## **Background**

## The University of Leeds, including their Disability Services’ department, are committed to extending a social model approach to the provision of support and services. This approach understands that impaired students and researchers are disabled by the barriers they face; by the practices, provisions and environment at University rather than by their physical or learning attributes.

## To ensure an understanding of the barriers faced by researchers and students seeking to access their services, Disability Services, is piloting a joint panel of Service Management staff, disabled researchers and disabled students. This panel will offer a voice to disabled students to influence the practices, processes and provisions of the Disability Services. The panel will jointly review matters of interest to both staff and student members with the balance of the panel’s membership being with non-staff members. The position of chair will be available to a researcher or student member of the panel, the pilot Panel will run for one academic year.

## Researcher and Student members are asked to represent themselves, not the wider student body, so where broader views are sought or required the panel will jointly decide the approach to be taken. Student and researcher panel members will be invited to provide constructive feedback to Disability Services. Prior to the commencement of the Panel meeting training will be offered to ensure participants can fully engage in the experience.

## **Terms of Reference**

1. to offer a forum for constructive discussion regarding Disability Services procedures, practices and service provisions;
2. to operate to enable student and researcher service users to influence the service and service developments;
3. to annually consider Disability Service’s:  
   - transition practices and provisions;  
   - communication modes and messages;
4. to enable Service users or staff to raise matters relating to the Service for consideration by the Panel;
5. may collate views, opinions and feedback regarding other aspects of University provisions and services on the understanding these would be passed on to a relevant entity outside of the Service;
6. to identify other opportunities and methods for gathering wider user feedback.

## **Constitution (Membership)**

## By design the panel is intended to have a membership weighted towards Service users, and will seek to include:

1. - up to seven disabled students or researchers registered at the University;

- three managers from the Disability Services Management Team,

- a Student Panel Coordinator (Disability Services Engagement Officer),

- one Disability Contact based in a school or faculty  
- the head of Disability Services may attend as an associate member, with no voting rights, to provide insight or feedback as requested by the Panel;

Additional details regarding student and researcher members:

1. student members will be registered students of the University of Leeds who identify as disabled;
2. student membership of the Panel will be undertaken by application;
3. should more than seven students apply to join the panel places will be offered based on their applications;
4. the role of the Chair is to be filled by a student member of the Panel;
5. the Chair of the panel will be selected in the first meeting of each academic year, this can either be decided by volunteering or if more than one student put their name forward, an anonymous vote will be cast by all members of the panel;
6. membership will be for the duration for 1 academic year. If students wish to continue, they should re-apply in the subsequent academic year;

Additional details regarding the Panel Coordinator:

1. The Student Panel Coordinator will:

* minute meetings;
* send invites, agendas and associated paperwork to Panel members;
* coordinate the marketing of the Panel to prospective students members;
* be a liaison for user members;
* provide logistical support to the Panel.

## **Proceedings**

1. The Disability Services Panel will normally meet 5 times in the academic year.

## **Support for User Members**

1. This is a voluntary role offering the opportunity to gain experience in collaborative working; to influence peers, Service staff and the Service collectively.
2. Student members will be expected to undertake training to support their time on the Panel and ensure they can get the most out of the experience. Training will cover topics such as:

* Equality and Inclusion Training
* Overview of Disability Services
* Developing your speaking and influencing skills
* How to effectively contribute in and lead meetings
* Strategic thinking
* Effective communication
* Dealing with conflict and negotiation

# The training is intended to support student Panel members to confidently, constructively and articulately share their opinions and experiences whilst respecting others’ views in the meetings. **Panel Cycle**

1. The panel will meet 5 times a year with additional training during November
2. We anticipate this will take approximately 33 hours of each members’ time throughout the year:   
   (a) 2 hours per meeting   
   (b) 2 hours preparation and debrief before and after the meeting

(c) 5 hours in support of specific activities such as surveys / conducting research with fellow students / other activities in support of the Panel’s objectives.

(d) approximately 8 hours of training over the year.

1. Any other work is optional
2. The first meeting of the year will reflect on transition events for the September prior
3. The final meeting will propose agenda items to be carried over into the following year.
4. Advertising for the student panel will commence from October 2018  
     
   If you have any questions regarding these Terms of Reference or the Disability Services Panel enquiries can be made to Gemma Turner, Disability Service Engagement Officer, by emailing [g.t.turner@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:g.t.turner@leeds.ac.uk)