



European School  
of Osteopathy

**DISABILITY  
EQUALITY  
SCHEME  
2009**

[www.eso.ac.uk](http://www.eso.ac.uk)

## **SUMMARY**

The Disability Equality Scheme for the European School of Osteopathy is an honest presentation demonstrating an institutional awareness of obligations under disability legislation. The constraints under which the School is operating are highlighted and the plans for meeting its obligations listed.

Information is provided allowing the stakeholder to determine lines of responsibility for issues to be actioned, together with approximate deadlines and mechanisms for monitoring progress.

The School has involved a physically disabled patient to assess the accessibility of both the Boxley and Tonbridge Road sites. The European School of Osteopathy invites all individuals to input the DES and meets regularly with stakeholders to assess their ongoing needs.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The European School of Osteopathy has a well-defined Equal Opportunities Policy that covers all aspects of the School's operation.

The sensitivity of Management to the needs of disabled individuals working within or visiting the institution is highlighted by the creation some 5 years ago of a Disability Committee with a membership drawn from all School sectors including Management. (*See Appendix I for Committee Membership and Terms of Reference.*) This committee has had the responsibility for drafting the School's DES, in consultation with various stakeholder groups.

Clearly, it is student disability that is the overwhelming concern of the institution and the Management has a well-defined policy, operative for a number of years, to ensure that disabled students are not discriminated against in their learning and assessment.

The Development and Strategy Plan of the School will include reference to the obligations of the School under the terms of disability legislation to ensure adequate provision for disabled individuals operating within the institution.

The listed-building nature of much of the School's housing does mean, however, that flexibility is reduced. Nevertheless, with advice from disability consultants, necessary adjustments have been, or will be, made to obviate disability discrimination.

## 2.0 CONTEXT

All public authorities, including higher education colleges, have duties to promote disability equality. These duties will cover the recruitment, retention and progression of disabled staff and students, as well as making welcome other members of the community who may use the European School of Osteopathy facilities.

A person with a disability is defined by the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) as "someone with a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term impact on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities."

This definition includes people with cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis, heart conditions, hearing or sight impairments (except those which can be corrected with contact lenses or glasses), or a significant mobility difficulty. It also covers those with hidden disabilities, such as diabetes, epilepsy and dyslexia and other learning difficulties. Mental health conditions are also covered.

The legislation sets out general and specific duties. The general duty is that the educational facility must work to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunities for disabled people. We must also promote positive attitudes shown by ESO staff and the wider academic faculty to encourage the participation of disabled people in the life of the School.

In the process of producing the Disability Equality Scheme, we have:

- 1) Involved disabled staff, students and others in producing the scheme and developing the Action Plan;
- 2) Identified our key policies and procedures and impact-assessed how they could affect disabled staff, students and visitors;
- 3) Identified ways to collect both qualitative and quantitative data to inform our actions in our ongoing plan;
- 4) Risk-assessed both the facilities and specific job roles to ensure compatibility with the new legislation;
- 5) Produced a three-year Action Plan;
- 6) Published the Disability Equality Scheme on our website and set up regular meetings to discuss, review and progress the Action Plan.

### **3.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW**

Osteopathic practice is a manual medicine and as taught at the European School of Osteopathy, covers a particularly broad range of techniques. By virtue of this, individuals with particular disabilities may be daunted and assume their unsuitability as students. This may or may not be valid. The School in its student recruitment process provides each applicant with full advice and we always require the potential applicant to observe and/or experience an osteopathic treatment.

The main form of disability that is encountered within the student body is dyslexia – a disability that the School has had much experience at dealing with.

As indicated, the disability incidence within the student body is predominantly restricted to learning difficulties (mainly dyslexia). Physical disability is mainly in the area of impaired sight and hearing. All disabled students are regularly monitored for their needs – see Exams and Assessment (*Appendix II*).

The following table summarises the incidence of disability in the student body over the last 3 years.

**TABLE SUMMARISING THE INCIDENCE OF DISABILITY IN THE STUDENT BODY 2006-2009**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Dyslexia</b>	<b>Other Disabilities</b>
2006/2007	22	7
2007/2008	26	6
2008/2009	22	9

There has only ever been one disabled member of the admin staff – who had a physical disability that did not require accommodation by the School. Within the teaching faculty the only disability has been dyslexia, and that less than 1%.

The number of disabled public visiting the School over the past 10 years has also been in single figures – mainly in the context of International Conferences. Disabled access has not been a problem on such occasions. (A blind delegate was accompanied by a guide.)

Within the clinic, there is access for wheelchair users and ground floor treatment rooms with height-adjustable treatment tables.

The School Management is satisfied that within the context of its present disability groups its policies are working well and the School is operating within the guidelines of disability legislation. Its main shortcomings are addressed in the Action Plan.

#### **4.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN**

An important initial step was to enlist the help of an appropriate consultant in the identification of features, both physical and otherwise, within the institutional operation that are of concern in the context of disability legislation. These first steps have been achieved. We have, in the last three years:

- Improved physical access into and within the main administrative block at the School's Boxley site by use of a portable ramp.
- Improved certain internal and external aspects of health and safety associated with the Boxley site buildings that may adversely affect the physically disabled.

- Improved signage within the School buildings.
- Clearly identified disabled car parking spaces.
- Looked into increasing the number of accessible toilets.
- Researched ways to cater for the needs of the hard of hearing in lectures.
- Decided how to improve Library access.
- Improved website accessibility and found out how to produce versions of institutional documentation in Braille.
- Broadened the consultative process with disabled groups to include more of the physically disabled.
- Implemented training, as required.
- Improved existing policies and procedures associated with recruitment (staff/students) and exams and assessment.

The following actions have also been completed.

**A. Achieved by Christmas 2006**

1. Trimmed foliage overhanging hand-rail to front steps to Boxley House.  
*Responsible Staff: Caretaker (Mr A Perdios)*  
*Line Manager: Corporate Operations Manager (Mr I Fraser)*
2. Installed hand-rail on stair up to main photocopier.  
*Responsible Staff: Caretaker (Mr A Perdios)*  
*Line Manager: Corporate Operations Manager (Mr I Fraser)*
3. Website accessibility has been improved by the deployment of 'Screentalk'.  
*Responsible Staff: Human Resources Adviser (Mrs J Harris)*  
*Line Manager: Head of Corporate Operations (Mr N Hales)*
4. Clear glass doors have been 'frosted'.  
*Responsible Staff: Caretaker (Mr A Perdios)*  
*Line Manager: Corporate Operations Manager (Mr I Fraser)*
5. Involved, in the production of the DES, disabled individuals drawn from within and outside the School to provide a spectrum of disability.  
*Responsible Staff: Welfare Officer (Mrs J White)*  
*Line Manager: Vice-Principal (Academic) (Dr P Fletcher)*

6. Confirmed with the requisite authorities for how long staff and faculty job applications must be retained.

*Responsible Staff: Human Resources Adviser (Mrs J Harris)*

*Line Manager: Head of Corporate Operations (Mr N Hales)*

7. Ensured the continued achievement of the following goals:

- a) Disability Assessment Reports – early receipt from involved students.
- b) Staff and teaching faculty – compliance with disability regulations as they affect teaching and assessment.
- c) Written permission from disabled students for transmission of their disability to relevant staff/faculty.
- d) Regular progress monitoring of disabled students.

*Responsible Staff: Academic Registrar (Mrs E Bell)*

*Line Manager: Vice-Principal (Academic) (Dr P Fletcher)*

## **B. Key targets for the next 3 years.**

1. Accessible toilet within female toilets in Boxley House to be converted into a unisex disabled toilet with separate entrance.

*Responsible Staff: Mr. Ian Fraser*

2. Cost of Hearing loop to be put into budget so it can be put in place if required.

*Responsible Staff: Welfare Officer (Mrs Jacqui White)*

*Line Manager: Vice-Principal (Academic) (Dr P Fletcher)*

3. Continued use of the current Library site at Boxley to be investigated. Access to the Library facilities for disabled students to be improved as far as is feasible until such time as the library can be re-located..

*Responsible Staff: Vice-Principal (Academic) (Dr P Fletcher)*

4. Maintenance of main drive at Boxley site to be monitored frequently.

*Responsible Staff: Corporate Operations Manager (Mr I Fraser)*

5. Look into purchasing/leasing requisite computers for dyslexic student use. There is a computer in the IT suite with larger keyboard print.

*Responsible Staff: Library Supervisor (Mrs S Elliott)*

*Line Manager: Vice-Principal (Academic) (Dr P Fletcher)*

6. Training of requisite staff/faculty to act as scribes for students with dyslexia (and others) in examinations/assessments.

*Responsible Staff: Academic Registrar (Mrs E Bell)*

*Line Manager: Vice-Principal (Academic) (Dr P Fletcher)*

7. Recruitment of additional invigilators to cope with the special needs of disabled students as required.  
*Responsible Staff: Academic Registrar (Mrs E Bell)*  
*Line Manager: Vice-Principal (Academic) (Dr P Fletcher)*
8. The patio slabs on the south-facing aspect of Boxley House to be re-laid to improve current uneven surface.  
*Responsible Staff: Caretaker (Mr A Perdios)*  
*Line Manager: Corporate Operations Manager (Mr I Fraser)*
9. Lecturers to be made aware of Disability legislation and include the production of lecture notes / Handouts in their job descriptions.  
*Responsible staff: Vice-Principal (Academic) (Dr. P. Fletcher).*

There follow a series of completed action points, all related to job recruitment. In each case the responsible staff member is the Human Resources Adviser. *Mrs. J. Harris*

1. Send out a copy of the Equal Opportunities Policy with application forms.
2. Extend Disability Discrimination training to the rest of the employees.
3. Job descriptions to be revised annually at appraisal, to ensure that any changes to employees' circumstances are considered.
4. Collect and classify information regarding disabled applicants and current employees.
5. Examination of the success rate of disabled applicants.
6. Record recruitment, training and promotional records of all employees and compare statistics of disabled and able-bodied employees.

Actions still outstanding:

1. Interview Training Skills training course for line managers (to be run in-house).
2. Equal Opportunities training for Senior Management.

**At the School's Clinic Site the following actions have been completed:**

- Signage has been upgraded both internally and externally;
- Risk assessments have been completed;
- Footpath leading from the rear of the main clinic building to the classroom block has been pressure-washed;
- External lights have been inspected;
- Old/worn carpets have been replaced;
- Internal steps leading from the level of the Clinic Director's Office in the White House to the patient waiting area, has been rendered less hazardous with a filing cabinet at the side to provide hand-support and to prevent falls;
- Fire extinguisher stands have replaced unstable wall mountings.

*For all of the above the Responsible Staff: Mrs Jacquie Harris (Human Resource Advisor)  
Mr Ian Fraser (Corporate Operations Manager);*

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### **Measurable Indicators of Progress**

The Progress Indicators will be quantitative and will be monitored at every Disability Committee Meeting, ie progress will have been made or not. It will be the responsibility of the Chair of the Disability Committee to ensure that responsible staff are alerted to any failings – either directly or via the line manager.

### **5.0 REPORTING ON PROGRESS WITH THE DES – MAKING THINGS HAPPEN**

The components of the Action Plan will be incorporated into the Development & Strategy Plan, a key aspect of the progress of the School, which is reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees. The Development & Strategy Plan of the School is available to all of the School's external auditors and therefore its contents are closely monitored.

As indicated earlier, the reporting of progress with the DES will be to the Disability Committee, the membership and Terms of Reference of which may be found in the Appendix. The Disability Committee reports directly to the Management Committee, in turn reporting to the Board of Governors/Trustees.

The Disability Committee meets at least twice per year and more frequently if required. The Management Committee meets fortnightly.

At each of the planned meetings, a key agenda item for the Disability Committee will be DES progress. As the membership includes Senior Managers, there is therefore a direct line of communication to the Management Committee, accountable for the day-to-day management of the School.

As can be seen from its Terms of Reference, the Disability Committee has responsibility for addressing communications to Management, staff, faculty and students regarding disability legislation and any associated training. The Management Committee will have responsibility for implementation.

All data collected will be analysed by the Disability Committee before consultation with Management, leading to possible changes in the DES and possible modification of the Development & Strategy Plan in discussion with the Board of Trustees.

The DES, and any subsequent amendments, will be published on the School's website.

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The responsibility for updating/redrafting the DES will be that of the Disability Committee in consultation with the Management Committee.

## **6.0 LOOKING AHEAD**

The decision has been taken by the School's Trustees and Management to retain the Boxley site as the main administrative and classroom-teaching site, for the foreseeable future. The Clinic will remain at the Tonbridge Rd site for at least the next 5 yrs

The Boxley site will undergo a series of improvements over the next few years to its office, teaching, dining and student facilities generally. The needs of the disabled will be significant factors for consideration in all of these developments. This will also be the case with the Clinic Campus.

A particular challenge will be improving access to the Boxley library. However the Management remains optimistic that this and all of the other issues listed in the Action Plan can be addressed.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix I	Disability Committee Terms of Reference & Membership.
Appendix II	Examinations and Assessment

# Appendix I

## The Disability Committee

### Terms of Reference

1. To provide guidance to Management, Clinic and Classroom Teaching Faculty on how to comply with DDA and SENDA (via seminars, booklets etc)
2. To investigate note and disseminate information on the special needs of particular disability groups. This dissemination could take the form of special talks from experts in the field.
3. To determine current levels of disability legislation compliance within the School and Clinic. (Physical, human, intellectual and teaching resource).
4. To arrange for suitable disability awareness training for management and faculty. This can take any number of forms and could involve selected individuals attending conferences and seminars to gain knowledge for later institutional dissemination (see also item 2).
5. To determine from where requisite legal advice may be obtained.
6. In the first instance to deal with any complaints concerning non-compliance with DDA/SENDA legislation. This may concern internal institutional compliance or compliance as it may affect any external groups making use of the School's facilities (see next item).
7. To ensure the adequacy in terms of DDA/SENDA compliance of any of the School's facilities made available to non-osteopathic external groups.
8. To investigate the likely cost to the School of full DDA/ SENDA compliance.
9. Seek to establish norms of DDA and SENDA compliance throughout the UK Osteopathic Educational Community. (Via The Council of Osteopathic Educational Institutions and the General Osteopathic Council).

The Disability Committee will meet at least bi-annually and more frequently if required. It will report directly to the Management Committee.

Membership:

- Welfare Officer (Chair)
- Academic Registrar
- Admissions Officer
- Vice-Principal (Academic)
- Caretaker
- Clinic Practice Manager

## Appendix II

### **EXAMS AND ASSESSMENT – DISABILITY PROCEDURE**

#### **Generally**

It is important to remember that disability covers many areas including long term illness and the effects of this. The School must be aware of these areas.

- All students with disabilities noted on Admission Form and UCAS application
- Conveyed to Exams and Assessment Office
- Relative information checked, eg dyslexia assessment report or disability report checked, and the recommendations discussed with the individual student to determine what facilities, help, etc the student needs
- If a student does not have a report, advice is given as to how to obtain this with costings if relevant
- Follow up with student on a regular basis – in certain cases disabilities and requirements may change
- Confidentiality is maintained for all students. Where it is necessary for information to be passed to lecturers, welfare officer, other staff, permission from the student is obtained
- Guidelines for marking the work of students with dyslexia are given to the lecturers/examiners.

#### **Coursework**

- Students with dyslexia are informed of extra time available and a submission date agreed.
- Relevant staff are informed of students with disabilities and what is required of them.
- Help/assistance from an appropriate person is offered if student requests it.

#### **Examinations**

- Ensure that all requirements in the individual needs assessment reports have been considered when planning the exam programme
- Students with dyslexia will get extra time, usually 25%, but this will be noted on their individual reports and in certain cases it may be longer
- Where relevant rest breaks will be offered
- Examination papers will be given in different format, eg larger font. Again instructions on what is required will be on the individual student's disability report
- For students with long term illnesses, special arrangements can be made if unable to take exam on the designated day or exams may be staggered if necessary
- For students with disabilities, discrete seating/placement in the exam room is available
- Invigilators informed discreetly of students with special needs and requirements