

Short Guide for Students with Mental Health Difficulties



A brief introduction to the type of support and services available to students with mental health difficulties such as depression or anxiety.

This information should enable you to establish whether the IOE can broadly meet your needs, and to provide a basis for discussion of your individual requirements with Disabilities Support staff.

What is a mental health difficulty?

The term 'mental health difficulty' encompasses a wide range of conditions, including depression, anxiety, bi-polar disorder, PTSD, eating disorders, and OCD. Indicators vary, but people with these conditions may experience low energy; fatigue; problems with social interaction; difficulty concentrating; and problems with personal organization.

Getting a diagnosis

If you suspect that you may have a mental health difficulty but have not been formally diagnosed, your first step should be to contact your GP. They will refer you to a specialist if necessary. Funding may be available to pay for any costs incurred gathering diagnostic evidence, usually via the 'Access to Learning Fund'.

Disclosing your mental health difficulty

The Disability Coordinator can discuss any concerns you may have about disclosing your mental health difficulty to IOE teaching staff, fellow students or other parties (eg. on school placements). Information about your mental health difficulty disclosed to Disabilities Support staff will not be shared with anyone else without your written permission.

Learning Support Agreements

Students with mental health difficulties are invited to have their needs clearly stated in a Learning Support Agreement. An LSA sets out exactly what support you are entitled to from various departments within the IOE. This means that you will not have to rearticulate your needs to different staff members. It also helps to maintain confidentiality and to ensure an equitable level of support across the IOE. If your needs change while you are on your course, you can request a review of your LSA at any time.

Sources of funding

Funding is available to help with additional costs which a student may incur as a direct result of their mental health difficulty. An example of this would be a digital recorder which students may find helpful for recording lectures, because of particular difficulties with concentration when listening and trying to take notes at the same time.

The Disabled Students' Allowance is available to home students (and some EU), subject to certain qualifying criteria. It is not means tested, and the funds are administered by Local Authorities, Research Councils or Student Finance Direct. Students who apply for the DSA will undergo a

study needs assessment in order to establish their requirements. Once in receipt of the DSA, students must reapply for each academic year they are studying.

Other sources of funding are available for International students and any others who are not eligible for DSA funding (eg. those on part time courses with less than 50% attendance). When you finish your course, there is "Access to Work" funding which may be available to help with any disability related costs incurred in the workplace.

Support from the Disabilities Support Office

All students with mental health difficulties are individuals, and we will endeavour to ensure that support is tailored to each person's specific requirements. Some examples of support on offer are given below:

Equipment & software:

Equipment loan system (administered via Media Services) for items such as laptops with specialist software, digital recorders

Access to PCs with specialist software at assistive technology workstations within the IOE

Assistive technology training

Mentoring:

One to one sessions with a mentor / study skills tutor

Topics covered can include strategies for coping with stress, time management, mind-mapping techniques and improving concentration.

Support is non-subject specific and aims to develop the students' own strategies

IOE students can also access the counselling service run by the Gower Street Practice

Medical room:

Access to a private room to rest or take medication

Support from your Faculty

Making lecture/seminar handouts available in advance

Allowing recording of lectures, or alternatives to note-taking

Awareness of the implications of mental health difficulties when marking work

Special assessment arrangements, eg. additional time in exams

Support from Information Services

Extended book loans

Access to the Disability Assistive Technology Rooms with specialised equipment and quiet study facilities

To find out more about Mental Health....

Links to useful websites:

Mind

<http://www.mind.org.uk>

Sane

<http://www.sane.org.uk>

Mental Health Foundation

<http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>

A copy of this guide can be made available in large print and other alternative formats.

To request, please contact:

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