

Additional Needs Policy

The Organisation recognises and values each student's individual diversity in all its forms. The School, aims to promote access to our training programme for all applicants who have a professionally diagnosed physical/mental health condition/disability and/or professionally assessed learning difficulty resulting in an additional need. Applicants have the opportunity to declare any such conditions when completing an Application Form and while this is encouraged it is not a requirement at this stage of the application procedure. As such, in compliance with the Equality Act 2010, the School does not require applicants to provide information about any additional need(s) they may have until the interview process is complete. In order to achieve this any applicant with an additional need is not fully assessed until post interview and after being offered a place on the course.

Declaration of Additional Needs Information

1. Post-offer and prior to commencement of the course, in order to ensure the Organisation can support students with additional needs, all students are asked to complete a confidential **Medical & Learning Support Form**, and thus provide basic information about their health status, and in particular to declare any special learning need they have, as extra learning support may be needed to successfully complete the course. Students are informed that any information provided will be treated confidentially and only shared within the Organisation which includes the Course Director, Tutors, Course Supervisor and Development Manager.
2. Students should be aware that any disclosed medical condition &/or learning disability must be declared to the placement manager(s), so that appropriate support can be provided if necessary.
3. Once a student declares an additional need then, the **Additional Needs Assessment Process** below will be actioned and implemented by the Course Director and depending on the nature of the declared additional need, one or both of the learning support assessment procedures will be applicable.
4. Depending on the nature of the disclosed medical condition &/or learning disability the School may on occasion need to seek advise from an external agency.
5. Students should be aware that the tutors are unable to implement any reasonable adjustments unless these form part of a formal Support Plan Form /Support Plan Review Form that has been agreed and signed by the Course Director.

Additional Needs Assessment Process

Risk Assessment & Support Plan Process

1. Students with a formally diagnosed and documented physical/mental health medical condition, the Course Director, in liaison with the Course Supervisor if deemed necessary, will conduct a confidential risk assessment with the student to determine the level of risk and identify any procedures that can be put in place in order to support the applicant's condition whilst in the learning environment. During the consultation, a **Student Risk Assessment Form & Support Plan** will be completed, and a copy given to the student and tutors. The tutors will implement and monitor the agreed procedures during the student's participation in the course.
2. Students need to be aware that depending on the nature of a declared medical condition, they may be required to obtain from their GP/Health Care Professional a **Statement of Fitness to Participate & to Practice** as a trainee counsellor, prior to commencement of the clinical placement.

Learning Assessment & Support Plan Process

1. Students with a professionally assessed and documented learning disability, the Course Director, in liaison with the Course Supervisor if deemed necessary, will conduct a learning support assessment to determine whether sufficient reasonable adjustments can be put in place, and if so, what these are, in order to support the student's learning.
2. The Course Director will complete these details on the relevant sections of a Support Plan Form and include any recommendations and/or research into how the applicant can be best supported. If deemed necessary, these are then considered by the Course Supervisor and by the relevant members of the teaching team.

3. The Course Director then puts these recommendations forward to the student by emailing them the completed Support Plan Form, with the aim of supporting their learning needs, and subsequently implementing the support plan. If required, the Support Plan Form should be amended by the Course Director. Once agreed the form should be signed by the student, their personal tutor and then a copy provide to the student and Course Director.
4. If it is considered that sufficient reasonable adjustments can be put in place, then the nature and extent of such a provision must be fully understood by all parties in advance of its commencement, and once established, the total extent of such support must be clearly indicated by the student on all submitted work and on a **Reasonable Adjustment Log Sheet**, as provided by the Course Director.
5. The student's support plan will be implemented by their personal tutor and monitored regularly during tutorials at agreed time periods of 3, 6 or 9 months. A **Support Plan Review Form** should be completed by the tutor after each review and copied to the student for inclusion in their portfolio. However, if the student either declares a new arising learning disability or requests a new reasonable adjustment then the tutor should proceed as **Arising Learning Needs pt 3** below.

Withdrawal of Place on the Course

1. In such circumstances where Life-Force School has carried out a Risk/Learning Support Assessment, and after consultation with the relevant and appropriate external agency, if it is subsequently determined that an adequately supported learning environment cannot be provided, then the applicant will be informed accordingly and the offer of a place on the course will have to be withdrawn. Should the applicant disagree with this assessment outcome then they should be aware that the School would welcome their comments along with any recommendations they may have themselves regarding possible reasonable adjustments.
2. The School will further consider the applicants submission detailing reasonable adjustments that could potentially be implemented and will then make a final judgement and notify the applicant in writing. If the applicant is dissatisfied with the final decision of the organisation, they are encouraged to appeal in writing to Life-Force School within 28 days.

Arising Learning Needs

During the course, if a student has any change of personal circumstances regarding their medical status and/or learning disability then they should inform their personal tutor and complete a **M&LS Review Form** and return to the Course Director. Depending on the nature of the disclosed additional need the procedure will be the same as for a declaration made at the start of the course, with the exception of a concern raised by a tutor see below, which will involve one or more of the following options:

1. **Risk Assessment - Completion of Student Risk Assessment & Support Plan**
The Course Director will liaise/meet with the student to assess and determine the procedures to be put in place to minimise the identified risk.
2. **Learning Assessment - Completion of a Support Plan Form**
The student has declared a learning disability for the first time since being offered a place and starting the course through the completion of a **M&LS Review Form**.

NB. Alternatively, the tutors may suspect the student has an unidentified learning need as they are struggling to complete course assignments with the standard number of allocated tutorials. The student is then required to complete a **Declaration of Learning Support Needs Form** to confirm whether or not they think they may have a learning disability and possibly need additional support.

In either of the above situations, the student needs to provide written professional evidence of any learning disability before any reasonable adjustments can be put in place.

Once provided, the Course Director will follow the **Learning Assessment & Support Plan Process** points 1-5 above, with the aim of supporting the student's learning.

3. **Learning Assessment – Additional Review of Support Plan Form**

The student already has a Support Plan in place, but prior to the scheduled review date, they request additional support/further reasonable adjustments, then the tutors provide them with a **M&LS Review Form** which once completed is submitted to the Course Director. Depending on the nature of the request the Course Director, in liaison with the Course Supervisor if deemed necessary, will determine whether or not the student needs to provide additional written professional evidence regarding any newly declared learning disability. Following this a meeting with the Service Support Manager, and tutors if deemed necessary, will be conducted and an interim **Support Plan Review Form** completed, if applicable, detailing any further agreed reasonable adjustments to be put in place.

Reasonable Adjustments

The School is able to make appropriate “reasonable adjustments” to standard assessment arrangements, wherever this is deemed fitting. A reasonable adjustment is any action that helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the student at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. Reasonable adjustments permitted at the discretion of the School must be agreed with the Course Director and monitored by the student’s personal tutor. Once agreed, a **Reasonable Adjustment Log Sheet** must be completed and then kept within the student’s professional portfolio file so that it can be made available to the moderator during their visit.

Examples of Reasonable Adjustment/Support Include

- Extra Tutorial Support - To enable the student to understand the assessment criteria requirements of written coursework assignments.
- Software – Such as Texthelp and Write and Dragon Dictate to support the further development of literacy and help with proof reading.
- Hardware – Extended use of Library Facilities.
- Language Grammar Support – From an independent lay person who is not a family member or relative, acting as a scribe or proof-reader to help with the writing of assignments.
- Extension Times – Longer time periods of up to 30% in order to complete assignments.
- Word Count Margin – An increase of up to 30% for assessed assignments.
- Audio Recording – Group tutorials on assignment requirements and assessment criteria.
- Viva Support – Opportunity to verbally demonstrate the ability to understand the theoretical knowledge contained.