# Disability Services: what we do with your data

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## Introduction

Information about a disability, impairment, or any health condition is considered special category personal data under Data Protection law. This means that there are restrictions on how this information may be collected, stored and shared. Disability Services requires your consent to hold and share your information with relevant members of staff at the University of Leeds, as well as with funding bodies, external support providers, placement providers and other bodies directly involved with your studies. This document gives details about the way we use the information you share with us about your disability and personal circumstances, so that you can decide what level of consent you wish to give to share your information.

You should read this document in conjunction with the Disability Services Student Privacy Notice and the [University of Leeds Student Privacy Notice](https://dataprotection.leeds.ac.uk/gdpr/student-privacy-notice/).

## Why do you need to process or share my information?

We process your information in order to ensure you are supported effectively during your studies. We only share your information with people who are directly responsible for teaching you or supporting you during your time at Leeds, and we share information on a 'need to know' basis, which means that we will only share sufficient information to address the issue at hand, and only with the people directly involved in that situation or process.

We always ask that the people we share your information with respect your confidentiality and do not pass your details on to anyone else unless they are also involved in the situation or process.

## How do you gather information about my disability?

The University gathers information on disabled students from two main sources: from the information you enter on your application form (e.g. UCAS), and during the registration process when you first start at University. This information is available to Disability Services through Banner, which is our main student information system.

In addition to this, Disability Services captures specific disability information from applicants and current students using the online Sign Up Form. This gives you the opportunity to tell us more about your disability and the impact it has on your studies. We will also ask you to send us evidence of your disability in the form of a report or letter from a medical professional or educational psychologist, and this information will be stored on your record within Disability Services. We do not generally share evidence outside Disability Services unless you have asked us to do so.

If you are in receipt of any disability-related funding, we may also receive a copy of your Study Needs Assessment directly from the Assessment Centre who carried out your assessment. We may also receive information from your academic School, or from other University Services (e.g. the Accommodation Office). We may also gather information from any Support Workers you work with, such as Specialist Mentors, Strategy Tutors or Personal Assistants. We may also retain information shared by parents or family members (see the section “[Does Disability Services share information with parents?](#_Does_Disability_Services)”).

However the majority of the information we hold about your disability will come from you, through our sign up process and our contact with you throughout your studies.

## Are there different levels of consent to process information?

Yes, there are two levels of consent and you can choose to give one or the other to Disability Services in relation to processing your data. The levels of consent are known as ‘Full Disclosure’ and ‘Restricted Disclosure’.

**Full disclosure**  
Disability Services may need to share information on a 'need to know' basis only with those people directly responsible for teaching or supporting you during your studies. This is likely to include your academic School and key Services within the University (e.g. the Exams Office, the Library). It may also include other parties, such as Funding Bodies or placement providers. We ask the people with whom we share your information to respect your confidentiality and abide by GDPR in relation to their own processing. You can find out more about who we might share information with in the next section.

**Restricted disclosure**  
You can decide to restrict the disclosure of your information to certain individuals or groups only, or to request your information is not disclosed beyond Disability Services. If you choose to do this, please be aware that this may limit the timing and nature of the support the University can provide. You will need to discuss this with us, and we will contact you directly if you choose restricted disclosure.

## If I give consent for Full Disclosure, who can Disability Services share my information with?

In order to support you effectively, Disability Services is likely to need to share information with the following groups within the University of Leeds. These are the people or groups we may share information with if you choose to give consent for ‘**full disclosure’**:

* Your **academic school**, so that staff responsible for teaching or supporting you during your studies are aware of your requirements.
* The **Exams Office**, so that they can make additional arrangements for your exams (e.g. extra time, rest breaks).
* The **Library**, so that you can access additional borrowing rights and bookable rooms.
* Any **Support Workers** who may be providing your one-to-one support, either from the University’s Support Worker Team, or an external agency who has been contracted to deliver that support.

We may also share information with:

* The **Accommodation Office**, so that they can ensure you are able to access appropriate accommodation, if you wish.
* **Estate Services**, so that they can ensure the built environment is accessible to you.
* **Central Timetabling**, so that they can take any requirements into account when scheduling your teaching sessions.
* The **RNIB/UoL Transcription Service**, if you require transcription.
* **IT Services**, regarding the provision of assistive software.
* **Leeds University Union Student Advice Centre**, as part of the referral process.
* The **Student Cases** team, in the event you have any complaint or appeal during your studies.

Disability Services does not routinely contact people outside the University of Leeds, but may on occasion require your permission to talk with:

* **External providers** of funded support.
* **Funding bodies**, such as Student Finance England, Research Councils or sponsors.
* **Needs Assessment Centres** and **Assessors**, as part of your disability support funding application.
* **Placement providers**, such as employers you undertake a placement with, or Study Abroad Host Institutions.
* **Externally funded support workers**, such as sign language interpreters or personal assistants.

In certain exceptional circumstances (such as where there is an immediate and serious threat to your personal safety or to the safety of others), we may disclose your information without your consent.

## Does Disability Services share information with parents?

The University does not normally discuss students with their parents/guardians, partners or other family members. We may occasionally provide family members with generalised information relating to the support we offer to all disabled students when it is requested, but we will not share information about you with them unless you have given your permission to do so. This decision would always be made in consultation with you, and there is a separate process for capturing and recording your consent to share information with parents, guardians or family members.

In certain exceptional circumstances (such as where there is an immediate and serious threat to your personal safety or to the safety of others), we may disclose information to your parents/guardians, partners or family members without your consent.

## Why do I need to give consent for you to process my information?

Disability Services works under the terms of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Equality Act 2010. Information relating to physical or mental health and disability is considered under "special categories of data" in relation to GDPR. This means that Disability Services must seek your explicit permission before we can process this type of data, unless there is a legal obligation for us to provide this information.

## Can I restrict the information you share or the people you share it with?

Yes, you may choose to restrict the disclosure of your information. You can decide to restrict the disclosure of your information to certain individuals or organisations only, or request that your information is not disclosed beyond Disability Services. This is called giving consent for ‘restricted disclosure’. If you choose to do this, please be aware that this may limit the level and type of support the University can provide as it means we may not be able to speak to the relevant people to request that reasonable adjustments are made. If you would like to discuss what adjustments may be made in such circumstances, please contact your Disability Coordinator.

## How do I give my consent to share or restrict my information?

You can give your consent when you first register with Disability Services, via the online Sign Up Form. This will summarise the way we share information and ask you to confirm whether you give consent for ‘full disclosure’ or ‘restricted disclosure’.

If you want to change your level of consent at any time, you can talk with your Disability Coordinator.

## My course has a ‘fitness to practice’ requirement. Does this affect my disclosure?

If you are undertaking a professional course such as medicine, you will be subject to additional fitness to practise requirements prescribed by the professional body.  Please be aware that if you give Disability Services consent for Full Disclosure, we will pass information about your disability to your academic department so that they can provide appropriate support and adjustments.  If you are concerned about the implications of disclosing a disability, please contact us at [disability@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:disability@leeds.ac.uk).

## How does Disability Services store my information?

You information will be stored electronically on our internal, stand-alone student information system. This is only accessible to certain staff within Disability Services. Personal information is also stored on individual University email accounts, and in our shared file directory. Both are password protected and encrypted through the University server, and all employees are bound by Data Protection Law.  Where paper-based information is gathered, it will be

stored in locked cabinets when in use, and will be shredded or disposed of through the confidential waste process when no longer required.

Any statistical information collected by Disability Services to monitor and evaluate the service will be anonymised. This includes any research we carry out relating to disabled students.

## For how long does Disability Services keep my information?

In accordance with the [University’s retention schedules](https://dataprotection.leeds.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/48/2023/01/The-University-of-Leeds-records-retention-schedule-v2.6-1-2.docx), we retain your record for as long as you continue to use the service and will delete it 6 years after you leave the University of Leeds. Data on applicants, general enquirers and offer holders who do not attend the University of Leeds are held for 1 year from the last date of contact.

## Can I access the information Disability Services holds on me?

You have the right to request a copy of all the information Disability Services holds on you. You will need to complete a Request Form for Access to Personal Data which is available from the [University’s Data Protection website](https://dataprotection.leeds.ac.uk/individual-rights/). If you simply want to check a specific document, please raise this with your Disability Coordinator.

## Can I talk with someone about how my information will be used?

Yes: you can make an appointment to see your Disability Coordinator or the Disability Advisory Team Manager. We can explain in more detail how and when we might want to share some limited information about you, and agree specific restrictions. You can contact us at [disability@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:disability@leeds.ac.uk) or on 0113 343 3927 to arrange this.

### Where can I find further information?

We also have some additional notices, guidelines and policies with further useful information about the way in which we process your personal data:

* **The University of Leeds Student Privacy Notice**, which contains additional details about the way the University processes your personal information: <https://dataprotection.leeds.ac.uk/quick-link-to-resources/>
* **The Disability Services Student Privacy Notice**, which gives more detail about the gathering, processing and retention of personal data: <https://students.leeds.ac.uk/download/downloads/id/7752/ds-privacy-notice.docx>
* **The University’s Data Protection Code of Practice** – this contains a lot of useful general information on data protection and University practices. See <https://dataprotection.leeds.ac.uk/data-protection-code-of-practice/>
* **Our website** – we use Cookies (that will collect your personal data) on our web pages. Please see the University policy on the use of Cookies at <https://comms.leeds.ac.uk/websites/policy-on-privacy-and-cookie-notices/>
* **HESA returns** – the University is required to return important information (that will include your personal data) to HESA. Please see HESA’s collection notice, together with other supporting documentation, at <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/about/regulation/data-protection/notices>.