



ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT

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OVERVIEW OF ALS

Colchester Institute is committed to inclusive learning and widening participation; the college also take its responsibilities under the Equality Act very seriously. This means that all applicants and students 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 complete their programme of study successfully.

Additional Learning Support (ALS) includes any activity providing direct support to an individual student over and above that provided in a standard Study Programme, and which leads to achievement of their qualifications and learning goals. The need may arise from a learning difficulty or disability, or from English, maths, or language support requirements.

Colchester Institute strives to meet ALS needs on an individual basis; as assessment will be undertaken by the staff of the ALS Team and other members of the Student Services and Support department in liaison with course leaders and, where appropriate, parents and external agencies.

WHAT CONSTITUTES LEARNING SUPPORT?

The Additional Learning Support Team (ALS) can provide access to:

- In-class support or 1:1 support.
- Specialist equipment to support identified learners
- Note taking, interpreting and signing support for deaf or hearing impaired learners
- Support for those who have a medical condition that qualifies for a learning support plan
- Tutors for learners with specific learning difficulties
- Exam Concession arrangements
- Transition support from students from school to college
- 1:1 study skills support for HE learners who have applied through the DSA process
- Mentors and Practical Assistants for HE learners who have applied through the DSA process
- Group study skills support for HE learners without DSA (through the HE Ops team)

FUNDING FOR LEARNING SUPPORT

ALS for students with an identified ALS need (16-18, or 19-25 with an LDA) is automatically funded by the EFA, provided the student is on a full Study Programme.

Students on SFA funded courses (19+ and Apprentices) receive support to the value of £150 per month. A top-up can be applied for if their support needs are greater.

ALS funding is available for students aged 24+ on level 3 or level 4 courses, provided they have been awarded a 24+ Advanced Learning Loan; an assessment will be made and support implemented as deemed appropriate and within the limit of the funds available.

Additional funding may be claimed from Essex County Council for EFA funded students, where Colchester Institute provides ALS that will cost over £6000 to put in place – these are High Needs Students (HNS).

No funding for ALS is available for full-cost courses.

Appendix 2 shows the process followed for HN Students through application and enrolment.

IDENTIFYING SUPPORT NEEDS

The ALS Team screens all full time applications to mainstream courses where a disability or learning difficulty is declared to see whether ALS might be appropriate. If so, a member of the ALS team will carry out an assessment and decide what ALS is required. External agencies and parents will be involved where required. Where college applicants are attending school, the Schools Transition Officer requests information from schools about their previous support needs.

A copy of the ALS assessment will be put in the student's file. If an applicant has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an EHCP, EBS will be flagged to let the ALS team know of the progress of the application. Applicants will be supported by the ALS team at interview and at any other assessment activity where appropriate. All records of disabilities declared at application stage will be entered onto EBS by Admissions. A colour code system is used on the front of the Admissions wallet for each student:

- Red – ALS need
- Green – medical condition
- Yellow – Statement of Special Educational Needs, LDA or EHCP
- Blue – support required at interview

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

Admissions

- Give the ALS team access to applicant information on application forms where a learning difficulty or disability has been declared
- Organise an interview and communicate details to the ALS team where it is indicated that the student will require support
- Notify the ALS team of any changes to an application flagged on EBS as having a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health and Care Plan

Additional Learning Support Team

- Interview those with significant needs applying to mainstream courses
- Keep records of students identified as needing ALS
- Organise appropriate transition arrangements for students with complex needs
- Ensure support is in place at the start of a student's course
- Notify Area Heads and Course Leaders at the start of the academic year of all students on their courses requiring ALS by recording information on ProMonitor
- Ensure ProMonitor records are kept up-to-date with regard to ALS matters
- Track students with Education Health and Care Plans, High Needs and Considerable Needs through termly reviews

Course Leaders

- Refer to information from the ALS Team/in student files and on ProMonitor about the ALS needs of students in their groups and make adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment as necessary.
- Use GCSE results to set relevant SMART targets, take appropriate action, and monitor progress against needs
- Complete an ALS Tutor Referral Form (available from the ALS portal site) where a student shows a previously undeclared need for support later in the course; to submit it to the ALS Team with the required evidence and commentary.
- Work with ALS assigned to students by sharing ILP targets and contributing to ALS paperwork; to use LSPs effectively in classes and to include ALS staff in planning.

IMPLEMENTATION OF SUPPORT

It is the responsibility of both the ALS Team and Course Teams to check their records, student files and ProMonitor to ensure that students needing support are identified and given an early tutorial and support where appropriate.

Regular contact is made between ALS staff and course teams throughout the year. The ALS Team aims to contact course areas by the end of week 1 to explain what support is arranged for each student with High and Considerable need. By the end of week 3, the ALS Team and SEND Specialist aim to meet with the Area Head and members of the course team to ensure the support in place is satisfactory. Reviews are carried out half-terminly throughout the year. The Information and Assessment Team are informed immediately of any changes to a student's support.

Additionally, the ALS Team will:

- Match all High Needs Students and students with Considerable Need to a named member of ALS staff to support them in-class and around college
- Provide LSP support for each level 1, English, and maths class, and to support Stepping Up courses where possible
- Ensure hover support is available as required by all other students assessed for ALS
- Arrange the supply of assistive technology where a student is considered to have an ALS need that can be met in this way
- Take receipt of Tutor Referral Forms and arrange exam assessments
- Arrange an initial meeting with a specialist tutor for a dyslexia assessment and to refer students for additional specialist tutor support as needed

MONITORING ADDITIONAL LEARNING SUPPORT

Each term the amount of learning support across the college is monitored to ensure that correct funding claims can be made and subsequently audited.

ALS provision on mainstream courses is monitored through termly progress reports completed by LSPs on ProMonitor. Learning support on Learning for Living and Work courses is tracked through routine and regular target-setting and ILPs as part of the course activity and in conjunction with course leaders. Where possible, LSPs will be part of course teams and included in team meetings, progress reviews, etc.

Students' and tutors' views around ALS provision are gathered to ensure any such provision is meeting the needs of the student as part of the termly review process. Achievement data is monitored to track achievement in relation to achievement in the college as a whole. Course Leaders should report through course reviews and SARs the impact of ALS on student achievement; the HNS element of the college SAR will reflect on allocation of funding, deployment of provision, comparative retention and achievement, and the effective use of resources and technology.

EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

Exam Concessions are granted to students who have a learning difficulty or disability - such as dyslexia or a hearing impairment - or whose English skills are considerably below the standard of their practical skills and understanding. Students without such a learning difficulty or disability who have low English skills as well as a poor understanding of the concepts and theory of the course are not eligible for Exam Concessions. Students are not required to disclose a learning difficulty or disability to their tutor but it is in their interest to inform someone in the ALS Team or Exams if they think they will need support in an exam.

The Course Tutor is responsible for requesting arrangements for exams, but any tutor entering students for exams will need to take responsibility for checking with course tutors which students may require special arrangements, and then follow the procedure below.

Even if information about a student's prior Exam Concessions is available, this is not enough to provide evidence for exams at Colchester Institute. Specialist assessments need to be carried out by appropriately qualified staff within the ALS team, and these are arranged based on observed support needs based on a student's normal way of working. The course tutor should fill out the referral form. Referring tutors must provide a commentary on the learner's observed support needs and a sample of the learner's handwritten work.

Exam board regulations demand that exam concessions match the learner's "normal way of working" in class. Both the commentary and sample are essential for the requirement to "paint a picture of needs" (Joint Council for Qualifications Regulations). Tutors should give brief but specific examples of when learners have experienced difficulty with reading, writing/hand writing or needed extra time on specific tasks with support measures used.

ALS will contact the student to offer them an appointment to see someone, either for support to begin, an Exam Concessions test to be done, or to seek further information. If exam arrangements are agreed tutors should inform the exams department in the usual manner prior to exam board deadlines.

APPENDIX 1: LEARNING SUPPORT PROCESSES

If an FE applicant discloses an ALS need, it is recorded on EBS and in the student's file. Schools are contacted by the Schools Transition Officer to be asked to provide more detail about these applicants where relevant.

Disclosed information is reviewed by the ALS Team and recorded in Spirals. A member of the ALS team carries out a generic interview and initial ALS assessment with each applicant with a significant need.

A record of declared students is kept within ALS and folders are created for each student who will be eligible for ALS support. Details of the ALS interview are recorded in the student's file and should be viewed by course teams before interview. LSPs will view these folders to ensure they provide the best support to students in their role.

LSPs are allocated to students, with High Needs students being matched to LSPs, followed by Considerable Need and Hover support. Where students receive 1:1 support, the LSP follows the student not the group. The course leader views the content of the student file to gain necessary information.

For all students with High and Considerable Needs a meeting takes place between the Assistant Area Head, any of the course team they require to attend, the relevant ALS Faculty Co-ordinator and the SEND Specialist. This meeting serves to explain the needs of these students to the course team, make sure that the AAH is aware of this information in case of changes to the course team, and provide support to enable the course team to teach in the most effective way.

LSP allocated to student for in-class support.

Student receives 1:1 support from a specialist learning support tutor.

Student supported in a group within a classroom setting

If an ALS need is recognised on-course, the tutor refers the case to ALS using the Tutor Referral form available on the ALS portal site. The ALS team considers the appropriate support level. This will typically start with an assessment for Exam Concessions.

ARRANGING EXAM CONCESSIONS

ALS refers a student to the Assessor based on a declaration at application.

A Specialist Learning Support Tutor makes a referral

A Tutor refers a student to ALS for an assessment using the process on the portal.

The Exam Concessions assessor informs the Course Leader and ALS Team of the outcome. The Course Leader passes information to the whole Course Team.

The Tutor/Course Leader registers all students with exams and informs them of the students who have been assessed as needing exam concession arrangements each time an exam entry is made.

APPENDIX 2: HIGH NEEDS STUDENTS

= ECC CONTRACTUAL PROCESS

