

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 supports and guides the Support Providers who deliver 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.

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. New Support Providers should read the Code carefully then complete and return the Declaration (at the end of this document) to the Register of Support Providers at Queen's.

Recruitment and Selection

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

If successful at interview, new Support Providers must submit the following documentation before they may 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 and accompanying documentation to support your **Right to Work** in the UK.
- 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 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 EA / BSO (please see the **Timesheet Submission and Payment Schedule** 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 further guidance.

Payments via Queen's

Where a student's support is funded by the University, the Fund for Students with Disabilities (or FSD – for Rol students) or one of the GB funding bodies such as Student Finance England (SFE) or Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS), or where a class has been cancelled / additional classes scheduled 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 to you 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 matched with students on the basis of student requirements and the Support Provider skills / experience / availability. Unfortunately therefore, the Register cannot ever guarantee levels of work for a range 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 as to whether they continue with the support or with the particular Support Provider(s) matched 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 academic reasons;
- Incomplete/inaccurate QGIS (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.

Please note: 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 temporarily or on a 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 sessions. 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 and / or dyslexia assessment report.

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 formally through 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 explored with the student and a support package tailored to their individual needs is agreed. As their support requirements have already been addressed and agreed, Support Providers (especially those in Tutor roles), should not therefore suggest to students that they are 'entitled' to particular software, Assistive Technology (AT), equipment or one-to-one support. 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 wish to review their current support package at any stage, please advise them to contact with their Disability Officer / Needs Assessment Centre (nac@qub.ac.uk; 90 97 5062) 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 allocation. If you find that your student has only limited hours of support remaining and they feel that additional hours will be necessary, please ask them to contact their Disability Officer / Needs Assessment Centre at Queen's (see above) to discuss their needs so a case may be made to their funder for additional hours.

Being on Time / Cancellations

Please ensure you are punctual for support meetings / classes. 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 is 24 hours where possible. 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 eg in University libraries, public libraries, cafés or in the bookable rooms around the University and in the Student Guidance Centre etc (see **Places to Work** guidance for further information).

Documentation

Support Providers are responsible for returning to the Register a number of documents (see the Register web site / Cudos landing page) including:

- A **Statement of Agreement** for each support relationship (excluding one-off Note Taker covers);
- **Learning Plans** (for those providing Tutor support);
- **Interim Report** (again, only for those Support Providers providing Tutor support);
- Adding a **photo / bank details** to Cudos and regularly **submitting electronic timesheets** through Cudos for student verification.

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

Feedback

At the end of each academic year, students and Support Providers will be given the opportunity to complete online satisfaction questionnaires. The questionnaires are 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 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 and their Queen's / College 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/ or your landing page on Cudos).
- 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 timesheets on Cudos on a regular basis so their Support Providers may be paid for the assistance they have provided.
- Give their Support Provider at least 24 hours' notice where possible if they are no longer able to attend a session and advise 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 support 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 QGIS.
- Advise their Note Taker(s) as soon as possible if there have been changes to class times / venues.
- Clarify how they wish their notes to be written up and structured.
- Clarify any 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* when unable to attend for reasons relating to their disability.
- Ensure that Cudos timesheets are regularly 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 consider 'phoning / texting the student to confirm their attendance. Whilst the student may not necessarily wish to acknowledge their Note Taker during class, they 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 in the match-up email. 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 may claim for the first hour of each 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 liaising with the student to agree attendance and notification strategies.

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 (towards the end of May) and over the summer months because support after the conclusion of the normal academic year 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 an undergraduate 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.

Development

An Induction session(s) and a number of additional awareness 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 awareness sessions that are of direct relevance to their Support Provider role(s) or that are of interest to them.

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:

www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sqc/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 further queries or require 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 have a new email account, mobile 'phone number or move home and 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 the various **Job Descriptions / Person Specifications** for further information).
- Support for undergraduates should not continue beyond the last day of the exam period (towards the end of May) unless prior approval has been sought / granted and you have received confirmation from the Register that you may carry on. If in doubt, always check with the Register first.
- Support boundaries should be maintained / reinforced as necessary when working with students so that one-to-one support relationships do not 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 encouraged to speak with their Disability Officer / Needs Assessment Centre to address and discuss their support needs.
- Support Providers should not act as intermediaries between students and School / academic staff members.
- Any concerns about a student should be reported to the Register of Support Providers. These will be conveyed to the student's Disability Officer and the Wellbeing Service.
- Support Providers should generally not accept gifts (and certainly not cheques) from the students they work with. Any gifts / gift vouchers 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 a particular student, please ensure that you contact the Register as soon as possible so that any issues may be addressed and resolved in a timely fashion.

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 their 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 / Wellbeing Service.

Safeguarding Student Information

As a Support Provider, you will be given some information relating to 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 / long term condition details
- 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:

- Additional information about the nature of their disability
- Their academic strengths and weaknesses
- An alternative / 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 lose / 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) see and 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, is password protected and 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 and therefore names 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/.

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: Duties and Standards

There are no duties or obligations owing from you to Queen's as any work undertaken, once matched by the Register, is personal between you and the student. However, in order to maintain the quality of one-to-one support provided to students, you will be required to provide support to the student as detailed in the match-up email in accordance with the remit of that role(s) and the hours specified in the match-up by:

1. Practicing only within the boundaries of the assigned Support Provider role(s) (see www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sqc/disability/TheRegisterofSupportProvidersatQueensUniversity/ for duties to be undertaken by Support Providers).
2. Maintaining professional standards at all times to deliver a high quality service.
3. Contacting the student within three working days of being matched with them.
4. Being mindful of any health and safety implications by not meeting in each other's private residencies and not engaging in any personal care, manual handling or lifting of the student.
5. Taking responsibility for the safe storage and handling of personal, sensitive and academic-related student information by adhering to Queen's various security policies and following the guidance notes available on Queen's Information Services web site at www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/Services/Security/.
6. Not becoming too involved or over-supportive or offering personal or subject-specific advice or guidance.
7. Actively encouraging, developing and promoting independent learning.
8. Notifying Queen's as soon if the student misses or cancels (with less than 24 hours' notice) two support sessions and stopping support until advised to resume.
9. Not acting as an intermediary between the student and others such as their funding body, academic staff, Disability Services etc.
10. Monitoring accurately and not exceeding the number of support hours originally allocated without prior written consent from Queen's.
11. Being aware that in the absence of prior, written consent, additional support over and above the student's original allocation will, in most cases, not be funded retrospectively.
12. Submitting accurate, complete and verified timesheets in a regular, timely fashion by the requisite deadline each month.
13. Not submitting inaccurate / inappropriate claims for support work.

14. Highlighting to Queen's on discovery if an overpayment has been received from the student's funder or from the University.
15. Not engaging in any activity that may bring Queen's, the role of Support Provider or the student into disrepute.
16. Taking responsibility for your financial administration by submitting tax returns to HMRC and paying tax and national insurance contributions as required.
17. Keeping personal information such as address, contact and bank account details up-to-date with Queen's and on Cudos, the Register's Information Management System.
18. Advising Queen's as soon as possible if you feel you are not a suitable match for the student.
19. Prioritising the student by giving notice to the student and the Register as far as possible in advance of periods of unavailability (eg holiday leave, planned medical treatments etc) to support re-matching and allow time for alternative cover to be arranged well in advance.
20. Giving notice to the student and the Register (to facilitate re-matching) as soon as possible where alternative cover is to be arranged if you are unwell or become unavailable for whatever reason.
21. Advising Queen's if intending to withdraw from the Register either on a temporary or permanent basis.
22. Avoiding activities that may give rise to a conflict of interest and raising with Queen's anything you believe might represent a conflict of interest in providing one-to-one support to students.
23. Complying with Queen's policies on safeguarding in relation to children and vulnerable adults.
24. In maintaining the Register and in relation to support work undertaken between you and the student(s) you are assigned to support, consenting to Queen's storing and using your personal data via a third party for the arrangement of one-to-one support in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) (see www.qub.ac.uk/about/Leadership-and-structure/Registrars-Office/Information-Compliance-Unit/).
25. Reporting to Disability & Wellbeing Service if you have serious concerns about the wellbeing of your student or the risk of harm to others.

Key Policies

- **Code of Practice and Good Conduct in Relation to Children and Vulnerable Adults**
www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sgc/disability/FileStore/Filetoupload,831071,en.docx
- **Data and Information Security Policies and Acceptable Use Guidelines**
www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/InformationServices/Services/Security/
- **Equality and Diversity Policy**
www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/HumanResources/hr-filestore/Filetoupload,866894,en.pdf
- **Health and Safety Policy**
www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/EstatesDirectorate/UniversitySafetyService/HealthandSafetyPolicy/

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/.

Name:

Role(s) on the Register of Support Providers:

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Date:

Signature:

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; nmhregister@qub.ac.uk

Web: www.qub.ac.uk/directorates/sqc/disability/TheRegisterofSupportProvidersatQueensUniversity/