**Disability & Wellbeing Services**

**The Register of Support Providers at Queen’s University**

**Code of Conduct for Support Providers**

**Introduction**

The Register of Support Providers at Queen’s University enables students registered with Disability Services to avail of one-to-one support to ‘level the playing field’ and give students more equitable access to teaching and learning at Queen’s.

Although the Register’s primary focus is to meet the needs of students, it also trains, supports and guides its team of Support Providers who deliver the one-to-one support to students. Support Providers work on a self-employed / freelance basis and as such, do not become employees of the University.

Support Providers deliver a range of one-to-one support (see below) that is tailored to meet with the individual needs of each student.

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| --- | --- |
| **Support Provider Roles** | |
| Study Skills Tutor | Note Taker |
| Dyslexia Tutor | Academic Mental Health Tutor |
| Exam Prompter | Autistic Spectrum Disorder Tutor |
| Foreign Language Tutor | Proof Reader |
| Reader | Library Assistant |
| IT Tutor | Typist |
| Electronic Note Taker | Audio Typist |
| Exam Scribe | Exam Scribe / Reader |
| Exam Scribe Typist | Maths & Statistics Tutor |
| Campus Assistant (General) | Campus Assistant (Specialist) |

**Code of Conduct**

The Code of Conduct outlines the principles that all Support Providers should adhere to when providing support through the Register. Please read the Code carefully, then complete and return the Declaration (at the end of this document) to the Register of Support Providers.

**Recruitment and Selection**

All Support Providers must successfully go through the Registers’ rigorous recruitment and selection procedure before being considered for the support roles they have applied for. Following shortlisting, individuals are called to interview and are asked a range of questions relating specifically to the role(s) they have been shortlisted for.

If successful at interview, new Support Providers must complete the following before they can be included on the Register:

* A signed **Code of Conduct Declaration** form (the Declaration at the end of this document).
* **Non-Staff Payment (NSP2) form** and accompanying documentation to support your **Right to Work** in the UK ***or***
* Register as a **Queen’s Supplier** by providing a letter from HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) that states their Unique Taxpayer Reference (UTR) number.
* At least one satisfactory **reference**.
* An **AccessNI background check** at the lower Enhanced level (only for those in Tutor roles) - for further information, please see www.nidirect.gov.uk/campaigns/accessni-criminal-record-checks.

**Engagement**

All Support Providers are engaged on a freelance basis and do not become employees of the University. All payments made to Support Providers by the local Education Authority (EA) / Business Services Organisation (BSO) on behalf of students do not therefore include any tax or national insurance contributions. As such, Support Providers are responsible for their own tax returns and should keep accurate, detailed financial records accordingly. The Register is not responsible for compiling and maintaining information regarding individual earnings for HMRC / individual tax returns.

**Payment: Electronic Timesheets**

Support Providers are paid on a monthly basis in accordance with the monthly payment schedule agreed annually with the Education Authority (see [**Work Record Payment Schedule**](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/FileStore/Filetoupload,833518,en.doc) for return deadlines) following the submission of complete / accurate / student-verified electronic timesheets through the **Cudos** Information Management System (IMS).

As student engagement is monitored through key performance indicator (KPI) data generated by the Cudos system, timesheets should be submitted on a regular basis for verification.

If completed and logged timesheets have not, for whatever reason, been approved by your student, please contact the Register for guidance.

**Payments Through Queen’s**

Where a student’s support is funded by the University, the Fund for Students with Disabilities (or FSD – for RoI students) or one of the GB funding bodies such as Student Finance England (SFE), the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS), or where a class has been cancelled by the University, the support will be paid for via Queen’s.

If you are registered with HMRC as self-employed, you will be registered as a ‘Queen’s Supplier’. As such, the Register should be advised of any changes to your personal data to allow for your payments to be processed correctly. As you are registered as self-employed and responsible for your own tax returns, support payments to Queen’s Suppliers will be made in full.

Support Providers not registered as self-employed will instead receive payments through the Non-staff Payment (NSP) system where tax is taken off at source. Any changes to personal data such as a new address or bank account details must therefore be sent directly to Queen’s Salaries Office (in writing, complete with signature) to ensure that payments continue to be made correctly.

**Guarantees of Work**

As the service is very much a student-focused one, Support Providers are allocated to students on the basis of student requirements and the Support Provider skills / experience / availability. Unfortunately therefore, the Register cannot ever guarantee levels of work fora variety of reasons that relate mainly to the students themselves:

* It is the student’s choice as to whether or not they decide to take up the recommended support;
* It is the student’s decision whether they continue with the support or with the particular Support Provider(s) allocated to them;
* A student may decide at any stage to temporarily suspend their studies;
* A student may withdraw (or be withdrawn) from the University, either for reasons relating to their disability or for purely academic reasons;
* Incomplete/inaccurate QSIS (Queen’s Student Information System) timetables and schedule changes in the first few weeks of semester;
* The majority of students referred to the Register are undergraduates - as such, there is very little work for Support Providers over the summer months.

Support provision is work that requires a lot of flexibility and because the Register is unable to provide guarantees of work, it may not be a viable option for those looking for a steady, regular income throughout the year. Equally, Support Providers are under no obligation to accept any of the support work offered to them and they are free to leave the Register at any time, either on a temporary or permanent basis.

**Matching Students with Support Providers**

Support Providers are matched with students according to their individual requirements and one-to-one support needs. Support Providers will be given, via email through Cudos, the student’s contact details, support needs and the total number of hours of support allocated.

It is the responsibility of the Support Provider to make initial contact with the student and to arrange the first meeting. Thereafter, both parties have equal responsibility for arranging further support meetings. As the Register can provide only limited course and disability-related information, you should discuss with your student(s) their particular support needs when you first meet with them and/or ask them to share with you their Needs Assessment report, dyslexia assessment etc.

All one-to-one support is arranged for students through the Register of Support Providers. As such, Support Providers should not provide students with any sort of support outside of this format. Support must be arranged formallythrough the Register so Support Providers should wait until receiving a match-up email before commencing support.

**Recommended Support**

The support recommended for students follows from an in depth one-to-one needs assessment review with a Needs Assessor / Disability Officer.

During the needs assessment, the various types of support available and their advantages / disadvantages are addressed and the student will agree to a particular support package. As support has already been addressed / agreed, Support Providers (and especially those in Tutor roles), should not therefore suggest to their students that they are ‘entitled’ to particular software, equipment, one-to-one support etc. It is unfair to raise a student’s hopes of accessing specialist support if their requirements have already been explored and the need cannot be justified.

**Changes to Support**

If your student’s support needs change (eg a downturn in their condition) or they want to review their current support package at any stage, please encourage them to contact with their Disability Officer / Needs Assessment Centre as soon as possible to discuss the options available to them. As the main focus of one-to-one support is fostering independent learners, it is the student and not their Support Provider, who should approach the Service about issues relating to their one-to-one support.

**Support Hours**

Support Providers should note carefully the hours allocated to them and keep a track of the number of hours used via the Cudos system. Please do not exceed the total number of hours of support available as you will run the risk of not being paid for support given over and above the original allocated. If you find that your student has only limited hours of support remaining and he/she feels that additional hours will be necessary, please ask them to contact the Needs Assessment Centre at Queen’s at [nac@qub.ac.uk](mailto:nac@qub.ac.uk) to discuss their needs so that a case may be made to their funder for additional hours.

**Being on Time / Cancellations**

Please ensure you are punctual for support meetings. If support has to be cancelled for any reason (eg illness), as much advance notice as possible should be given to both the student and the Register of Support Providers to allow for alternative support to be arranged. The minimum notice required where possible is 24 hours. The Support Provider, not the student, is responsible for contacting the Register to request alternative cover arrangements.

**Support Location**

For health and safety reasons, support must not take place in either the home of the Support Provider or the student. Support should be provided in a neutral space where both parties feel comfortable and secure such as the University libraries, public libraries, cafés or in the bookable rooms in the Student Guidance Centre etc (see [**Places to Work with Your Students**](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/FileStore/Filetoupload,628733,en.doc) for further information).

**Documentation**

Support Providers are responsible for returning to the Register a number of documents including:

* A [**Statement of Agreement**](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/FileStore/Filetoupload,628669,en.doc) for each support relationship (excluding one-off Note Taker covers);
* Electronic timesheets through the Cudos IMS;
* [**Learning Plans**](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/FileStore/Filetoupload,628677,en.doc) (for those providing Tutor support);
* [**Interim Report**](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/FileStore/Filetoupload,628729,en.doc) (again, only for those Support Providers providing Tutor support).

It is important to ensure that the above documentation is returned to the Register as soon as it is completed so the Register has access to that information should an issue arise or a complaint is made.

**Feedback**

At the end of each academic year, Support Providers will be given the opportunity to complete an online satisfaction questionnaire. This is an important feedback mechanism as it helps the Register to evaluate the support given to students. It also presents Support Providers with an opportunity to comment on various aspects of the Register and to make suggestions for enhancing / improving the service for both students and Support Providers.

**Student Responsibilities**

All students receiving one-to-one support through Support Providers must:

* Regularly check their ‘phone/Queen’s email account for messages from Support Providers.
* Respond quickly to messages about arranging to meet with their Support Provider.
* Familiarise themselves with the support roles for which they have been referred (see the ‘Students’ Guide to One-to-One Support’ and the various job descriptions on the web site at www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/TheRegisterofSupportProvidersatQueensUniversity/).
* Be clear about what to expect and the limitations of the support for which they have been referred (see above).
* Respect the professional boundaries of the working relationship and not ask a Support Provider to provide support beyond the remit of their support role(s).
* Be aware that support is not subject-specific.
* Ensure that they approve Cudos timesheets on a regular basis so that their Support Providers can be paid for the assistance they have provided.
* Give your Support Provider at least 24 hours’ notice where possible if they are no longer able to attend a session, if a class time/location has changed / been cancelled or a support session needs to be rescheduled.
* Advise their Support Provider / Register of any changes to their contact details, particularly to their mobile or home telephone numbers.
* Advise the Register / their Disability Officer / Support Provider of any temporary or permanent withdrawals from study.
* Report any problems immediately so that corrective action may be implemented.
* Stop working with their Support Provider after the last day of the summer exam period (undergraduate students), even if they have hours remaining.

Students receiving Note Taker support have additional responsibilities. Students must:

* Confirm in advance with their Note Taker(s) the timetable details of relevant classes in terms of days/times/venues. This is because the Register only has access to inaccurate and/or incomplete timetable information via QSIS.
* Advise their Note Taker(s) as soon as possible if there have been changes to class times/venues.
* Clarify how they want their notes written up and structured.
* Clarify font size and style preferences.
* Confirm the turnaround time for the return of notes.
* Complete a Statement of Agreement with their Note Taker(s) to reflect the aforementioned.
* Attend all classes unless eligible for Note Taker support *in absentia* (for reasons relating to their disability).
* Ensure that Cudos timesheets are checked and verified on an ongoing basis.

**Student Attendance**

Students with Note Taker support for lectures, tutorials and/or practical workshops/lab sessions must attend class. For Note Takers in a large lecture hall it may be difficult to spot the student so it is advisable to ‘phone/text them to confirm their attendance. Whilst the student may not wish to acknowledge their Note Taker during class, he/she must attend the class themselves. Note Takers are not permitted to attend in lieu of students except in exceptional circumstances if the student is absent for disability-related reasons and this type of support (*in absentia*) has been agreed in advance with the student’s funder. If applicable, Note Takers will be notified of this. If you note taking for a student who is eligible for Note Taker cover *in absentia*, please claim for these as normal on Cudos and not as missed sessions.

**Waiting Time and Missed or Cancelled Sessions**

The normal waiting time is around 20 minutes. If your student does miss or cancel a session with less than 24 hours’ notice, you can claim for the first hour of that morning / afternoon / evening session.

Funding bodies may stop the payment of one-to-one support when two or more missed or cancelled-at-short-notice sessions occur in a term (three terms per academic year). When a funder declines to pay for further support because of the number of missed or cancelled-at-short-notice sessions, the Register will support the student with getting their funding re-instated by meeting with the student to agree strategies and asking them to complete/sign the paperwork required by the student’s funding body ie a Cancelled Sessions Review form.

If a student fails to come in for the aforementioned review meeting, the Register of Support Providers will be unable to re-assign Support Provider(s) to the student until this process is complete, meaning that all of their one-to-one support will be put on hold. If support is put on hold, the Register will notify the Support Provider(s) concerned and ask them to stand down until further notice.

**Supporting Undergraduate Students over the Summer Months**

You should not continue to work with your undergraduate students beyond the last day of the exam period and over the summer months because this must be agreed in advance with the student’s funding body, even if your student has enough hours left to accommodate their requirements. Please only continue with a UG student following a direct request from the Register. If you do provide support without this prior arrangement in place, you may not be paid for the support. Please note that this arrangement applies only to summer and not to the Christmas and Easter holiday periods.

**Training**

An Induction session(s) and a number of additional training programmes will be provided throughout the year for Support Providers. All newly-appointed Support Providers should attend the Induction session. All Support Providers are encouraged to attend any other training that is of direct relevance to their Support Provider role(s) and any awareness sessions that are of interest to them. Participation in a number of core training courses will be expected of the following categories of Support Provider:

* **Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Tutors** – Study Skills, ADS Awareness and Mental Health Awareness opportunities.
* **Dyslexia Tutors** - Study Skills training and any related Assistive Technology (AT) training.
* **Study Skills Tutors** - Study Skills, ASD Awareness and Mental Health Awareness training.
* **Academic Mental Health Tutors** - Study Skills and Mental Health Awareness training.

**Guidance Documents**

A range of guidance documents, forms and other information for Support Providers is available via Cudos and on the Register web site at: <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/TheRegisterofSupportProvidersatQueensUniversity/>.

Support Providers are expected to read and adhere to the guidance relevant to their Support Provider role(s) and should contact the Register team if they have any queries or require further clarification.

**Health and Safety**

Support Providers must be mindful of both their own health and safety and that of the student(s) with whom they are working and should not engage in any personal care or manual handling / lifting.

**Keeping in Touch**

The main mode of contact with Support Providers is via email so it is important that you check your email account regularly for support opportunities, match-ups and other communications from the Register / your students.

As the Register conveys your contact details (email address and mobile ‘phone number) to the students with whom you are matched, it is important to let us know as soon as possible if your details change eg if you get a new email account, mobile ‘phone number or change address.

**Professional Conduct**

All Support Providers are requested to follow a number of professional conduct protocols:

* Support Providers should practice only within the boundaries of their skill competencies / roles and under no circumstances should they give academic or personal advice to students beyond the remit of their Support Provider role(s) (see [**Job Descriptions and Personnel Specifications**](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/TheRegisterofSupportProvidersatQueensUniversity/JobDescriptionsandPersonnelSpecifications/)for further information).
* Support boundaries should be maintained / reinforced as necessary when working with students and one-to-one support relationships should never become too involved or over-supportive.
* Support Providers are expected to deliver high quality support to all students, irrespective of the student’s age, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, religious or community background.
* Support Providers should encourage and support independent learning. As such, assignments and projects must always be the student’s own work.
* The support delivered should be in line with any recommendations conveyed to you by the Register at matching.
* If the student feels that the nature or level of support is inappropriate, they should be to speak with their Disability Officer / Needs Assessment Centre to discuss their support needs.
* Support Providers should not act as intermediaries between students and academic staff members.
* Any concerns about a student should be reported to the Register of Support Providers and these will be conveyed to the student’s Disability Officer.
* Support Providers should generally not accept or encourage gifts from the students they work with. Any gifts should be flagged with the Register upon receipt and the Register will offer advice on the appropriate action to take (if any).
* Students are expected to meet a number of responsibilities (see earlier) when using support arranged via the Register of Support Providers. If you are experiencing difficulties with particular students, please ensure that you contact the Register at the earliest opportunity.

**Confidentiality**

Support Providers are required to keep confidential all information relating to the students with whom they are working. Support should be delivered in a discreet manner and Support Providers must respect the privacy of disabled students.

Support Providers should only breach confidentiality if they are concerned about the welfare or well-being of a student, particularly if the student may be at risk to themselves or to others. Any such concerns should be flagged with the Register as soon as possible and these will be conveyed to the student’s Disability Officer.

**Safeguarding Student Information**

As a Support Provider, you will be given some information on the student you are matched with. This information will include:

* Name
* Course details
* Contact number(s) (home and/or mobile ‘phone numbers)
* Queen’s email address
* Disability details (where appropriate)
* Date of birth
* Funding body

Once you begin to develop a working relationship with your student, you will find that you will gradually acquire other personal information about that individual such as:

* Further information about the nature of their disability
* Their academic strengths and weaknesses
* An alternative or home email address
* Email/text communications from your student
* Texts/emails about missed sessions and the (often personal) reasons for missing or cancelling a session with you at short notice
* Learning plans for the semester
* Feedback from lecturers on essays and assignments.

Please remember that as a Support Provider, you are responsible for safeguarding that personal / sensitive data. As such, it is essential that you take appropriate precautions to ensure that this information is not inadvertently disclosed to other parties.

**Safeguarding Student-Related Information**

1. If you are working with your students using paper-based materials, remember not to leave any papers, folders etc behind in public places such as in libraries, the Student Guidance Centre or on the bus/train/taxi.
2. If you are working with your student using your laptop, do not leave it unattended – laptops are extremely attractive to thieves.
3. Likewise, smart ‘phones are also very prone to theft / loss.
4. Similarly, memory sticks are easy to loose / leave behind and are attractive to the opportunistic thief.
5. Do not access sensitive information about your student in public areas where someone else may inadvertently (or intentionally) read it - think about where you are first.

**Precautions**

1. Double-check that you have everything with you (papers, memory stick, mobile ‘phone, laptop etc.) before leaving the area that you have been working in or when leaving public transport.
2. Make sure that your laptop/PC is encrypted, has a screensaver and is password protected / locks after a period of inactivity. Your password should be at least 30 characters long and mixed (ie of both letters and numbers) so that it is more difficult for a thief to crack.
3. Similarly, ensure that your mobile ‘phone is pin protected so that if it is lost/stolen, your texts and contact numbers cannot easily be accessed.
4. Remember that email is an inherently insecure way of transferring sensitive information and should be used with caution. If sending the same set of notes to several different students, either email them individually (preferable) or use the Bcc (blind copy) facility so their email addresses are not disclosed to one another.
5. Ensure that your laptop or home computer is protected against viruses.
6. Safeguard any sensitive data on your computer by using encryption software.
7. Use memory sticks that are fully encrypted. As add-on encryption can be left turned off, the University recommends using IronKey memory sticks that have inbuilt encryption. This encryption cannot be turned off, is resistant to physical disassembly and destroys the data after 10 failed access attempts.
8. Try not to unintentionally store information - delete any contact details, emails or other information about students when you have finished working with them or at the end of the academic year.
9. If you do have your laptop/PC/mobile ‘phone breached or stolen and the device contains information relating to the student(s) you are working with, please let the Register know as soon as possible.

For additional information on securing your laptop and/or PC, please read the University’s various security policies and see the guidance notes available on the University’s Information Services web site at: [www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/Services/Security/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/Services/Security/).

**Managing One-to-One Support**

In the main, one-to-one student/Support Provider relationships are very successful. Occasionally however, a student may seek support beyond the boundaries of the support role remit, may behave rudely and / or aggressively or may fail to engage / keep in contact. If you are unhappy about any aspect of a working relationship and have not been able to resolve the issue informally with your student, please contact the Register and we will follow the matter up for you.

**Summary of Expectations**

In summary, Support Providers are required to:

* Uphold the principles embodied in the Code of Conduct for Support Providers.
* Practice only within the remit(s) of their Support Provider role(s).
* Maintain one-to-one support boundaries at all times and not become too involved or over-supportive.
* Encourage, develop and promote independent learning.
* Take responsibility for encrypting their laptops / PCs and the safe storage and handling of personal, sensitive and academic-related student information.
* Take responsibility for their own financial administration and tax returns.
* Keep the Register advised of address, email or contact number changes.
* Give adequate notice if taking time off to attend appointments, go on holiday etc. to allow for alternative cover to be arranged in a timely fashion.
* Give notice as soon as possible when alternative cover is needed eg because of illness or some other unforeseen / emergency situation.
* Advise the Register if intending to withdraw either on a temporary or permanent basis.
* Read and be familiar with the following University Policies:
* **Code of Practice and Good Conduct in Relation to Children and Vulnerable Adults:** [www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/RewardandEmployeeRelations/LegalServices/SafeguardingChildrenandVulnerableAdults/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/RewardandEmployeeRelations/LegalServices/SafeguardingChildrenandVulnerableAdults/)
* **Data and Information Security** **Policies** and Acceptable Use Guidelines:

[www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/Services/Security/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/Services/Security/)

* **Equality and Diversity** **Policy**:

[www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/DiversityandInclusionUnit/PoliciesandProcedures/EqualityandDiversityPolicy/#d.en.759342](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/DiversityandInclusionUnit/PoliciesandProcedures/EqualityandDiversityPolicy/#d.en.759342)

* **Health and Safety Policy**:

[www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/OccupationalHealthandSafety/HealthandSafetyPolicy/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/OccupationalHealthandSafety/HealthandSafetyPolicy/)

**Key Emails**

Payment and timesheet queries [supportprovider@qub.ac.uk](mailto:supportprovider@qub.ac.uk)

Matching / student queries [nmhregister@qub.ac.uk](mailto:nmhregister@qub.ac.uk)

Missed/cancelled sessions [nmhregister@qub.ac.uk](mailto:nmhregister@qub.ac.uk)

Complaints / feedback / other queries [nmhregister@qub.ac.uk](mailto:nmhregister@qub.ac.uk)

Additional hours / equipment queries [nac@qub.ac.uk](mailto:nac@qub.ac.uk)

**Declaration**

Please sign and return the **Declaration** on the next page as soon as possible to the Register of Support Providers at Queen’s.

**The Register of Support Providers at Queen’s University**

**Code of Conduct for Support Providers**

**Declaration**

* I acknowledge that I have read and accepted all of the principles outlined in the Code of Conduct for Support Providers. I will adhere to these principles when delivering support through the Register of Support Providers at Queen’s University and I accept that failure to do so may result in my being removed from the Register.
* I have read the guidance documents pertinent to my Support Provider role(s) and I will seek advice or further clarification from the Register of Support Providers if there is anything that I am unsure of.
* I accept that I am responsible for the safe storage and handling of sensitive, personal and academic-related information relating to the student(s) with whom I am working as a Support Provider.
* I have read and understood the preceding information and the various University policies / guidance notes provided on the Information Services web site at

[www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/Services/Security/](http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/Services/Security/).

**Name:** …………………………………………………………………………………….

**Role(s) on the Register of Support Providers:**

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**Date:**  …………………………………………………………………………………….

**Signature:** ……….………………………………………………………………………

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**Please complete, sign and return this page to:**

**The Register of Support Providers at Queen’s University**

Disability & Wellbeing Services

Student Guidance Centre

Queen’s University

Belfast, BT7 1NF

**Tel:** 028 90 973610

**Emails:** [supportprovider@qub.ac.uk](mailto:supportprovider@qub.ac.uk); [nmhregister@qub.ac.uk](mailto:nmhregister@qub.ac.uk)

**Web:** <http://www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/TheRegisterofSupportProvidersatQueensUniversity/>