



2013/14 Annual Report

Disability Resource Centre (DRC)

Support and advice for students



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**

Foreword

The Disability Resource Centre's Annual Report demonstrates the University's commitment to supporting its disabled students to get the most out of their time at Cambridge. It is particularly pleasing that the DRC has secured funding to allow the Asperger syndrome project to be extended for another two years.

Looking forward, although details of the cuts to Disabled Students' Allowances announced by David Willetts in the Spring are not yet known, all indications are that significant additional responsibilities will be placed on HEIs. With guidance and advice from DRC staff, the General Board will consider ways in which Faculties, Departments, (and Colleges) can make teaching more inclusive to avoid the need for adjustments for individual students, and how we can make even better use of technology in teaching to ensure that the University continues to meet its obligations under the Equality Act.



Graham Allen
Academic Secretary

The Disability Resource Centre is a remarkable component of the support network available in Cambridge for our undergraduate and graduate communities. The DRC works constructively with the colleges and departments to formulate the best structures catering to the individual requirements of students. The presentation of training events and the coordination of non-medical help and other support have made a real difference to so many students trying to manage the challenges of living and working in Cambridge and, perhaps more importantly, in helping these students make the most of the opportunities available to them.

During this period the DRC team has also assisted in the development of the revised Code of Practice for Disabled Students and in the Student Registry's improvements to examination access arrangement processes; developed the new DRC website; and successfully secured funding from the Vice-Chancellor's Endowment Fund and the colleges to continue the Asperger syndrome project.

All of this has been achieved by John Harding and his professional and committed team during an uncertain funding climate in which the Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) has been under review. For all the reasons outlined above, I offer my congratulations and gratitude on behalf of the University.



Dr Nick Bampos
University Disability Equality Champion

Table of Contents

1. Overview.....	5
2. DRC Staff.....	7
3. Specific Learning Difficulties.....	8
4. Disability Advisers.....	9
5. Non-Medical Helper Scheme.....	10
6. Training.....	11
7. Donations and Bursary Funds.....	12
8. Events and Communications.....	14

Appendices

Appendix 1: Overall Student Data.....	15
Appendix 2: Specific Learning Difficulties Data.....	16
Appendix 3: Other Disabilities Data & Non Medical Help Scheme Data	17
Appendix 5: International Students Fund and Training Data	18
Appendix 6: Year End Accounts.....	19

1. Overview of the 2013/14 academic year

Service Demand:

The 2013/14 academic year saw a further increase in disabled students accessing support. The total number of current disabled students at the end of the academic year (14 July 2014) was **1825** an increase of **10%** on the previous year (1659). The number of undergraduate applicants disclosing a disability during this period also rose from **824 to 866**, an increase of **5%**. These increases are a positive indication that any perceived stigma around the disclosure of disability is diminishing and evidence of achievement against the University's Equality Objective 4 which has a focus on increasing levels of disability disclosure.

A breakdown of all current students by HESA disability category is included in Appendix 1.

Staffing:

During the year Sarah Norman was promoted to the role of Office Administrator, and Alyson Grainger joined the team as Administrative Assistant. June Massey will retire from the DRC in September 2014 and she will be replaced by Ken Ewing. Ali Fawkes will join the team as Asperger Syndrome Project Officer. John Harding became a Director of the National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP), the professional body for the education sector.

Key Activity in 2013/14:

- Development of the revised Code of Practice for Disabled Students in collaboration with the Educational and Student Policy Section.
- 59 International Students were successfully supported via the International Disabled Students' Fund, co-funded for the first time in 2013/14 by the University and the Colleges.
- Collaborative projects with the Student Registry and Board of Exams to streamline the process for examination access arrangements will be implemented for the 2014/5 academic year.
- The DRC made a successful bid for continued funding for the Asperger syndrome project from the Vice-Chancellor's Endowment Fund and the Colleges. Our gratitude is extended to both for this continued support.
- A highly successful and well attended Annual Disability Lecture on Mental Health was introduced by the Vice-Chancellor.
- Continued successful collaboration with the Careers Service, specifically in respect of students with Asperger syndrome, including a project with a multinational IT company focussing on employment for graduates with autism.
- Development of the new DRC webpages, which will be launched on the new University template in October 2014.
- The DRC delivered 36 training events (covering 15 courses run via PPD; 13 bespoke training events, 6 mentoring training sessions and 2 Disability Liaison Officer events). 96% of delegates who completed evaluations ranked the delivery positively.
- The DRC's non-medical helper (NMH) scheme continued to operate effectively with a 42% increase in the number of mentoring hours used and a 10% increase in student take-up of support.
- The DRC continued its work to streamline administrative processes and to utilise electronic solutions to reduce paperwork whilst maintaining or increasing accessibility.
- Several DRC staff members have been involved directly in the planning and preparation for the new Student Services Centre, including the development of an Access Statement for the new building and input into the majority of the 13 workshops which have been set up to help with the progress of this important project.

1. Overview of the 2013/14 academic year (continued)

Governance:

The Head of the DRC reports to the Head of Educational and Student Policy within the Academic Division. The Head of the DRC is also co-opted member of the Student Health and Wellbeing Committee. Disability related policy matters fall under the remit of the General Board's Education Committee.

DRC Priorities for 2014/15:

Outside of maintaining current levels of support for disabled students and those staff supporting them, the year ahead will be dominated by formulating the University's response to the proposed changes to the Disabled Students' Allowances system. Whilst the exact details of these changes are not known, it is clear that Universities will be asked to take on a far greater degree of the responsibilities for (and cost of) the support and adjustments required by disabled students. The DRC is representing the University in consultations with the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, prior to the publication of the new DSAs regulations for 2015/16, which will be issued in the Autumn of 2014. Additional regulations will then be issued for further changes, specifically to arrangements for the provision of human support, which are due to come into force for the start of the 2016/17 academic year.

Other key priorities for 2014/15:

- Establishing the effective operation of the new Asperger syndrome specialist post
- Delivery of training to new tutors (October 2014)
- Continued input into the planning and development of the new Student Services Centre project
- 12th Annual Disability Lecture
- Implementation of new Non-Medical Help pay bands (to be in-place for Sept 2015)
- Project to highlight effective inclusive teaching and learning practice in action across the collegiate University.

Quality Assurance 2014 Student Survey:

The student survey was sent to 1792 students. 350 responded, with 269 completing the whole survey. The majority were undergraduate, as with the general cohort, and they were also slightly more likely to be female, 57% as against 48% of the general cohort.

- 87% of respondents rated DRC support as 'Very helpful' or 'Helpful'

Respondents commented that, whilst standard of service was high, waiting times could be longer than expected.

'Helpful, friendly, understanding and supportive staff, who provided ideas and suggestions to help me that I didn't know were possible.'

Annual Student Survey Comment.

2. DRC Staff



3. Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs)

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) is a term that covers a range of conditions such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and, for the purposes of support and funding, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Service Demands

The total number of current students who have disclosed a Specific Learning Difficulty, or were in the process of being diagnosed as of July 2014 was 933, a 6% rise on the previous year (877). This includes those diagnosed with two impairments including an SpLD.

Service Development

Transitional support events for students with SpLDs are held before the start of Michaelmas Term for incoming students and operated successfully for a second year in 2013/14.

Specialist 1-1 Study Skills

Specialist 1-1 study skills is coordinated by the Disability Resource Centre. The DRC has a pool of eight 1-1 specialist study skills tutors who support students who have been recommended this support by Educational Psychologists or DSA Needs Assessors. Specialist 1-1 study skills is funded either by Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) or from other sources of funds, such as the International Disabled Students' Fund or via support from Colleges.

Evaluation of Service

All specialist study skills tutors are formally observed annually and submit termly reviews to Directors of Studies. PAToSS, the Professional Association for Teachers and Assessors of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties, has recognised the University of Cambridge's assessment model for SpLD as an example of best practice in the higher education sector.

Data on the DRC service for students with Specific Learning Difficulties, including detail of student appointments, is available in Appendix 2.

'They aim to give person-specific advice, rather than teach every recipient generic study skills was something I liked about the process.'

Annual Student Survey comment on Study Skills Provision

'My tutor has a very good attitude. She is respectful and easy to talk to as well as having a nuanced awareness of the issues we are dealing with.'

Annual Student Survey comment on Study Skills Provision



4. Disability Advisers

Disability Advisers carry out detailed investigations into the support requirements of incoming students who have disclosed a disability on their application. Support is then arranged in the months prior to an individual's arrival at University and communicated to academic and support staff via a Student Support Document (SSD). Disability Advisers provide on-going support and advice to students and staff after admission. They also work closely with students who become disabled or are diagnosed after admission. Advisers respond to initial enquiries from prospective students and/or their parents and set up pre-admissions visits for some prospective students.

Service Demands

The total number of current students who disclosed a disability, other than a Specific Learning Difficulty as of July 2014 was **988**, a **13% rise** on the previous year when the total stood at 871. This includes students with more than one diagnosis but includes shared students who also have an SpLD.

As reported in previous years, the most pressing issues for the Disability Advisers relate to the increase in volume of current students requiring support; the increasing volume of enquires; the growing number of cases which require significant advisory time and resources; and increasing demand on advisory services in general.

Service Development

5 students have been referred for diagnostic assessment at CLASS following initial assessment and referral by Disability Advisers. The popular Transitional Support Events for incoming students with AS and their families/guardians will continue to be held during the long vacation.

Specialist 1-1 Support

Disabled students often benefit from the provision of Non-Medical Help (NMH), and this support is often recommended within students' specialist evidence, including independent assessments of need. Disability Advisers work with the Disability Support Co-ordinator to ensure that disabled students are matched effectively with support workers with the appropriate skills, experience and subject knowledge (for example, note-takers, mentors).

Evaluation of Service

Service evaluations are held every two years. A breakdown of current disabled students by HESA disability category (other than SpLD) is included in Appendix 3.

84% of respondents to the 2014 student survey rated the service they received from their Disability Adviser as 'very good' or 'good'.

'Very understanding, supportive and generous in time.'

'Very swift, very kind, very efficient. Covered bases I hadn't even thought of. Offered to come and meet me in my college to save me the difficulty.'

Annual Student Survey Comments.

5. Non-Medical Help (NMH) Scheme

The Non-Medical Help Scheme provides coordinated support for disabled students who require assistance in order to access their studies effectively. These recommendations are usually detailed in the Needs Assessment Reports for students, within specialist evidence, or as a result of assessment by a specialist adviser. The recruitment, training, and matching of NMHs to students is the responsibility of the Disability Support Coordinator. The SpLD Administrator matches students with SpLDs to specialist 1-1 study skills tutors.

The DRC can provide interim NMH support in anticipation of DSA to students who apply for Disabled Students' Allowances, as this grant can take some time to process fully. The DRC does not have any budget allocation to cover the costs of this support. Colleges are, once again, thanked for underwriting these costs on occasion.

Service Demands

The 2013/14 academic year saw a significant increase in NMH provision, with the total number of students in receipt of NMH support rising from **351 to 389**, an increase of **11%**. From the previous year, students in need of proofreading and note-taking support also rose, and 1-1 specialist study skills support rose slightly 159 to 162. There was a 42% increase in the number of mentoring hours used, from 1226 to 1792. Data on hours of NMH support administered by the DRC can be found in Appendix 4.

Service Development

The appointment of a new, full-time, Disability Support Co-ordinator in August 2013 has led to an improvement in service delivery and a 10% increase in students taking up NMH support. There were 75 NMHs supporting students, and training and events were held for them throughout the year. Mentoring training has also been reviewed and improved by the Disability Development Consultant and the Disability Support Co-ordinator over the year. The 28 mentors were offered optional training courses on mind-mapping software, supporting students with Asperger syndrome and mindfulness.

Evaluation of Service

The NMH scheme is evaluated annually as part of the Annual Student Survey, with the majority of respondents rating their NMH support as helpful or very helpful. The following are comments received from the 2014 Annual Student Survey:

'X is fantastic and very supportive. I have been through a lot in the last couple of years and I can always count on her for objective feedback and immense support through the rough times.'

'My note takers have been very good at taking all of the points down and the notes are easy to use. I do feel that I am at a bit of a disadvantage because they are not my own notes, but it is the best option for lectures. My mentor has been excellent and helped me through a lot of things during my time here.'

'X has been really helpful in terms of time management and looking at things a different way. She also offers me advice on where to look for help for my problems. Also we are now focusing on tasks that can help me feel less isolated and become a more social person.'

6. Training

The Disability Resource Centre offers interactive, responsive training in a range of formats across the University and Colleges, through bespoke training courses developed in response to requests, and in conjunction with Personal and Professional Development (PPD).

Training courses

The DRC delivers training in support of disabled students, staff and visitors. Sessions promote disability equality by enabling staff to meet their responsibilities under the Equality Act (2010) and to work effectively and easily with disabled people.

Courses delivered in conjunction with PPD

In 2013/14, 15 courses were delivered via PPD to 121 people. Ongoing courses included the *'Teaching Students with...'* series and *'An Introduction to Sign Language'*. Courses currently offered focus on dyslexia and other Specific Learning Difficulties and Asperger syndrome. A course on Student Support Documents (SSDs) and the process by which information about disabled students' recommended support is communicated proved very popular and continues this academic year. A new course was introduced, *'Understanding Specific Learning Difficulties: Identification and Diagnosis (Briefing)'*, which explores the process of diagnosis of Specific Learning Difficulties, and has been well received.

Bespoke training sessions:

In 2013/14, there were 13 bespoke training sessions delivered, with 148 participants, a significant increase in take up. Training to college and departmental staff looking at teaching disabled students was popular in addition to work around supporting students with Asperger syndrome and mental health conditions. Those taking up bespoke training included:

Colleges:	Churchill, Homerton, Jesus, King's, Queens'
Departments/Faculties:	Linguistics, Philosophy, Plant Sciences
UAS:	Cambridge Admissions Office, Occupational Health
Other:	Botanic Gardens, Student Advisory Service

Work continued around the needs of individual disabled students, and to support departments. Additionally, within the DRC, workshops and training for mentors in the NMH scheme continued and were developed.

Evaluation of Service

In 2013/14, the DRC continued to ask participants to evaluate how each course had met its objectives, the delivery of the course and its administration, ranking on a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 was 'not at all' and 4 was 'fully'). Over 99% of respondents ranked the administration and delivery at 3 or 4, and 96% ranked success at meeting its objectives at 3 or 4.

For data of courses conducted in 2013/14 see Appendix 6.

7. Donations and Bursary Funds

The Disabled Students' Bursary Fund:

This Fund was established in recognition of the additional expenses incurred by disabled students and to contribute to the costs of acquiring essential services or equipment. The Guardians of the Fund consider applications throughout the year. In 2013/14, 10 awards were made to fund specialist equipment, Non-Medical Help, and travel and accommodation costs. These totalled £3,497.

Donations:

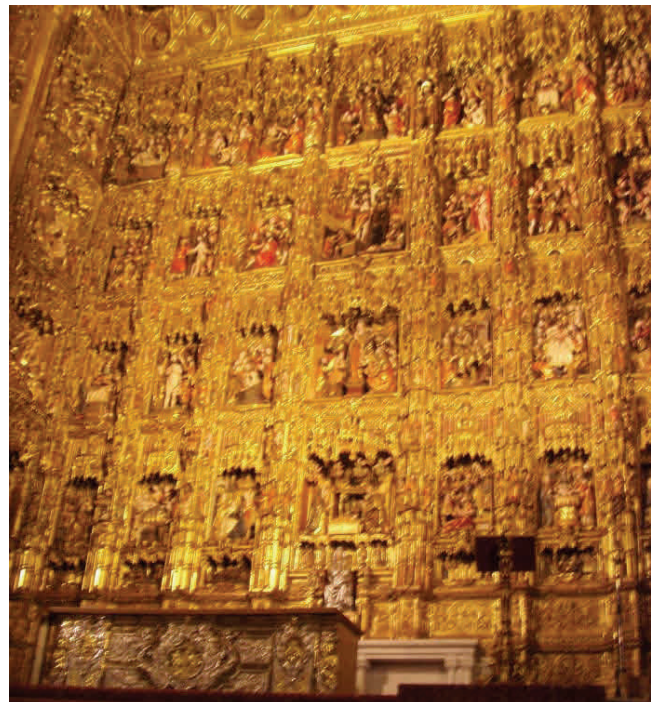
The Disability Resource Centre is extremely grateful for the continued support from a number of donors who help support disabled students at the University. These funds have assisted many disabled students in accessing their learning over the last year. The donors include the following: The Alchemy Foundation, City and University of Cambridge Masonic Charitable Trust and The Coutts & Co Charitable Trust. We thank the donors for their generosity.

The Charlie Bayne Travel Trust:

This Trust was set up in the memory of Charlie Bayne (1965–90) who spent four years as an undergraduate at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1985–89. The Trust offers travel grants to disabled undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of Cambridge and at Anglia Ruskin University. In 2014, 7 awards were made, helping students to travel to many different destinations, including: India to start setting up libraries in rural schools, France to enrich interest in French Revolution Studies, Spain to develop knowledge of Spanish culture and language, Montserrat and Zambia to undertake research, Cornwall for a research and drawing trip and Norway to increase self-esteem and independence in unfamiliar places. Our sincere thanks go to the Bayne family, and the Trustees for their continued support of this valuable student trust.

'The trip was a whirlwind: five cities in seven days, but it was a truly wonderful experience for both of us. We were able to experience both the historic and the modern culture of Spain, see some awe inspiring architecture, wander charming streets, experience a new cuisine, and have a tremendous amount of fun while doing so. Without the generosity of your foundation we would not have been able to experience this, and we would both like to express our deepest gratitude for this opportunity.'

Postgraduate Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics student



7. Donations and Bursary Funds (continued)

The International Disabled Students' Fund (IDS Fund)

The IDS Fund enables international disabled students to receive support equivalent to that received by their 'home' counterparts via Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs). The Fund is managed and administered by the DRC. During the third year of the IDS Fund (2013/14), a total of 59 international students were granted an award out of a total of 68 who applied. 4 out of the 9 students who were not granted funding will be made an award in 2014/15, due to the timings of the necessary assessments.

Financial Overview

Planned total expenditure for the 2013/14 academic year was £60,000. An additional £10,446 was awarded using recycled unused funds from students who have graduated. The majority of IDS Fund applications took less than 2 months to process from application to award, a far quicker turnaround than that for home students applying for DSAs.

The IDS fund is supported equally by the University and Colleges. Sincere thanks go to the Colleges and to the University for supporting this important source of assistance for the growing population of disabled international students.

Testimonials from Students in receipt of IDS funds

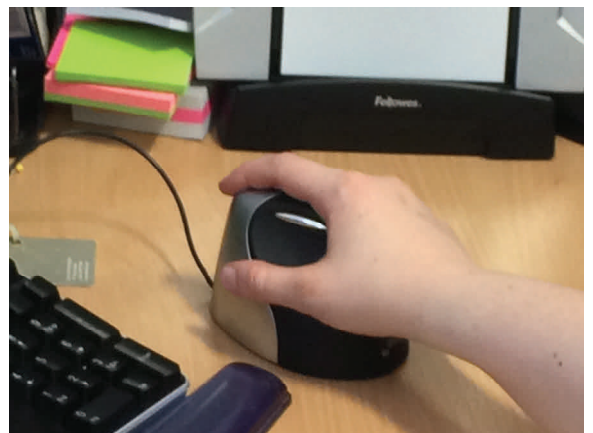
'The award, and the resulting transcriptions, enabled me to thoroughly analyse the empirical work I conducted as part of my PhD thesis. It was instrumental for undertaking (and ultimately completing) my doctoral research. Other funding sources were reluctant (or refused) to fund interview transcriptions, so the Fund filled a vital funding gap. I am very grateful for the Fund's support.' Postgraduate Law student.

'I used my IDS Fund award for travel support on rainy days. It is extremely hazardous for me to walk on slippery surfaces, and I called taxis when the weather made pavement conditions hazardous. The award gave me the security to know that I could safely attend classes and lectures without jeopardizing my future mobility.' Postgraduate archaeology student.

Equipment Loan Pool

The loan pool for assistive technological and ergonomic equipment is funded through donations. It provides equipment for students waiting for funding to come into place and for staff to borrow following a referral from Occupational Health.

In 2013-14 the value of equipment purchased and cost of servicing current equipment was £1,343.



8. Events and Communications

Events:

The DRC supports, co-sponsors and contributes to a range of events, both independently and within the wider Equality and Diversity programme.

- The 2014 Annual Disability Lecture took place on 20 March 2014. The speaker was Dr Rachel Perkins, speaking about creating mentally healthy communities. The podcast is available online at <http://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1682982>. The lecture was very well attended by over two hundred people.



- The DRC offered information sessions and one-to-one guidance appointments for prospective students and their families as part of the University Open Days.
- Transitional support events were run for incoming students with Asperger syndrome and Specific Learning Difficulties during the 2013 long vacation.
- DRC staff attended the Societies' Fair in October 2013 in order to publicise the DRC's services to new and returning students.
- The DRC social media presence was increased with a new Pinterest site launched, and Twitter and Facebook activity improved, resulting in new followers.
- A project to update the DRC website to the new templates started, with student user feedback taking place in July 2014.

Disability Liaison Officers (DLOs):

Events for DLOs were run in September 2013 and July 2014. The July event focussed on Assistive Technology with a talk given by Sheena Macrae, Assistive Technology Specialist, UIS.

Networking:

DRC staff maintain strong links with national professional bodies, such as the National Association of Disability Practitioners (NADP), of which the Head of the DRC, John Harding, is a Director, and the Association of Dyslexia Specialists in Higher Education (ADSHE). The Head of the DRC represents the University at the Heads of Russell Group Disability Services Forum. DRC staff are also represented on the steering group of the Disabled Staff Network, and attend national and regional Non-Medical Help groups and Funding Body Network meetings.

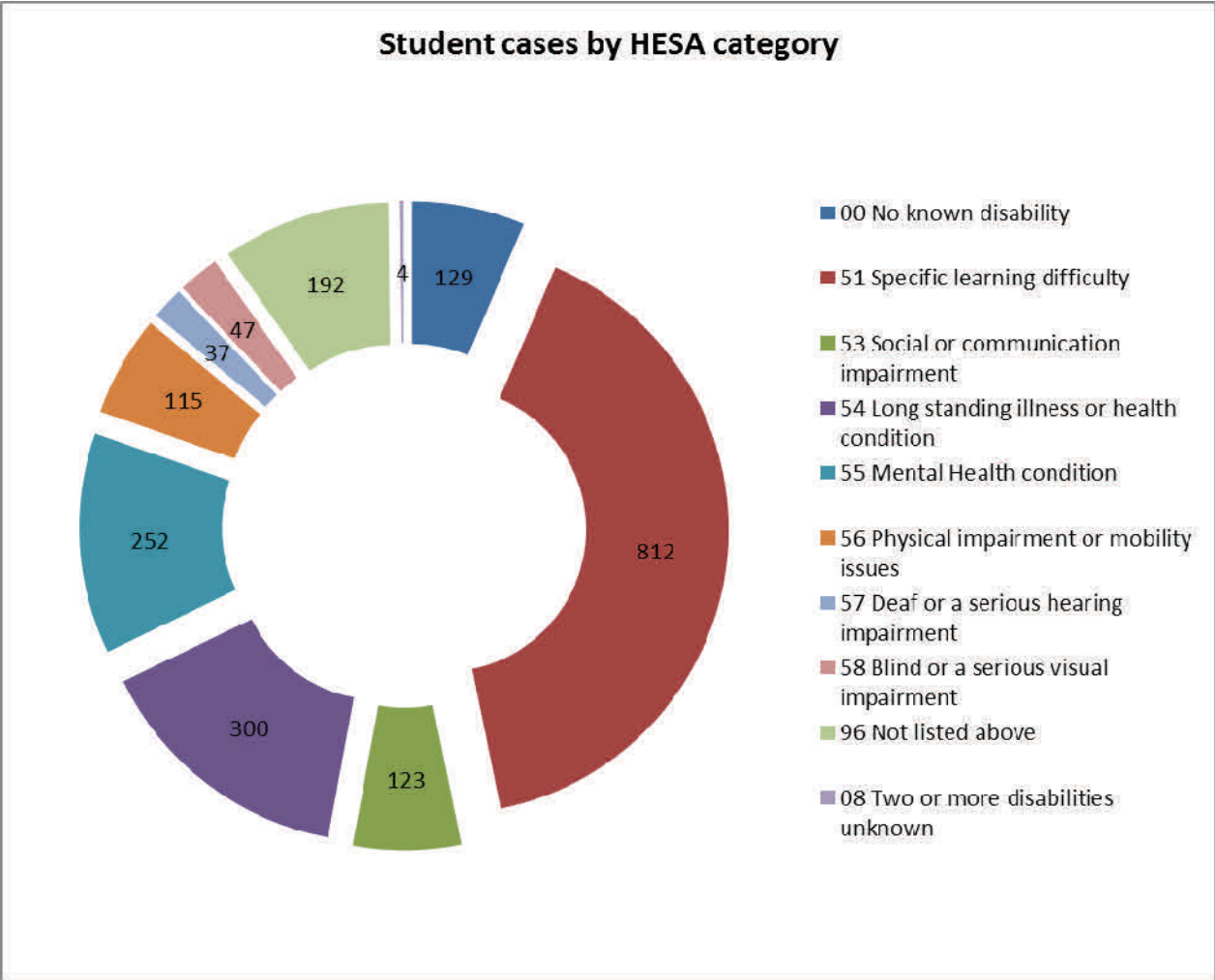
Appendix 1: Overall Student Data

All data accurate as of 14 July 2014.

Data is collected on disclosure.

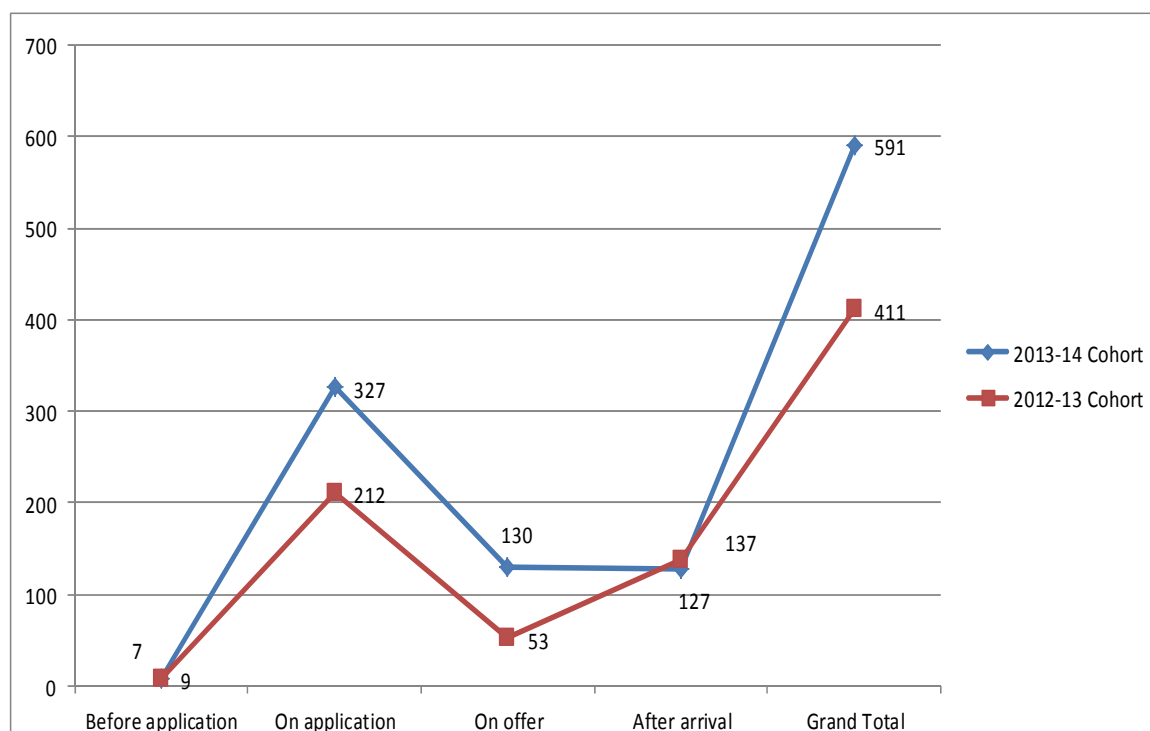
Category	No. of active student clients
Undergraduate	1200 (1137 + 5.5%)
Postgraduate	625 (522 +20%)
Total	1825 (1659 +10%)

Table 1.1 Total Active Students 2013/14 (2012/13 in brackets)



Graph 1.1 Active students by HESA Disability Categories in 2013/14. This includes 210 students who have two or more known disabilities.

Appendix 1: Overall Student Data (continued)

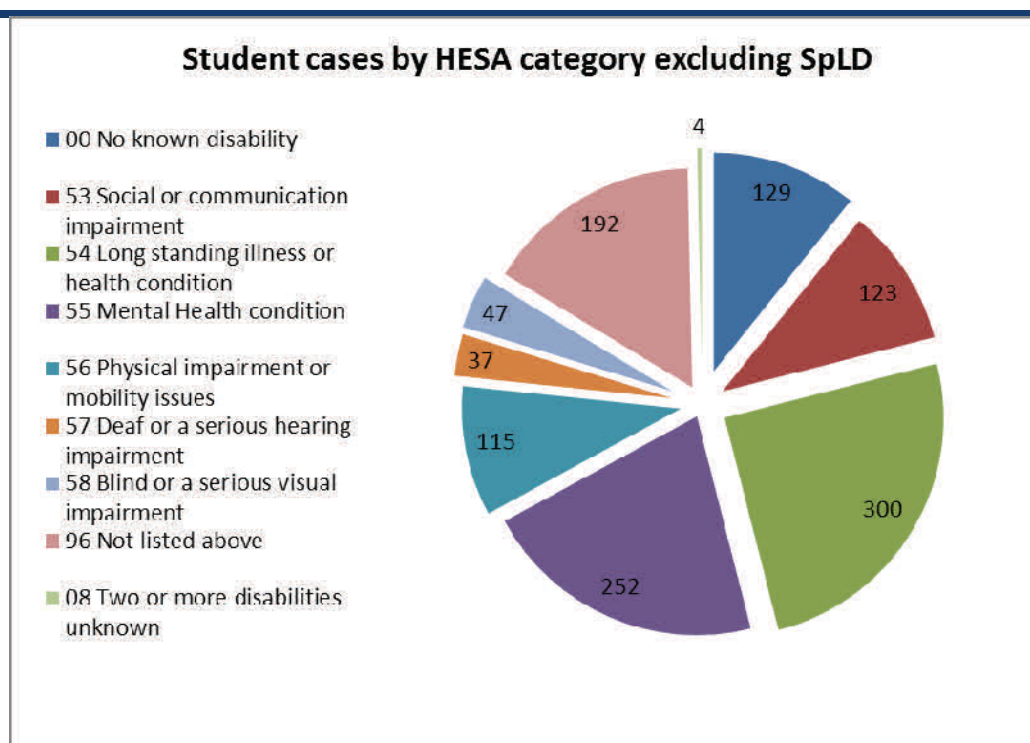


Graph 1.2 Time of disclosure to the DRC, 2013-14 data only includes first year students where 2012-13 and 2011-12 includes students disclosing in later years of study.

Appendix 2: Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) Data

Activity	Total 12-13 Caseload	Total 13-14 caseload
Initial interviews	127	140
Educational Psychologist diagnostic referrals	137	126
Report feedback sessions	94	84
Support review	93	116

Appendix 3: Other Disabilities Data



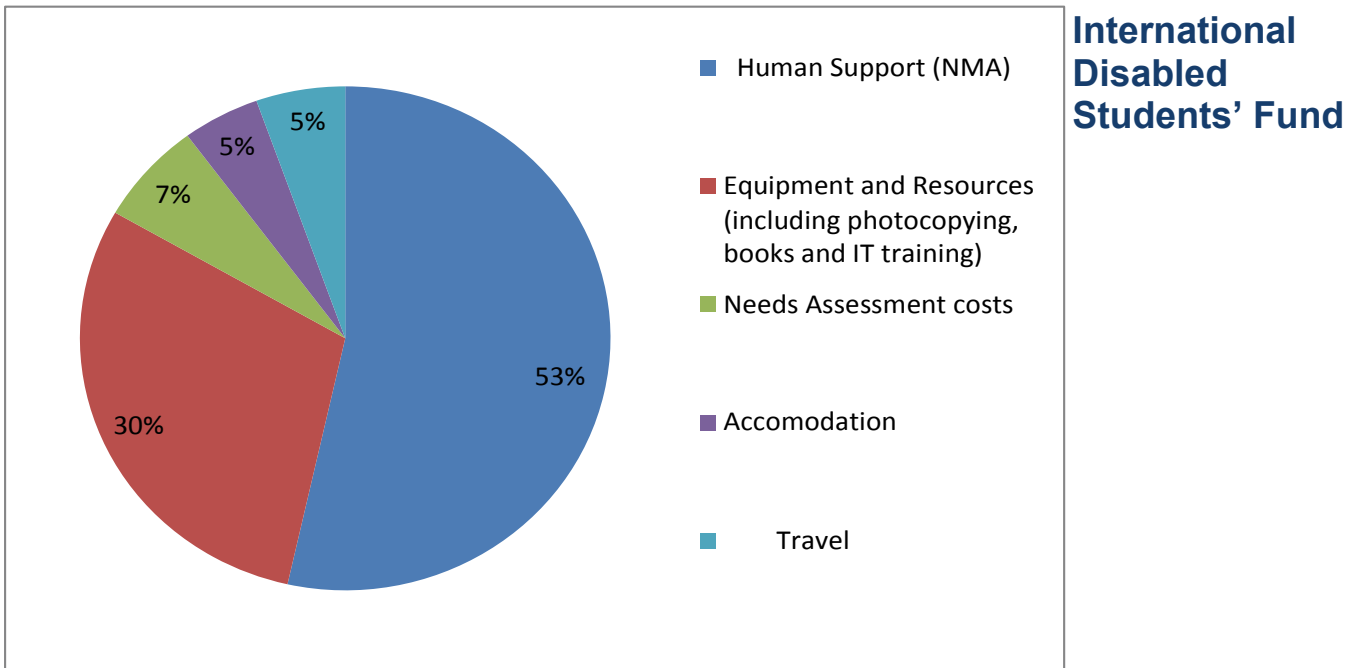
Graph 3.1 Students according to HESA disability categories excluding Specific Learning Difficulties

Appendix 4: Non-Medical Help (NMH) Scheme Data

	2012/13 Annual NMH Hours	2012/13 Number of Students	2013/14 Annual NMH Hours	2013/14 Number of Students
Note-taking	3348	30	3525	38
Study Skills Support	749	159	781	162
Practical & Laboratory Support	126	6	528	10
Mentoring	1226	122	1792	135
Library Support	151	17	144	14
Orientation	0	0	11	3
Proofreading	125	9	148	15
Amanuensis/ Transcription	388	8	368	12
Totals	6113	351	7297	389

Table 4.1 Comparison of NMH hours by task and number of students supported 2012/13 to 2013/14

Appendix 5: International Disabled Students Fund and Training Data



Graph 5.1 2013/14 International Disabled Students' Fund expenditure by category

Appendix 6: Training Data

Type of Course	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Participants on PPD supported courses	117	86	113	121
Courses delivered supported by PPD	14	14	12	15
Participants on DRC administered/bespoke courses	115	166	133	148
Courses administered by DRC/bespoke courses	10	16	9	13

Table 6.1 Courses conducted in the past four academic years

Appendix 6: Year End Accounts

Income		2012-13	2013-14
Chest	Stipends and Wages	322,553	325,824
	Savings target	-6,596	-10,592
	Non-payroll	40,883	45,192
Donations	DSA Administration & trusts and foundations	234,790	244,729
	Vice-Chancellor's special fund		7,500
Other	Insurance claim, trading	301	34,522
Total income		591,932	647,175
Expenditure		2012-13	2013-14
	Stipends & Wages	320,332	320,889
	Non-pay	247,934	312,271
Total expenditure		568,266	633,160
Surplus (deficit) Year End		2,283	14,015
Cash in hand brought forward		71,857	83,387
Total reserves as at July 2014 (1)		85,670	97,402

- (1) Reserves include c/fwd funds for student awards :
- Student Bursary Fund c/fwd 2014-15 £19,692
 - International Students Disabled Fund c/fwd 2014-15 £56,242
 - Loan Pool Equipment £1,958
 - Vice-Chancellor's special fund c/fwd 2014-15 £7,500

If you would like this report in an alternative format (such as Braille, large-font or an electronic version), please contact the Disability Resource Centre.

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