



University of Galway Disability Support Service

Data-Protection Notice

Disclosure of disability

The University of Galway encourages students with disabilities to disclose a disability/ongoing health condition/learning difficulty to the [Disability Support Service](#) (DSS) as early as possible on commencement of their studies or as soon as possible after receiving a diagnosis. While this is encouraged, registration with the DSS can take place at any time during your studies. Please note that “disability” is broadly defined under Irish law and the term “disability” throughout this document should be understood to also include ongoing health conditions and learning difficulties/differences.

Why disclose?

Disclosure is encouraged so that the DSS can work with the student to ensure that any reasonable accommodations required are identified and facilitated. A “**reasonable accommodation**” can be defined as any action or adjustment, not part of the mainstream provision of the institution, which may enable a student with a disability to participate on their chosen course, without which they would be disadvantaged relative to their peers. The University of Galway has a duty under the Equal Status Act 2000 (as amended) and the Disability Act 2005 to make “reasonable accommodations” for students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are determined through a needs assessment process taking into account the nature and impact of the disability, evidence of disability and course/module requirements.

Confidentiality for students with disabilities

An electronic record of your contact with us, as well as any documentation or information presented when disclosing a disability, is held by the Disability Support Service (DSS), which is part of the [Access Centre](#) at University of Galway. The DSS will treat documents and all information that we retain in relation to your registration with our service as “special category personal data”, which will be securely stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1988-2018 (as may be amended), and only shared in accordance with the University of Galway’s Data Protection Policy (found [here](#)) and the European General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (see [here](#) for details). Further details of your data protection rights are available [here](#)

Where the DSS recommends any form of reasonable accommodation for a student, the DSS will share relevant information to the staff members in those Schools and Units responsible for providing or facilitating students in accessing such accommodations. In such instances, only information relevant to the particular situation will be shared by email using internal University of Galway email accounts. Academic staff may occasionally contact the DSS for advice and guidance regarding the provision of reasonable accommodations for individual students. Should this occur, it will be necessary for a disability advisor to obtain the written permission of the student concerned before sharing information.

The DSS may occasionally contact our registered students to inform them of disability-specific matters. These include training opportunities, events of interest, research participation and mentoring opportunities.

For the DSS to coordinate supports on behalf of students registering for disability support, it may be necessary, with students’ written consent, to arrange referrals to internal University of Galway support services. Such services include the Student Health Unit, the Counselling service and the Mental-Health Support Worker. It may also be necessary for the DSS, with students’ written consent, to share relevant information with specific external parties such as assistive technology software providers and companies responsible for facilitating students in accessing certain accommodations and supports. Please see the table below for details of these external parties.

Your data may also be used for statistical and monitoring purposes without your identity being revealed.

Your Information is Your Own

Your rights: You may at any time request restrictions to the processing or sharing of your data by the DSS. However, it is important to be aware that such restrictions may adversely affect the level of support or reasonable accommodations that the University can offer. If you have any concerns about this or would like to discuss the consequences of disclosing or withholding information, please speak to a Disability Advisor.

Other students: The University will not disclose details of your disability to other students; it is your choice to let others know that you have a disability, or that you are accessing/receiving support.

Parents/guardians/supporters: In accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), information about your disability and your support requirements/arrangements will not be shared or discussed with your parents/guardians/supporters without your prior written consent. It is important to be aware that parents cannot act, or request changes, on your behalf and that you retain responsibility for engaging with the DSS.

Academic Transcript: Academic transcripts of results do not include any details of disability supports/reasonable accommodations you have received.

Employers: The DSS will not share information about your disability with current or future employers.

Disclosures in exceptional circumstances: The University may, **in limited and exceptional circumstances**, share some data about your disability/ongoing condition with third parties without your consent. These circumstances are provided for, in full, under the Data Protection Act and include:

- a) Emergencies, for example, if you are unwell/injured; or at risk of injury to yourself/others.
- b) To protect the vital interests of any person, including yourself.
- c) Fitness to practice issues or a duty to report to a professional body (such as CORU).
- d) Complaints/appeals to the University.
- e) Legal situations, for example, legal disputes/advice/proceedings, or where required by a Court of Law.
- f) To law enforcement agencies, for the prevention/detection of crime or the apprehension/prosecution of an offender.

Feedback/Concerns/Complaints

The DSS is open to any suggestions or feedback you have about our service. As well any changes you might like to see, please also tell us if there is something you like about our service. You can email your questions, comments or concerns to disabilityservice@universityofgalway.ie.

If you are dissatisfied about any aspect of our service, we hope that you will feel comfortable to discuss this with one of the DSS team, in the first instance. For example, you could raise a disability support-related matter with your Disability Advisor, who should then be able to help resolve the issue.

We aim to resolve any concerns through informal discussions. However, at any point you can choose to follow the University's formal [student complaints procedure](#). In addition, under the [Disability Act 2005](#) (section 38) complaints can be made in writing with respect to Sections 25, 26, 27, 28 or 29 of the Act to Bernie McGee, University of Galway Disability Officer bernie.mcgee@universityofgalway.ie.

Student Declaration of Consent

I request reasonable accommodations from the University of Galway's Disability Support Service (DSS). I understand the DSS will ensure that my personal data will only be used to facilitate the required and agreed levels of reasonable accommodations and supports.

I consent to the DSS retaining information relating to academic and disability-support requirements and sharing this information as necessary to provide reasonable accommodations. I understand that reasonable accommodations will only be provided following a needs assessment and the creation of my Learning and Educational Needs Summary (LENS) report.

Depending on what reasonable accommodations are required and agreed, the following sample of services and types of disclosure (as required) may apply:

University of Galway Service (Internal)	Information Provided
Academic department/course co-ordinator	LENS report
Examinations Office	Name, Student ID, exam accommodations
Accommodation Office	Name and accommodation requirements
Library	Name, Student ID and library requirements
International Office	Name, Student ID
Placement officers	Name, placement planning report
External Services	
Supplier of specialist support staff (Servisource, Irish Sign Language Interpreting Services)	Name, contact details and support requirements
Assistive Technology suppliers	Name, Student email address
Funding Body (HEA/EU)	Name, Student ID, Supports received
Specialist transport providers	Name, contact details
Libraries (RNIB Bookshare / Bookshare.ie)	Name, Student ID, library requirements

I have read and understood the above and I hereby consent to information relating to my personal details (e.g. name, student number, nature of disability, academic and other support requirements) being shared by the Disability Support Service with relevant University departments and external bodies, as required and as appropriate.

Without your written consent:

Please note that if consent is not provided it may not be possible to provide the recommended supports/reasonable accommodations that require a level of disclosure. Students are strongly encouraged to get in touch with us if they wish to discuss any concerns or queries they have about disclosure.