**Queen’s University Belfast**

 **(STAFF) Disability Support Fund**

**Terms of Reference**

# Background

1. Queen’s University is committed to equality of opportunity and supporting members of staff who have disclosed their disabilities and/or long term conditions.

1. This is a commitment stated in the University’s Equality and Diversity Policy and institutional Disability Action Plan (2016-2020).
2. The University also has a legal obligation to ensure the environment is accessible and inclusive, as far as is reasonably practical, for all staff, students and visitors.

**Aims and Objectives**

1. Queen’s University Belfast has administered a Disability Support Fund (“the Fund) for its staff since 2006.

1. The aim of the Fund is to provide additional financial assistance for University staff with disabilities and/or long-term conditions who require specialist equipment and/or support (see **“Use of Funds”** for more information).
2. This document was developed to provide staff with clear guidance on how applications for support should be administered and managed.

1. It was developed following engagement and consultation with the University’s Disability Forum, an internal body which represents the best interests of staff and students with disabilities in the University.
2. An application to the Fund does not negate the University’s overall responsibility to create an inclusive and accessible environment for all staff and students.

**Application process**

1. Applications must be submitted using the pro forma template provided online. [Disability Support – Application for Assistance](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/hr-filestore/Filetoupload%2C867233%2Cen.docx).
2. The School/Directorate/Unit should work closely with the member of staff on their application.
3. Applications for support from the Fund must then be submitted to the Diversity and Inclusion Unit.
4. Each application will be considered on its own merits and applications will only be approved or refused after careful consideration and agreement between the School/ Directorate/ Unit and a representative from the Diversity and Inclusion Unit.
5. Applications for support from the Fund will be shared on an equal (“50/50”) basis between the applicant’s School/Department and the Diversity and Inclusion Unit subject to a maximum contribution of £300 per person/application per annum from the Diversity and Inclusion Unit. This is to ensure as many people as possible can benefit from the Fund.

For example if an applicant sought financial support of £500 this would split £250 equally between the Diversity and Inclusion Unit and the applicant’s School/Directorate/ Unit.

If an applicant sought financial support of £750, this would be split £300 (Diversity and Inclusion Unit) and £450 by applicant’s School/Directorate/ Unit.

1. Schools/Directorates/Units may not submit more than one application for a particular member of staff in any one year (1 August to 31 July).

1. Applications for support from the Fund will be considered on a first come first served basis and will continue until such time as the available budget (within the Diversity and Inclusion Unit) is reduced to nil.

1. The administration and management of the Fund will be kept under review by the Diversity and Inclusion Unit in order to ensure fair and equal access to support for disabled staff.
2. Access to Assistive Technology (e.g. software including but not limited to Read and Write Gold; Mindview; JAWS; Dragon etc) must be made separately to Information Services and will not be supported from the Fund.

1. Any changes to the Terms of Reference will be communicated to the University’s Disability Forum.

**Use of Funds**

1. The Fund is designed to help disabled members of staff with a disability or long term condition by subsidising the cost of assistive support or equipment such as larger monitors; specialist chairs or keyboards; height adjustable desks; specialist eye tests; proof reading services; hardware so long as the equipment can be demonstrated to meet the needs of the individual member of staff.

1. Applicants must submit details of the cost of such equipment (VAT inclusive) and at least three quotes identifying suppliers, specification and the best value for money option.

1. Applicants are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of any equipment purchased and cannot apply for additional support from the Fund to replace/upgrade any equipment purchased.
2. Any property purchased by members of staff through the Fund must be returned to the Diversity and Inclusion Unit in the event of a member of staff leaving/ending employment with the University.

**Further information**

1. Information on the Fund will be communicated to all staff and hosted on the Diversity and Inclusion Unit’s website.

1. Any specific queries should be directed to Fiona O’Connell in the Diversity and Inclusion Unit and/or School/Department line managers.

Tel no: 02890 971046

Email: f.oconnell@qub.ac.uk

**Useful links**

* [Please click here](http://www.qub.ac.uk/diversity)to access the Diversity and Inclusion Unit homepage.

* [Please click here](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/DiversityandInclusionUnit/PoliciesandProcedures/)to access the University’s Equality and Diversity Policy.

* [Please click here](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/DiversityandInclusionUnit/WhyWeDoIt/Disability/#d.en.758867)to access the University’s Disability Action Plan.

* [Please click here](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/)to access staff in Disability Services (student advisory service)

 **12 March 2018**