reports, ensure that they are considered by the responsible staff or committee, agree actions within existing resources and monitor progress.

247. The agenda of the Equality and Diversity Committee will include a standing item on the implementation of the Disability Equality Scheme. This will enable the committee to receive update reports from the ELSG and any more detailed reports associated with specific themes.

248. The Equality and Diversity Committee will continue to receive and monitor quantitative data relating to disabled staff and students and make recommendations for action to the appropriate manager or body within the University. Such actions will be included in future up-dates of our action plan.

249. A report on the implementation of the scheme will be included in the annual report of the Equality and Diversity Committee to the Board of Governors.

250. Plans at school and service level will be monitored by the University Executive, as outlined above.

251. At subject level, a number of developments have taken place over recent years to require consideration of disability issues as part of the University's Annual Monitoring process. Annual monitoring reports are considered by School Quality Committees, which report to the University Quality Committee (UQC). UQC has planned additional actions to strengthen this requirement and disseminate elements of good practice to other subject areas and schools as appropriate.

252. Specifically, information gained from annual monitoring activities should assist schools with the development of their equality plans, as outlined above.

253. By the end of this scheme we will have undertaken a systematic review of all major aspects of the student lifecycle and our employment functions.

Measuring Progress

254. We will use a variety of methods to assess whether we have achieved our desired outcomes.

255. We will continue to use the same thematic approach for our next scheme. Use of the same themes and a standard set of questions will enable direct comparisons to be made between the data gathered for this scheme and the data gathered at future consultations on the same theme. We should then be able to draw conclusions on whether the actions we have taken have resulted in tangible improvements in the area under consideration.

256. Should we arrive at a position where no significant barriers are identified within a specific theme, we will need to consider ways of monitoring to ensure that these high standards are maintained. We do not anticipate reaching this position within the life of this scheme or the subsequent scheme due to the complexity of the barriers to be addressed.

257. Changes in the strategic position of the University, its policies, practices and procedures or the wider educational environment may result in the need to consider new themes or redefine existing ones. Disabled staff and students will be involved in determining such changes via mechanisms such as the Disability Advisory Group.

258. Increased rates of satisfaction expressed by disabled people via a variety of mainstream consultations, such as local and national student satisfaction surveys, will provide a good indication of improvements achieved in specific areas.

259. The quantitative data outlined in section D and Appendices 1 - 5 will be used as a baseline from which we will be able to assess improvements in our performance against agreed targets.

Appendices

Appendix ! – Analysis of Engagement and Involvement Activities

Activity	Publicity Methods used	Actual participants	Indicative barriers	Para
Disabled students provided their perspective at the Disability Equality Conference, 4 Apr. 06	Direct approaches from SEC staff and members of the Disability Advisory Group	5 participants: 1 graduate wheelchair user 1 visually impaired student who withdrew during the first year 2 dyslexic students 1 student with invisible impairments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for more staff development • Isolation of disabled students with particular impairments • Need to publicise and raise the profile of the SNT role 	
Disabled staff focus group	E-mail to all staff (approximately 2500)	8 staff attended the focus group 4 staff completed an electronic questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for parity of support for disabled students and staff • Need for named contact for staff disability issues • A variety of attitudinal barriers continue to exist 	
Disabled members of the Disability Advisory Group	Members are nominated by their school/service	Eight current members represent a variety of impairment groups, including wheelchair users and people with limited mobility, people with sensory impairments and invisible impairments	N/A	
Telephone/e-mail survey of disabled students	Direct approaches to a sample of 50 students using SEC database of supported students	36 students responded, 25 by phone, 11 by e-mail	N/A – priority order for thematic focus groups has been compiled from individual students' 'top 3 areas for action'	
Health and safety focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters sent to key disability contacts • Direct invitations to 40 students 		Information not yet available	
Adaptive technology focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters sent to key 		Information not yet available	

	disability contacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct invitations to 50 students known to use / require adaptive technology 			
Admissions focus group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters sent to key disability contacts • Direct invitations to 60 students who began their studies in 2006-2007 	1 student attended the focus group 3 have completed electronic questionnaires to date	Information not yet available	

Appendix 2 – HEFCE Disability Performance Indicator

HEFCE PI Table T7 - Participation of students in higher education who are in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

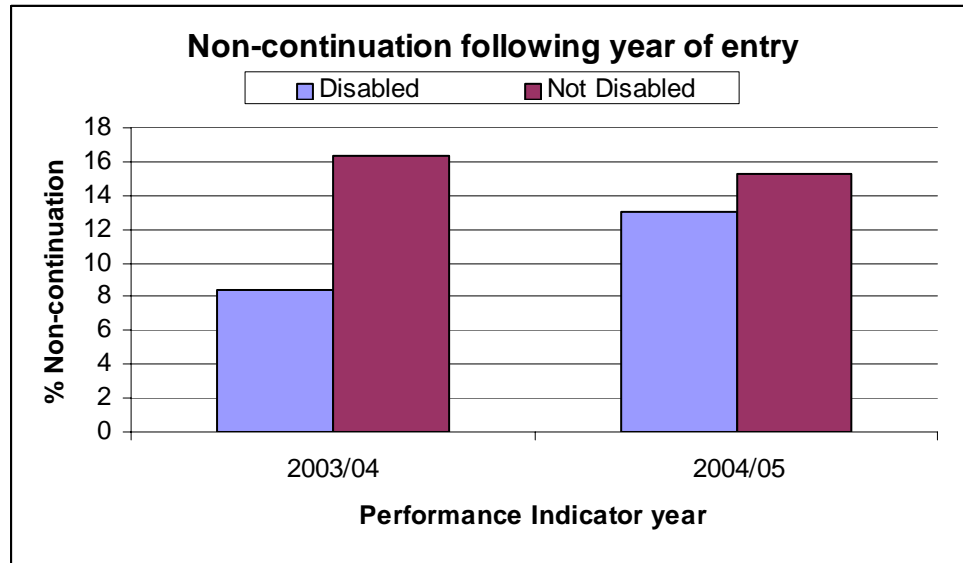
Institution	FT first degree			FT all undergraduate			PT all undergraduate *		
	Total entrants	Percent DSA	Benchmark	Total entrants	Percent DSA	Benchmark	Total entrants	Percent DSA	Benchmark
University of Wolverhampton 2000-01	8,372	1	2	11,299	1	2	2,066	-	1
All UK Institutions 2000-01	830,140	2		945,204	1		229,536	2	
University of Wolverhampton 2001-02	8,484	1	3	11,636	1	2	2,203	1	1
All UK Institutions 2001-02	853,612	2		976,917	2		151,383	1	
University of Wolverhampton 2002-03	8,530	1	4	11,410	1	3	1,185	1	1
University of Wolverhampton 2003-04	8,247	3	4	11,377	2	4	1,052	2	2
All UK Institutions 2003-04	912,086	3		1,034,365	3		249,441	2	
University of Wolverhampton 2004-05	8,365	2.8	4.6	11,210	2.6	4.2	1,125	2.0	1.9
All UK Institutions 2004-05	928,705	3.6		1,051,105	3.5		239,295	1.9	

Appendix 3 – Student Progression

Student Progression

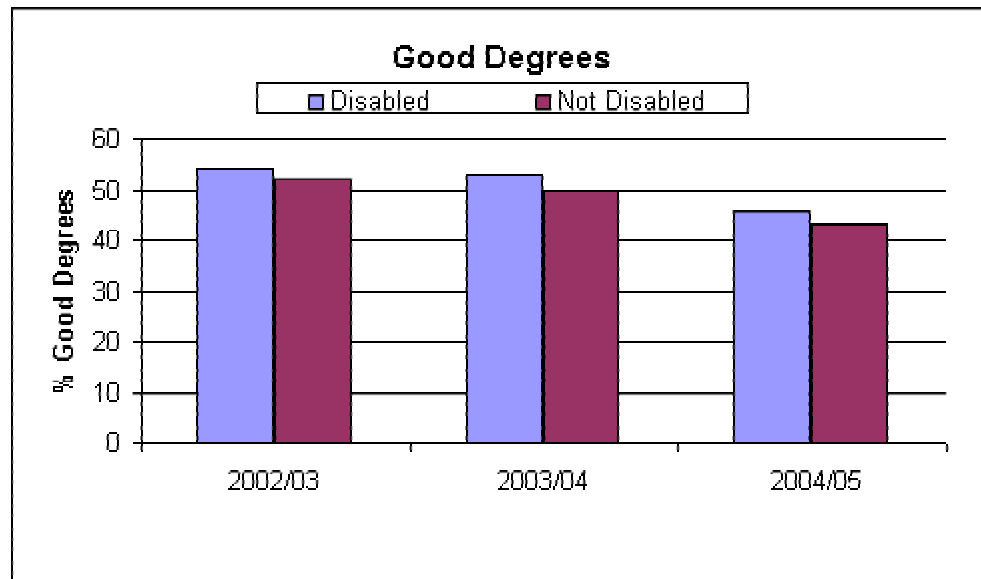
Based on HEFCE PI Table 3a: Non-continuation at the University following Year of Entry

Full-Time First Degree Entrants included in HESA returns



Appendix 4 – Degree Classifications

Good Degrees (1st & 2.1 Degree Classification)



Appendix 5 – UoW First Year Disabled Students

UK Domiciled First Year students who identified themselves as disabled
University of Wolverhampton

