



# Disabled 101

A GUIDE TO DISABILITY AND  
MENTAL HEALTH AT CAMBRIDGE



DISABLED STUDENTS'  
CAMPAIGN



# Welcome!



Welcome to Cambridge - your home for the next few years! All of us at the Disabled Students' Campaign wanted to say hello, and give you some important info that you might find helpful during your time here.

Whether or not you identify as disabled, you will probably find this guide useful at some point during your degree, so it's a good idea to hang onto it! there are also digital copies on the Cambridge SU and DSC websites.

We hope you have an amazing time here, but if you're struggling, remember you can always get in touch with Cambridge SU and we'll do our best to help!



# What is disability?

Here are some examples of things that can 'count' as a disability:

**ANXIETY**

**PTSD**

**CROHN'S**

**DIABETES**

**DYSPRAXIA**

**DYSLEXIA**

**IBS**

**HARD OF HEARING**

**CHRONIC  
PAIN/FATIGUE**

**LUPUS**

**DEPRESSION**

**AUTISM**

**ADHD**

**EPILEPSY**

**ARTHRITIS**

**EDS**

A disability isn't just being a wheelchair user! A disability is defined as any long term condition - mental or physical - which has an impact on your ability to carry out day to day activities.

There is no such thing as being 'registered disabled' and we will never ask you to prove your disability or diagnosis to take part in the Disabled Students' Campaign.



# Disability Rights

Under the Equality Act 2010, you have the right to reasonable adjustments as a disabled student to allow you equal access to education. Examples of this include accessible buildings, lecture notes in advance, exam access arrangements (such as extra time or rest breaks), deadline extensions, and accessible college facilities.

This is not an exhaustive list, so if there's something you need, just ask! As long as a request is reasonable and something you need as a result of your disability, you are entitled to it!

Additionally, public bodies (this includes the University and the colleges) have a duty to go further in promoting the rights of disabled people.

They must:

- Promote disability equality
- Take steps to eliminate discrimination and harrassment
- Publish a Disability Equality Scheme, setting out how they plan to do the above






# Community


At Cambridge we have a very strong and supportive disability community. The Disabled Students' Campaign is here to offer support, as well as representing disabled students' interests and campaigning for change.

If you're looking for advice or support from peers, key people you can contact are your college DSO, any member of the DSC Committee, or the Cambridge SU DSO.



If you're looking to meet other disabled students, there are plenty of opportunities! The DSC runs plenty of chilled out social events throughout the term, as well as talks and film nights, which are all advertised on our social media. If you're looking to get into campaigning, we run a forum at least twice a term - this will be live minuted so you can join in even if you can't attend, and the minutes will be available online afterwards. Any online socials will take place on a platform with captioning.


We also have condition specific Facebook support groups for a variety of conditions, for example chronic pain, eating disorders, autism or BPD. Students can post here for advice or solidarity.






# Mental Health

Some people find Cambridge to be an overly tough and demanding environment, which can take a toll on their mental health. Struggling is not unusual, but you do not have to endure it! There are plenty of people to speak to and plenty of help available!




If you are having a mental health crisis, there are people you can contact in the moment. **Nightline** is an anonymous and confidential helpline run by students, for students. Call **01223 744 444** If you want to talk to a professional, **NHS 111 option 2** is available 24/7 and can refer you to further support.



If you need longer term support, some colleges have their own counsellors available, or there is counselling available via the University Counselling Service. You can self refer through their online form, or be referred by your college nurse. If you are BME you can also request a BME counsellor.

Mental health conditions are disabilities so you are entitled to adjustments. Please refer to the other pages in this guide outlining your rights and the support which is available.



# Support and Resources

There are a lot of resources available to you as a disabled student at Cambridge:

UCS

University Counselling Service. Free counselling available to all students - just fill out the online self-referral form.

DRC

Disability Resource Centre. Great first port of call for disabled students. They will help you get the support and adjustments you need and can also give general disability related advice. Support will usually be in the form of a personalised document called an SSD (Student Support Document) which details all the adjustments and support that should be put into place for you.

DSC

Disabled Students' Campaign. A community providing informal support and advice, solidarity, campaigning and fun events for all disabled students.

SAS

Student Advice Service. Providing free and impartial advice. See advert on the back of this booklet!

SENSUSACCESS

Service which allows you to convert documents into different accessible formats.

# Exam Adjustments

If you believe your disability will cause you to be disadvantaged in, or uncomfortable during your exams, then you will likely be entitled to exam adjustments. Since COVID, exams have begun to take on more formats than just 3 hour in person exams, and this has meant a larger variety of exam methods are available (such as take home 24 hour exams, online proctoring, coursework etc). The University is legally obliged to provide adjustments to suit your specific needs, so don't hesitate to ask for whatever you think will help you! You may be the only person in the University with your specific adjustments and that's okay!



Some examples of exam adjustments are: extra time, rest breaks, doing your exams in a separate room (if in person), typing exams, having a scribe, being allowed snacks in the exam hall.

You will need evidence of your disability to apply for adjustments. This is likely to be a letter from a GP or specialist, or an assessment from the DRC. If you need help with this there are lots of people you can speak to. You can ask your DoS, Tutor or college nurse for help with the process and they can put you in touch with the right people. You can also contact the Disabled Students' Officer at any time.



# Accommodation

If you have a disability that means standard accommodation may not be suitable for you, you are entitled to accommodation that meets your needs. For example, if you have mobility needs, you may need a ground floor room, or accommodation close to your lecture sites. If it is not possible for your college to provide this, it may be possible to move college. Other examples may be an ensuite or a room with better self-catering facilities.



Your college should not be charging you more for accommodation which is adapted for disability needs. If you need a more expensive room on account of a disability, your college can only charge you the cost of a standard room - this is a legal requirement under the Equality Act to not pass on the charge of implementing reasonable adjustments. It is worth checking what you are paying compared to others in case your college is overcharging you without telling you about your rights or their obligations. If you are being overcharged, please contact your Disabled Students' Officer or the Student Advice Service.



# Double Time

Double Time (officially known as "Extension to Period of Study") is studying part-time for health reasons - e.g. because your health reduces the amount of time you can spend working each day. You can do your degree over a longer period of time, whilst receiving the same amount of financial support.

The Disabled Students' Campaign has produced a guide to Double Time which is available on their website:

[www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/Double-Time](http://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/Double-Time)

If you are considering Double Time, you should speak to your Tutor as soon as possible. The application process can often be fairly slow, but there is work being done to speed this up. If your Tutor isn't sure what Double Time involves, point them to the guide and possibly speak to your Senior Tutor and DoS too.

The Disabled Students' Campaign has a designated officer and a private Facebook support group for Double Time students. There are also social events. Don't hesitate to get in touch with any questions.



# Intermission



Intermission is where you take time out of your studies, often due to health reasons. The Disabled Students' Campaign can help you through this process, as well as letting you know what adjustments you might need to continue studying. Intermission is formally known as "disregarding terms". Lots of students intermit at some point during their degree, and it is nothing to be ashamed of.

The Disabled Students' Campaign has a dedicated Intermission Officer to provide support. We run regular Intermission socials throughout the terms so you can meet other students who are intermitting, or come to ask advice if you are thinking about intermitting. We also have a webpage with info on intermission here:

[www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/intermission](http://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/intermission)

