



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Support Worker Team



Student Handbook 2023-24

Disability Services

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<http://students.leeds.ac.uk/supportworkerteam>

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Introduction to the Support Worker Team and How to Contact Us

The Support Worker Team (SWT) is based within Disability Services, providing one to one support for disabled students to assist with academic studies. We are located on the ground floor of Chemistry West Block and our support takes place on campus and via remote support.

Our office opening hours are **Monday to Friday 9am-5pm**.

Email Address: supportworkerteam@leeds.ac.uk.

Telephone/video: if you would like to request a phone or video call with a member of the office team to discuss your support, please contact us with your availability and we will send you a Microsoft Teams invitation.

We also have a **text only** service that you can contact at **07520632906**. Please include your full name with any text messages sent.

What We Do With Your Information

To support you, we may need to share information about your disability with other people in the University. We only share information where necessary and on a 'need-to-know' basis. This means that we will only share sufficient information to resolve any issues, and only with the people involved in resolving these. [View our Data Sharing Policy](#).

We will not share information with people outside the University, except where you have given your explicit permission, and this is necessary. This might include your DSA study Needs Assessor or your funding body.

The University does not normally discuss students with their parents/guardians or other family members. You can give us permission to be able to discuss your support with your parents, family members or representatives by completing our Consent and Share Form. Please let your Disability Coordinator know if you want to do this.

Comments or Complaints

If at any point you have questions or concerns regarding your support, please contact the Support Worker Team who will be happy to discuss your support and find resolution to any questions or issues.

We very much welcome comments on the service we offer. If you would like to comment upon the service you have received, either in positive or negative terms, you can speak directly with your support worker or the Support Worker Team.

Should you wish to make a more formal complaint you can follow the [University complaints procedure](#).

What Support We Offer

Disability Services and the Support Worker Team provide academic support and support that enables you to access the learning environment through the following schemes:

- Personal Assistance (PA)/Library Support/Sighted Guiding/Orientation Support
- Notetaking
- Specialist Mentor
- One-to-One Study Skills Support
- British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreters

We cannot provide the following:

- Subject specific support
- To mark or proofread your work
- Providing you with ideas or suggested content for your academic work
- Therapeutic Support
- Providing personal care
- We cannot typically provide support that is non-academic and takes place outside of the university environment.

Our support is delivered during working hours (i.e., 9am-5pm Monday-Friday) on Campus, via remote delivery (or a mixture of both).

If you require support for academic activities outside of these times or off campus, then please contact your Disability Coordinator to discuss what options may be available to you.

Changes to your Funding Circumstances

Funding End Dates and Course Extensions: In normal circumstances your funding for support will cover sessions during term time. If you have course extensions or resits that extend your studies beyond the end of the academic year in June (or for Postgraduate students, the 31st August) then it will be necessary to obtain evidence of the agreed extension date from your School and request an extension to your DSA funding. If you are not sure whether this has been granted or not, please contact disability@leeds.ac.uk for further guidance about obtaining this permission to extend your DSA funding beyond your original course end date.

For some students it may also be necessary for apply for funding for the new academic year. Please make sure to review any emails from Disability Services as we send out reminders ahead of typical course end dates along with instructions on how to extend funding if needed.

Students on Temporary Leave/External Students:

To be eligible for DSA funding you need to be a registered member of the university in current study and a home rated student accessing Student Finance support. This does not include students who are on temporary leave or who are studying externally. If you are planning temporary leave or external study, then you will need to have a discussion with your Disability Coordinator about how to access your non-medical help support during this time.

How to Get the Most Out of Your Support

- **Make sure you arrange your support in good time;** most types of support take a few weeks to set up. If you want support in place in time for the start of the semester or ahead of assessment periods you should allow plenty of time for it to be set up. Additionally, for Mentor and Study Skills support if you have very limited availability, you may wait longer to access support as it will be harder to match you to a suitable support worker.

We will only be able to set up support once you have returned the required forms for each Support Scheme, see following sections for further information, including 'Student Agreement' and availability forms.

Our support workers are allocated based on availability. During busy periods, including around the start of the new academic year, there may be a waiting list for mentor or study skills support, and we may not be able to assign a notetaker or PA to all your sessions immediately. We will inform you if this is the case.

- **Discuss what you want to get out of your support** with your Support Worker:
 - Set goals with your mentor or 1:1 study skills tutor.
 - Speak to your notetakers about how you like your notes.
 - Speak to your PA about how best they can assist you with tasks.
- **Let us know as soon as possible about changes including absences.** Please make us aware of any changes to timetables and your requirements as soon as possible. Please see individual scheme sections and the Absence Policy in the Appendix for more information.
- **Arrive on time and be prepared for your sessions.** If you have not arrived for your session or made your support worker aware of your presence it may be

assumed that you are not coming, and your session will be cancelled. Please see our Absence Policy in the Appendix for more information.

Students are expected to behave professionally with their support workers including arriving at their sessions on time, being in a suitable mindset to engage with the session and being dressed appropriately (this applies to both for remote and in-person support). You should familiarise yourself with the [University policies and governance](#) regarding expected behaviour, including the Student Contract and the Dignity and Mutual Respect policy. **The Support Worker Team has a zero-tolerance policy for any inappropriate behaviour towards both staff and students.**

- **You do not have to use all the hours which you have been recommended.** Your needs assessment or support summary will have given you an entitlement to a certain number of hours support for the year. You do not have to start your support immediately and you can withdraw from the support at any time if decide it is not helpful to you and you will be able to resume support at a later point if you wish. You are also not obligated to take up support at all if you would prefer not to do so. If additional hours are required, we will where appropriate support requests for extra hours.
- **Contact the Support Worker Team if things are not working for you.** If you do not feel that you are getting the best out of your support, then please discuss this with your support worker in the first instance or if you do not feel comfortable discussing this with them then contact the Support Worker Team. Your support worker and the Support Worker Team will work with you to resolve any concerns or issues, and we would rather you contacted us to work out any issues you are having than stop accessing support.

Timesheets and Session Confirmations

Students who are funded internally for notetaking and PA do not need to sign timesheets for their support. The support hours will be automatically processed by the Support Worker Team Office. You may however be asked to confirm session details as part of our auditing processes (see following section for more information).

For all Mentor and Study Skills support we require you to electronically sign a timesheet confirmation at the end of every session as evidence that the session has taken place. The Support Worker Team require confirmed timesheets to invoice your funding body for support you have received. You will be asked by your support worker to confirm the date, time and method of delivery of your session.

To access support, you agree to sign a timesheet confirmation for every support session attended, or any support session cancelled with less than the required notice period, for whatever reason. **Confirmation should be completed within 24 hours of the session occurring.**

If you have unsigned timesheets or outstanding session confirmations, your support worker or the Support Worker Team will contact you to arrange for you to sign and complete these timesheets. You agree to make every effort to arrange a method for you to sign any unsigned timesheets. Please be aware that support may be suspended because of an accumulation of unsigned timesheets or unconfirmed sessions and only resumed once completed.

If you do not want to sign a timesheet for a session or send a session confirmation, then please discuss the reasons for this with the Support Worker Team.

Support Audits

Periodically the Support Worker Team may email you with a list of support sessions that have taken place and ask you to verify that this list of sessions is correct. This is part of our internal financial auditing processes.

If you have any questions about the list of sessions sent to you or what is involved in the audits, then please contact us.

Personal Assistance or PA Support/Library Support/Sighted Guide – An Introduction

PAs provide support in the academic environment, to develop and maintain independence, participate in all aspects of university life and to benefit fully from the experience of being a student. The support is tailored to your specific needs and requirements. How often and when you access PA/Library Support is at your discretion (within the recommendations set out by your Disability Coordinator).

What to Expect from PA Support

- Support accessing venues across the university, e.g., getting to and from lectures, accessing buildings, learning the accessible routes around campus.
- Retrieving, returning, locating books at the library (this could be in person with your PA, or the PA could do this on your behalf).
- Support with physical tasks, e.g., carrying books around campus, getting set up in teaching space with the materials you need to access the learning.
- Assistance with PC work.
- Mobility support for students with mobility difficulties or wheelchair users.

- Sighted guiding for blind students or students with visual impairments.

A PA/Library Support cannot:

- Assist you within your accommodation. PA staff are not permitted to enter student accommodation.
- Assist you with support off-campus. PA staff are campus based, except for occasional pre-arranged, specialised circumstances.
- Assist with tasks that are not related to your academic engagement.
- Provide personal care.
- Provide subject-specific or academic support.

PA Support Set-Up Process

PA support is timetabled on a weekly basis. PA requirements are requested to be sent through by email to the Support Worker Team by **9am on a Wednesday morning** for any support required the following week. Schedules for the following week will then be sent out every Thursday afternoon.

We cannot guarantee being able to accommodate your request for PA support if it is received at short notice or is after the weekly Wednesday deadline.

How to Arrange PA Support

PA/Library Support can be arranged on a regular/recurrent basis, or on a changeable week-by-week arrangement. If you would like us to regularly schedule PA support around your teaching sessions, then please send us a copy of your timetable for the semester.

To schedule PA support, we need the following information:

- The date of the support
- The start **and** end time of the support
- What type of activity you require support for, e.g., support getting to and from lecture venues.
- Where you would like to meet your PA.
- Whether the session is in-person or distance support.

The PA schedule is sent out weekly to your university email address. It is your responsibility to ensure that you check this schedule and make us aware of any changes or errors in your schedule with as much notice as possible.

Where possible we will try to facilitate requests for specific staff assigned to a PA session. However, this cannot be guaranteed.

Absences, Cancellations and Lateness

You must inform the Support Worker Team with at least 24 hours' notice (where possible) if you are unable to attend a booked session. You must also provide a reason. Repeated failure to attend without sufficient notice or reason may result in

suspension of support. More details regarding this can be found in the Absence Policy in the Appendix.

Please note your session may be cancelled if you are **more than 10 minutes late** and you have not informed us of your late arrival. If you are running late to a session, please text us on **07520632906** so that your PA can be informed that you will be late to the session. Please include your full name with any text messages sent.

Support Worker Team Cancellation: If, due to unforeseen circumstances, your PA needs to cancel a support session, the Support Worker Team will try to find alternative cover for the session. Cover may not always be possible, and the session may have to be cancelled (in such instances the session will not be deducted from your allocation of support hours). The Support Worker Team will inform you of any staff absence and cover arrangements, if applicable, by email or text message.

Notetaking Support – An Introduction

Notetaking support provides summative notes of your taught sessions, (e.g., lectures and seminars), according to your notetaking requirements.

Depending on the recommendation from your Needs Assessment Report or Support Summary, notes can be handwritten, electronic or live-typed.

What to Expect from Notetaking Support

You can expect your notetaker to:

- Attend lectures, seminars, labs and other taught sessions as needed/requested. (For postgraduate research students this can include supervision meetings by special request).
- Access online learning content through Minerva to provide a set of summative notes from remote learning sessions.
- Take accurate and appropriate notes for you to use as a reference or as reliable record to support your learning.
- Be friendly and approachable to discuss your notetaking needs including priorities and format preferences.
- Transcribe the notes into an appropriate format according to recommendations in your Needs Assessment or from your Disability Coordinator (e.g., electronic, large print, summary notes, while meeting style or content preferences).
- To be scheduled for the whole Semester (where possible), this schedule will be sent to you prior to the start of teaching provided your timetable is supplied by you in sufficient time so you will know in advance who will be taking notes for you.

With **prior agreement** as requested by your Disability Coordinator it may be possible for your notetaker to:

- To take notes when you are absent for disability reasons.
- Wait longer than 10 minutes if you are late.
- Not to make contact or speak to you in your lectures/classes. This is called **Discreet Notetaking** support.
- Take notes straight onto a laptop, or word process notes afterwards.

A notetaker will not:

- Help with tasks that are not notetaking support, e.g., help carrying books, returning materials to the library, reminding you of deadlines, explaining the content of lectures to you etc.
- Take notes in your absence unless this support is previously agreed (see above).
- Contribute to teaching sessions including joining in with group work.
- Take notes for sessions that are not pre-arranged with the Support Worker Team.

Notetaking Support Set-Up Process

How to arrange notetaking support

Notetaking support is timetabled on a semester basis, which means we will contact you with an email to your university email address a few weeks before the beginning of every semester to set up your support for the whole of the semester. To set up your support we need you to provide us with a copy of your **timetable** for the semester along with a completed **Notetaking Requirements Form**.

There will be a deadline to get all of your support requirements and timetable information back to us. **If you do not meet this deadline, then we cannot guarantee that you will have notetaking support in place for the start of teaching.**

You can request that notetaking support is set up at any point in the Semester, in which case you should allow 2-3 weeks for your support to be arranged.

Notetakers are allocated based on availability and subject knowledge. We try to match the notetaker to your subject as closely as possible. Where we do not have a notetaker with a suitable subject background available to cover your session we will notify you in advance so that you can make alternate support arrangements with your school.

The Support Worker Team will also ask if you have any specific requirements for your notetaking support e.g., pen colour, font size, page spacing, structure of notes, use of bullet points etc. This information will be provided to your notetaker(s), and you can amend this information at any time if you would like your notes to be taken differently by contacting your notetaker(s) or the Support Worker Team.

Information on your Notetaking Schedule

Unassigned Shifts: Some of your shifts may be marked as 'unassigned' where the notetaker's name would usually go. This means that we do not currently have anyone available for these sessions. This does not mean that this will remain the case for the whole semester, you will receive an email schedule update if we have managed to find cover for outstanding sessions.

Doubled-Up Notetakers: You may have some sessions on your timetable listed as '2 students'. This means that there is one notetaker in the session notetaking for two students at once. If this does appear on your timetable it means that the notetaker will be acting as discreet support (see below for more details) for both students so that confidentiality is not broken. This means that they will not acknowledge you in the session or let anyone know who they are there taking notes for.

Meeting Your Notetaker

For in-person teaching, we have asked your notetaker to stand at the front of the classroom at the beginning of the session. Notetakers may be wearing a blue lanyard with their staff card in it. It is your responsibility look out for them and make yourself known to them within the first 10mins of the session. If they cannot see you in the session and you have not made yourself known to them then they may leave the session early and you will not receive a copy of the notes.

Discreet Support

Discreet notetaking support is for students who would like their notetaking to remain confidential from other students in their class and teaching staff. Your notetaker will attend the session and if required will state to the class that they are a notetaker, but they will not approach you or divulge to other students or your tutor who they are there taking notes for.

For discreet support it is mandatory that you provide the Support Worker Team with a photograph of yourself so that your notetaker can recognise you and check that you are in attendance in the session.

Remote Support

For remote sessions we will need to inform your notetaker how they can access the session so please make sure you provide the Support Worker Team with a list of sessions that are happening remotely and the method of how those sessions are being delivered when you set up your support.

There are two main types of remote learning:

- Pre-recorded sessions: notetakers can enrol on modules automatically through Minerva and download pre-recorded teaching content.
- Live remote sessions: these sessions will require a notetaker to have access to the session during live time as there is no guarantee that the session will be recorded. For these sessions it may be necessary for you to request that your lecturer or tutor

grant your notetaker access to the session. Please let the Support Worker Team know if this is the case and we can advise on how to set this up.

Collecting notes: if you opt for handwritten notes these will be available to collect from Disability Services in Chemistry West during usual office opening hours, please allow 24 hours for your notes to be ready to collect. If you have asked for typed notes these will be typed up and emailed to you, please allow 2-3 days for typing up time.

Timetable Changes

Your notetaking schedule will be emailed to your university email address at the beginning of each semester. The schedule is based on the timetable information available at the beginning of the semester, **it is your responsibility to ensure that you provide information of any timetable changes as soon as you become aware of them.**

The Support Worker Team does not get informed by your school of any timetable changes, and if we are not aware of the changes then we cannot re-schedule your notetaker and you may go without support for that session.

Absences, Cancellations and Lateness

You should inform the Support Worker Team with at least 1 weeks' notice (where possible) if you need to make changes to your notetaking schedule or to cancel a session.

Lateness: Your notetaker may consider your notetaking session to be cancelled if you have not attended your class within 10 minutes of the beginning of your session or if they cannot spot you in the session and you have not met them at the front of the classroom.

If you are running late to a session, please text us on **07520632906** so that your notetaker can be informed that you will be late to the session. Please include your full name with any text messages sent.

Absence: You must inform the Support Worker Team by email or text message **by 9am on the day of your absence** (where possible) if you are unable to attend a booked session so that we can inform the notetaker. You must also provide a reason.

If we have not heard from you and you do not attend or make yourself known to your notetaker in the first 10mins of the session, then the notetaker will leave the session and you will not receive a copy of the notes.

If you have notetaking in absence agreed by your Disability Coordinator: you are entitled to have the notetaker stay in sessions during absence for disability-related reasons. **As above you must notify the Support Worker Office Team before 9am on the day of absence** so that we have plenty of time to notify the notetaker of your absence. If we do not hear from you before this time, then we cannot guarantee that your support

will be in place in absence as we may not be able to notify the notetaker and instruct them to stay in the session in your absence.

Repeated failure to attend without sufficient notice or reason or consistently failing to attend sessions without notifying us may result in suspension your notetaking support. More details regarding this can be found in the Absence Policy in the Appendix.

Support Worker Team Cancellation: If, due to unforeseen circumstances, your Note-taker needs to cancel a support session, the Support Worker Team will try to find alternative cover for the session. Cover may not always be possible, and the session may have to be cancelled (in such instances the session will not be deducted from your allocation of support hours). The Support Worker Team will inform you of any staff absence and cover arrangements, if applicable, by email or text message.

Specialist Mentor Support – An Introduction

Specialist Mentors provide tailored one-to-one support which helps address barriers to learning, for example, coping with anxiety and stress situations, how to deal with concentration difficulties, time management, prioritising workload and creating a suitable work-life balance.

What to expect your Mentor to support you with:

- Implementing strategies to help with organisation, time planning and managing your workload.
- Maintaining motivation, focus on your academic progress and engaging with university life.
- Liaising with your academic department and with other services at the University of Leeds.
- Understanding coursework requirements and breaking down work into manageable pieces.
- Orientation of campus, libraries and key student facilities and signposting to sources of information e.g., who to contact in a department.
- Additional support during the initial induction phase – e.g., assistance with registration, societies fair, choosing electives.
- Discussion with you about your requirements and working together to identify how best to respond to them.
- Flexibly identifying a time to meet with you. Support is generally provided 9am-5pm and mentors are based on campus.
- Keeping a record of your mentoring sessions.

A mentor may not:

- Provide subject specific help.
- Enter your accommodation.
- Provide counselling (your mentor can help you contact the Student Counselling Centre or the Student Mental Health Team).
- Proofread your coursework (although they may, if requested, read your work aloud to you to assist you in identifying errors).
- Act as a PA or secretary.

The content and frequency of your mentoring sessions will reflect your individual needs and the recommendations from your Needs Assessment or Disability Coordinator.

Mentor Support Set-Up Process

To set up your 1:1 Study Skills/Specialist Mentor support you will need to send us a copy by email, of your **Availability Form and Student Agreement**. The Support Worker Team can provide copies of these documents.

Once your documents have been received these will be acknowledged, and you will be put on a waiting list for support. The length of this waiting list varies, especially during peak periods, e.g., at the start of the academic year and, just before the exam periods. Please note that if you give us limited availability then you may be waiting longer for a tutor or mentor to be available to support you.

When a mentor becomes available, we will contact you with their name and email address and they will contact you using your preferred method of contact to arrange a suitable appointment time. All future appointments will be arranged through your mentor.

How to arrange Mentor Support

Mentor Support can be offered as in-person or distance support or a mixture of both. The type of support you receive will be based upon the recommendation in your Needs Assessment or Support Summary and your preferences.

Where your Mentoring sessions will take place: sessions can take place in person on Campus, via remote delivery or a mixture of both. If you choose support in person this will take place on Campus at Disability Services in Chemistry West building. If you choose to have remote support your support worker will agree with you which piece of software would work best (e.g. Skype, Microsoft Teams, Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate). Please note that due to Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) guidelines, your chosen method of accessing support must have the facility to have a video or voice call and a chat function and we are not able to offer support via email. For GDPR reasons all distance support must be accessed through software that is registered to your university email address. We are unable to communicate with you using personal accounts.

For remote support, please make sure you are in a suitably private space to be able to engage with your support fully. We recommend that you access support in a room on your own away from distractions and limiting external noise. It is not advised that you access support in a public place (e.g., a café or social study space on campus) as you will not be able to have a confidential discussion with your support worker and may struggle to hear them. You will also need a reliable internet connection for video chats to work. [You are able to book private accessible study space in the Libraries on Campus.](#)

If you wish to change your session from distance to in-person support or vice versa then this must be agreed with your support worker with more than 24 hours' notice. Please be aware that if your support worker is unable to accommodate your request to change the method of accessing your support it may be necessary to change the time of your appointment.

Students are expected to treat distance support with the same professionalism that they would an in-person appointment. This means that you should attend the session on time, dressed appropriately and ready to work with your support worker.

University codes of conduct apply to in person and distance support and the Support Worker Team has a zero-tolerance policy for any inappropriate behaviour towards both staff and students.

Absences, Cancellations and Lateness

Session bookings: You will agree a date and a time for your session with your support worker and this will be confirmed in writing. You are expected to attend the session at the time booked and lateness and session absences will be recorded, see the Absence Policy in Appendix for more details.

Lateness: if you are running late, you should inform your support worker directly via your agreed means of communication, or alternatively inform the Support Worker Team directly by email or text message. **If you do not attend or inform your support worker of your lateness within the first 15 minutes of the session this will be considered an absence**, this will be deducted for your support hours and you may be asked to confirm a timesheet for this absence. Repeated absence from sessions without communication may result in your support being suspended.

Absence: you must inform your Support Worker with at least 24 hours' notice if you need to cancel or rearrange a booked session (where possible).

You should contact your support worker directly as soon as possible when you need to cancel or rearrange a session, providing a reason for this. Where less than 24 hours' notice is given, this will be considered a short notice cancellation and the session will be deducted for your support hours and you may be asked to confirm a timesheet for this absence. Repeated short notice absences from sessions may result in your support being

suspended. Absence for Disability Reasons or due to unavoidable circumstances will be taken into consideration.

Repeated failure to attend without sufficient notice or reason may result in suspension of support. More details regarding this can be found in the Absence Policy in the Appendix.

Support Worker Team Cancellation: If, due to unforeseen circumstances, your Mentor needs to cancel a support session, your mentor or the Support Worker Team will inform you of their absence and expected return date. In such instances the session will not be deducted from your allocation of support hours. Should your mentor be expected to be absent for longer than a week (during term time periods) the Support Worker Team will contact you to ask if you would like us an alternative Mentor in the interim period (where possible).

One-to-One Study Skills Support – An Introduction

The purpose of study skills support is to work with you to equip you with long term strategies and transferable skills which will benefit you in your academic studies and beyond.

The content of your sessions will depend on where your individual needs lie and the priorities you may have. You will have already talked these through during your needs assessment and they will be described in your Needs Assessment Report (NAR). Your study skills tutor will use the NAR as a starting point as he/she helps you to devise your individual learning plan (ILP). The ILP will then provide the framework for your sessions and will be completed by your study skills tutor after each session.

What to expect your Study Skills Tutor to support you with:

- Grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- Academic writing skills and essay structure.
- Revision schedules and strategies.
- Proofreading strategies and referencing.
- Research and resource management.
- Developing presentations.
- Notetaking and reading strategies.

Study skills support cannot:

- help you improve specific items of coursework.
- assist with proofreading individual items of work (although proofreading strategies can be developed).
- provide subject specific tuition.

1:1 Study Skills Support Set-Up Process

To set up your 1:1 Study Skills support you will need to send us a copy by email, of your **Availability Form and Student Agreement**. The Support Worker Team can provide copies of these documents.

Once your documents have been received these will be acknowledged, and you will be put on a waiting list for support. The length of this waiting list varies, especially during peak periods, e.g., at the start of the academic year and, just before the exam periods. Please note that if you give us limited availability then you may be waiting longer for a tutor or mentor to be available to support you.

When a tutor becomes available, we will contact you with their name and email address and they will contact you using your preferred method of contact to arrange a suitable appointment time. All future appointments will be arranged through your Study Skills Tutor.

How to arrange Study Skills Support

Study Skills Support can be offered as in-person or distance support or a mixture of both. The type of support you receive will be based upon the recommendation in your Needs Assessment or Support Summary and your preferences.

Where your Study Skills sessions will take place: sessions can take place in person on Campus, via remote delivery or a mixture of both. If you choose support in person this will take place on Campus at Disability Services in Chemistry West building. If you choose to have remote support your support worker will agree with you which piece of software would work best (e.g., Skype, Microsoft Teams, Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate). Please note that due to Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) guidelines, your chosen method of accessing support must have the facility to have a video or voice call and a chat function and we are not able to offer support via email. For GDPR reasons all distance support must be accessed through software that is registered to your university email address. We are unable to communicate with you using personal accounts.

For remote support, please make sure you are in a suitably private space to be able to engage with your support fully. We recommend that you access support in a room on your own away from distractions and limiting external noise. It is not advised that you access support in a public place (e.g., a café or social study space on campus) as you will not be able to have a confidential discussion with your support worker and may struggle to hear them. You will also need a reliable internet connection for video chats to work. [You are able to book private accessible study space in the Libraries on Campus.](#)

If you wish to change your session from distance to in-person support or vice versa then this must be agreed with your support worker with more than 24 hours' notice. Please be aware that if your support worker is unable to accommodate your request to change the

method of accessing your support it may be necessary to change the time of your appointment.

Students are expected to treat distance support with the same professionalism that they would an in-person appointment. This means that you should attend the session on time, dressed appropriately and ready to work with your support worker.

University codes of conduct apply to in person and distance support and the Support Worker Team has a zero-tolerance policy for any inappropriate behaviour towards both staff and students.

Absences, Cancellations and Lateness

Session bookings: You will agree a date and a time for your session with your support worker and this will be confirmed in writing. You are expected to attend the session at the time booked and lateness and session absences will be recorded, see the Absence Policy in Appendix for more details.

Lateness: if you are running late, you should inform your support worker directly via your agreed means of communication, or alternatively inform the Support Worker Team directly by email or text message. **If you do not attend or inform your support worker of your lateness within the first 15 minutes of the session this will be considered an absence**, this will be deducted for your support hours, and you may be asked to confirm a timesheet for this absence. Repeated absence from sessions without communication may result in your support being suspended.

Absence: you must inform your Support Worker with at least 24 hours' notice if you need to cancel or rearrange a booked session (where possible).

You should contact your support worker directly as soon as possible when you need to cancel or rearrange a session, providing a reason for this. Where less than 24 hours' notice is given, this will be considered a short notice cancellation and the session will be deducted for your support hours and you may be asked to confirm a timesheet for this absence. Repeated short notice absences from sessions may result in your support being suspended. Absence for Disability Reasons or due to unavoidable circumstances will be taken into consideration.

Repeated failure to attend without sufficient notice or reason may result in suspension of support. More details regarding this can be found in the Absence Policy in the Appendix.

Support Worker Team Cancellation: If, due to unforeseen circumstances, your Tutor needs to cancel a support session, your support worker or the Support Worker Team will inform you of their absence and expected return date. In such instances the session will not be deducted from your allocation of support hours. Should your support worker be expected to be absent for longer than a week (during term time periods) the Support Worker Team will contact you to ask if you would like us an alternative Mentor in the interim period (where possible).

British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreters

We offer BSL interpretation for internally funded students only. For any students who are entitled to this support through Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) you will be able to access this support through an external supplier. The supplier should be listed on your DSA entitlement letter. For further information, please contact your Disability Coordinator, or email disability@leeds.ac.uk.

You can access BSL support for academic purposes only. This would usually be for teaching sessions but can also be for meetings with your tutors etc.

Due to the limited availability of interpreters in the Leeds area we book interpreters a semester in advance. This means that to book a BSL interpreter we will need a copy of your timetable before the beginning of teaching. We may also request that you provide us with a copy of the teaching materials before the session so that the interpreter can prepare for the session.

The cancellation period for BSL interpreters is 15 working days. Three weeks' advance notice for any session changes or cancellations is required. If you need to cancel the interpreter with short notice, for example due to illness, then please see the Absence Policy in the Appendix.

If you have any further questions regarding BSL support, please contact the Support Worker Team.

Assistive Technology Support

Tom Starkey, our Assistive Technology Adviser is available to students to offer guidance on assistive technology including text-to-speech, organisational tools, and adaptable equipment.

There is a [Minerva site](#) for further information on Assistive Technology Resources, including a booking link to make an appointment with Tom.

Appendix 1: Booking/Cancellation and Absence Policy

Definition of a Booked Session:

- The session is considered booked once you and your support worker have agreed a day, time and place of session(s) or you have a confirmed schedule for PA or Notetaking support from the Support Worker Team.
- This could be a one-off session or regularly occurring booking agreed between you and your support worker, which may not be confirmed each week. For example, on a weekly or monthly basis.
- This could be a session listed on your Note-Taking or Personal Assistant schedule, based on your request/requirements form information. The Support Worker Team do not get automatically notified by Schools of any timetable changes. You are expected to read your notetaking and PA support schedules and contact the Support Worker Team at the earliest opportunity regarding any errors or sessions where support is no longer required.

Definition of a Missed Session:

- One which you cancel with less notice than 24 hours' notice (less than 15 working days' notice for BSL support).
- One which you do not cancel and do not attend.
- One which is on your note-taking or PA schedule and you have not informed the Support Worker Office Team is incorrect or not required.
- One to which you are more than 10 minutes late for without notifying the support worker/Support Worker Office Team that you are going to be late.

Where a session has been booked and missed, according to the above definitions, a support worker is able to submit a timesheet for the session and you can be asked to sign for this session on the basis that it was booked and not attended or given sufficient notice to cancel. **The missed session will come out of your funding allowance for support.**

Guidance Regarding Absences and Missed Sessions

You are asked to give as much notice as is possible to cancel a session with a support worker or the Support Worker Office Team. You will be asked to discuss reasons for your absence or cancellation with your support worker, or the Support Worker Office Team, and mention if there is anything we can do to assist you with avoiding future absences.

The Support Worker Team monitor support delivery and record any missed sessions or absences which occur. However, we also want to ensure that the Support Worker Team and support workers are doing everything possible to enable you to access support and we are committed to working with you to resolve difficulties which you may be encountering in attending support.

If you have more than two absences per semester for non-disability related reasons, then the Support Worker Team may suspend your support and ask to have a

meeting to discuss reasons for your absences. Sessions which are missed or cancelled due to your disability or unavoidable circumstances will be taken into consideration.

Absence from Study Skills and Mentoring Support

If you need to cancel a booked session, you must contact your Mentor or Study Skills Tutor directly or if they are not available then the Support Worker Team. You should discuss the reason for the cancellation and rearrange the session if possible.

Where you cancel a session, or do not attend:

- Your Mentor to Study Skills Tutor will contact you to confirm the details of your next session and ask you to confirm if you intend to attend. You are asked to respond to confirm your attendance, the session may be offered to other students if confirmation is not received.
- If you have a regular standing booking, following one non-attended session, the support worker will assume that all future sessions are cancelled, until you have confirmed that you wish to continue the sessions.
- The support worker will also open a discussion with you, by email, text or at the next meeting regarding the reasons for not attending and discuss if it is possible to avoid this happening in future.
- Your support may be suspended if you have consistently not attended or cancelled at short notice. If this is the case support can be reinstated following a discussion between you and the Support Worker Team regarding your attendance and ways of resolving access difficulties.

Absence from PA Support

You must inform the Support Worker Team with **at least 24 hours' notice** (where possible) if you are unable to attend a booked session. You must also provide a reason. Repeated failure to attend without sufficient notice or reason may result in suspension of support.

Please note your session may be cancelled if you are **more than 10 minutes late** and you have not informed us of your late arrival. If you are running late to a session, please text us on **07520632906** so that your PA can be informed that you will be late to the session. Please include your full name with any text messages sent.

Failure to give notice or cancelling within 24 hours, will result in a timesheet being generated for the session and the session will be taken from your allocated hours. We ask that you provide a reason for any non-attendance or short-notice cancellation of a support session.

Your support may be suspended by the Support Worker Team if you consistently missed or cancel support at short notice. Sessions which are missed or cancelled due to your disability

or unavoidable circumstances will be considered when considering suspension of your support.

Absence from Notetaking Support

You must inform the Support Worker Team **by 9am on the day of your absence** (where possible) if you are unable to attend a booked session, you should also provide a reason.

Please note your session may be cancelled and you will not receive a copy of the notes if you are **more than 10 minutes late** to your session or made yourself self-known to the notetaker within the first 10 minutes and you have not informed us of your late arrival. If you are running late to a session, please text us on **07520632906** so that your Notetaker can be informed that you will be late to the session. Please include your full name with any text messages sent.

Failure to give notice or cancelling within 24 hours, will result in a timesheet being generated for the session and the session will be taken from your allocated hours. We ask that you provide a reason for any non-attendance or short-notice cancellation of a support session.

Your support may be suspended by the Support Worker Team if you consistently miss or cancel support at short notice. Sessions which are missed or cancelled due to your disability or unavoidable circumstances will be considered when considering suspension of your support.

Notetaking Support in Absence Policy: If you have Notetaking support agreed 'in absence', the support worker attends the session in your absence. Support in absence is only agreed for sessions where the absence is disability related. For any non-disability-related reasons for missed sessions the above cancellation policy still applies.

If you receive Notetaking Support in absence and you will be absent for a disability-related reason, then you will need to notify the Support Worker Team before 9am on the day of absence so that we have plenty of time to notify the support worker of your absence. If we do not hear from you before this time, then we cannot guarantee that your support will be in place in absence as we may not be able to notify the support worker of the absence and instruct them to stay in the session in your absence. If the support worker cannot see you in the session, and they have not been instructed by the Support Worker Team to stay in the session in your absence, then they will leave the session after 10 minutes and it will count as a missed session. You will not receive a copy of the notes for the session and the session will be taken from your allocated hours.

Notetaking in absence support is specifically agreed by a student's Needs Assessor or Disability Coordinator based upon their individual needs. If you feel that you would benefit from notetaking in absence support, then you should contact your Disability Coordinator for further advice.

Absence from BSL Support

The cancellation period for BSL interpreters is 15 working days. Please contact the Support Worker Team as soon as possible if you are aware of changes to your schedule.

Please contact the Support Worker Team for any as soon as possible if you are going to be late or absent from a session. You can contact by email or text **07520632906** (please include your name with text messages).

Your support may be suspended by the Support Worker Team if you consistently miss or cancel support at short notice. Sessions which are missed or cancelled due to your disability or unavoidable circumstances will be considered when considering suspension of your support.

Support Worker Team Cancellation

If, due to unforeseen circumstances, your support worker needs cancel a support session, your Support Worker or the Support Worker Team will contact you as soon as possible by email or text message.

For PA and Notetaking Support we will try to find alternative cover for the session. Cover may not always be possible, and the session may have to be cancelled (in such instances the session will not be deducted from your allocation of support hours). The Support Worker Team will inform you of any staff absence and cover arrangements, if applicable, by email or text message.

For Mentor and Study Skills Support, your Support Worker or the Support Worker Team will inform you of their absence and expected return date. In such instances the session will not be deducted from your allocation of support hours. Should your support be expected to be absent for longer than a week (during term-time periods) the Support Worker Team will contact you to ask if you would like us an alternative Mentor in the interim period (where possible).

Support Worker Team, Disability Services

0113 343 3927

supportworkerteam@leeds.ac.uk

<http://students.leeds.ac.uk/supportworkerteam>



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