# Disability Service Educational Support Worker Pack

## Updated Sept 2019

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## Disclaimers

* A student’s application for Reasonable Accommodations with the Disability Service is strictly confidential and is protected under Data Protection legislation. Confidential information about the student may not be disclosed to anyone outside of the Disability Service, without the agreement of the student, except in cases where there is justifiable concern regarding the personal safety of the student or others.
* All Educational Support Workers (ESWs) with direct contact with students must be Garda Vetted and have proof of same before being assigned an ESW role. ESWs must contact the Disability Service in the relevant HEI for information on the process of applying to be Garda vetted.
* Third party providers supplying ESW support on behalf of HEI are required to ensure that ESWs have been Garda vetted as per tender agreements.
* ESWs are only responsible for educational assistance and tasks that arise during college contact hours.
* Failure of the ESW/Student to meet any of the terms as outlined in the job descriptions may result in the withdrawal of the service.
* Students may be required to sign and verify the accuracy of timesheets submitted by ESWs to confirm that the agreed support has been delivered.
* The cancelation policy to cancel or rearrange ESW support may vary between HEIs. The relevant Disability Service should be contacted for confirmation of the cancelation period.
* If a student is not satisfied with the support being delivered, and if it cannot be resolved, the Disability Service should be contacted.
* The student and ESW should not be in contact outside the contracted hours unless in exceptional circumstances.
* ESWs should utilise their own laptop for notetaking or other preparatory work and accept full responsibility for it.

## What is an Educational Support Worker?

An Educational Support Worker (ESW) provides support to students registered with the Disability Service, to provide students with the opportunity to fulfil their academic potential.

Examples of Educational Support Worker roles include, Academic Personal Assistants, Notetakers, Irish Sign Language Interpreters and Academic Tutors.

Potential ESWs should contact the relevant Higher Education Institution (HEI) to find out about the process of applying to register as an ESW.

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| Notetaker |
| Description of role  |
| * Notetakers record accurate notes, either written or typed, on behalf of the student(s) to whom they have been assigned. These notes are not a full transcript of the class material.
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| Person specification |
| * Notetakers should ideally have an undergraduate qualification. In some cases, such as a language or technical subject, it may be necessary for a Notetaker to have a background in the discipline.
* Notetakers must have good spelling and grammar and be able to record notes quickly and accurately.
* Notetakers must have legible writing if taking handwritten notes and have proficient typing skills when typing notes.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of Notetaker  |
| * A Note taker’s role is to take notes in classes or other relevant academic events. Notetakers do not take a word for word transcription of the class.
* Notetakers must complete any training deemed necessary. This may include training on notetaking skills, keyboard skills, or health and safety training when working in laboratories.
* Notetaking hours are agreed in advance with the Disability Service at the beginning of each term. Notetakers must attend all agreed classes (lectures, tutorials, labs) and record accurate and detailed notes on the content delivered, including audio visual material, graphics and diagrams.
* At the beginning of term, Notetakers should introduce themselves to lecturers but not provide the name or contact information of the students. Lecturers should be advised to contact the Disability Service if additional information is required.
* Notetakers must provide their own equipment (e.g. laptop) and accept full responsibility for it. Laptops must be password protected to protect the confidentiality of student information. Notetakers should ensure the autosave feature is enabled on their laptop and that they have sufficient battery to take the notes for each lecture.
* Notetakers must arrive punctually and be prepared to take notes from the beginning of the class.
* An electronic copy of any notes taken should be provided to the student(s) within 24 hours, and also to the Disability Service, clearly indicating the date, time, location of the class, and the module (subject).
* Written copies of any notes taken should be provided to the student(s) at the end of the class, clearly indicating the date, time, location of the class, and the module (subject).
* Notetakers must not give copies of the notes to any third party, unless directed to do so by the Disability Service.
* If a Notetaker is unable to attend a class, sufficient notice should be given to the Disability Service so that an alternative Notetaker can be assigned.
* In the event that a student does not require notetaking services for a particular lecture they are required to give 24 hours’ notice. If adequate notice is not given, the Notetaker is entitled to be paid in full for the session.
* Notetakers must maintain accurate signed records of the support provided to the student and submit these records to the Disability Service when requested.
* Be discreet, respect the privacy of the student and liaise with the Disability Service regarding any concerns or issues in relation to the student or support service.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of the Student |
| * Provide timetables to the Disability Service or designated Notetaking Service as early as possible to allow sufficient time to source Notetakers for required classes.
* Delays in providing timetables or in notifying of any course changes may result in delay in the support being provided.
* Ensure they have contact details for their Notetakers.
* Inform the Notetaker and the Disability Service or designated Notetaking Service of any changes to contact details or course schedule.
* Notetaking services are provided on condition that students attend all classes. If the student does not attend, the Notetaker will forward the notes to the Disability Service and not the student. In exceptional circumstances, such as absence from a course due to serious illness, a student may be permitted to receive lecture notes while absent. This must be pre-approved by the Disability Service.
* Provide 24 hours’ notice to the Notetaker if unable to attend a session or if there is a change or cancellation to classes. The Notetaker will be paid for the class unless 24 hours’ notice is provided.
* Provide feedback to the Notetaker on the style of notes (format and layout of notes, including font size and level of detail) so the notes can be adjusted accordingly.
* Do not ask the Notetaker to provide extra information, explanation, coaching or tutoring assistance.
* Must not provide the notes for sale, as a favour or for free to any other person.
* Advise the Notetaker if unsatisfied with the support being delivered. If the issue remains unresolved, the Disability Service should be contacted.
* Students are required to sign and verify the accuracy of timesheets to confirm that the agreed support has been delivered.
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| Academic Personal Assistant  |
| Description of the Role  |
| * An Academic Personal Assistant (Academic PA) provides assistance with mobility around the campus, educational or physical tasks (i.e. photocopying, notetaking, carrying personal belongings) and some personal care needs that the student cannot complete independently.
 |
| Person Specification |
| * Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
* Sensitivity, confidentiality and respect for the privacy of the student at all times are paramount in this role.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of Academic Personal Assistant  |
| * Academic PAs must complete any training deemed necessary. This may include training on notetaking skills, keyboard skills, health and safety training for labs and manual handling.
* Academic PAs should work with the student to establish a positive working relationship.
* The primary responsibility of an Academic PA is to assist with educational support requirements that the student cannot complete independently.
* Academic PAs may be required to assist with mobility and orientation around the college.
* Academic PAs may be required to assist with educational tasks, sourcing library books and/or photocopying.
* Academic PAs may be required to assist with carrying personal belongings, books, folders and materials for the student.
* If providing notetaking support, Academic PAs must also adhere to the guidelines for Notetakers.
* Academic PAs should not ‘do the work’ but simply facilitate the student’s ability to participate. Academic PAs will not assist with, or complete, any of the work associated with the course of study and will not participate in class discussions etc. unless contributing directly on the student’s behalf
* Discuss any issues that arise with the student in the first instance, and if it cannot be resolved, the Disability Service or agency should be contacted.
* Academic PAs should be punctual.
* Provide 24 hours’ notice to the agency if unable to attend work so that cover can be provided.
* Academic PAs should not contact the student outside the contracted hours unless in exceptional circumstances.
* Academic PAs must maintain accurate signed records of the support provided to the student and submit these records to the Disability Service when requested.
* Be discreet, respect the privacy of the student and liaise with the Disability Service regarding any concerns or issues in relation to the student or support service.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of the Student |
| * Provide timetables to the Disability Service or designated provider as early as possible to allow sufficient time to source Academic PAs.
* Student should work with the Academic PA to establish a positive working relationship.
* Ensure they have contact details for their Academic PA and agree when and where to meet. Inform the Academic PA, Disability Service or designated provider of any changes to contact details.
* Inform the Academic PA, Disability Service or designated provider of any changes to requirements.
* Provide 24 hours’ notice to the Academic PA, Disability Service and designated provider and if unable to attend a session or if there is a change or cancellation to classes.
* Attend all classes where the Academic PA is present.
* Adhere to the guidelines for notetaking support if the Academic PA is also acting as a Notetaker.
* First discuss with the Academic PA if they are not satisfied with the support being delivered, and if it cannot be resolved, the Disability Service should be contacted.
* Students may be required to sign and verify the accuracy of timesheets to confirm that the agreed support has been delivered.
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| Academic Tutor |
| Description of the Role  |
| * Academic Tutor reviews course material with students. Support is delivered on a one-to-one basis and involves recapping of material covered in lectures.
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| Person Specification |
| * Ideally Academic Tutors should have knowledge of the subject area, including module content, assessment procedures and other subject specific information
* Ideally Academic Tutors should have previous experience in tuition and typically be a postgraduate with knowledge in the subject for tuition.
* Ideally the Academic Tutor will be recommended as suitable by the Academic Department
* Academic Tutors should be able to adapt their teaching style to meet the needs of diverse learners.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of the Academic Tutor |
| * The Disability Service will confirm the number of approved hours for subject specific tuition. Tuition times and venues should be agreed in advance between the tutor and the student.
* Tuition should take place in a venue on-campus.
* Liaise with relevant staff in the Academic Department for guidance on subject requirements and course content to be covered.
* Prepare a tutorial plan in advance of the first session with objectives for the number of tuition hours that have been approved.
* Discuss with the student the difficulties they are having and the learning and teaching methods that suit them best.
* Prepare for each session by engaging in appropriate research and retrieving necessary material in advance. This saves time to focus on the session’s content.
* Attempt to create a stimulating and interactive learning environment which enhances the student’s understanding of the module content.
* During a tutorial session, prompt the student for responses, present questions and help the student to answer the questions in a structured and academic manner.
* At the end of each session, ask the student for feedback and agree the material to be covered in the next session.
* Give adequate notice to the student if unable to fulfil an appointment. Reschedule the tuition for the next available time.
* Academic Tutors are entitled to be paid in full for the session if 24 hours’ notice is not provided where a student is unable to attend a tutorial.
* Complete the evaluation form provided by the Disability Service at the end of the tuition.
* Academic Tutors are expected to facilitate the student’s learning but are not responsible for the student’s performance – the student is responsible for their own learning and academic development.
* Academic Tutors should not offer assistance with completing assignments or proofreading/editing student’s work for submission.
* Observe and adhere to departmental rules.
* Academic Tutors must maintain accurate signed records of the support provided to the student and submit these records to the Disability Service when requested.
* Be discreet, respect the privacy of the student and liaise with the Disability Service regarding any concerns or issues in relation to the student or support service.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of the Student |
| * The Disability Service will confirm the number of approved hours for subject specific tuition. Tuition times and venues should be agreed in advance between the tutor and the student.
* Ensure they have contact details for the tutor and agree when and where to meet. Inform the tutor and the Disability Service of any changes to contact details.
* Tuition should take place in a venue on-campus.
* Provide 24 hours’ notice to the tutor if unable to attend a session. The tutor will be paid unless 24 hours’ notice is provided and this will be subtracted from the allocated time.
* Prepare for each session by engaging in appropriate research and retrieving necessary material in advance. This saves time to focus on the session’s content.
* Be responsible for their own learning and academic development.
* Give constructive feedback to the tutor to ensure that the most beneficial service is provided.
* First discuss with the tutor if they are not satisfied with the support being delivered, and if it cannot be resolved, the Disability Service should be contacted.
* Complete the evaluation form provided by the Disability Service at the end of the tuition.
* Students are required to sign and verify the accuracy of timesheets to confirm that the agreed support has been delivered.
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| Learning Support Tutor  |
| Description of the Role  |
| * A Learning Support Tutor provides individual support to students with a disability for academic development such as study skills, essay planning, time management and preparing for exams.
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| Person Specification |
| * Ideally Learning Support Tutors should have good academic knowledge that can be applied to multiple disciplines.
* Preferably the Learning Support Tutors should have previous tuition experience.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of the Learning Support Tutor |
| * Meet with students on an individual basis who are referred by their Disability Officer.
* Provide ongoing support for identified students as well as learning development drop-in sessions, workshops, classes and courses.
* Identify individual and group needs for students. This is done in conjunction with the relevant Disability Service.
* Design and deliver workshops on important and relevant academic support issues e.g. study and research skills, notetaking skills, learning technologies, academic writing, analytic skills, exam and revision techniques.
* Learning Support Tutors are expected to facilitate the student’s learning but are not responsible for the student’s performance – the student is responsible for their own learning and academic development.
* Give adequate notice to the student if they are unable to attend a session.
* Keep up to date in specific areas of learning support and teaching methodology.
* A Learning Support Tutor is not an Academic Tutor, a Proofreading service or an individual counselling service.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of the Student |
| * Ensure that they have contact details for their Learning Support Tutor and liaise with them to agree when to meet on campus.
* Inform the Disability Service and the Learning Support Tutor of any changes to contact details.
* Provide 24 hours’ notice to their Learning Support Tutor if unable to attend a session.
* Discuss, with the tutor, any difficulties and what learning tools/methods would suit best to assist the tutor to structure the tuition sessions.
* Be responsible for their own learning and academic development.
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| Irish Sign Language (ISL) Interpreter |
| Description of the Role  |
| * An Irish Sign Language (ISL) Interpreter facilitates communication between students who are deaf, their peers and college staff. ISL interpretation provides access to the teaching and learning environment and supports, as much as is possible to enable the student’s full participation in college life.
 |
| Person Specification |
| * ISL Interpreters must hold a recognised professional accreditation (i.e. Diploma/ Honours Degree in ISL/English Interpreting from the Centre for Deaf Studies in Trinity College Dublin or Bristol University.
* ISL Interpreters will also be members of a professional interpreting/translation body and adhere to their Code of Ethics.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of the ISL Interpreter |
| * Introduce themselves to lecturers at the beginning of each term or when there is a new lecturer. The Disability Service provides guidelines on ISL interpretation but it is sometimes helpful to discuss the role of the Interpreter with the lecturer and any arrangements that need to be made (e.g. seating arrangements, provision of materials, arrangements for facilitating class discussion).
* Work with the student and lecturer to obtain and study all necessary materials to prepare for interpreting responsibilities.
* Arrive ten minutes prior to lectures and interpreting assignments.
* Interpret any spoken, signed and/or audio information in a clear and concise manner, for the benefit of both the student and the staff.
* Obtain feedback from the student regarding signing style or subject-specific terminology. Be respectful of a student’s wishes for changes to their interpretation arrangements (e.g. style of signing and where and when interpretation is required).
* Interpret all that is said within the class including relevant comments.
* Complete any training deemed necessary such as health and safety training for interpreting in labs where hazardous material may be handled.
* Maintain confidentiality at all times by treating any information which may arise in the course of an interpreting assignment as privileged information. Any concerns regarding a student should be brought to the attention of the Disability Service.
* Contact the student and the agency if unable to attend an assignment. Sufficient notice should be provided so that cover can be provided.
* Be discreet, respect the privacy of the student and liaise with the Disability Service regarding any concerns or issues in relation to the student or support service.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of the Student |
| * Provide timetables to the Disability Service and designated provider as early as possible to allow sufficient time to source ISL Interpreters for required assignments.
* A student may request a particular ISL interpreter but due to timetabling and availability this may not always be possible and another ISL interpreter will be provided.
* ISL Interpreters should work with the student to establish a positive working relationship.
* Inform the Disability Service and/or designated provider immediately of any course changes. Delays in providing timetables and notification of any changes may result in a delay in providing the required support.
* Ensure they have contact details for their ISL Interpreters and agree when and where to meet. Inform ISL Interpreters and the Disability Service and/or designated provider of any changes to contact details.
* Ideally provide one weeks’ notice to the ISL Interpreter, designated provider and the Disability Service if unable to attend a session or if there is a change or cancellation to classes. Unforeseen absences/cancellations should be reported immediately.
* Where an ISL Interpreter is required to prepare for an assignment, ensure that they are provided with all required materials at least 48 hours in advance. It may also be necessary to meet with the Interpreter in advance to prepare for the assignment.
* Irish Sign Language (ISL) only can be provided. It is not possible to provide other sign language such as British Sign Language or American Sign Language.
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| SpeedText Operator |
| Description of the Role  |
| * SpeedText is a real time transcription system. It involves using two laptops, one for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing student to read the information that is transcribed on the other laptop by a specially trained operator. SpeedText Operators are also known as a palantypist or a stenographer.
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| Person Specification |
| * All SpeedText Operators should be appropriately and professionally qualified holding a recognised qualification in stenography or equivalent speciality.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of the SpeedText Operator |
| * Attend all assigned lectures, tutorials, labs and other academic contact hours, and record all spoken and/or audio information in a clear and concise manner. Hours are agreed in advance in consultation with the Disability Service.
* Provide the transcription to multiple students where there is more than one student in a lecture, tutorial, lab who are SpeedText users.
* Attend any specialist training required (e.g. in laboratories where hazardous material may be handled). This training will be provided by the relevant academic department when required.
* A projector or alternative technology solutions may be used when there are multiple SpeedText users. In this case, the SpeedText agency is responsible for providing appropriate equipment.
* Endeavour to facilitate any timetable changes if possible. Although timetables are agreed at the beginning of term, they are subject to change at short notice. A period of 24 hour advance notice shall be provided, where possible, if insufficient notice is provided the SpeedText operator will be paid for the scheduled hours.
* Not offer the transcriptions for sale, favour or free to another person unless authorised to do so by the Disability Service.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of the Student |
| * Ensure that they provide their timetable to the SpeedText Operator, SpeedText Agency or Disability Service as required.
* Ensure they have contact details for their SpeedText Operator and liaise with the SpeedText Operator to agree where and when to meet.
* Inform the Disability Service, the SpeedText Operator and SpeedText Agency of any changes to contact details and/or course changes.
* Provide a minimum of 24rs notes if there is a change or cancellation to lectures or tutorials.
* Negotiate with the SpeedText Operator before lectures about seating arrangements if working from a cable connection.
* Attend all lectures/tutorials where the SpeedText Operator is in place. If the student does not attend, the SpeedText Operator will forward any work undertaken in the lecture or tutorial to the Disability Service and not the student, unless the student has a pre-approved absence for disability related reasons.
* Must not offer the SpeedText Operator’s transcriptions for sale, favour or free to another person unless authorised to do so by the Disability Service.
* Not ask the SpeedText Operator to include extra information, explanation, coaching or tutoring assistance.
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| Assistive Technology Facilitator (ATF)/Alternative Media Format (AMF) Facilitator |
| Description of the Role  |
| * An Assistive Technology Facilitator/Alternative Media Facilitator (hereafter ATF/AMF) advises students on appropriate technology to support them in achieving their full academic potential.
* The AMF/ATF may provide training in the use of assistive technology to students.
* The AMF/ATF may support the student to transfer inaccessible material into alternative media format to allow a student access the material using screen readers or other software.
 |
| Person Specification |
| * ATF/AMFs must have sufficient technology skills to provide technical support to students who are learning to use assistive technology.
* Ideally the ATF/AMFs will have previous experience teaching assistive technologies to students.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of the ATF/AMF |
| * Enable ATFs provide support and information to allow students develop key technology skills to support them in their study to enhance independent learning.
* Enable AMFs will assist in helping a student access printed material where an alternative format may be needed such as large print, alternative electronic format, Braille, and audio such as digital recording. In some colleges the above work is done by the Library and/or the AT
* Help determine the appropriateness and usefulness of apps to determine if it meets the student’s unique learning needs. They can give information on apps for: note-taking, accessing books, identification, navigation and location, magnification, read-to-me, and braille.
* Enable a student to use Screen-reading and screen-magnification software. Facilitate the use of all the functions of a computer, making it possible for them to read and write documents, use the internet and send email, using only a keyboard and without needing to look at a computer screen. Screen-reading software available include: Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA), Jaws and Thunder. Students to this point may have been using Braille format but to have equal access, the ATF/AMF can assist in the transition to using both computers and software along with Braille such as the introduction of an iPad.
* Enable the student to use notetaking technologies to allow them to take notes effectively within a lecture environment to support independent learning. The ATF may supply Digital Dictaphones to students to record lectures and research information. The student is shown how to upload to their laptop and is then responsible for storing of materials.
* Show the student how to train the Voice Recognition Software and lead training sessions with the student.
* Supply Text-to-speech recognition software such as ClaroRead and Read and Write Text Gold and instruct on usage.
* AMFs request electronic versions of textbooks from the publisher.
* AMFs contact the student if publisher electronic files are not available to request their textbook for production.
* AMFs provide one alternative format copy of each material required for academic use.
 |
| Role and Responsibilities of the Student |
| * Be responsible for making an appointment with the ATF/AMF and ensuring that they attend. Students are requested to give adequate notice for a cancellation of an appointment and re-arrange for another appointment in a timely manner.
* Submit a copy of all relevant course information (syllabus, course schedule) to the AMF in advance of the academic semester/term where available.
* Materials provided to students in alternative formats is for personal use only and should not be distributed
* Complete the AT assessment form and the Equipment Borrowing contract that is provided.
* Take care when operating equipment loaned to the student by the Disability Service.
* Contact the AT/AMF to request training on any available assistive hardware or software.
* Attend the requisite number of training sessions for software/hardware supplied.
* Ensure that they have permission from Lecturers to use AT equipment during the course of a lecture and follow the institutions’ guidelines for recording audio in lectures.
* Be aware that equipment is supplied to students on the understanding that it is used for the completion of college related work only.
* Be aware that the College’s dignity and respect policy prohibits students from displaying sexually explicit material which interferes with anyone’s work or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment. Images of this nature found stored on Disability Service equipment will result in the immediate confiscation of equipment and the appropriate disciplinary action in line with the institutions’ policy on acceptable computer usage.
* Leave all control panel settings as set by the ATF and not alter the equipment in any other manner.
* Ask for permission to add third party software to the computer. Only academic software is permitted on Disability Service equipment.
* Report any problems with equipment immediately to the ATF.
* Not try to copy any software or any protected data that is compliant with copyright law.
* Not try to fix the equipment by themselves as this could forfeit the warranty of the equipment.
* Store equipment in a safe place when not in use.
* Provide an external drive (USB flash drive or external HD) to back-up important data and files.
* Inform the Disability Service and the AT/AMF Facilitator of any changes to contact details, course changes or technology needs.
* Equipment that is not being used by the student has to be returned to the ATF/AMF.
* Return AT equipment upon completion of their studies. Do not pass on or share equipment with any third parties.
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| Guidelines for the AT/AMF |
| The ATF/AMF can provide training in the following:Scanning a book: Each chapter should be saved as an individual document, with a title that refers to the main title of the publication. Any images should be edited into accessible format. The saved documents should be given to the student and copied to the appropriate Disability Service folder to be archived for future use.General Formatting Guidelines:* The standard font format is Arial 14 points.
* There should be no more than one column of text per page.
* The text should always justify to the left.
* The paragraph widths and indentations should be standard throughout the document.
	+ There should be a blank line between each paragraph.
	+ Square brackets [ ] must always be used to denote comments added by the AMF/ATF.

Bibliographic Information and References:* Each document should begin with the complete bibliographic information:
	+ Book: The name of the author, initial (year), title of the publication in italics, place of publication, publisher, page numbers.
	+ Journal article: Name1, Initial1, Name2, Initial2, (year) Title of article, title of the Journal Vol (no) pp.
	+ If the library code or ISBN numbers are available, these should also be included at the beginning of the document.
	+ For all other references, refer to the HEI’s Library guidelines.
* Academic references should be fully cited at the end of the scanned document and these must be checked carefully.

Page Numbers:* It is not essential that page numbers are included in the scanned document; however the page numbers from the original document are required.
* Insert p. and the number at the beginning of the text (after the reference), and each subsequent page should be numbered - even if this means breaking up a paragraph mid-sentence.
* Leave one line, then write p. and the number, leave another line, and continue with the text. This is necessary because if a student is quoting directly from the work of an author, page numbers must be cited in the references.

Italics and Bold Text:* During the scanning process, most Optical Character Recognition software packages recognise bold and italicised text, and retain this formatting.

Quotations:* Quotation marks must be recorded accurately and must be checked by the AMF.
* The most appropriate method for denoting block quotations is to use [block quote] and [end of block quote] at the beginning and end of the quote.

Footnotes:* When formatting footnotes, a blank line should be inserted, then [footnote1] followed by another blank line, the text of the footnote, followed by another blank line, followed by [end of [footnote1].
* The accuracy of footnotes should be verified before the document is submitted.

Tables:* Tables that are properly formatted in a Word document are usually accessible to persons with a visual impairment (VI). Therefore it is essential that tables are correctly represented, and that tables are used rather than columns of text. This may require that the facilitator inserts a table manually and copies the text into the table.

Diagrams and Images:* Diagrams and images can be difficult to describe to a person with a VI. The importance of the diagram or image and the essential information presented by it, must be assessed by the facilitator.
* The information presented will obviously vary but, in general, it is less likely that a student with a VI will need information about the colour of arrows or the artistic details of the image. It is likely that they will need to know the information desired to be conveyed.
* Many Optical Character Recognition programmes delete diagrams and pictures automatically and if this occurs, a description of the image is still necessary.

Descriptions should be typed within square brackets [ ]:* A general description, e.g. [figure 1: flow chart illustrating the process of photosynthesis…] or [a photograph of children playing…].
* In the case of flow charts, it can be useful to give an overall general description of the layout of the chart before giving the precise details contained within boxes. It can be difficult for a VI student to create a mental image of the diagram and consequently make sense of the comments unless a clear description of the overall appearance is provided.
* Useful descriptions might include [there are three boxes in a row, interconnected with arrows. An arrow from the centre textbox points down to a box below it. The left box from the row contains…].
* When working with a graph, type a general description first, e.g. [figure 2 pie chart…]
* State the names of the axes, the units, range and increments used as well as a general description of the graph shape.
* It is possible to produce graphs and other visual information in tactile format in order to overcome the problems associated with describing visual information. This however can be difficult to produce and can also be very time consuming.

Headers and Footers:* Headers and Footers from the original document should be deleted as there should be no need for further information and it can distract from the content.
* Once the editing process is complete the document should need no further information as it can distract from the content.

Once the editing process is complete the document should be saved to USB for the student’s use or emailed to the student, as an attachment. A copy should be stored in the Disability Service archive for scanned material. |