



**QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST**

**DISABILITY ACTION PLAN
Annual Progress Report
2019-2020**

PART B - Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended)

Annual Progress Report (2019-2020)

1. Number of action measures for this reporting period that have been:

39

Fully achieved

1

Partially achieved

4

Not achieved

Please note throughout this report where “disability” is mentioned, this refers to both disabilities and long-term medical conditions

2. Please outline below details on all actions that have been fully achieved in the reporting period.

2 (a) Please highlight what **public life measures** have been achieved to encourage disabled people to participate in public life at National, Regional and Local levels:

Local level for all items	Public Life Action Measures	Outputs ⁱ	Outcomes / Impact ⁱⁱ
2	To mainstream the disability duties into all decisions and activities	To review the Code of Practice for Disability Support and ensure the University is meeting its statutory and anticipatory duties in respect of students with disabilities and long-term health conditions	Code of Practice has been reviewed and is available on the Disability Services website for staff, and Queen’s Online under Supporting Students documents.
3	To mainstream the disability duties into all decisions and activities	To provide our Section 75 Annual Progress Report to Standing Committee and to the	Fully achieved.

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		Equality Commission on the actions taken under this plan	
4	To mainstream the disability duties into all decisions and activities	To review methods and means of communication of Individual Student Support Agreements (ISSAs) to students	The process for sharing ISSAs with students has been streamlined with support from IS. A new SharePoint site has been created by Student Disability and Wellbeing Services to securely communicate ISSAs to students in a timely manner.
5	To mainstream the disability duties into all decisions and activities	To ensure Disability Services Registration and Assessment meetings occur in a timely manner	Disability Services have significantly reviewed the process for new student registration appointments. The waiting time for an assessment appointment in Sept 2020 was maximum 3 weeks. This is a significant reduction to previous years.
6	To mainstream the disability duties into all decisions and activities	To create guidance on special examination arrangements and supports for short term impairments or any changes to normal examination processes	Disability Services reviewed the process for implementing Special Examination Arrangements and Supports for students with a short-term impairment. The revised process and supporting documentation was clearly communicated to Schools and Examinations Service to ensure understanding.
7	To mainstream the disability duties into all decisions and activities	To provide support and resources to enable staff to embed Universal Design for Learning (UDL) across all teaching programmes	Supporting staff to embed UDL is a continuing responsibility and is part of our objectives and this is done through designing and developing resources, through UDL workshops and school away days. For more information on the resources available please click here .
8	To mainstream the disability duties into all decisions and activities	To review “Work Placement Policy” to ensure inclusion and accessibility are central tenets as students with disabilities and long-term	A review was undertaken and the revised work based and placement learning , accessible on the DASA webpages. The policy specifically outlines the responsibilities of each

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		conditions face greater barriers to accessing work related learning opportunities	member of staff to ensure that inclusion and accessibility are central considerations for work placements.
9	To mainstream the disability duties into all decisions and activities	To implement the Institutional Mental Health Framework (OMNI) and to engage with our stakeholders on key deliverables	<p>The OMNI Movement, launched in February 2019, helped to reinvigorate the conversation at a local level on mental health and wellbeing for students and staff.</p> <p>Launched by the Students' Union, and supported by the Vice-Chancellor, the MH framework has been engaging with key stakeholders throughout the reporting period.</p> <p>Mental Health First Aid Training for staff, a key tenet and effective use of branding is a large part of the success of year 1 initiatives.</p> <p>During the first year, a student survey on mental health was undertaken and results reported to inform key actions, Mental Health First Aid Training for staff was delivered resulting in 60 trained MH First Aiders throughout campus.</p> <p>The University will continue to engage with staff and students and the Student's Union will remain a key partner in the development of the Healthy Campus Framework and actions going forward.</p>
11	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To include a specific welcoming statement encouraging persons with a disability to apply for roles where there is an identified issue of under-representation	The University continues to include a specific welcoming statement encouraging persons with a disability to apply for roles where there is an identified under representation.

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			<p>An example of such a welcoming statement can be found here: “The University is committed to equality of opportunity and welcomes applications from all.</p> <p>However, our employment monitoring data tells us that individuals from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, people with a disability and those who identify as LGBT+ are currently under-represented at the University. As such, we particularly welcome applications from these individuals.”</p>
12	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To continue to provide applicants with an opportunity to indicate any reasonable adjustments which may be required to assist them during the recruitment process	<p>Applicants are provided with the opportunity to indicate any reasonable adjustments at any stage of the recruitment process.</p> <p>Candidates are asked to contact the Recruitment team if they require any adjustments which may assist them during the recruitment process.</p>
14	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To support and deliver outreach initiatives, involving external stakeholders where appropriate, aimed at supporting staff with a disability/long term condition	<p>Through membership of Employers for Disability NI (EFDNI) we forward on any useful information received to colleagues with specific conditions.</p> <p>We continue to deliver, in partnership with EFDNI, autism awareness training sessions to support awareness and support for those staff with a disability/long term condition.</p> <p>We have also created a Staff Disability Network to provide support for those staff with a disability/long term condition.</p>
15	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To monitor the number of applicants with a disability applying to study at the University	<p>Disability Services continue to link with Admissions and Access Service, to monitor and identify applicants to the University who have disclosed a disability.</p> <p>Information on the range of supports available and how to access these services was subsequently communicated to students.</p>

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<p>16</p>	<p>To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life</p>	<p>To improve accessibility at Open Days, events, etc.</p>	<p>Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, Open Days did not take place on-campus. Virtual Open Days ran in a very successful way with high-profile communications to ensure information was accessible and well-promoted.</p> <p>Sessions were recorded to allow prospective students to watch afterwards.</p> <p>Live chat features were available, from current students and staff.</p> <p>Student Disability & Wellbeing ran a number of webinar sessions outlining supports available at Queen’s for those with a disability and/or long-term condition.</p> <p>Service user testimonies were also provided in specific videos produced by the University’s Strategic Marketing & Communications team.</p> <p>For other on-campus and virtual events, the upgrade of the “What’s on at Queen’s?” scheme has enhanced the overall accessibility of events for students, staff, and members of the public. Accessibility information can be included, as well as links to AccessAble (providing venue accessibility information), and contact information for attendees who may have specific queries or access requirements.</p>
<p>17</p>	<p>To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life</p>	<p>To continue to meet the accommodation needs of disabled students whilst pursuing study at Queen’s University</p>	<p>Student Accommodation achieved all requirements for any student who applied and stayed in accommodation in 19/20.</p> <p>Each student who advises they have a disability or long term condition is contacted by a member of the Accommodation</p>

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			team (if their disability or long term condition and any reasonable adjustments are relevant) to determine their own individual requirements so we can meet their needs.
19	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To create opportunities for people with disabilities through providing access to programmes and facilities in order to encourage participation in physical activity	<p>Queen’s Sport continues to create opportunities for people with disabilities through providing access to programme and facilities to encourage participation in physical activity. For example by ensuring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The promotion and delivery of inclusive activity classes for people of all abilities; and • That all sporting facilities are accessible to all staff, students and the wider community.
21	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To use accessible venues for development and alumni relations events where possible	<p>When organising events, alternative needs are considered, possible limitations identified, and accessibility or special requirements are accommodated where possible. For example, ensuring that access is possible for those with limited mobility, ensuring hearing loops are provided and working guide dogs are allowed to attend.</p> <p>If we are arranging tours of campus we will identify the limitations or special requirements of visitors in advance and adjust tours to suit.</p> <p>Guests are asked to identify any special requirements on booking forms to ensure that support can be provided as needed and we endeavour to support the alumni to the best of our ability.</p> <p>All internal venues are managed by Eventus Department who have ensured suitability for the needs of all users.</p>

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22	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To ensure Fresher’s Fairs are more accessible for current students with sensory or mobility issues	<p>In 2019 the Freshers’ Fair layout was adjusted to reduce the number of stalls overall and to create wider walkways / remove pinch points to improve physical accessibility.</p> <p>In 2020 the Freshers’ Fair was held entirely online following the Covid-19 pandemic and related restrictions. As such, Clubs and Societies’ online presence enhanced to allow for online sign-ups at any time during the year.</p> <p>In addition, the upgrade of the “What’s on at Queen’s?” scheme has enhanced the overall accessibility of events including the Freshers’ Fair.</p>
25	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To include a welcoming statement in all advertisements and promotional materials encouraging students with a disability to nominate themselves for elected positions, particularly elections to the Executive Management Committee, and positions within clubs and societies	<p>This information cannot be included on <i>all</i> promotional materials (e.g. social media graphics etc.) as they are graphical in nature. However, the following is included in the core election promotional information on Students’ Union website to which all potential candidates are directed:</p> <p><i>“The Students’ Union aims to be as accessible as possible and we are continuously working to make our elections more accessible. We will make all the reasonable adjustments that we can to make our elections and our roles as accessible le as possible.</i></p> <p><i>Each case will be different and require a personalised approach. If you have any queries contact the <u>Student Voice</u> team at the earliest possible opportunity and we can start working on a tailored support package to meet your requirements.”</i></p>
26	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To ensure that reasonable adjustments are put in place for candidates with a disability	All candidates are advised to contact Student Voice if they require reasonable adjustments and all nomination forms

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		during elections for sabbatical and non-sabbatical posts	<p>for these posts include sections for candidates to highlight any potential accessibility requirements.</p> <p>Any candidate that completes this section of the form is contacted personally to identify support requirements and potential reasonable adjustments. Individual support plans are then put in place.</p>
27	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To ensure representation of staff members and students with a disability on the University's Disability Forum	Both staff members and students with a disability are represented on the University's Disability Forum. In addition, representatives from the newly formed Staff Disability Network will attend future forum meetings.
28	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To encourage and support students with a disability to represent the University and the Students' Union at external events or to external organisations	<p>Any Sabbatical Officer, Non-Sabbatical-Officer, Student Councilor, or delegate to a National Union Conference representing the Students' Union will have an accessibility plan in place.</p> <p>Potential requirements are captured during the nomination period and followed up on after election, partnering with the relevant external organisations to identify support needs and how they are addressed.</p> <p>Examples for all of the above in recent years include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of sign-language interpreters at events; • Paying travel / subsistence costs an accompanier to events; • Provision of soft/hard seating for individuals; • Securing accessible hotel accommodation / single room accommodation;

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing large print copies of documentation; and • Providing quiet spaces / rooms for election candidates.
30	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	Train 5 Support Providers as electronic note takers to better meet the needs of students with hearing impairments	<p>A total of five Support Providers achieved the Level 3 OCN qualification in Electronic Note Taking to enable them to provide discreet support to students with hearing losses by live streaming notes to the student's device.</p> <p>The Register of Support Providers at Queen's now has a total of six Electronic Note Takers available to students recommended for this form of one-to-one support.</p>
31	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To produce a video of QUB students with ASD to provide information on how the McClay Library works	<p>'My Library, My Space', a student-led collaborative project between students with ASD, Library Services, Video Production and Disability Services was launched in November 2019. The video is available on the Library webpages here introduces the McClay Library as well as its features.</p> <p>This has proven to be very popular, particularly in the context of Covid-19 to help offer a virtual tour of our world-class library and study facilities.</p>
32	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	Provide a mechanism for accepting block bookings from individual students referred by Disability Services	The facility for individual students to block book study rooms for the entire semester is available to all students referred by Disability Services.
34	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To continue to promote a positive student experience for students with a disability and support available through outreach and recruitment activity	Due to Covid-19, the planned Information session for prospective students in April 2020 did not take place. As an alternative communication tool, Disability Officers delivered a webinar for students and parents. This outlined the full range of supports available to students with a disability

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			<p>and/or long term condition and offered information on the steps to register with the service.</p> <p>Disability Officers facilitated a number of peer led support groups throughout the academic year for students with ASC and epilepsy.</p> <p>The Disability Services website was significantly reviewed in year. This ensured that students and staff have access to clear and up-to-date information on the full range of supports available.</p> <p>Student Disability & Wellbeing Drop-in was extended to run daily from 11am – 3pm to ensure students have access to timely information and supports.</p> <p>A total of three new freelance Needs Assessors and 21 self-employed Support Providers were recruited in 2019/20 to supplement assessment and support resources available to students with disabilities / long-term conditions.</p>
39	To monitor and review progress	To communicate availability and monitor uptake of the Disability Support Fund	<p>The Diversity and Inclusion Unit continue to promote and communicate availability of the Disability Support Fund via internal communications and via the website. Uptake is monitored and reported to the Disability Forum to communicate availability.</p>
40	To monitor and review progress	To monitor the number of persons with a disability in the University's workforce	<p>This action is monitored and reviewed during on an ongoing basis and as part of our statutory monitoring obligations.</p>

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41	To monitor and review progress	To monitor the number of applicants with a disability to vacancies at the University following implementation of the welcoming statement	The People and Culture Directorate continues to monitor and report the number of applicants with a disability to vacancies at the University following implementation of the welcoming statement.
42	To monitor and review progress	To seek student and staff feedback on an annual basis relating to disability support. Maintain satisfaction levels for incoming year	Feedback from staff and students is sought from representatives of the Disability Forum, which meets on a quarterly basis.

2(b) What **training action measures** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Training Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
43	Think Difference Act Differently	Annual Mandatory staff training through e-learning.	84.2% % of staff have completed the training.
	Unconscious Bias training	Mandatory staff training launched in March 2017. Content included on unconscious bias towards those with disabilities.	87.3% % of all staff have completed the package.
	Bullying and Harassment Training	Two workshops (1hr 30 mins) covering the legal framework, examples of bullying, harassment and victimisation; responsibilities of staff and managers; and Support available.	1 workshop took place on 24 October 2019 took place with 29 staff attending. Ad-hoc B&H training has taken place throughout the University's Schools and Directorates during this reporting period.
	Deliver Equality and Diversity training session in induction training for new University staff.	Regular staff induction training module.	The Diversity and Inclusion attend all Staff Welcome events and promote Equality and Diversity and all Equality and diversity mandatory training – Think Difference, Act

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			<p>Differently and Unconscious Bias. BAME and International and LGBT Staff Networks are also present at this event for all new staff.</p> <p>All staff must complete mandatory “Think Difference, Act Differently” Equality and Diversity training online and Unconscious Bias training as part of their induction.</p>
44	Deliver specific training relating to disability awareness in the learning environment as part of the PGCHET.	Regular training module as part of PGCHET	We continue to deliver this training annually as part of the PGCHET.

2(c) What Positive attitudes **action measures** in the area of **Communications** were achieved in this reporting period?

	Communications Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
20	Provide accessible Development and Alumni Services	To continue to ensure that marketing, internationalisation, communications and engagement activity reflect the diversity of our staff and student bodies; and are made available in other formats, including subtitles.	<p>We continue to ensure that marketing, internationalisation, communications and engagement activity reflect the diversity of our staff and student bodies.</p> <p>Accessibility of online versions of documents is enshrined in our equality screening documentation and guidance and all staff are encouraged to ensure resources are available in accessible formats.</p>

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33	Review the University's Communication Strategy to encourage positive attitudes towards disability	To review a range of internal and external communications policies, practices and procedures to ensure that disability is portrayed positively and to identify opportunities to include positive images of disability in University publications, social media and on websites.	We continue to work with colleagues in Marketing, Recruitment, Communications and Internationalisation to ensure that positive images are used.
35	Review the University's Communication Strategy to encourage positive attitudes towards disability	To positively promote the profiles of staff and /or students with a disability demonstrating the contribution they have made to Queens	We continue to work with colleagues in Marketing, Recruitment, Communications and Internationalisation to ensure that images are used which reflect the diversity of our staff and student bodies.
36	Ensure accessibility of the University's website, publications, internal documents and information systems	To ensure that all University publications and internal documentation shall be made available in alternative accessible formats upon request	Accessibility of online versions of documents is enshrined in our equality screening documentation and guidance and all staff are encouraged to ensure resources are available in accessible formats.

2 (d) What action measures were achieved to 'encourage others' to promote the two duties:

	Encourage others Action Measures	Outputs	Outcome / Impact
18	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To encourage students to volunteer for opportunities with organisations with a disability focus	Volunteer SU offer a wide range of volunteering opportunities for students and have specifically partnered with organisations with a disability focus such as RNIB and Action on Hearing Loss. For more information please click here .

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23	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To encourage members of staff with a disability to apply for membership of committees, consultative groups and working groups where appropriate	The Disability Forum is one way in which we encourage members of staff with a disability to apply for membership of working groups and committees. This will also be expanded on and encouraged through the Staff Disability Network.
24	To encourage participation of persons with disability in public life	To encourage students with a disability to be School representatives including School level Student and Staff Consultative Committees and Academic Board representatives	A key remit of the Disabled Students' Officer is to encouraging disabled students to become more involved in the Union and in representative roles. This is also communicated through the Disabled Students' Network to students with a disability.
37	To promote positive attitudes towards persons with disability	To ensure that the University's Terms and Conditions for Supplies, Work and Services requires suppliers and contractors to subscribe to Equality and Diversity where appropriate.	Our previous and new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy (2020) state that all visitors and anyone providing services to, or those contracted to work at, the University including sub-contractors, are expected to comply with this policy. Breach of this policy could result in the termination of the contract. We have also outlined this commitment in our Supply Chain Code of Conduct which all suppliers must comply with.

2 (e) Please outline **any additional action measures** that were fully achieved other than those listed in the tables above:

	Action Measures fully implemented (other than Training and specific public life measures)	Outputs	Outcomes / Impact
	We engaged with Employers for Disability NI on outreach,	A breakfast was held to raise awareness of EFDNI and to mark International Day of Disabilities on 29 November 2019.	Awareness raised of disability related issues and the services provided by EFDNI.

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	collaborative working and fundraising activities.		
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3. Please outline what action measures have been **partly achieved** as follows:

	Action Measures partly achieved	Milestones / Outputs	Outcomes/Impacts	Reasons not fully achieved
38	To produce an online learning resource in order to support QUB students, staff and members of the public to develop their ability to communicate with the deaf	Significant development has taken place on this resource in 2019/20.		<p>The impact of having to work remotely and focus on a wide range of other development to support our existing core offer and, our reactionary Lockdown Language Learning offer, have meant that we have been unable to complete the development of the online resource: 'An Introduction to BSL and Deaf Awareness' within the intended timeframe.</p> <p>Despite having to postpone this development project, we are hopeful to complete this development and launch this course in early 2021.</p>

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4. Please outline what action measures **have not been achieved** and the reasons why.

	Action Measures not met	Reasons
1	To review the University's Bullying and Harassment procedure. As part of the review, we will ensure Equality Screening is undertaken	Due to Covid-19 the University identified a need to prioritise further policies which required urgent attention. As such, the review process will be completed in the next reporting period.
10	To scope the feasibility of introducing a Guaranteed Interview Scheme to encourage persons with a disability to apply for roles at the University	Due to resourcing changes in the Recruitment Team this action has not yet been achieved and the feasibility of a scheme scoped, we hope to review and achieve this action in our next Disability Action Plan for the next reporting period.
13	To consider the feasibility of paid placements as part of the Inclusive Employment Scheme	<p>Due to Covid-19 we were unable to hold our sixth year of the unpaid IES in June 2020. Due to the uncertainty of the days and weeks ahead, we have taken the decision to postpone the start date for those seeking placements until such time when it is safe to do so.</p> <p>Due to this and the uncertainty regarding resource and budget cuts this scoping exercise has not yet been fully achieved.</p>
29	Proposed pilot of employability skills tutor being considered by DfE	Still under consideration.

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5. What **monitoring tools** have been put in place to evaluate the degree to which actions have been effective / develop new opportunities for action?

(a) Qualitative

The Diversity and Inclusion Unit actively monitors measures in the action plan as part of a live, iterative process. We informally gain feedback from staff across the on a range of subjects. Feedback is regularly discussed at team meetings which can help inform new initiatives.

(b) Quantitative

The Disability Forum monitors progress against the action plan measures at meetings which take place four times a year. Progress is also monitored by the Diversity and Inclusion Unit, who provide the University Operating Board with a Progress Report on an annual basis. Quantitative data is collected, collated and analysed across equality categories. Our equality monitoring system and database is reviewed regularly and where necessary, changes and/or new data may be commissioned.

6. As a result of monitoring progress against actions has your organisation either:

- made any **revisions** to your plan during the reporting period or
- taken any **additional steps** to meet the disability duties which were **not outlined in your original** disability action plan / any other changes?

Yes, we carried out additional measures that were not in the **2016-20 plan not part of the 2019/20** revised plan, see below.

Revised/Additional Action Measures	Performance Indicator	Timescale
Staff Disability Network	It is hoped that the network will be a useful and valuable platform for staff in similar situations to get together and share their knowledge and experiences as well as providing an opportunity for staff to support each-other and provide them with a platform on which they seek the help they need to improve life in work.	Launched Summer 2020

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Staff Carers Network	The Carers Network will enable carers across QUB to come together to chat and share experiences and information. Further information on the Carers Network is available here .	Launched Summer 2020
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7. Do you intend to make any further **revisions to your plan** in light of your organisation’s annual review of the plan? If so, please outline proposed changes?

The Disability Action Plan is a live iterative document with regular updates, initiatives and associated projects. The Diversity and Inclusion Unit monitors and reviews progress against the specific measures and is amended as appropriate. Proposed changes to the Disability Action Plan are discussed and consulted upon with staff and students in a range of ways and at regular meetings of the University’s Disability Forum.

ⁱ **Outputs** – defined as act of producing, amount of something produced over a period, processes undertaken to implement the action measure e.g. Undertook 10 training sessions with 100 people at customer service level.

ⁱⁱ **Outcome / Impact** – what specifically and tangibly has changed in making progress towards the duties? What impact can directly be attributed to taking this action? Indicate the results of undertaking this action e.g. Evaluation indicating a tangible shift in attitudes before and after training.