

National Learning Network

Investing in People, Changing Perspectives

CDVEC Disability Support Service

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Contents

rorev	3	
Intro	4	
<u>Acad</u>	emic Year 2003-2004	
	ay to day operation of Disability Support Service	6
	und for Students with Disabilities – 2004	8
New 1	Initiatives and Achievements 2003/2004:	12
Assist	cive Technology	12
Exam	ination Accommodations	13
Rehal	o Council Awards for Innovation	14
<u>Acad</u>	emic Year 2004-2005	
Intro	duction	16
Deve	opment of Policies and Procedures	16
The F	und for Students with Disabilities 2004/2005	17
Exam	ination Accommodations 2004-2005	20
_	vement in CDVEC Five-Year Plan: rowth of the Service	22
List o	of appendices	25
1.	Examination Guidelines	26
2.	Assistive Technology Toolkit	37
3.	Principal Approval Forms	40
4.	AT & Dyslexia guide	44
5.	The National Learning Network/CDVEC response to the HEA Discussion paper.	60
6.	Disability Support Officer Job Description	63



FOREWORD

This report describes the work of the Disability Support Service for the academic years 2003-2004 and 2004-2005. The Disability Support Service (DSS) is a partnership project between the National Learning Network (NLN) and City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC).

The aim of the service is to provide supports to students with disabilities, to provide support, equality and in-service training to CDVEC staff, and to educate and inform the general student population on disability and equality issues.

I wish to thank those involved in the project, from the staff of the National Learning Network to the Principals, staff and students involved. I would also like to acknowledge the considerable support given to the service by the Department of Education and Science.

Jacinta Stewart

Chief Executive Officer

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City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee



INTRODUCTION:

This report describes the Disability Support Service for the academic years

- 2003 2004
- 2004 2005

The Disability Support Service (DSS), which is a partnership project between The National Learning Network (NLN) and the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC), arose as a result of a Horizon project in 1995 between National Learning Network Ballyfermot and Ballyfermot Senior College. A group of people with disabilities wanted to access a course in Media Studies. Classes took place in Ballyfermot College of Further Education (FE) and staff from The National Learning Network supported both staff and students involved. Feedback from the students was very positive.

In March 2001 the CDVEC and The National Learning Network formed the Disability Support Service in:

- Ballyfermot College of FE
- Inchicore College of FE
- Pearse College of FE

In September 2002 the service expanded to four additional colleges:

- Coláiste Dhúlaigh College of FE
- Coláiste Íde College of FE
- Plunket College of FE
- · Whitehall College of FE.

Killester College of Further Education joined the project in October 2003

The service provides support and information to students and staff on a wide variety of disability issues. The current Disability Support Officers are Eileen Daly and Sarah Mc Aree.

The Disability Support Service deals with a wide range of disabilities. These include:

- Dyslexia (and other Specific Learning Difficulties)
- Deafness
- Hearing Impairment
- Blindness
- Visual Impairment
- Mobility Issues (including Multiple Sclerosis, Cerebral Palsy, Friedreichs Ataxia, Spinal Injury)
- General Learning Difficulties
- Long Term Ongoing Illness
- Dyspraxia
- · Chronic Pain
- Aspergers Syndrome



The project is managed collaboratively and makes effective use of the expertise and resources of both CDVEC and The National Learning Network. Essential aspects of the Disability Support Service include:

- Meeting the needs of individual students by seeking funding through the Fund for Students with Disabilities
- Sourcing funding for students who are not eligible for funding through the Fund for Students with Disabilities
- Discussion and resolution of issues around disability policy
- Needs based in-service training for CDVEC Staff
- Production and publication of reports
- Presentations at conferences and seminars
- o Planning for the expansion of the service
- Seeking funding for projects and initiatives connected with the service

In addition to its core activity in the eight CDVEC Further Education colleges listed above, the DSS is also available to all other colleges within CDVEC as a resource on disability issues. This resource allows for the sharing of information and procedures in the area of disability. It can range from a brief overview of disability issues to developing an inclusive perspective within whole-school planning.

The DSS aims to:

- Identify areas requiring development in the forthcoming academic year.
- Seek opportunities to work more closely with The National Office of Equity and Access within The Higher Education Authority (HEA) particularly in relation to funding structures under The Fund for Students with Disabilities.
- Continue to make the procedures developed within the DSS available to other colleges within CDVEC.
- Continue to develop and promote models of best practice of inclusive education within the CDVEC.

The CDVEC National Learning Network Support Service would particularly like to thank Jacinta Stewart, CEO, City of Dublin VEC, for her past and continuing support of the service.



The day-to-day operation of the Disability Support Service

The Disability Support Service has developed uniquely in each college. The development of the service is determined by the management style of individual principals and the other student support services, which are available within the college.

The Disability Support Officer (DSO) works with students in many different ways. This includes developing study skills, time management, planning and applying for funding, where appropriate. The DSO also liaises with students, examination officers and principals to implement examination accommodations.

The Disability Support Service also provides in-service training to the colleges. Such training includes:

- Disability Awareness
- Specific Learning Difficulty Training
- Deaf Awareness
- Assistive Technology Training

The Disability Support Service is also available on registration days and open days. The service also advertises within the college to alert students and staff to the fact that there is a Disability Support Service within the college.



The following is a synopsis of the colleagues with whom the Disability Support Officer liaises on a regular basis in each college:

Coláiste Dhúlaigh	PrincipalCareer guidance counsellorsCourse co-ordinators
Killester	PrincipalStudent support servicesOfficerIndividual tutors
Plunket	PrincipalDeputy PrincipalSpecial needs committee
Whitehall	 Deputy Principal Student support services team Career guidance counsellors Student welfare officer Learning support tutor CDVEC psychologist
Inchicore	 Principal Career guidance Course co-ordinators Teachers CDVEC psychologist
Coláiste Íde	PrincipalDeputy PrincipalCareer guidance counsellors
Pearse	PrincipalCareer guidance counsellorsCourse co-ordinatorsTeachers
Ballyfermot	 Principal Career guidance counsellors Course co-ordinators CDVEC psychologist



The Fund for Students with Disabilities 2003 - 2004

The Fund for Students with Disabilities is the main source of funding available for students with disabilities in further education. The Disability Support Officer also provides information on other sources of funding such as B.T.E.I., Millennium Fund, V.E.C. grant and Health Board grants. The Disability Support Officer will also refer the student to the V.T.O.S. Officer, if appropriate. We will also look at low cost solutions for students if they are not eligible for the Fund for Students with Disabilities. (See appendix 2: Assistive Technology Toolkit).

In 2003, responsibility for the co-ordination, management and administration of The Fund for Students with Disabilities transferred from The Student's Support Unit of The Department of Education & Science to The National Office of Equity and Access within The Higher Education Authority, (HEA).

The aim of the fund is to assist students with disabilities to participate in Further & Higher Education. Grants are provided to students (through their college) towards the cost of equipment or human supports, such as note-takers, to enable them to access their course of study.

Historically, Further Education has been the least served sector in terms of funding. Supports are often not implemented at the start of the year, as funding may not have been approved under the Fund for Students with Disabilities. This means that the student has to wait until funding is available, unless the individual principal is willing to provide the support in the hope that the funding will come through.

The co-ordinator of the Disability Support Service and the CDVEC Education Officer meet with representatives from HEA on a regular basis to discuss ways in which both parties can work together to ensure that the Fund for Students with Disabilities can best meet the needs of students within the Further Education sector.

Positive Changes:

During the academic year 2003/04 a Renewal Funding mechanism was implemented. This enabled students who were returning to study for a second year to have their renewal applications processed in late August or early September. For other students whose circumstances had changed from the previous year, a Change of Needs form was introduced. This enabled students whose needs changed during the academic year to access additional funding. For example, if a student moved house during term and their transport costs increased, an application for funding for additional transport costs may be submitted for consideration.

In the 2003/04 academic year, the deadline for applications received was removed. Previously, the date for all applications was mid November. This allowed students who had not presented themselves to the Disability Support Service by this date to make an application for supports.



Summary of Educational Support Worker hours requested under the fund for students with disabilities 2003-2004

College	Type of resource	Amount Requested	Total
Whitehall	PA x 2 1-1 tuition	5,197.50 1,320.00	6,517.50
Plunket	0	0	0
Coláiste Dhúlaigh	Note taker x 2 1-1 tuition ISL Interpreter	9,355.50 693.00 12,170.40	22,218.90
Coláiste Íde	Ste Íde Personal Assistant 1,3 1-1 tuition Note taker x 2		1,8348.00
Ballyfermot	Dyslexia tuition x 5	10,989.00	10,989.00
Killester	ISL Interpreter Note taker 1-1 tuition Dyslexia tuition	14,190.00 3,300.00 4,884.00 7,326.00	29,700.00
Inchicore	Reader 1-1 tuition Dyslexia tuition	1,650.00 3,663.00 7,326.00	12,639.00
Pearse	0	0	0
TOTAL			100,412.40



	Whitehall	Plunket	Coláiste Dhúlaigh	Coláiste Íde	Ballyfermot	Inchicore	Killester	Pearse
	€	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
PC		1,900.00					1,199.00	
Laptop					6,600.00	1,650.00		1,650.00
Scanner					734.00		367.00	
JAWS	995.00							
Kurzweil					1,788.00	555.00	1,367.00	
Dragon					660.00			
Quicktionary						365.95	356.95	
Spellmaster						100.00	150.00	
Text help					279.00			
Mindful					90.00			
Mini Disc						270.00		
Conversor						454.00		
Assistive Technology	300.00	2,979.74	650.00	0				
TOTAL	1,295.00	4,879.74	650.00	0	10,151.00	3,394.95	3,439.95	1,650.00

<u>Summary of Assistive Technology requested under the fund for students with disabilities 2003-2004</u>



COLLEGE	ESTIMATED COST
	€
Whitehall	1,980.00
Plunket	624.36
Coláiste Dhúlaigh	4,913.70
Coláiste Íde	24,994.20
Ballyfermot	3,300.00
Inchicore	0
Killester	0
Pearse	0
TOTAL	35,812.26

Summary of transport costs requested under the fund for students with disabilities 2003-2004

COLLEGE	AMOUNT REQUESTED €	AMOUNT GRANTED €
Whitehall	9,792.50	7,782.75
Plunket	5,504.10	2,148.39
Coláiste Dhúlaigh	27,782.20	17,548.47
Coláiste Íde	43,342.20	15,300.70
Ballyfermot	24,440.00	10,444.75
Inchicore	16,033.95	1,545.86
Killester	33,139.95	6,402.32
Pearse	1,600.00	140.69
TOTAL	161,634.90	61,313.93

Summary of total funding requested and granted under the fund for students with disabilities 2003-2004



NEW INITIATIVES AND ACHIEVEMENTS 2003/2004:

During 2003/04 The National Learning Network/CDVEC Disability Support Service developed a number of new initiatives. Significant progress and recognition have been achieved in the following areas:

- Assistive Technology
- Examination Accommodations
- Rehab Council Innovation Awards 2004

Assistive Technology

Background:

During the 2003/2004 academic year, the area of Assistive Technology (AT) was identified by the Disability Support Service as an aspect of the service that needed to be reviewed.

The numbers of students that access the Disability Support Service who use AT is increasing and therefore it is important for the service to ensure that the area of AT is incorporated into the overall service delivery framework.

Throughout the 2003/2004 academic year the Disability Support Officers examined current practice in relation to AT and sought to develop best practice in relation to AT by:

- Receiving informal feedback from students on the AT they used
- Participating in a two week High Tech Assistive Technology course delivered by Enable Ireland and accredited by DIT
- Researching current models of best practice and also reviewed some products available

Following from this process the following actions were achieved:

• The DSS decided to use the 'matching person with technology' model when working with students in the CDVEC. This model is widely recognised as best practice in the field of Assistive Technology. In September 2002 National Learning Network, in partnership with The Central Remedial Clinic, San Diego State University (SDSU) and The Institute of Matching Person with Technology (IMPT), hosted a two - day conference in Dublin called "Demystifying Assistive Technology". The conference examined the positive impact Assistive Technology can have on the daily lives of people with disabilities. This model involves looking at the relationship between the person, the technology and the environment when deciding on what technology will match the person's requirements. This model will be incorporated into the Information and Evaluation of Supports Required Form that



students complete when they initially access the Disability Support Service.

- Two low tech 'toolkits' have been compiled by the Disability Support Service (see appendix 2 for list of items contained in the toolkit). Students can sample the items contained in the toolkits before purchasing the item. It is hoped that when students have the opportunity to sample various pieces of technology that the rate of technology abandonment will be minimal.
- The Disability Support Service has recruited an Assistive Technology Technical Support Worker one day per week. It is envisaged that this person will train and support students in the use of AT purchased (if appropriate) and will be available for technical support if necessary.
- The service continued to build networks and maintain links with both voluntary and community organisations that have specialist knowledge in the area of AT
- The Disability Support Service produced "Dyslexia and Information Technology: A Guide for Students and Staff in CDVEC". The aim of the guide is to introduce both students and staff to some of the technology available and to advise them on how they may find the supports useful. It has been available to both staff and students since September 2004. (See appendix 4)

The area of AT will continue to be reviewed systematically to ensure best practice, to keep up-to-date with technological advances and product development and to examine integrating AT solutions into mainstream college systems.

Examination Accommodations

During the 2003-2004 academic year, the DSS did identify with students the examination accommodations they would require when completing the Student Information and Evaluation of Supports required form.

At the request of the student this information was forwarded to the examinations officer. However, it must be noted that students who did not access the DSS or students who had limited contact with the service may have requested accommodations directly from the Examination Officer or their course co-ordinator.

The method of requesting examination accommodations has led to a lack of uniformity throughout the different colleges and the need for developing best practice guidelines was identified.

The Disability Support Officer and College Management in Ballyfermot College of Further Education agreed that the DSS would develop a policy document in relation to examination accommodations for students. The



draft document was given to the college's Examination Officer and Principal for their input.

The draft document was used during the summer examinations as a working policy document. All students requesting examination accommodations contacted or were referred to the Disability Support Service. Training was also provided to students using readers and scribes.

Using the draft Examination Accommodation Guidelines as a working document proved to be quite successful in Ballyfermot College of FE. The final version of the document is in appendix 1.

Rehab Council Awards for Innovation:

Today in both the public and private sectors the key concept is innovation. Organisations strive to develop pioneering and inventive programmes. The Rehab Council Awards recognises such programmes that have been developed within the Rehab Group.

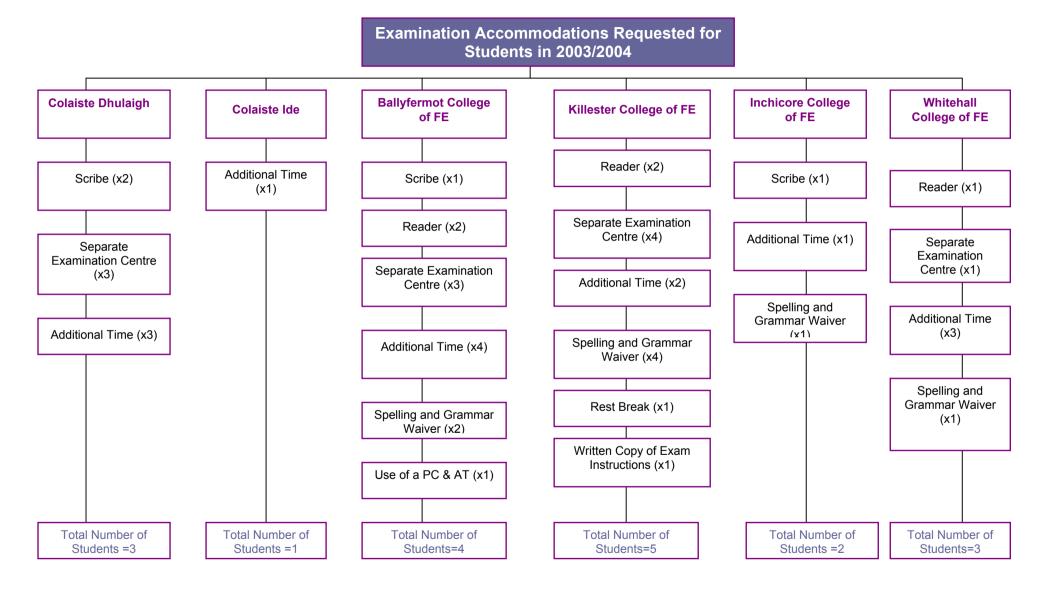
It is due to the unique partnership between City of Dublin VEC and the National Learning Network in the development and delivery of a support service that promotes access and inclusive education for all that the National Learning Network/CDVEC Disability Support Service was selected as recipients for the 2004 Awards.

The Disability Support Service was selected as one of four overall winners from over 42 project entries from within Rehab Ireland, England and Scotland. The Award ceremony was attended by the Disability Support Service team and Jacinta Stewart, Education Officer (now CEO), attended as the representative of CDVEC. Liam Hogan, Chairman of the Rehab Council, presented the Award.

The Disability Support Service held a reception to celebrate the award and to thank those involved in the project for their continued input and support.

The National Learning Network/CDVEC Disability Support Service does not intend to rest on its laurels! We view the receiving of the award as recognition of the success our collaborative has achieved to date and we intend to build on that success into the future.







Academic Year 2004 - 2005

Introduction:

The National Training and Development Institute (NTDI) formally changed the company name to The National Learning Network – "Investing in People, Changing Perspectives" on 1 June 2005.

The Disability Support Service has been consolidated during 2004 - 05 and policies and procedures have been developed as service growth demands standardisation and transparency.

The role of the Project Co-ordinator has changed to a more general overseeing of the project and her role in planning and liaising at a Head Office level has grown. However she still responds to principals and teaching staff as issues arise, and supports the Disability Support Officers on an ongoing basis.

Disability Support Officers report to the principal or person designated by the Principal.

Development of Policies and Procedures

In conjunction with CDVEC staff, the Disability Support Service has made significant progress in the implementation of procedures to foster a transparent, inclusive and efficient service. When a student accesses the Disability Support Service for the first time the Disability Support Officer will assist him or her in completing a Student Information and Evaluation of Supports Required Form. The rationale for completing this form is to enable the Disability Support Officer and the student to form a holistic picture of the most appropriate supports required to successfully complete their studies and participate fully in student life.

After any necessary discussion with Guidance, teachers, etc, the Disability Support Officer will recommend that the identified supports are implemented and a funding application will be completed and submitted to the HEA for consideration under The Fund for Students with Disabilities. Supports are implemented only with the approval of each college principal.

In order to facilitate this process a template has been designed to demonstrate the implementation status of each support. For example, a student may require funding for individual dyslexia tuition but the implementation of this support may be pending approval of funding from the Fund for Student with Disabilities. (See Appendix 3)

In June 2005 all educational institutions were invited to contribute to the Higher Education Authority (HEA) strategic plan. The National Learning Network and the CDVEC submitted a paper making suggestions and recommendations as to how the further education sector may be better incorporated in the strategy. The paper is included in Appendix 5.



The Fund for Students with Disabilities 2004/2005

The amount of funding requested and received under the fund for students with disabilities significantly increased during the academic year 2004/2005. The data below demonstrates this and it also provides a breakdown of how the funding was utilised in terms of resources and supports requested.

COLLEGE	AMOUNT REQUESTED €	AMOUNT GRANTED €
Killester	101,257.90	107,875.00
Whitehall	18,869.23	6,930.02
Coláiste Íde	41,573.00	41,573.00
Ballyfermot	60,284.00	60,124.00
Pearse	17,793.95	17,793.95
Inchicore	17,047.00	12,515.75
Coláiste Dhulaigh	1,885.00	1,885.00
Plunket	0	0
TOTAL	258,710.08	248,696.72

Summary of total funding requested and granted under the fund for students with disabilities 2004-2005



	TYPE OF RESOURCE	AMOUNT REQUESTED €	TOTAL
		•	€
Killester	P.A. Dyslexia tuition Additional Tuition ISL Interpreter Speedtext Individual Tuition	32,340.00 4,735.50 5,610.00 28,202.40 23,050.00 555.00	94,492.90
Whitehall	P.A.	12,416.80	12,416.80
Coláiste Dhúlaigh	Dyslexia Tuition	1,885.00	1,885.00
Coláiste Íde	Note Taker PA/Note Taker	9,464.00 16,170.00	25,634.00
Ballyfermot	Dyslexia Tuition PA ISL Interpreters Note Takers	13,175.00 9,240.00 25,146.00 5,544.00	53,105.00
Inchicore	Resource Hours Dyslexia Tuition	5,087.50 2,252.50	7,340.00
TOTAL			194,873.70

Summary of Educational Support Worker hours requested under the fund for students with disabilities



CDVEC Disability Support Service Report

September 2003 – August 2005

	Whitehall	Plunket	Coláiste Dhúlaigh	Coláiste Íde	Ballyfermot	Inchicore	Killester	Pearse
	€ 545.70	€	€	€	€	€	€	€
PC	545.70							
Laptop	1,376.98				1,650.00	3,050.00	1,700.00	
Scanner					367.00	370.00		
Kurzweil				1,299.00	555.00	3,877.00		
Dragon				450.00		420.00		
Alphasmart	110.43					370.00		
Spellmaster					60.00	50.00		
Text help						940.00	1,162.00	
Zoomtext	746.60							453.00
Trackball Mouse							120.00	
Penfriend							130.00	
Photocopying					400.00		100.00	
Dictaphone						250.00	160.00	
Mini Keyboard							158.00	
Joystick Mouse							605.00	
Predictive Text							150.00	
Video Camera							500.00	
Speakout						120.00		
TVIGVA Monitor								840.95
Talking Tutor						200.00		
Misc. A.T.(Cables, adaptors etc)	69.63					60.00		
INDIVIDUAL COLLEGE TOTALS	2849.34	0	0	1,749.00	3,032.00	9,707.00	4,785.00	1,293.95
TOTAL								23,416.29

Summary of Assistive Technology requested under the fund for students with disabilities 2004-2005



COLLEGE	ESTIMATED COST €
Whitehall	3,603.09
Plunket	0
Coláiste Dhúlaigh	0
Coláiste Íde	14,190.00
Ballyfermot	4,147.00
Inchicore 0	
Killester	1,980.00
Pearse	*16,500.00
TOTAL	40,420.09

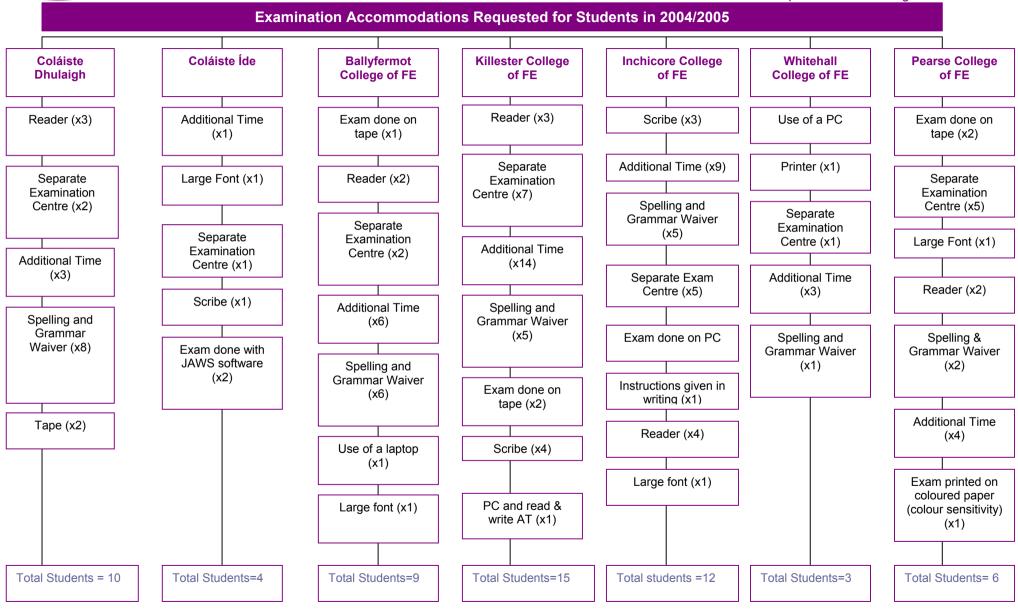
<u>Summary of transport requested under the fund for</u> students with disabilities 2004-2005

Examination Accommodations 2004-2005

Requests for examination accommodation increased significantly in 2004/2005. After discussions with relevant staff, examination officers, coordinators and Principals, guidelines for examination accommodation for students in CDVEC were implemented in all 8 exam centres. The diagram below provides an analysis of the type of accommodation provided to students for the examinations in 2004/2005.

^{*}Some funding carried over from 2003/2004. This was not included in the figures for 2003-2004



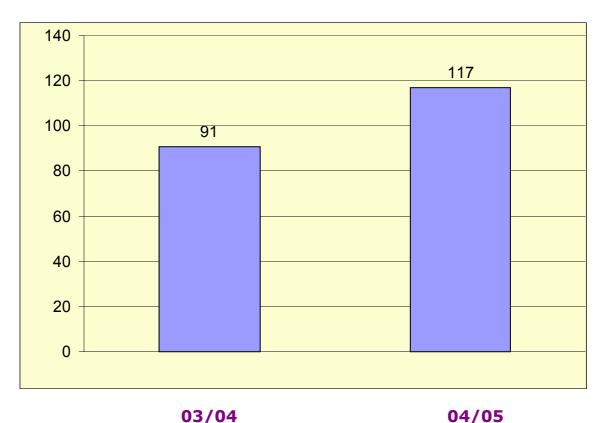




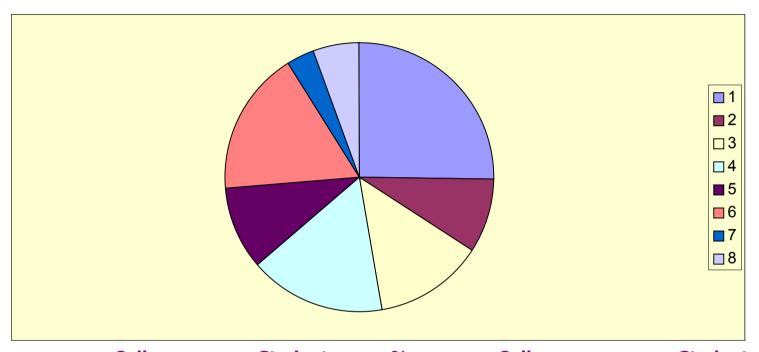
<u>Involvement in CDVEC five-year plan:</u> THE GROWTH OF THE SERVICE

Due to the increase in profile of the Disability Support Service, the number of students availing of the service has increased greatly. The graph shows a growth of 29% over the past academic year.

When compiling this report, it was decided that a new standardised format for measuring the use of the service would be formulated. Each student who visited the Disability Support Service was counted by year, as opposed to each term. Numbers of visits were not taken into account. The frequency with which students contacted the DSS varied from a once-off query to meeting with the DSO on a weekly basis. Therefore, each number reflects one student who accessed the service, as opposed to one meeting.







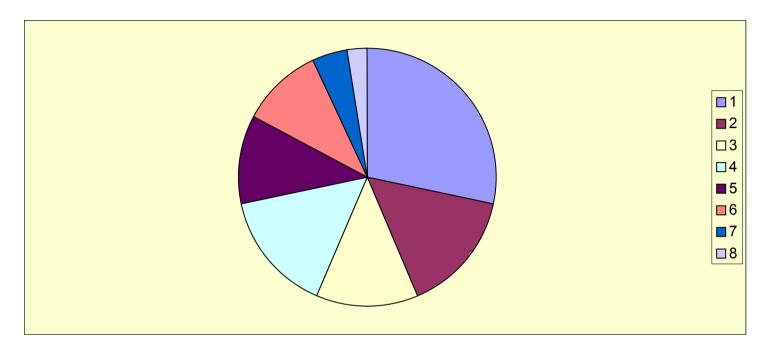
College **Students** % College **Students** % 1 Killester 23 (26%)5 Coláiste Dhulaigh (10%)9 2 Inchicore (9%) 6 Coláiste Íde 16 8 (18%)3 Pearse 12 (13%)7 Whitehall 3 (3%)4 Ballyfermot 15 (16%)8 Plunkett 5 (5%)

Total number of students: 91

Comparative analysis by college of the number of students who accessed the Disability Support

Service in the 2003/2004 academic year





College	Students	%	College	Students	%
1 Killester	33	(29%)	5 Coláiste Dhulaigh	13	(11%)
2 Inchicore	18	(15%)	6 Coláiste Íde	12	(10%)
3 Pearse	15	(13%)	7 Whitehall	5	(4%)
4 Ballyfermot	18	(15%)	8 Plunkett	3	(3%)

Total number of students: 117

Comparative analysis by college of the number of students who accessed the Disability Support
Service in the 2004/2005 academic year



Appendices

Appendix 1	Examination	Guidelines
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Appendix 2 Assistive Technology toolkit

Appendix 3 Principal approval forms

Appendix 4 AT and Dyslexia guide

Appendix 5 The National Learning Network/CDVEC submission to

the HEA

Appendix 6 Disability Support Officer Job Description



Appendix 1: Guidelines on Examination Accommodations for Students within CDVEC

March 2005

Contents

- Introduction
- Context for Policy Development
- o Principles that Govern Examination Accommodations
- o Funding for Examination Accommodations
- o Process for Requesting Examination Accommodations
- o Implementing Examination Accommodations
- Use of Technology During the Exams
- Recommendations



Introduction

Within the Further Education Sector in recent years an inclusive education ethos has developed and this model of inclusion has begun to be incorporated into all aspects of service delivery. 'Inclusive Education creates conditions within mainstream at primary, secondary and tertiary levels to allow all members of society to access the educational content of curricula and access social activities in a manner that will allow autonomy to emerge under an egalitarian ethos' (Duffin, forthcoming).

The overall examinations policy of an educational institute, as well as examinations accommodations, need to be considered as part of an inclusive education perspective, as examinations are central to the academic process and it is within this setting that students' knowledge and abilities relating to their courses of study are assessed. Therefore, it is essential that equality of opportunity and equity of assessment within the examination process for students with disabilities is addressed by educational institutions.

By examining current assessment procedures and by identifying barriers students experience in effectively demonstrating subject knowledge within an examination setting, colleges of further education can begin to move towards developing a clear and transparent policy in this area that reflects the diverse learning and assessment requirements of students.

Context for Policy Development

The need for a policy document in relation to examination accommodations has been identified. Across the VEC there are a number of awarding bodies for the wide range of courses available, the largest of which is FETAC. Presently FETAC are operating under the National Council for Vocational Awards Regulations for Centres and Candidates, March 2002, which allow local examination centres to implement certain examination supports on a local basis to facilitate students. Other awarding bodies also permit the college to employ reasonable accommodations as long as the awarding body is kept informed.

So while some students are facilitated, the accommodations that are implemented are done on an adhoc basis across the VEC resulting in a lack of standardisation and lack of uniformity of process.

Therefore, it is necessary to develop a policy on examination accommodations with sound governing principles that also complies with legislative requirements, which can be incorporated into a broader inclusive education model.



Principles on which the provision of examination accommodations are based:

All requests for examination accommodation should be informed by the following principles:

- Examination accommodations should be made for students, who because of a temporary, permanent, or long-term disability require accommodations to effectively demonstrate their knowledge in an examination situation
- Any accommodation awarded should not compromise the integrity of the examination process
- Since the core principle of the examination is equity of assessment, all accommodations should be designed to minimise the disadvantage experienced by students with disabilities rather than to provide students with a competitive advantage
- Examination accommodations should be implemented to support the student in demonstrating her or his knowledge in an examination situation and they should not be implemented to compensate for a possible lack of achievement arising from a disability
- The specific accommodations should be made after consultation with the individual students with consideration given to the fact that different subjects and different methods of assessment may make different demands on students
- Where it is not possible for a student to participate in a particular type of assessment it should be possible for the student to apply for an alternative mode of assessment providing the purpose of the examination would not be compromised
- It is essential to ensure that any accommodation made should not compromise the objective of the assessment, i.e. that students are required to demonstrate a predetermined level of ability in relation to essential course requirements



Funding for Examination Accommodations

Funding for examination accommodations is not available through the HEA's Fund for Students with Disabilities. The guidelines in relation to the Fund for Students with Disabilities (or form DF5b) specifically states that 'the fund cannot grant resources for the provision of services that can reasonably be expected to be provided by the college (e.g. counselling, examination accommodations) or by any other agency.'

Therefore, as external funding is not available, it is the responsibility of individual colleges to provide accommodations required by students from the overall college examination budget.

Process for Requesting Examination Accommodations

Information Provision

Students need to be aware of what accommodations are available and the application process involved. It is the responsibility of the college to ensure that this information is made available to students and this information can be disseminated in the following ways:

- Information on the availability of examination accommodations for students with disabilities should be outlined in the college's students' handbook and on the college website
- The Examinations Officer, or a designated person in each college, should write to any students who identified themselves as having a disability, informing them of the application process when requesting examination accommodations

Applying for Accommodations

Once a student has been informed of the availability of examination accommodations it is the responsibility of the student to request such support. All requests for examination accommodations should be made through the Disability Officer in the college (or other designated person if there is no Disability Officer attached to the college). It should be the responsibility of the Disability Officer to:

- Work with the student in identifying the most appropriate examination accommodations for them and this should be done in consultation with relevant teaching staff
- To provide support to the student by giving them the chance to sample the various options available
- To request from the student evidence of a disability which is required before any accommodation can be implemented



On the basis of the documentation provided by the student and from other discussions with either the student or teaching staff, the Disability Officer should then make recommendations on accommodations to the Examinations Officer in the college.

It is then the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to ensure that the accommodations requested are put in place and then to inform individual students of the specific arrangements for their examinations (this should be done several weeks before the exams start and students should also have the opportunity to meet with any support personnel such as readers, scribes etc. they will be working with in advance of the exams).

The Disability Support Officer will source and provide training for any support personnel such as readers, scribes etc. and will be available for consultation on any issues relating to examination accommodations.

If a student is not happy with their exam accommodations s/he should write to the principal of the college with all the details and the principal will give a final decision after looking at all the documents provided.

All staff in the college need to be familiar with the policy on examination accommodations for students with disabilities and receive a copy of this policy.

Implementing Appropriate Examination Accommodations

The Examinations Officer continues to have responsibility for the overall examinations process, particularly the control and storage of papers. Therefore it is through the Examinations Officer that examination accommodations recommended by the Disability Support Service will ultimately be implemented. While the process of awarding examination accommodations varies from student to student accommodations given will be based on standard best practice guidelines.

Role of the Invigilator

Invigilators need to be familiar with how exam accommodations operate.

The invigilator is responsible for obtaining examination questions and returning all examination papers. It is also the role of the invigilator to ensure that the examination paper is available in a format that is accessible to the student, so if, for example, a student requires an exam paper to be scanned into the computer, this should be done by the invigilator before the exam starts. However, if the exam paper is presented to the student in a format that is totally inaccessible it is the duty of the invigilator to bring this to the attention of the Examinations Officer immediately.



During the exam it is up to the invigilator to make sure that all information is communicated to the student in a way that s/he can access and also to record if there were any difficulties during the exam with putting the exam accommodations in place.

Role of Examination Support Staff

Students may require support from specific personnel during the examination. Guidelines governing the role of these staff members during the exam are outlined below. However it is important to note that in general the person invigilating the exam should not play a dual role during the exam, for example, acting as the invigilator and a scribe.

If any problems come up during the exam it is up to the examination support staff to let the invigilator know what these problems are

Guidelines for Use of a Reader during an Exam

- A reader is a person who reads the exam paper to students and reads back their answers when the student asks them.
- The reader is only allowed to read what is written down on the exam paper or on the student's answer sheets. The reader is not allowed add in any other words or give advice to the students on how to answer the questions
- The reader is not allowed interpret exam questions for students
- The reader can repeat the reading of the exam paper/the students answers as often the student wants
- The reader may, if working with a visually impaired student, assist the student by using tactile maps, diagrams, graphs and tables to obtain the same information that a sighted person has access to.
- A reader working with a visually impaired student may give the spelling of a word only if requested
- A student using a reader must sit the examination in a separate examination centre
- A student using a reader should receive additional time, e.g.
- 10 minutes per hour
- Students may have worked with a reader throughout the year and may want to ask this person to act as a reader during the exams.
 However it would not be appropriate to have a fellow student or a family member act as a reader during the examination
- The person acting as a reader should be able to read accurately and at a reasonable rate the language associated with the subject being examined
- The reader should read through the whole exam paper at the beginning of the exam so the student can get an overall view of the exam paper. When the student has decided what questions s/he wants to answer they can ask the reader to reread these questions



- Both the student and the reader should have the opportunity to have practice sessions before sitting the exam
- Any difficulties that arise during the exam should be brought to the attention of the invigilator straight away
- Copies of the guidelines should be given to students, the person acting as a reader and the invigilator

<u>Guidelines for Using an Amanuensis or Scribe during</u> <u>an exam</u>

- An amanuensis or scribe is a person who in an exam writes down the student's answers
- The person acting as a scribe should be able to write legibly and be able to write in any language subject chosen by the student and be familiar with subject specific vocabulary and notation in scientific, technical and mathematical subjects
- The scribe should write down the exact text as dictated by the student
- The scribe should not write any other text other than that dictated by the student and should not give any advice to the student on any part of the exam
- There should be no communication between the student and the scribe during the exam, except to clarify the student's answers
- A scribe may read back the student's answers to the student as requested but may not read the exam paper to the student unless the student has also been granted the facility of a reader
- A student using a scribe must sit the exam in a separate examination centre
- A student using a scribe should receive additional time e.g. 10 mins per hour
- A student may have worked with a scribe throughout the year and may want to ask this person to act as a scribe during the exams. However it would not be appropriate to have a fellow student or a family member act as a scribe during the examination
- Both the student and the scribe should have the opportunity to participate in practice sessions before sitting the exam
- The scribe should be given a five minute rest break each hour
- Copies of the examination guidelines should be given to the student, the scribe and to the invigilator



<u>Guidelines for Using a Personal Assistant during an</u> Exam

- A personal assistant is a person that assists the student to complete manual tasks and with personal care
- A personal assistant may be permitted to stay in the exam centre during the exam even if they are not required to give support to students at all times. However, the personal assistant should not discuss any matter with the student during the exam, unless it relates to the student's need for personal care or assistance with manual tasks
- In general the P.A. should not be required to play a dual role during the examination, e.g. act as a P.A. and a reader. However, there are certain situations where the P.A., because of the working relationship she/he has with the student, would be most suited to supporting the student with other accommodations approved
- Copies of the examination guidelines should be given to the student, P.A. and invigilator in relation to the P.A.'s role during the exam

Guidelines for Using an Irish Sign Language Interpreter During Exams

- The person acting as an ISL Interpreter to the student should be a fully trained and qualified interpreter sourced from an appropriate organisation
- The interpreter should only interpret the exact sign/speech as communicated by the student or the invigilator
- The interpreter should not have any communication with the student or invigilator during the examination unless it relates to the communication of examination of questions and answers
- The interpreter should be familiar with the subject being examined
- The interpreter may be recorded as a back-up to the interpretation
- Copies of the examination guidelines should be given to the student, Interpreter and invigilator

Use of Technology During the Exams

Use of a Computer

- The use of a 'computer' in this document includes word processors, personal computers (P.C.'s) and any other micro processing devices that produces text.
- A student using a computer must sit their exam in a separate examination centre
- Details of the type of hardware and software used during the exam should be noted by the invigilator



- The exam file should be opened by the invigilator and saved using the student's name or student number
- The students should be provided with a floppy disc/CD which is labelled with the student's name/exam details at the beginning of the exam
- Students should use this floppy disc/CD to save their answers and must hand these up at the end of the examination
- When the examination has ended the completed exam should be printed and signed by the student (or the student's P.A.) and invigilator
- Setting up the computer and printing out the completed exam paper should not be considered as part of the examination and therefore should take place outside of the time allocated to the exam and these tasks should take place under the supervision of the invigilator
- If a student is using his/her own laptop all files relating to the subject being examined must be deleted to comply with examination regulations
- Provision should be made to have a computer technician on call in case of any fault with the computer. If time is lost due to a fault the student should be awarded the amount of lost time.
- If a student is using a college PC, the onus is on the college to ensure that any software or AT equipment that the student uses is available on the college PC
- It is the responsibility of the student to be proficient in the use of the computer and appropriate software or any other piece of technology the student wishes to use during the exams
- Any software or AT equipment used by a student during the exam must be approved by the college's Examination Officer prior to the exam
- The student should be given a copy of the guidelines in relation to using a computer/laptop during an exam

Guidelines for Use of a Tape Recorder During Exams

- A student using a tape recorder during an exam must use a separate examination centre
- The tape recorder should be tested prior to the exam commencing to ensure that it is in working order
- The only material to be recorded onto the tape is the student's answers.
- The student should indicate the question number and the actual question he or she is answering prior to recording each answer
- The tape recorder can be turned on and off to avoid periods of silence on the tape



- The student can replay the tape to review his /her answers
- The tape can be started and stopped by the student's P.A. as directed by the student if required
- The student should have to opportunity to practise using the tape recorder prior to sitting the exam
- When the exam has been completed this should be indicated on the tape by the invigilator. The tape should also be clearly labelled as to the contents of each tape
- The student should be given a copy of the guidelines in relation to using a tape recorder during an exam

Other Accommodations

In addition to the guidelines listed above, it is important to note that it is essential that consideration be given to the physical environment in which the student is required to do the exam. While some of these considerations may not be explicitly named in the accommodations that a student requires, it is essential that these elements be put in place to allow the student to complete the exam with minimum difficulty. Such considerations are:

- Is the building/room accessible to all students?
- Is the room easy to locate?
- Are there accessible toilets in the building?
- Are there enough sockets in the room for the Assistive Technology being used?
- Is the desk space adequate for the student's requirements?

It is necessary to consider these questions when planning the locations for exams universally and for students that require specific examination accommodations, and it is a fundamental part of these policy guidelines that these questions be addressed at the planning stages of organising any college exams.

Guidelines for Rest Breaks

Some students may be granted rest breaks as part of their examination accommodations. While the time of all rest breaks cannot be determined in advance, it is important that the invigilator follow the guidelines set for rest breaks in the exam period.

- A student may take a rest break/s during the exam if approved by the Examination Officer in advance of the exam
- The purpose of the rest break will be outlined to the student and the invigilator in writing prior to the exam and the amount of rest breaks and the duration of the rest breaks will also be set out in writing prior to the exam
- During the rest break the student is not permitted to communicate with any other person unless it is to questions to the invigilator about the rest break/exam or to a P.A. in relation to personal care



- The invigilator should supervise the student while the student is taking a rest break
- In situations when a rest break is taken when required by a student, the rest break may be timed by the invigilator and added on to the time specified for the exam

<u>Guidelines on Accommodating Students in Planning</u> Examinations

When setting out the examination timetables it is important to note that some students may fatigue quickly and other students may find it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time. To accommodate these students the possibility of spreading out the exam timetable and not having two examinations on the same day should be explored.

Other Policy Recommendations:

- While it is crucial for students to receive examination accommodations in order to effectively demonstrate their knowledge of the subject being studied, it is also crucial for the academic staff to review their practices in setting examination papers and explore the following issues:
 - o Is the language used in the exam accessible to all students?
 - o Is the format of the paper accessible to all students?
 - How do I create equity of process without compromising academic standards?

Each institution should provide training to its staff to provide a format in which to discuss and resolve these issues

- As many teaching staff also act as invigilators during the exams, it
 is necessary to provide training to teachers to familiarise them with
 the procedures involved, to allow them to perform effectively in
 this role, especially when invigilating for a student who requires
 specific accommodations.
- Each teacher should receive a copy of the college's policy on examination accommodations
- One component of examination accommodations is a spelling and grammar waiver. While this accommodation is available to students, no clear guidelines are available to teachers on how to mark these papers. This can result in a variation in the grades awarded to students and thus can compromise the academic process. Therefore, it is essential that these guidelines be developed as speedily as possible and that some training be given to staff on marking papers where a spelling and grammar waiver has been awarded



Appendix 2: Assistive Technology toolkit.

Low-Tech Toolkit

Product	Approx. Cost	Rationale for Including in Toolkit
Cherry Compact Keyboard & Key Guard	€14	This keyboard is smaller than the standard keyboard and users with limited movement may find it easier to use. The key guard can make it easier for users to select the key they want to use. Users can also rest their hands on the keyboard if using the guard without carrying out an unwanted function on the PC
Full Keyboard Stickers	€19	Keyboard stickers provide high contrast and larger letters, making keys easier to locate
PC Keyboard and Key guard	€93	Using the standard keyboard with a key guard can support PC access to people with restricted dexterity
Microspeed PC Trac usb	€110	This is larger than the standard mouse and the track-ball design supports users who do not have the fine motor skills that are required to use the standard mouse
Mini Mouse	€22	This small mouse is light weight and can help to avoid hand fatigue



Product	Approx. Cost	Rationale for Including in Toolkit
Signature Guide	FREE	This product has a cut-out window where you make your signature to place in the correct position on documents requiring signing.
15 Minute Mini Recorder	€30	This recorder allows the user to record up to 99 short messages, pieces of information or ideas. It is very compact and portable
Non-Slip Mats	€4	This product helps to solve many of the gripping and stabilization encountered when using IT
Bump-ons	FREE	These are tactile markings that can be used to identify specific keys on a keyboard
Dictaphones	€70	Using a dictaphone can allow the user to record large amount of information, e.g. the content of a lecture
Wrist rest	€34	Using a wrist rest can help maintain a neutral wrist position, making the user more comfortable and reducing wrist fatigue
Franklin Pocket Dictionary/Thesaurus	€40	This portable handheld dictionary has the following features: dictionary definitions, Thesaurus and phonetic spell correction and can be helpful to a wide range of users



Product	Approx Cost	Rationale for Including in Toolkit
Pen and Pencil Holder Non Retail Pack	<u>€3.00</u>	The various pen grips and writing pens are useful to people who have difficulties with fine motor movements as they are designed to make gripping pens/pencils easier and more comfortable
Tri-Go Grip	€15.61	
Grippit Ladies	€7.24	
Grippit Gents	€7.24	
Ring Pen	€32.88	
The Pencil Grip pack of 3	€11.62	
Dexball Writing Aid (Small)	€26.26	
Weighted Universal Holders Adult Model	€37.51	
Velcro Stick On Tape Black	€2.84	





College:	Centre Number:	Name of Suppor	t Worker:	Rec	ruitment Source:	
Role*: Teaching	Support	nume of suppor				
Please tick as appropri						
yslexia Tuition	ISL Interpreter	Note Taker	P.A.	Dlasca Snac	ify	
	13L Interpreter	Note Takei	г.А.	riease Spec		
Name of student	Hours per week	Date of instigation	Date of conclu	sion	Funding source	Approved
		evidence of qualifications will put on the payroll at the cent		payroll. If g	iving an invoice, ma	ximum of €40
agree for the above s	supports to be implemen	ted.				
agree to the above t	supports to be implemen					
rincipal's Signature:						
rincipal's Signature:						





|--|

College: Centre Number:

Name of Student	Support Required	Status of Implementation	Funding Source	Approved

Please sign below to confirm that you are aware of the current status of support implementation	1
Principal's Signature:	
Date	





Form C:3 Summary of Assistive Technology Supports Applied for

College: Centre Number:

Name of Student	AT/Equipment Required	Training Requirements	Supplier and Cost Information	Approved	Any other information

Please sign below to confirm that you are aware of the current status of support implement	entatio
Principal's Signature:	
Date	





Form C:4 Summary of Transport Supports Applied for

College: Centre Number:

Name of Student	Support Required	Nature (NRC or other firm)	Funding Source (Insert project code if not HEA)	Approved	Additional Information

Please sign below to confirm that you are aware of the current status of support implemen	tation
Principal's Signature:	
Date	



Appendix 4: AT & Dyslexia Guide



<u>Dyslexia and Information Technology: A Guide</u> <u>for Students and Staff in CDVEC</u>

Contents

Introduction

Making Your PC 'Dyslexia Friendly'

- Keyboards
- Changing the Font
- Changing the Spacing
- Changing the Colour Schemes
- Spelling & Grammar Check and Auto Correct Features

Using Hardware and Software to Support Reading and Writing

- Hand Held Electronic Dictionaries
- Hand Held Tape Recorders or Dictaphones
- Word Prediction Software
- Screen Reading Software
- Voice Recognition Software
- Combination Packages
- Scanning and OCR Software

Using Software to Support Studying

- Visual Mapping
- Organisational and Time Management Skills

Information on Supports available from the Disability Support Service

Introduction

The aim of this guide is to introduce both students and staff in CDVEC to Information Technology supports that are available to students with dyslexia. It is intended that this guide be used as a reference that can be 'dipped' into by both students and staff, as required. And remember, some of the information in this guide may also be useful to a broad range of students, including those with other specific learning difficulties such as dyspraxia, literacy difficulties and students learning English as a second language.

CDVEC Disability Support Service Report September 2003 – August 2005



The guide is divided into three broad sections:

- 1. Making Your PC 'Dyslexia Friendly'
- 2. Using Hardware and Software to Support Reading and Writing
- 3. Using Software to Support Studying

The guide aims to be as comprehensive as possible but it is important to note that, due to the range and variety of both hardware and software products available, not all products available are listed in the guide. However, attempts are made to give a general overview of the types of products available, rather than to list individual products.

While examples of specific products are listed for the purpose of explanation, the Disability Support Service or CDVEC do not in any way advocate any specific product or supplier.

After reading the guide, if you feel you have further questions in relation to any piece of hardware or software and its applications the Disability Support Officer in your college is available to discuss this with you in more detail.

Making Your PC 'Dyslexia Friendly'

All of us use PCs and Laptops as part of everyday college life. Many students with dyslexia find that computers enable them to produce written work that better reflects their abilities than the more traditional method of using pens and paper.

However, while many of us would be lost without features such as the spelling and grammar checker, there are ways to modify PCs or laptops to make them even more useful and of greater benefit to dyslexic students.

This section of the guide goes through some of the features of the standard college PC Microsoft Office Package and aims to demonstrate to the student how to modify the PC to suit their own personal learning requirements.

Keyboards

Keyboards are the primary devices we use for inputting information into the PC. But on most PCs the keyboard is the exact same. However, there is a wide range of keyboards on the market and using an 'alternative keyboard' may be of benefit to a student with dyslexia.

- Using a keyboard with the keys in the upper case might be useful for students that get b & d mixed up
- A keyboard with lower case letters might be better for those that struggle with capitals



Most of the keyboards we use have the keys set out in what is called QWERTY.



However, some students may prefer to use a keyboard that has an ABC format as they might find it easier to find individual keys.



Another method of making the keyboard more user-friendly is to use keyboard stickers. These keyboard stickers are usually colourful and the letter is bigger which can make it easier for students to find individual keys.

Changing the Font

Changing the font or type style can be useful. On most PCs the font that comes on automatically or the default font is 'New Times Roman'. However, there are a number of fonts to experiment with such as:

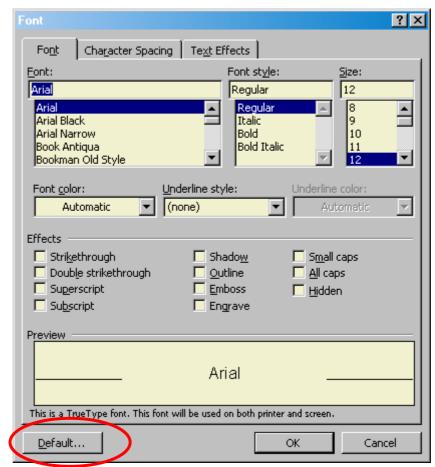
- Comic Sans
- Courier
- Verdana
- Arial

Individual students will have their own font preferences but finding the right font for you can make it easier to read the text on screen.

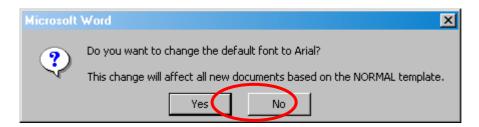
September 2003 – August 2005

To change the Font on your PC just follow these steps:

- 1) Click on the word 'format' in the toolbox at the top of your screen using the mouse
- 2) Then click on font
- 3) Select the font you like
- 4) Click on the default box to accept the change



If you want to make your new font selection permanent, in other words select a new default font, simply click yes on the options box that appears on your screen.



Changing the Spacing

For some students changing the spacing on a document can be very useful. If single line spacing is used some students may find that the sentences and words 'blend' into one. If double spacing or 1.5 spacing is used the document can look much clearer to a student with dyslexia.

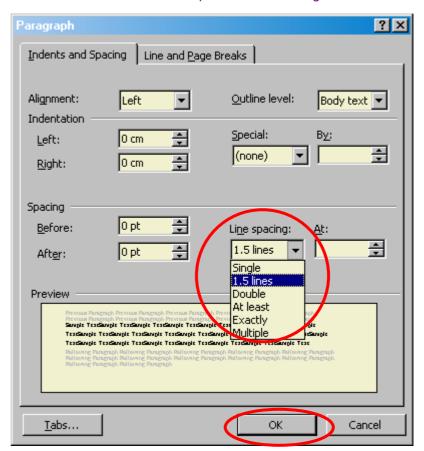
The spacing used in this document is 1.5



September 2003 – August 2005

To change the spacing on your PC just follow these steps:

- 1. Click on format
- 2. Click on paragraph
- 3. Click on the down arrow under line spacing to get the spacing options
- 4. Select the spacing you like
- 5. Click on the ok box to accept the change



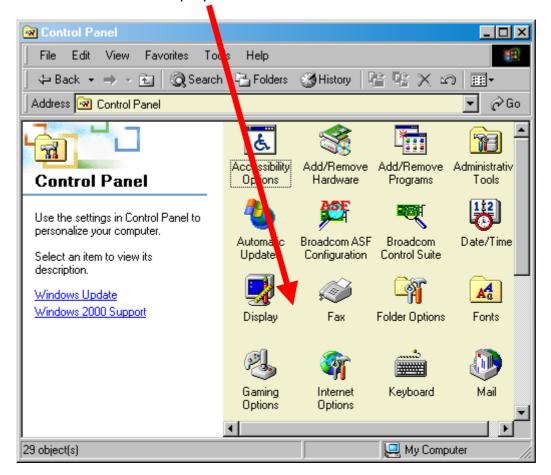
Changing the Colour Schemes

Many students experience a 'glare' from a white background and find that contrasting colour schemes within windows can make the text easier to read. The colour scheme on a PC or laptop can be customised for each user. Many students find that a cream or pale blue background works for them



You can change the colour scheme on your PC by following these steps:

- 1. Click on the My Computer icon on your desktop
- 2. Click on the Control Panel icon
- 3. Click on the Display Icon

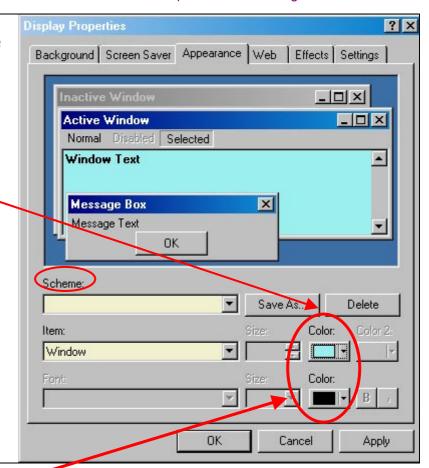


- 4. When the Display Properties opens you'll see that it is divided into six sections by the tabs at the top of the window. The background option is the one that opens as a default when you enter the display properties.
- 5. You can select the background you want and this will appear on your desktop when you turn on the PC. It is also possible to import images from the Internet or a digital camera to use as your background.
- 6. If you select the background tab, you can then customise the colour scheme in the window boxes and the text boxes. There are a number of colour scheme options available within display options. You can select these by using the drop down menu under the word scheme.



September 2003 – August 2005

- 7. To change the colour scheme simply click the title bar or window.
- 8. Then use the drop menu to select the colour options available.
- Select the colour you want and then click on the apply box.
- 10. You can also select the colour of the font by following the same steps and then selecting the colour of the font from the second colour menu.



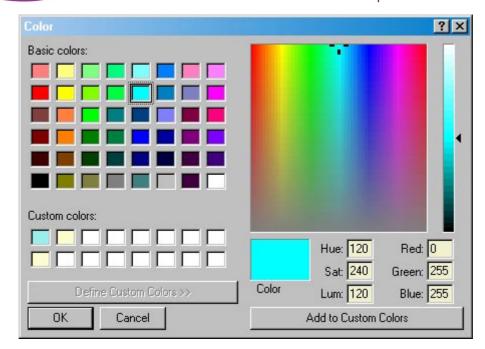


As well as the basic colours available you can customise colours.

To do this click on the other box that appears when you select the drop down menu for colours



September 2003 – August 2005



This window then appears. You can select the colour of your choice and to custom colours.

When you have selected the colour you want click ok.

You can also change the size of the font in the title bar when using this feature.

Remember you can experiment with colour schemes to decide what suits your individual preferences!

Spelling and Grammar Check and Auto Correct Features

Spelling and Grammar Check

Many students find that the spelling and grammar feature on the PC means that they can check work quickly and efficiently without having to rely on a dictionary or asking for help. To use this feature just follow these steps:

- 1. Click on Tools
- 2. Click on Spelling and Grammar
- 3. Words spelt incorrectly will appear in red. You will be given the option to ignore the spelling suggestion or change the word to the spelling suggestion.
- 4. To ignore the spelling suggestion click ignore.
- 5. To change to the suggested spelling click change.

But remember the computer is not always write! As you can see the computer can make mistakes, for example with the meaning of words and with the grammatical structure of the sentence so even when using the spelling and grammar check not all mistakes will be corrected.

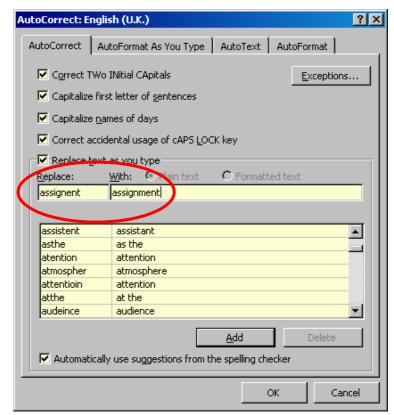


MS Word Auto Correct

Microsoft word is set to automatically correct some words. For example if you type 'teh' it will automatically be corrected to 'the' when you press the space bar. Word can learn your common mis-spellings and can be set to add new words to auto correct.

To do this, just follow these steps:

- 1. Click on the tools in the toolbar
- 2. Click on auto correct
- 3. You should then view this panel
- 4. In the box underneath 'replace' type word the way you mis-spell it.
- 5. In the box underneath 'with' type the correct spelling of the word.
- 6. Select add to enter a new autocorrect entry.



You can have more than one alternative spelling for each word; this can be especially useful for more uncommon misspellings that wouldn't be picked up by the spell checker.

You can also select autocorrect by right clicking beside the word you want to correct. The autocorrect option will then appear with suggestions for replacement words. Select the word you want by left clicking with the mouse.

Abbreviation Expansion

You can also use the AutoCorrect feature to expand abbreviations. This is particularly useful for commonly used phrases and words. An example of this could be subject specific terminology. For example, for a childcare student, instead of writing child development psychology, which may take some effort, s/he could type cdp and get autocorrect to replace that with the full phrase. To do this just follow the steps outline above.

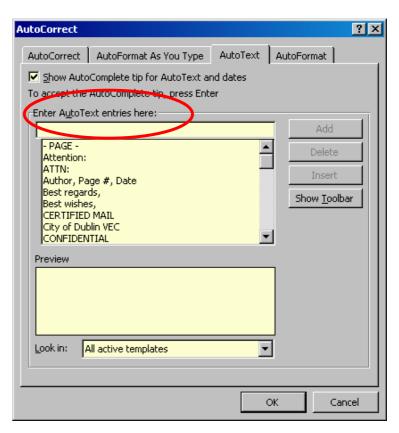


Auto Text

Auto text can be used to abbreviate large amounts of text and graphics. Auto texts checks to see if you are entering an abbreviation or start of a piece of text stored with its table. If auto text recognises a phrase of piece of text it will be displayed in a yellow 'tool tip' box alongside your text cursor. You can enter this phrase into the document you are working on by pressing 'enter'.

To enter a new phrase or piece of text into auto text just follow these steps:

- Select add to enter the new autotext entry
- 2. Click on the tools in the toolbar
- 3. Click on autocorrect
- 4.
- 5. Click on the autotext tab
- 6. Enter the phrase you want in the box under 'enter AutoText entries here'



Using Hardware and Software to Support Reading and Writing



There are a range of software programmes and equipment to support students with reading and writing. Some of these programmes are simple to use while others are more complex and require training to use. Therefore, before deciding to use a software programme to support reading and writing, it is important for the student to consider what exactly they want to use the software for and what training they require. It is also recommended that, if possible, a student should sample the



software or hardware they wish to use before purchasing it, as you don't know if you'll like something until you try it!

You can contact the Disability Support Service in your College to make an appointment to try out different software programmes. You can also train in the use of the different programmes and get information on funding to purchase these products

Hand Held Electronic Dictionaries

The Franklin dictionary is an easy to use portable device that allows the user access to the following features:

- Phonetic spell correction
- Dictionary definitions
- Thesaurus
- Speaking dictionary also available

Many students find this useful as it is simple to use and, as it is portable, it can be used in the classroom, library or whenever the student needs it!

Hand Held Tape Recorders or Dictaphones

These can be used for recording a wide range of information. Many people with dyslexia will have difficulty taking down information under time constraints but will have no trouble transcribing information in their own time. But remember don't leave yourself with hours of tapes to transcribe! Many students will use dictaphones to record short amounts of information such as ideas for an essay, a list of things to do, but not a day's worth of lectures.

Word Prediction Software

There are a number of packages available that will work with almost any other software to predict or 'guess' what you are about to type when you have entered the first letter, the second letter and so on. You can then select the word you want from the options that appear on screen by number or by point and click.

The image below is an example of a Co-writer 4000, word prediction software being used. This particular package also allows students to spell phonetically.





By using word prediction software students are offered support with spelling and speed of composing text. Many of the predictive text software packages are also able to read out almost any text, such as word documents and web pages.

Two of the most commonly used word prediction software packages are Co-Writer and Penfriend XP.

Screen Reading Software

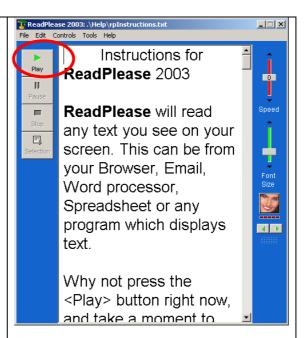
There are software packages available that will read out almost any text on screen, including Windows applications. This software is useful as it helps to identify errors in spelling, missed words, incorrect words etc.

A **FREE** screen reading software package can be downloaded from the website <u>www.readplease.com</u>. To download the free software go to the website and follow the directions given.

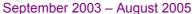
When you have downloaded the software onto your PC you can open it by clicking on the ReadPlease icon on your desktop. You will be then presented with a simple set of instructions on how to get ReadPlease to read text.

The instructions simply state that you:

- Select the text you want to have read
- Select it with the mouse
- Copy to the Windows Clipboard (use edit + copy menu)
- Open ReadPlease and paste into the Read Please window (use edit + paste menu)
- Press the green ReadPlease Play button



Speak Out is another screen reading software package. This package is simple to use and works with most Windows applications and even some visual mapping software. As well as speaking out the information on screen it will also speak out words or letters as they are typed. Many students find this feature helpful when they are typing an assignment.





Voice Recognition Software

There are software packages available that allow the user to speak into the computer and the computer will then type what is spoken. The technology that makes this possible is improving all the time and using voice recognition software can be useful for students that have severe difficulties with spelling.

However the software is not without its drawbacks. It is not 100% accurate; it often mis-recognises words and will not improve unless it is corrected. It is not portable, as the environment it is used in has to stay the same, e.g., a quiet room. And it takes may hours of **practice** to get the computer to recognise your voice and students often have to receive **training** to use voice recognition software.

Before you make the decision to use voice recognition software it is important to weigh the practice and training required against the perceived benefits of using the software. The Disability Support Officer in your college is available to discuss this option and possible alternatives with you.

Combination Packages

There are a number of software packages available that combine some of the features already mentioned in this section. These software packages are particularly useful as a support tool for students who would present with a multiplicity of dyslexic characteristics.

Remember, as these combination packages are multi-featured, training in their use is required and not all students will need to use all the features

Two examples of combination packages are Text Help Read and Write Gold and Kurzweil 3000.

Text Help Read and Write offers some of the following features:

- Speech highlights and reads words, sentences, documents
- Word Prediction
- Phonetic spelling
- Support with homophones (words that sound the same but mean different things)
- Dictionary
- Word Wizard- helps find words when given the starting point of a known word, e.g. Amazon River found from starting point Brazil.

Kurzweil 3000 offers some of the following features:

- Speech- highlights and reads words, sentences and documents
- Advanced Scanning Support- useful for students who scan a lot of material and edit a lot of material
- Dictionary
- Bilingual and Foreign language support
- Vocabulary list and homophone support
- Study skills supports

You can sample both of these software packages by making an appointment with the Disability Support Officer in your college. You can also find out more information about these products by going to the following websites:

www.kurzweil.com www.texthelp.com

Scanning and Optical Character Recognition (OCR)

By buying a scanner and OCR software you would be able to scan typed or printed documents into your computer. This is particularly useful for a student with dyslexia as it would mean a document would not have to be re-typed into the computer and the scanned document could also be read by any of the screen reading software already mentioned.

Using Software to Support Studying

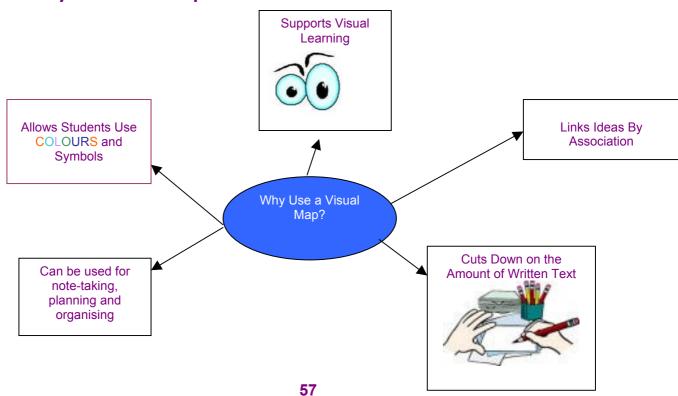
As learners we all developed our own individual study skills techniques. However, we can all learn new study skill techniques to support us with planning and writing assignments, note taking, exam preparation and time management. There are a number of software programmes that can support students in this area and in this section of the guide we will outline some of those available.

Remember, the method and style you find most useful will depend on the subject and your own individual learning style so it is important to try out different techniques and find what works best for you!

Visual Mapping

Visual mapping is also known as spider-grams, web notes and mind-mapping. This style of note-taking is more visual than traditional linear note and relies on a person's imagination to link ideas by association and to use visual tags and maps. The amount of text used is limited.

Why Use a Mind-Map?



CDVEC Disability Support Service Report September 2003 – August 2005



There are versions of visual mapping software available. Two such programmes are Inspiration and Mind Genius. If you are interested in sampling visual mapping software you can download free trial demo versions of the software programmes mentioned by going to the companies' websites,

www.inspiration.com www.mindgenius.com

and follow the download instructions given.

Remember, when downloading files from the Internet be careful of viruses and if you are using a college PC check with the Network Administrator that it is okay to download programmes onto the college PC.

You can also speak to the Disability Support Officer in your college about sampling visual mapping software and receiving training in using this software.

Organisational and Time Management Skills

Do you feel that you are disorganised? Find it difficult to keep your notes in order and meet assignments deadlines?



There are a number of software programmes available on the Internet that can be downloaded onto the PC that aim to support students improve their organisational skills.

Some of these programmes are free and with others you can download a trial version before committing to purchasing the package.

These programmes aim to support students with their organisational and time managements skills by offering the following features:

- Setting reminders
- Creating 'post-it notes' on your desktop
- Sticking notes to documents
- Sorting notes

The following are examples of such programmes:

www.tenebril.com/products/stickynote/index.html www.forty.com/note wonder.htm www.mycorkboard.com

Remember when you are downloading demos from the internet be wary of companies offering you special deals and trying to ascertain personal information!!!

If you feel you need additional support with study skills and time management make an appointment with the Disability Support Officer in your college.





National Learning Network

Investing in People, Changing Perspectives

Attention Students!!!!!

Did you know that there is a Disability Support Service available in your college?

This service is for students with disabilities, including specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, who require specific support to fully access their course of study.

The supports students receive vary from person to person but can include the following:

- Use of Assistive Technology (both hardware and software)
- Additional Tuition
- Personal Assistance
- Use of an ISL Interpreter
- Use of a Speed text Operator
- Reader
- Note taker
- Exam Accommodations
- Support in accessing transport

If you think that you require any of the supports listed, or if you have specific requirements that are not listed, please contact the Disability Support Officer in your college.

We would advise you to do this as early as possible to facilitate the Disability Support Officer in putting the supports you require in place at the beginning of the academic year.

For further information, or to make an appointment, you can contact:

Sarah Mc Aree 0879678134 sarahmcaree@nln.ie Eileen Daly 0872024939 eileen.daly@nln.ie

You can request the above information in an alternative format by contacting Eileen or Sarah







Appendix 5: The National Learning Network/CDVEC response to the HEA Discussion paper.

Current Situation

The National Learning Network/CDVEC Disability Support Service (DSS) arose out of a Horizon Project between National Learning Network Ballyfermot and Ballyfermot Senior College in 1995.

As a result of the findings of this pilot project a service to provide supports to students with disabilities was offered to three CDVEC colleges.

The DSS currently employs one part-time co-ordinator and two full-time Disability Support Officers and is now available in eight CDVEC colleges of further education

The role of the disability support officer (DSO) is:

- 1. To offer supports to individual students and to groups of students
- 2. To offer support and training to college staff
- 3. To raise awareness amongst the student body.

The following are included in the role of the co-ordinator:

- 1. To provide training and support to the DSOs
- 2. To provide support to the college principals
- 3. To liaise with CDVEC head office
- 4. To liaise with HEA from the Further Education perspective of student and college needs

The DSOs are on the premises in each of the colleges for one day per week and are available to students and staff at other times through telephone and email.

The colleges currently in receipt of the service are:

- Ballyfermot College of Further Education
- Coláiste Dhúlaigh
- Coláiste Íde
- Inchicore College of Further Education
- Killester College of Further Education
- Pearse College of Further Education
- Plunket college of Further Education
- Whitehall College of Further Education

National Learning Network CDVEC Disability Support Service Report September 2003 – August 2005



Drivers of Change

Over the past decade students with disabilities have increasingly sought access to further and higher education in the mainstream; this is due to a number of factors:

- The desire of people with disabilities to be treated in the same way as other members of society (Report of the Commission on the Status of People with Disabilities 1996).
- Legislative promotion of inclusive practice.
- Higher levels of social awareness about social diversity including disability and disability issues.
- People with disabilities have become more self-advocating and see access to mainstream education as a human right.

Within CDVEC the Disability Support Service has been operating in its present form since 2001 and has developed a unique partnership model of specialist and mainstream service provision that not only goes a very long way to meeting all the above, but is also demonstrating success in allowing people with disabilities to achieve their academic potential for the first time.

Outcomes of the DSS to date include:

- Students with disability returning to education as adults to participate on access courses and Junior or Leaving Certificate courses for the first time.
- Students increasing confidence and self-esteem as the academic year progresses.
- Student transition from specialist service providers to return or progress to further education due to increased awareness of the DSS.
- Needs-led staff training and support programmes
- Input into policy making and procedures
- Publication of Exam Accommodations Guidelines and Staff Manual of AT for Dyslexia.

In the Academic year 2004-2005

- 85 students accessed the Disability Support Service on a regular basis
- 43 students received supports for dyslexia or other specific learning difficulty.

35% individual specialist tuition 15% study skills



Proposals for the Future

Aim:

To provide the National Learning Network/CDVEC DSS in all City of Dublin second level, Youthreach and Further Education Colleges in a coherent and standardised manner.

It is proposed that the support provision developed in partnership between National Learning Network and the CDVEC be externally assessed in order that it can be formally established as a best practice model from which a number of objectives can be met including:

- The setting up of a formal partnership between the National Learning Network and CDVEC.
- The setting up of a committee to execute and support the model (including seeking funding for students who are currently ineligible).
- The production of a college manual including common policies, procedures and documentation.
- The development of an accredited continuing professional development programme for CDVEC and National Learning Network staff.
- The carrying out of quantative research to show the impact on student access, retention and achievement.

CDVEC Disability Support Service Report September 2003 – August 2005



Job Description

Position: Disability Support Officer, Inclusive Education

Reporting: Dawn Duffin, Manager, Mainstream Education Services

Brief description/purpose of the job:

The Disability Support Officer works on an outreach basis with Post-Leaving Certificate colleges providing advice, information and support to students with disabilities on existing courses. They also co-ordinate an advisory service to college staff, offer staff training and assistance and act as a liaison between college staff and National Learning Network resource staff, thereby raising the profile of students with disabilities.

Key Tasks

- 1. Assist in identifying student needs and matching student needs to appropriate resources.
- 2. Facilitate and support students in the development of a variety of learning strategies, which may suit individual and group settings. Develop progressive educational paths for students.
- 3. Make applications where necessary for appropriate aids and appliances.
- 4. Deliver a quality and confidential support service to students while retaining a sensitive approach to their learning concerns.
- 5. Disseminate accurate and current information on alternative forms of assessment pertinent to the assessing body.
- 6. Deliver personal development and study skills, information workshops and group sessions.
- 7. Create and maintain networks with course tutors and other providers to maximise learning support for clients
- 8. Refer students, when appropriate, to other school services, i.e. guidance counselling, psychologist, VTOS, literacy, etc., and liaise with other support services in the college
- 9. Provide information and advice to college staff.
- 10. Develop and deliver disability awareness training for staff development days in the college. Network with other professionals, agencies and community services.
- 11. Deliver disability awareness training to students and offer advice to the general student population, thus increasing awareness in the college.
- 12. Any other duties related to the above that may be required from time to time.



Contact Details

CDVEC Disability Support Service

Blanchardstown Centre, Block A, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown, Blanchardstown, Road North, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15.

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00353 872024939

Sarah McAree: <u>sarahmcaree@nln.ie</u>

00353 879678134