



Guide for Prospective and Current Academy Students with Disabilities and Specific Learning Difficulties

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Registered Charity No. 310007



University
of London

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Welcome

The Royal Academy of Music prides itself on being an inclusive environment in which we welcome disabled students, staff and visitors. We are committed to providing services of the highest standard within the resources available for all existing and potential users of our services. Quality and equality are core values which underpin all our activities. We believe that promoting equality enriches the teaching and learning environment and ensures we act fairly and responsively.

The Academy offers a wide range of support for students who have disabilities and specific learning difficulties. This includes exam arrangements and specialist tuition, so that all students can participate fully in the life of the Academy. We are pleased to be able to offer to meet with every student individually to discuss their particular needs.

This guide explains the services the Academy offers and how students can access them. We hope that you find it useful.

This guide can be made available in Braille and large print on request.

You can download a copy as a word or PDF document from the Academy's website at www.ram.ac.uk

Introduction

What is meant by the term 'disability'?

The term 'disability' covers a wide range of impairments and conditions including:

- Specific learning difficulties, such as Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Asperger Syndrome and Autism
- Sensory impairments, such as visual and hearing impairments
- Mobility impairments
- Long term health conditions, such as diabetes
- Ongoing medical conditions, such as multiple sclerosis
- A diagnosis of HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis
- Long term mental health conditions

According to the Equality Act 2010 a person is disabled if she or he:

“has a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities” Equality Act(S6(1)).

The social model of disability

The Academy, applies the social model to its understanding of disability. The social model illustrates how people are disabled by the restrictions that exist within society rather than by their impairment or condition. The social model provides a framework that focuses on removing barriers and creating a more inclusive environment. By using the social model, the Academy strives to provide an inclusive environment, for students, staff and visitors who use Academy facilities.

Disclosure and confidentiality

If you are already a student or are planning to come to the Academy and would like to discuss any issues relating to disability, you are welcome to contact the Disability Advisor, Judy Fink (j.fink@ram.ac.uk) and, when enrolled, your Programme Tutor.

Please contact us as early as possible so that appropriate support can be agreed and coordinated. Information disclosed to the Academy by students is treated in confidence. Any disclosure required, for example to put arrangements in place will be discussed and agreed with you.

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Applying to the Academy

Anyone is welcome to apply to the Academy. Students are recruited on the basis of their musical abilities and potential. For details of our courses and facilities, please see our prospectus which is available at www.ram.ac.uk or via the Registry at the Royal Academy of Music, Marylebone Road, London NW1 5HT Tel: 020 7873 3357.

The Academy is committed to ensuring that candidates with disabilities and specific learning difficulties are not disadvantaged by the admissions or audition process.

Open days

If you need information on disability access when attending an open day please contact the departmental administrator first, who may refer the query to the Disability Advisor where appropriate. Access information for visitors is available on www.ram.ac.uk

Application

When applying, you can use the CUKAS on-line form to notify the Admissions Officer of any requirements you might have due to disability. You can also contact the Admissions officer; admissions@ram.ac.uk or the Disability Advisor; disability@ram.ac.uk

Auditions

Any disability related requirements will be agreed prior to audition. For example, a candidate with dyslexia will be allowed 25% extra time to complete their paperwork test. Contacts are as above,

Specific audition requirements can be found on the individual departmental pages of the prospectus and website.

Offer

All offers will be posted from the Academy before Christmas.

Taking up a place at the Academy

If you tell us about a disability when you apply, the Disability Advisor will contact you by email before you arrive at the Academy and offer you an appointment to discuss any support/ access requirements. We will arrange the meeting as early as possible, so that any necessary arrangements can be put in place early in the term.

If you have not disclosed a disability at application but would like to discuss any issues relating to a disability, you are welcome to contact the Disability Advisor, or your Programme Tutor when you arrive at the Academy or at any point during your course.

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Support and Advice during your Course

Support staff

Programme Tutors have overall responsibility for monitoring students' progress and for their general pastoral care. They also assist and guide students in all areas of their curriculum, including performance and academic options, timetabling and any other aspect of a students' programme of study. Each student is allocated a particular tutor when they enrol.

The Disability Advisor offers practical help and advice that may be needed due to disability or a specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia or dyspraxia. With the student's consent, the Disability Advisor works alongside the Programme Tutors and the Additional Support Tutor to support each student's individual needs.

The Counsellor is easily accessible and provides strictly confidential emotional support, no matter how large or small the problem or difficulty.

Initial screening, assessment or diagnosis

If you have a disability or think you may have, you can speak to your Programme Tutor or the Disability Advisor. If you think you may have dyslexia or dyspraxia, either the Disability Advisor or the Additional Support tutor will carry out an initial screening. Depending on the outcome, you may be referred for a formal diagnostic assessment. (See page 10 for further information).

The Disability Advisor can discuss the appropriate process of diagnosis and assessment for students with other disabilities.

If you are a new student, please contact the Disability Advisor before you start your course or as soon as possible after you arrive at the Academy so any arrangements can be put in place in good time.

Personal Learning Plan (PLP) scheme

The PLP scheme has been developed to coordinate and document any additional requirements due to a disability or specific learning difficulty. It is an agreement between the student and the Academy: for the Academy to provide appropriate support, referred to as 'reasonable adjustments', and for the student to accept responsibility for making the most of support offered.

Before a PLP can be issued, you will need appropriate evidence of disability. This is a diagnostic assessment carried out after the age of 16, by a suitably qualified psychologist in the case of specific learning difficulties, or evidence from a medical practitioner for other disabilities.

A meeting with you, the Disability Advisor and any other relevant staff will be arranged to discuss what arrangements need to be made. At this meeting issues of confidentiality, disclosure and dissemination of information will be discussed and agreed. A Personal Learning Plan (PLP) will be put in place if appropriate.

Common reasonable adjustments include:

- Extra time in written exams (usually 25% extra)
- Extra time in aural and sight-reading tests
- Use of laptop in exams
- Separate room for exams
- Enlarged scripts
- Coloured paper scripts

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Exams at King's College London

The Academy has an arrangement with King's College London to enable Academy students to take some of their courses. Academy students wishing to apply for exam arrangements for King's College London course exams must apply directly to King's College using their normal procedure. Information regarding their procedures can be found at: www.kcl.ac.uk/about/structure/admin/acservices/examinations/sea/

Please check the deadline for registering for exam arrangements and any requirement for disability related arrangements at KCL on the above website at the beginning of each term.

Emotional support

Confidential emotional and psychological support is available via the Counsellor, Dani Singer, who is also the Student Support Co-ordinator.

Contact details: d.singer@ram.ac.uk, Tel: 020 7873 7303

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Dyslexia and dyspraxia

Diagnostic assessment

Students who have not been previously diagnosed or who need an updated assessment (post 16 years), can be referred to a qualified psychologist. The process takes about two and a half hours. It may be possible for a student to apply to the Academy to contribute to the cost. Students are advised to contact the Disability Advisor for further information.

Additional learning support tutorials

For students with specific learning difficulties we offer in-house additional support with Paula Bishop-Liebler, a qualified dyslexia teacher and a specialist in music and dyslexia. Paula's role is to teach students strategies for *how* to tackle their work rather than *what* to learn, which is the subject-specific teacher's role. Support typically consists of learning strategies such as: how to research, take notes, organise time, spell, punctuate, write clearly, organise and structure written work and read effectively for different purposes.

As well as 'academic work' strategies, Paula works with musicians to develop music learning strategies to support the aspects of musical learning that are often difficult for musicians with dyslexia or dyspraxia, such as rhythmical accuracy.

This service is available to students who have been allocated funding for specialist tuition through their Disabled Student Allowance (DSA).

The Academy may also be able to assist with the provision of this tuition for students who are not eligible to apply for DSA, such as international students. This should be discussed with the Disability Advisor.

Dyslexia/dyspraxia student support group

If you are interested in being part of a group to provide an opportunity for students to discuss their experiences as dyslexic/dyspraxic musicians and to support each other, please contact either the Disability Advisor, Judy Fink, at j.fink@ram.ac.uk or the Additional Support Tutor, Paula Bishop-Liebler, at p.bishop@ram.ac.uk. You can also contact us using, disability@ram.ac.uk

Specialist IT equipment

The Academy has specialist software, **Inspirations and Read&Write**, to support dyslexic and dyspraxic students whilst at the Academy. This software can be found on computers in the Main Building, York Gate computer rooms and the library.

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Visual Impairment

Please contact the Disability Advisor to discuss access requirements.

The Academy has links with the organisation *Musicians in Focus*, run by Jackie Clifton. Jackie offers specialist training and support to enhance access for blind/visually impaired musicians. The Academy can help organise training to take place before a student starts their course in order that they can begin their studies with confidence.

Support for UK students can often be funded through the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). Please see page 16 for further information about DSA.

For students not eligible for DSA, funding options can be discussed with the Disability Advisor.

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Monitoring and Developing Provision for Students with Disabilities

The Academy is committed to continuing to develop our services for disabled people and promoting disability equality. Our Equality Scheme, Primary Equality Objectives and Action Plan can be found on the Academy website www.ram.ac.uk/equalities or <https://ram.air.ac.uk> under the Equality page, and in hard copy from the Disability Advisor.

Staff-Student Liaison Committee

Disability issues are overseen by the Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC), which is chaired by Dr Chris Atkinson, one of the Undergraduate Programme Tutors. All areas of student support and welfare are represented on this committee, which reports to the Standing Committee of the Academic Board.

Student Union

The RAM Students' Union is an independent student body, which exists to represent the interests of students at every level in the Academy. The Union can also provide support for students on a one-to-one basis.

A student can contact the President or the Welfare and Disability Officer on 020 7873 7337, email: ramsu@ram.ac.uk, or find them in the Students' Union Office (LG18) next to the Student Common Room.

University of London Union (ULU)

RAMSU is affiliated to ULU so its members have access to all ULU service provision.

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Other Useful Information

Access to our buildings

There are six steps with handrails to the main entrance. Wheelchair (step-free) access to the Academy's main building and the York Gate building is via a ramp at the side entrance of the York Gate building. This is located approximately 100 metres to the left of the Academy's main entrance and is adjacent to the David Josefowitz Recital Hall. It is signposted from the York Gate building front entrance. The ramped entrance has a remote entry system via voice intercom.

Once inside the building, via this entrance, there is access to all areas of York Gate, including accessible toilets, via the lift. The lift also provides access to the basement, from which there is access to the Main Building, as follows:

An enclosed platform lift connects the basement of York Gate and the basement area of the Main Building. This gives access to the David Josefowitz Recital Hall, and the basement area of the Main Building including the restaurant and bar. From here, there is lift to all floors at the front of the Main Building.

Prospective students who would like to arrange to visit the Academy for a tour of the premises and to discuss access arrangements are welcome to do so. Please contact disability@ram.ac.uk to arrange an appointment.

Emergency evacuation

Disabled refuge areas are provided in the York Gate Building and in the event of an evacuation of the building there is a dedicated marshal to check the refuges and take whatever action is necessary to ensure that people are taken safely out of the building. If appropriate a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) will be set up for individual students. For further information contact: safetyadvisor@ram.ac.uk

Health and Safety

If you have any concerns about Health and Safety or emergency evacuation please contact either the Safety Advisor or the Disability Advisor.

Accommodation

The Academy has access to a wide range of accommodation, including hostel space in the University of London. Please see the University of London's accommodation office website, www.housing.lon.ac.uk.

If you would like to discuss any access issues or disability related arrangements please contact:

Estates Manager: p.smith@ram.ac.uk

Disability Advisor: disability@ram.ac.uk

International Students' House

If notified in advance of a disabled student's accommodation requirements the Estates Manager, Pete Smith, can assist in arranging accommodation at the International Students' House (ISH) which is within easy walking distance of the Academy.

For further information, please contact the Estates Manager's Assistant phone 020 7873 7386 or email estates@ram.ac.uk

Transport

Driving and Parking in Central London

Within the City of Westminster, Blue Badge Holders can park free of charge in designated Disabled parking bays. At meters or 'pay and display' parking, payment is necessary but Blue Badge Holders are entitled to one hour extra parking for free. Blue Badges must be displayed at all times whilst parking. For more information about Blue Badges, visit:

www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/MotoringAndTransport/DG_4001061

The City of Westminster also offers a 'White Badge' scheme, which has similar application criteria as the Blue Badge. The White Badge enables holders to park without time restriction in residential bays and pay and display street bays in Westminster, free of charge. Further information is available at:

<http://www.westminster.gov.uk/services/transportandstreets/parking/disabledparking/nonres/>

Congestion Charging

Holders of a Blue Badge are eligible for a 100% discount from London's daily congestion charge, once they have registered for a one-off fee. Badge Holders can register up to two vehicles they normally use. Please note that the Badge Holder does not have to own the vehicle. The discount applies to the Badge Holder not the vehicle. For more information visit www.cclondon.com or phone London Transport on 0845 900 1234.

Public transport

There is a slip road in front of the Main Building where taxis can safely drop off disabled people. Buses that pass by the front of the Academy include the 18, 27, 30 and 205. All of these bus routes are wheelchair accessible. They all have a low floor access and ramp, see:

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/gettingaround/transportaccessibility/1171.aspx>

Financial Help for Disability Support

Disabled Students Allowance

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is a government grant which helps pay extra costs that arise due to disability when studying at higher education or postgraduate level. It is available to home-fee and EU students who study full time, and who satisfy the 'ordinary residence' requirements of being in the UK for 3 years, or alternatively students who fulfil the EEA Migrant Worker criteria. (See page 16 or contact details)

DSA is not means-tested. Students can receive DSA even if they do not qualify for help with fees or the means-tested element of the student loan.

Students can also apply for DSA if they have studied a course at the same level before, but are advised to check their fee situation with Registry.

There are three parts to DSA:

- **Specialist Equipment Allowance** pays for equipment such as computers and software, digital recorders, specialist furniture (one amount to cover the whole of a course).
- **Non-Medical Helpers' Allowance** pays for specialist tuition (for example for dyslexia), for helpers such as sign language interpreters or readers, note-takers, mobility-enablers. This allowance may be granted to meet such costs for each year of study.
- **General Allowance** pays for extra books or photocopying, extra heating costs, CDs and can also be used towards additional disability related costs for accommodation, such as having an en-suite room. Students can get general allowance to meet these costs for each year of study.

Students can also apply for help with travel expenses if they have additional costs due to disability.

To apply for DSA, students need to contact their student finance agency (see links below), ideally before the start of a course. We suggest applying for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) as early as possible.

Where and how to apply

In order to apply for DSA, students will require evidence of disability. This can be:

- a medical report / letter; *or*
- a dyslexia report which was written after the age of 16.

It will need to be sent to Student Finance England with an application form (DSA1) which can be downloaded from one of the links below.

If this evidence is accepted, Student Finance England will usually ask students to have a 'Needs Assessment', paid for as part of DSA. The Needs Assessment report will set out the support needed under the categories above.

New students need to apply for DSA to one of the following agencies depending on where they live:

- in England – Student Finance England:
www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance
- in Wales – Student Finance Wales:
www.studentfinancewales.co.uk
- in Northern Ireland – Student Finance NI:
www.studentfinancenir.co.uk
- in Scotland – the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS):
www.student-support-saas.gov.uk

Further Information

The Government's Department for Business, Innovation, & Skills (BIS) booklet '**Bridging the Gap**' is a helpful booklet about DSA.

You can download 'Bridging the Gap' at:

http://www.sfengland.slc.co.uk/media/561707/sfe_btgb_1314_d.pdf

You can also get information on how to apply for DSA from Student Finance England (or equivalent in Scotland or Northern Ireland).

Please also contact the Disability Advisor at the Academy for further help, email: disability@ram.ac.uk

Hardship Fund

Before applying for DSA it may be necessary for students to have a diagnostic assessment. It may be possible for a student to apply to the Hardship Fund to contribute to the cost of this. Hardship Funds are available through the Academy. Students are advised to contact the Disability Advisor for further information.

International students

International students are not eligible to apply for DSA but are advised to contact the Disability Advisor on 020 7873 7431 or email disability@ram.ac.uk regarding assistance in finding alternative funding opportunities for disability related expenditure.

Useful contacts and websites

General Disability Information

Office for Disability Issues

Government website containing news and information on a wide range of disability issues.

Web: <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/>

SKILL

Website presence only - information on training, education and employment for disabled people

Web: www.skill.org.uk

Disability and the Arts

Artsline

Provides information for disabled people on arts in London

Tel: 020 7388 2227

Web: www.artsline.org.uk

Sound Sense

National Music and Disability Information Service

Tel: 01449 673 990
(9am – 5pm Mon – Friday)

Web: www.soundsense.org

The London Regional Arts Council

Offers advice and support regarding funding for artists

Tel: 020 7608 6100

Textphone: 020 7608 4101

Web: www.artscouncil.org.uk

Disability Specific Organisations

Dyslexia Teaching Centre

Dyslexia Teaching Centre
23 Kensington Square
London W8 5HN

Tel: 020 7361 4790

Email: info@dyslexiateachingcentre.co.uk

Web: <http://www.dyslexiateachingcentre.co.uk/>

Arts Dyslexia Trust

Tel: 01233 811 960

Email: adt@artsdyslexia.org

Web: <http://artsdyslexia.org/>

British Dyslexia Association (BDA)

Tel: 0845 251 9002

Email: helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk

Web: <http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/>

Dyslexia Action

(formerly the Dyslexia Institute)

Tel: 020 7730 8890

Email: london@dyslexiaaction.org.uk

The Dyspraxia Foundation

Tel. Helpline: 01462 454 986
(10 am - 1 pm) Mon - Fri

Web: www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

The National Autistic Society

Tel: Helpline 0845 070 4004

Web: www.autism.org.uk

British Stammering Association

Tel: 020 8983 1003

Helpline 0845 603 2001

Email: mail@stammering.org

Web: www.stammering.org

Mind

National Charity offering advice about mental health issues

Tel: 0845 7660163

Web: www.mind.org.uk

Students Against Depression

Web: www.studentdepression.org

Action on Hearing Loss (previously RNID)

Tel: 0808 808 0123

Textphone: 0808 808 9000

Email: information@actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Web: <http://www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/>

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

Tel: 020 7388 1266

0845 766 9999

(9-5 Monday to Friday)

Web: www.rnib.org.uk

Musicians in Focus (Visually Impaired)

Tel: 029 2023 1113

Email: jackie@musiciansinfocus.org

Web: www.inclusionthroughmedia.org/index.php?id=40

Medical

Paddington Green Health Centre

Address: 4 Princess Louise Close
(off Church Street)
W2 1LQ

Tel: 020 7887 1600

Web: www.paddingtongreenhc.nhs.uk

British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM)

Helpline: 020 7404 8444 (London)

0845 602 0235 (elsewhere)

Admin: 020 7404 3222

Web: www.bapam.org.uk

Government Funding Agencies

Student Finance England

Tel: 0845 300 5090

Web: www.direct.gov.uk/studentfinance

Student Finance Northern Ireland

Tel: 0845 600 0662

Web: www.studentfinancenir.co.uk

Student Finance Wales

Tel: 0845 6028 845

Web: www.studentfinancewales.co.uk

Student Awards Agency for Scotland

Tel: 0300 300 3135(then option 6)

Web: www.saas.gov.uk

Equality and Human Rights Commission

A guide for disabled students and learners. Part 4 of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 – Post-16.

Available from:

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/your-rights/disability/disability-in-education/disabled-students-and-learners-in-post-16-education/>