



Faculty of Theology

Policy Statement on disabilities and compliance with SENDA

The Theology Faculty is committed to the principle of equality of opportunity for all staff and students. As obligated under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA), it is concerned in particular to make all reasonable provision within the collegiate university for theology students with disabilities so that they may participate in all theology courses without disadvantage.

This requires the Faculty to review and make adequate provision not only for the needs of present students, but for the probable needs of future students and candidates for admission, at undergraduate and postgraduate level. For undergraduates, the Faculty recognises the primary responsibility of the college tutor or director of studies to co-ordinate a student's studies, alerting the Faculty and individual tutors to any difficulties or problems as necessary. However, the Faculty also recognises its duty to aid the director of studies in this area, and to facilitate the co-ordination of provision by different bodies within the university. For postgraduates, the Faculty recognises the primary responsibility of the supervisor appointed by the Faculty Board to co-ordinate the student's studies as above.

To this end, in view of the recommendations contained in the Guidelines for Colleges and Departments on SENDA from the Educational Policy and Standards Committee Working Party on SENDA, the Faculty will have:

1. established a disability working party. This working party which will be co-terminous with the Faculty Centre Management and Safety Committee will monitor compliance with SENDA at meetings in Michaelmas and Trinity terms, and will make appropriate recommendations to the Faculty Board as and when necessary.
2. continue its existing policy of having a named disabilities contact officer, able to advise college tutors and Faculty Supervisors of help available within the Faculty and the wider University.
3. require each of the Faculty's teaching subject groups to review in the light of SENDA during the present academic year those courses, curricula, and regulations for which they have responsibility, and to report back in their minutes any pertinent changes to the Board. This review will then be repeated at regular intervals as determined by the Board.
4. remove potential barriers to learning in lectures, classes and tutorials through the following measures:
 - (i) the recommendation that all teachers follow the university guidelines for handouts concerning font sizes and styles, coloured paper etc. (see appendix 1).
 - (ii) the instalment of a permanent ramp at the front entrance of the Faculty.
 - (iii) the equipping of the Faculty seminar room with an induction loop system for the hearing-impaired.
 - (iv) the time-tabling of compulsory core-lectures for Prelims in the Michaelmas and Hilary terms in venues and at time accessible for wheelchair users.
 - (v) the time-tabling wherever possible of other lectures, classes and seminars in venues and

at times accessible for wheel-chair users who give reasonable notice of their intention to attend (see appendix 2).

(vi) the continued provision of syllabus reading-lists in a variety of formats on request (see appendix 3).

5. continue to provide in a variety of formats future editions of the faculty prospectus, hand-books for students, and similar documents used by current and prospective students (see appendix 3).

6. recognise as good practice the establishing of co-ordinated provision for students with a disability at an early stage through use where appropriate of a Student Support Document, drawn up either by the college's Director of Studies for an undergraduate or by the Faculty supervisor for a graduate student, in the months immediately before the student begins their course in consultation with Disability Services, the Faculty Administrator, and the Faculty disabilities contact officer.

7. encourage college directors of studies and Faculty supervisors to make early contact with the proctors to ensure provision is made for fair treatment in examinations or other assessment.

8. provide by Michaelmas 2003 for distribution to new students a document detailing the Faculty's provision made for students with disabilities.

9. provide Faculty staff and Faculty members with training in disability awareness initially by inviting members of the University disabilities services team to a meeting in 9th or 10th week of the Trinity term 2003.

10. review admissions procedures (open days etc) to ensure that the Faculty's commitment to equal opportunities for students with disabilities is communicated to prospective candidates.

11. review library provision for students with disabilities on a regular basis.

Appendix 1: Clear Print Guidelines.

Guidelines	Reasons
Provide typed overheads & handouts.	Typed script is easier to read for everyone.
Use a sans serif font e.g. Arial.	These fonts are plainer and easier to read.
Use at least 14pt print on handouts and 24 on OHPs.	Many students find larger print easier to read, including students with vision impairments, dyslexia and concentration difficulties.
Avoid using red & green ink/chalk at all times.	Students who are colour-blind will find these impossible to read. Green is the hardest colour for people with vision impairments to read.
Ensure there is a good contrast between the background colours of handouts and OHPs and the foreground (text) colour.	Dark text on a light background or light text on a dark background are the easiest to see. For example, white text on a blue background or black text on pale yellow works well.
Provide handouts on coloured paper.	Black print on white paper can create a lot of glare. Both students with dyslexia and vision impairments may benefit from having

	handouts printed on pastel coloured paper.
Avoid using glossy paper.	Material printed on a matt finished paper is easier to read and creates less eye strain.
Print text on a plain background	Printing text on a patterned background can often obscure the text and make it difficult to read.
Use bold text for headings and avoid faint text at all times.	Bold text is often easier to read for those with vision impairments.
Avoid CAPITALISATION and <u>Underlining</u> .	People with dyslexia often recognize words by the patterns they form. Capitalisation removes all word patterns as all letters are the same height making words more difficult to recognise. Underlining can often make text run together, again making it difficult to read.
Avoid the use of <i>Italics</i> or <i>text at an angle</i> .	Text in Italics is often difficult for people with vision impairments and dyslexia to read
If writing in pen for a student with a vision impairment, use a black medium tip pen or a felt tip pen.	Black pen is often easier to read, as it provides a good contrast and is usually darker than a blue pen.
Leave plenty of space between columns of text.	If columns are placed too close together then it can be difficult for some students to realise that a column exists.
Leave plenty of white space on Handouts.	Cramming too much information onto OHPs or slides makes them difficult to read. Everyone benefits from having some white space on a page.
Have no more than six bullet points on any OHP or slide.	This allows for well spaced, easy to read information.
Try to have only one topic per slide.	Having one topic per slide makes overheads easier to follow.
Provide written descriptions from and/or a tactile version of important diagrams and pictures.	Students with dyslexia benefit from the use of diagrams. However, students with vision impairments will need this information presented in an alternative way.
Left justify text and leave the right margin jagged.	This makes it easier to follow the lines of the text for people with dyslexia.
Avoid starting a new sentence at the end of a line.	Students with dyslexia can find this difficult to follow.
Students can then receive	Short, simple text is easier to read and

the information in their preferred format.	understand.
Avoid wrapping text around diagrams if it means that lines of text will start in a different position.	This can make lines of text difficult to find.
Use headings and page numbering consistently.	This makes allows people with vision impairments to navigate around the material easily.

Appendix 2 — Reasonable notice

Staff and students need reasonable notice of lectures, classes and seminars which students with disabilities wish to attend, so that venues and times may be planned appropriately given the constraints of the Faculty building and Schools.

Reasonable notice means that wherever possible:

- (i) For teaching in the Michaelmas terms, the faculty will send out to students with the relevant declared disabilities a provisional schedule by the end of week 1 of the preceding Trinity term. Students concerned will then be expected to give notice to the faculty of their intention to attend particular lectures, classes and seminars by the Monday of week 4 of Trinity term.
- ii) For teaching in the Hilary and Trinity terms, students are expected to consult the lecture forecast and handbook at the start of the preceding term, and to give notice to the faculty of their intention to attend particular lectures, classes and seminars by the end of week 2 in the preceding term.

Appendix 3 – Accessible Formats.

The faculty is committed to providing key documentation in a variety of formats accessible by prospective candidates and current students with disabilities. To this end it will:

1. keep its prospectus, handbooks and syllabus reading-lists for students on the web.
2. provide a large-print format of any Faculty document within a period of 7 working days.
3. provide a braille copy of any Faculty document within a reasonable period of time as advised by the staff at computer services.
4. provide a taped copy of any Faculty document within a period of 21 working days.
5. consider the ease of providing documentation in accessible formats when drawing up and producing new texts. To this end, copies or versions of any document will normally be held by the faculty office in Microsoft Word, or such other format as advised by the computing services.

Further information on access to the Faculty buildings for students with disabilities can be found in [the University website's access guide](#)