

6.1 Additional Learning Support

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Overview

Colchester Institute is committed to inclusive learning and widening participation; the college also take its responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) very seriously. This means that all applicants and learners who have disabilities or learning difficulties are entitled to receive support to enable them to participate as fully as possible in college life and to enable them to complete their programme of study successfully.

Additional Learning Support (ALS) will include any activity that provides direct support for learning to individual learners, over and above that which is provided in a standard learning programme and which leads to their Primary Learning Goal. The need may arise from a learning difficulty or disability or from literacy, numeracy or language support requirements.

“Where the majority of learners in a group appear to require ALS support, this should be addressed through the design of the programme which should be reviewed, e.g. Introductory Diploma” Ref: LSC funding document

In meeting the ALS entitlement, the college will exercise reasonable judgement on an individual basis. This judgement and the decision on support will be determined by the staff of the Additional Learning Support Unit (ALSU) and other members of the Widening Participation Department in liaison with the Course Team, and where appropriate parents and external agencies.

Appendix 1 contains information about funding for Learning Support.

What Is Learning Support?

The Additional Learning Support Unit (ALSU) can provide:

- 1:1 support in class
- 1:1 support in the Learning Link
- Team teaching (if specific disabilities identified)
- Funding for FE “Home students” whose second language is English, for English Language support provided elsewhere in college
- Dyslexia assessments for exam concessions and Disabled Students’ Allowance
- Staff development
- Training in use of specialist equipment and IT software
- Counselling (if essential to primary learning goal)

Within the Widening Participation Department the following staff available to assist learners:

- Specialist tutors for deaf learners and those with dyslexia
- Notetakers
- Learning Support Assistants
- Technician support for specialist technology and equipment
- Communication support workers
- Access to a Braille service

- Teachers of literacy and numeracy

Learning Support is different and separate from Key Skills. Appendix 2 shows the differences between Key Skills, Basic Skills and Additional Learning Support.

Procedures for identifying support needs

Application stage:

ALSU will be notified by the admissions team directly an applicant with a physical, sensory or communication or learning disability applies to a vocational or higher education course. The applicant will then be offered an interview by a member of the ALSU team who will complete an assessment form, a copy of which will be kept by ALSU and a copy put in the brown wallet for the tutor to read.

Tutors' responsibility

A red sticker with a note to alert tutors to a learning support need will be affixed to the left hand side of all wallets where a learner has identified a need on their application form; this is done by the Admissions team. It is the responsibility of the tutor to ensure they take note of this and discuss any additional learning needs at the interview stage and, using the referral form in the wallet, request support / information from the ALSU if necessary.

All records of disabilities declared at application stage will be entered onto EBS by Admissions.

Procedures for Initial Assessment

Initial assessment helps to determine the level of a learner's basic skills. Initial assessment should provide a guide that the learner is on the correct level of course and will ensure that support needs are identified early enough to help them achieve on their programme of study. To achieve this, applicants are expected to take the assessment at interview or at least before enrolment. There is no pass or fail on the IBSA, it simply indicates the level of literacy and numeracy at which the applicant is working, at that particular time

There is an opportunity on the literacy paper for learners to declare whether they have dyslexia which may disadvantage them during assessment, or whether they have had special arrangements in previous examinations. This is recorded during the marking process and noted on the scripts. The ALSU team keep a record of this and will pass the information on to tutors after enrolment.

Admissions then send out a letter to those particular learners inviting them to contact ALSU to discuss their needs.

After marking by the ALSU team, scripts are then returned to Admissions for filing in individual learners wallets

Responsibilities are as follows:

Admissions

- The organisation of interviews (dates/times) and the communication of this information to the Additional Learning Support Unit team.

Additional Learning Support Unit

- To support tutors with the delivery of the Assessment
- To mark the scripts
- To return marked scripts to Admissions to be retained in learners' wallets for auditing purposes
- To return and discuss a summary sheet of results to tutors and to Heads of Centre, and to keep SMT informed
- To input results onto EBS
- To interview learners who contact ALSU to discuss their needs
- To keep records of learners identified as needing additional support
- To ensure support is in place at start of course for those whose needs were identified through the application process.
- To ensure appropriate support is offered for those learners who have scored 2 places, or more, below the level of their course

Tutors

Before the start of the programme

- To ensure the assessment is delivered

On Programme

- To discuss results with learners in first tutorial
- To be aware of the implications of the results for planning programmes
- To be aware of the level of diagnostic testing required for planning key skills or learning support
- To continue to monitor progress against needs, take appropriate action and set relevant SMART targets from diagnostic testing
- Where individuals show a need for support, subsequent to the start of the programme, tutors should contact the ALSU to discuss possible support mechanisms and be ready to show how such support would be used, and for whom.

See Appendix 3 for Interpretation of assessment results and diagnostic testing.

<h2>Procedures for Implementation of Support</h2>
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It is the responsibility of both the ALSU and course teams to check their records, learner files and IBSA results to ensure that learners needing support are identified and given an early tutorial and support where appropriate.

All learners should visit the Learning Link, to make them aware of learning support, as part of their induction. If a learner has not identified a need before enrolment they can self-refer at any time

Regular liaison meetings with course teams and ALSU staff must take place and

information shared.

Literacy and Numeracy tutors should be aware that the Initial Assessment level should inform the level of diagnostic testing for a learner and a suitable and relevant programme of learning, with SMART targets should be the outcome of that process

The responsibilities of the Additional Learning Support Unit are as follows:

- The ALSU will arrange for a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) to be attached to all Pre-foundation and Level 1 classes, where necessary, to aid the learner's independence and achievement
- Small groups or team teaching will be arranged for literacy and numeracy support by specialist tutors, where there is appropriate need, usually identified through Initial Assessment. This will be carried out in liaison with the course tutors and the Learning Skills Unit.
- After enrolment, dyslexia specialists will contact tutors with lists of learners with known dyslexia, and arrange support needs where appropriate. Dyslexia specialists are responsible for assessment of learners requesting special arrangements for examinations.
- Assistive Technology to be available on request from learners and training for this can be organised by Opportunities Through Technology (OTT).

Procedures for Examinations and Assessment

Special arrangements for exams are granted to learners who have a disability, such as dyslexia or a hearing impairment, or whose literacy skills are well below the standard of their practical skills and understanding. Arrangements cannot be granted to learners who are not dyslexic but have low literacy skills and also a poor understanding of the concepts and theory of the course.

The course tutor is responsible for requesting arrangements for exams, but any tutor entering learners for exams will need to check with course tutors which learners may require special arrangements, and then follow the procedure below.

There may already be information about a learner's needs, such as a Statement of Educational Need, a dyslexia report or the learner's own disclosure of need on their application or enrolment form. However such information on its own is not enough to provide evidence for exam arrangements, and nor are the IBSA scores or diagnostic testing. Specialist assessments need to be carried out by LSU specialists. This takes roughly half an hour per learner.

The Examinations Officer in the Exams Office must be informed of the names of learners who may need special arrangements **and of the dates of the exams**. At the same time the

ALSU must be informed so that arrangements can be made for the necessary assessments to be done. This must be done three to six months before the exam.

If there is no specific evidence, but a tutor feels from observation of their general pattern of working that they have a specific difficulty with reading or spelling, an assessment must be made by the staff of the ALSU. This may particularly apply to mature learners who have been out of education for some time.

Learners are not required to disclose a disability to their tutor but it is in their interest to inform someone in Additional Learning Support or Exams if they think they will need support in an exam.

Measures for Monitoring Additional Learning Support

Each term the amount of learning support across the college will be monitored to ensure that correct funding claims can be made and subsequently audited. Where learners have withdrawn the reason will be recorded and followed up where necessary.

Learning support on pre-foundation programmes will be tracked through routine and regular target-setting and ILPs as part of the programme activity.

Learning support on mainstream programmes will be tracked through monthly progress reports completed by LSAs and copied to programme tutors and the ALSU. Where possible, LSAs will be part of programme teams and included in team meetings, progress reviews etc.

Individual and group literacy and numeracy support will be tracked through routine reports and summaries passed to course tutors at regular intervals.

Individual reviews for learners with specific learning disabilities will be tracked through routine reports and summaries passed to course tutors at regular intervals.

Programmes should report, where possible through SARs the impact of Additional Learning Support on learner achievement, to show distance travelled from early screening and diagnostic assessment.

The Additional Learning Support Unit should show through the SAR the retention, achievement and success rates of those receiving Additional Learning Support, and make comparisons across the college.

Case-studies of success stories for those receiving Additional Learning Support should be gathered and used to promote equality and diversity.

Appendix 1

Funding for Learning Support

For Learners in Further Education

Additional funding may be claimed where an institution provides ALS to an *individual* and will include any activity that provides direct support for learning to individual learners, over and above that which is profiled in a standard learning programme and which leads to their primary learning goal.

The sorts of things that can be claimed for (and thus provided) include:

- Specialist software
- Transport between sites – but not from home
- Administration costs – relating directly to LSU claims
- Additional examination preparation and time
- Additional time spent on transport training
- Additional staffing costs for visits and residentials
- Specialist material preparation time
- Specialist material costs – photocopying over and above that required by peer group
- Overheads that relate specifically to additional support delivery

For Learners in Higher Education

Learners on Higher Education programmes will need to apply for a Disabled Student's Allowance when they apply for their course. They will be funded through HEFCE. More information on this is available from the staff of the Additional Learning Support Unit, but the claim must be made by the learner him/herself.

For Learners undertaking courses under the heading "Other Provision"

Funding for ALS would be expected to come from other provision budgets.

Anyone who qualifies for ALS funding will need to have clearly identified needs and must trigger the funding threshold, (see special funding for ALS). Specialist assessments / medical reports are necessary before any special arrangements for exams are made.

Appendix 2: A comparison of Key Skills, Basic Skills and Additional Learning Support

Key Skills	Basic Skills	Additional Learning Support (ALS)
<p>Learners should have the ability to work independently and produce a good standard portfolio of written evidence. To pass the test at the appropriate level and the standards required.</p> <p>Entitlement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core and Key skills as part of KETS funding • Applies to all learners on Full-time FE programmes <p>Identification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combination of GCSE result, IBSA result and diagnostic result • Requirements of vocational programme • Personal aspirations <p>College responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide literacy, numeracy and where appropriate, ICT support to learners to maintain and improve skills • Course teams take ownership of key skills • Clarity of requirements for assessment, for tutors/learners. Clear ILPs and targets • Differentiate between basic / key skills • Ensure understanding of procedure for entering learners for exams and portfolio • Make sure the teaching is relevant and related to the primary learning goal 	<p>Learners who will need support to enable them to progress to working independently. They will need extra coaching in writing skills and Numeracy principles and (soon) IT.</p> <p>Identification from screening:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red highlight indicates 3 levels below course level, yellow 2 levels below. <p>Possible reasons: Gaps in education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • illness • absence for other reasons • motivation • learning difficulties <p>Their needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive teaching and coaching • Someone to motivate them towards learning • Teaching to be purposeful and relevant to their needs • An understanding of where they are at now, where they need to be in the future, and why! <p>College responsibilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality teaching, which is core curriculum based, and relevant. Level 3 / 4 trained • Course team commitment to support basic skills and embed within their teaching • Practice assessments for National Tests and extra support. Entry for tests. • Funded through KETs for under 19s, and possibly ALS funding 	<p>Learners with disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical • Sensory • Dyslexia • Communication (autism) • Learning difficulties <p>Anyone who needs support, over and above that which is normally given on their course, to help them achieve their primary learning goal.</p> <p>Identification:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre entry • Application • Self identification • Tutor referral <p>LSU provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 support with LSAs, communicators, mentors, specialist teaching. • On course reviews and support meetings • Evaluations • Pre entry information about those with disabilities or basic skills • Recruitment of appropriate staff to support learners. • Ongoing support and reviews for both learners and staff • Basic skills support for learners entitled to ALS • Support for compliance with DDA4 • Funding to recover costs for ALS

Appendix 3:

Interpreting the results of Initial Basic Skills Assessments (IBSA)

SCORE	LEVEL OF COURSE INDICATED
Entry level 1 / 2 / 3 or below:	Pre Foundation level
Level 1	NVQ level 1 Foundation GNVQ Key Skills Level 1
Level 2:	NVQ level 2 First Diploma GNVQ Intermediate Key skills level 2
There is no specific assessment for level 3 but it would be expected that learners on a level 3 course would score at level 2	NVQ 3 National Certificate Access Main Course Vocational A level Key Skills level 3

Initial assessment is used to determine the level of a learner's literacy and numeracy skills to ensure that they will be enrolled on the correct level of course, and to identify any support needs to help them achieve their long-term goals. It is a tool to use alongside GCSE results, school records and more in depth diagnostic assessment.

Diagnostic assessment identifies the skills a learner has or needs at a particular level. The ILP should be devised using the information from the diagnostic test to set SMART targets to enable learners to develop their weaker skills and move on to the next level

Learners can have a "spiky profile", which means that they may have different levels in literacy and numeracy. It is an indicator of which level of diagnostic assessment and key/basic skills they should be entered for.

If anyone scores 2 or more levels below their course level it would indicate that they would need basic skills support to improve their literacy or numeracy skills. These should be organised with the staff in Learning Link and agreed with the learner at the beginning of term. Alternatively learners can be referred to Admissions to discuss transferring to another level of course

IBSA scores can be accessed from AGENT by typing in the course code and running a report for "IBSA basic skills FOR ENROLLED STUDENTS". The results can also be obtained from the Learning Support Unit.

Glossary of terms used in reference to Additional Learning Support and Skills for Life

Adult Literacy and Numeracy	<p>This is a national strategy to tackle the literacy and numeracy needs of adults, which was launched by the government in the Autumn of 2000. The strategy includes national standards of adult literacy and numeracy they are specified at 3 different levels: Entry level, level 1 and level 2 and are aligned to key skills at level 1 and 2.</p> <p>Unlike key skills, there is a core curriculum to clarify what teachers should teach to enable learners to reach those standards. There are five separate curricula frameworks: Adult Pre entry, Adult Literacy, Adult Numeracy; Access for All, which includes strategies for working with people with disabilities and ESOL.</p> <p>There is also a new system of qualifications to measure achievement against the standards. These qualifications are linked to the key skills qualifications, with the key skills literacy and numeracy tests and the adult literacy and numeracy tests being exactly the same. The entry levels are split into Entry 1, Entry 2 and Entry 3, and have different assessments.</p> <p>Although these qualifications were originally intended for learners who were 19+ they have recently been confirmed as suitable for learners aged 14 - 19yrs.</p> <p>See appendix 2: a comparison of Key Skills, Basic Skills and Additional Learning Support Linked to Key Skills Policy</p>
Initial Basic Skills Assessment IBSA	IBSA is an assessment tool, linked to the adult literacy and numeracy standards, to ascertain which level of literacy and numeracy a learner is at.
Diagnostic Assessment for literacy and numeracy	Each of the levels of literacy and numeracy is broken down into skills and knowledge necessary for achievement of the standards. A diagnostic test is carried out one level above the IBSA result, to show which skills the learner already has and those they need to work on to improve their literacy and numeracy.
Dyslexia Assessments	<p>These are a range of psychometric tests which look at a range of strengths and weaknesses within the cognitive profile. These tests will show if a learner has specific difficulties with language processing, (i.e. dyslexia – a difficulty with words) and would need specialist tuition.</p> <p>These can only be administered by specialist teachers.</p> <p>Dyscalculia (severe difficulties in processing number) and dyspraxia (difficulty in motor integration and communication), are linked to the dyslexic spectrum.</p>

Special arrangements for exams	These assessments are carried out to ensure that learners who have difficulties in literacy, but are competent in terms of their theoretical and practical knowledge, are not disadvantaged by their lack of literacy skills in examinations.
Assistive technology	<p>A range of technical aids or equipment that can help learners to become independent.</p> <p>Jaws and Lunar: screen reader and print enlarger programmes to help visually impaired / blind learners access computer programmes</p> <p>TextHelp read and write: an enhanced spellchecker with speech facilities to aid learners who have difficulty with reading or spelling</p> <p>Experts in this field are John Picton and his team; they can be found in F7, and will be happy to discuss any needs you may have</p>