

STUDENT/STAFF DISABILITY POLICY

Definition of Disability

A person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. (Disability Discrimination Act 1995, as amended by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002). Disability covers a wide range of physical and mental impairments including physical and mobility difficulties, hearing impairments, visual impairments, specific learning difficulties including dyslexia, medical conditions and mental health problems.

Introductory Statement

The SWMTC Council is committed to a policy of equal opportunities for disabled staff and students and aims to create an environment that enables them to participate fully in the mainstream of SWMTC life. The object of the policy is to ensure that members of SWMTC community with disabilities have access to both facilities and a learning environment that is, subject to the present constraints of our residential and academic accommodation and to the constraints which may arise from the use of distance learning, comparable to that of their non-disabled peers.

To this end SWMTC will ensure:

- a) that in all policies, procedures and activities consideration is given to the means of enabling disabled students and staff to participate in all aspects of the academic and social life of SWMTC.
- b) That applications from all students will be assessed on the basis of academic and ministerial suitability for the Course. Criteria and procedures used for selecting students will relate to the requirements of the programme and do not unjustifiably disadvantage or debar applicants with disabilities. Discussions about the support requirements of students will be separate from assessment of suitability.
- c) that students with disabilities will have access to the full range of support services, appropriate to their needs, that are available to their non-disabled peers. Where existing services cannot be made available, alternative services and arrangements will be sought.
- d) that clear information about access to buildings and support facilities is made available to prospective students.

Teaching & Learning

- a) Consideration will be given to the requirements of disabled students during the approval of programme validation processes and

- appropriate amendments. Programme specifications will include no unnecessary barriers to access by disabled people.
- b) Academic staff will plan and employ teaching & learning strategies, which make the delivery of the programme as inclusive as is reasonably possible and, where appropriate and reasonable, adapt it to accommodate the individual requirements of disabled students.
 - c) Disabled students have access to academic and vocational placements, including field trips.
 - d) Assessment and examination policies, practices and procedures should provide disabled students with the same opportunities as their peers to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes.
 - e) Where studying is interrupted as a direct result of a disability-related cause, this should not unjustifiably impede a student's subsequent academic progress.
 - f) SWMTC will ensure that where appropriate evidence is provided that delayed completion of assessed work, non-attendance at residential weekends, deferral or withdrawal has been due to a disability-related cause, this is recorded in non-prejudicial terms in the relevant student file.

Staff

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) makes it unlawful for SWMTC to discriminate, in the field of employment, against a disabled person for a reason that relates to the person's disability, if that treatment cannot be justified. This applies not only to recruitment but all areas of employment including terms of employment, opportunities for promotion, transfer or training, dismissals or redundancies.

Disclosure and Confidentiality

- a) SWMTC is mindful of its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 and will do all it can to ensure the needs of disabled staff and students are not compromised by the competing requirements of this legislation with the responsibilities it places on SWMTC in respect of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- b) SWMTC will endeavour to develop an environment within which individuals feel able to disclose their disability. Every encouragement and opportunity will be given to students and staff to disclose any disability that may have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.