



THE LONDON SCHOOL
OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2010

Statement of Commitment

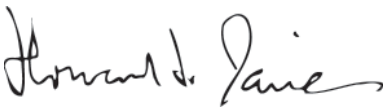
Promoting disability equality for the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) means more than just meeting statutory obligations. It represents a commitment that stems from and extends its academic excellence and global character.

LSE's academic activities are not restricted to the UK or the European Union. They extend world-wide. Its faculty includes a mix of eminent scholars from around the globe. Its student and staff body is diverse and includes students and staff who are disabled. Disability equality legislation for LSE, therefore, is not just a statutory obligation. It is embedded in the way LSE governs itself. The principles of equality of opportunity are enshrined in the School's founding memorandum and articles of association:

'Everyone shall be entitled to equal treatment on the basis of individual merit and without unfair discrimination as regards admission to and membership of the Corporation, and status as a member, officer or employee of the Corporation, and as a student or other individual associated with the Corporation, and as regards access to the benefits, facilities and services provided by the Corporation.'

Today, LSE continues to ensure that its students and staff are able to develop to their potential. It actively promotes the involvement of students and staff, men and women, from all social, economic, ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. This is reflected in the School's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan, which recognises diversity as one of LSE's core institutional values. This in turn feeds into the way LSE delivers scholarship in teaching and research. Equality for LSE, therefore, is a means to an end.

LSE recognises its responsibility enshrined in the general duty of the Disability Discrimination Act (2005), which makes it obligatory to:
a) eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment of disabled people; and
b) promote equality of opportunity for all. LSE's commitment to this Act is reflected in its Disability Policy, which was approved by the Council in 2002, and the Disability Equality Scheme, which is to be implemented over the next three years.



Howard Davies
Director – LSE



Lord Gabor of Aldwych QC
Chairman – LSE

Executive Summary

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 requires all public bodies to eliminate unlawful discrimination against disabled people and promote positive attitudes towards them. Specifically, it requires public bodies to prepare, with the involvement of disabled people, a three-year scheme which outlines ways and means through which the institution will address disability equality needs/issues. This document attempts to outline just that.

The Scheme was developed by the Disability Consultative Forum, Disability and Well-being Office and Alumni Disability Interest Group, with the involvement of students, staff members and visitors. This involvement was carried out through a number of consultative forums, events and exercises, and was informed by the previous audit of LSE's physical environment, and by the audit of School policies and practice conducted by Bond Pearce Solicitors.

Disability equality needs and issues were identified in several ways. First was the survey on disability, to which over 1,000 responses from staff, students and alumni members were received. The survey identified four main focus areas: institutional attitudes, student experience, staff and visitor experience, and the physical environment. These four areas formed the framework for the action plan. Second, a Disability Equality Scheme Planning Day was organised to consider current barriers and challenges identified by the disability survey and to make recommendations thereof. It also served as the mechanism for initial impact assessment of disability equality.

The DES preparation also benefited from an earlier large-scale focus group that was commissioned in 2003-04. 52 students were interviewed, and the level of provision and support for students with disabilities was generally found to be satisfactory. Areas of improvement included learning culture, library services, medical care, and other operational matters. The DES preparation was also informed by the needs assessment of disabled staff. The School in 2004, commissioned specialist advice from an occupational health company to

assess staff needs and recommend proposals for reasonable adjustments. These efforts to ensure involvement and participation of disabled students and staff are an ongoing feature of the School.

LSE has a number of institutional arrangements in place to address disability equality. The School is putting in place the Equality and Diversity Committee to oversee the implementation and progress monitoring of disability equality, among other equality streams. The Disability and Well-being Office provides support for disabled students, and contributes to disability training and raises awareness on disability issues. It works in close interaction with other departments, Student Services Centre, the Students' Union, the Students' Union Society for Students with Disabilities/ Dyslexia, and the School's counselling service and the onsite medical centre. It also liaises with external organisations, including the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (SKILL), the Equality Challenge Unit and the Disability Team within HEFCE's Action on Access. In October 2006, the School appointed the Diversity Adviser to provide advice on all E and D issues, ensure that all legal obligations are being fulfilled, and that the E and D agenda is progressing well in the school.

The Employee Relations Team of the Human Resource Division advises managers on staff disability issues. Staff have a number of other services available, such as, among others, disability disclosure, harassment policy and procedures, disability guide handbook, and staff training and awareness raising. The HR staff also ensures that disabled people are not discriminated against in recruitment and retention, and that staff involved in hiring are sufficiently trained. Staff Development Unit has been organizing half-day Valuing Diversity workshops since 2005. Health and Safety Policy includes disability as an important component, and in fire safety and emergency evacuation arrangements particular attention is paid to the needs of disabled people. Staff computer workstations are assessed on an annual basis. LSE also ensures that security staff are trained to assist disabled visitors should they need such assistance.

LSE is also making future arrangements towards disability equality. In terms of monitoring, the disability data at present is reflected in terms of exit and satisfaction surveys, and patterns across staff recruitment promotion, training and retention. A detailed system of monitoring is to be developed in the near future. While the Disability Equality Scheme Planning Day provided the initial impact assessment of disability equality, all new policies or policies being reviewed will undergo equality impact assessment in the future. A detailed process is being developed in this regard. The four areas of improvement as identified in the Disability Survey (institutional attitudes, student experience, staff and visitor

experience, and the physical environment) provided the initial framework for the action plan. This framework was translated into the action plan based on the guidelines provided in the Disability Rights Commission report, titled Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice, 2005. The Action Plan is divided into eight sections: Strategy and Leadership; Governance and Institutions; Participation and EIA (Equality Impact Assessment); Information and Communication; Staff Training and Development; Learning, Teaching and Research; Physical Access; and Monitoring and Reporting Progress. This in the document is followed by the action plan.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this Scheme. We also acknowledge the valuable feedback that was received from the Equality Challenge Unit.

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Part I – Context

1 Statement of Purpose

- 1.1** The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 prohibits discrimination against disabled staff in all aspects of employment and occupation. The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 extended this duty to students in post age 16 education in terms of curriculum, procedures and buildings in order to increase access in its widest sense. The Disability Discrimination Amendment Act (DDAA) 2005 extended this duty even further. It made it obligatory for all public bodies not just to eliminate unlawful discrimination, but also actively promote disability equality.
- 1.2** The DDAA 2005 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. The DDAA 2005 requirements reflect the social model of disability which acknowledges that: 'The poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by many disabled people is not the inevitable result of their impairments or medical conditions, but rather stems from attitudinal and environmental barriers.' (Disability Rights Commission, 2005).
- 1.3** The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) recognises its responsibility as enshrined in the duty of DDA 1995 and DDAA 2005. However, promoting disability equality for the LSE means more than just meeting the statutory obligations. It represents a commitment that stems from and extends its five priorities as specified in the Strategic Plan 2006-2011: **a)** maintain excellence in teaching with high quality student support services; **b)** produce research of the highest quality; **c)** engage

with the wider community; **d)** formulate and implement a planned programme of expansion to enable the School to maintain its competitive position and facilitate intellectual innovation; and **e)** focus resources to deliver priorities. Disability equality is, therefore, embedded in LSE's vision and values.

- 1.4** The preparation of this scheme is guided by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. This document outlines the LSE's Disability Equality Scheme (henceforth termed as DES). It extends LSE's existing disability access work and is linked to the 2006-2011 Strategic Plan. It sets out ways in which LSE will meet its statutory obligations and requirements. The ultimate aim is to embed disability equality into the way LSE governs itself.

2 Legislative Context

- 2.1 General Duty:** The DDA 2005 general duty requires all public bodies through all relevant functions to have due regard to the need to: **a)** promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people; **b)** eliminate unlawful discrimination; **c)** eliminate harassment related to disability; **d)** promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; **e)** encourage participation by disabled people in public life; and **f)** take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably than others.
- 2.2 Specific Duty:** The specific requirements of the DDA 2005 for a public authority, as outlined in the document titled, *The Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice, England and Wales, Disability Rights Commission, 2005*, are as follows: **a)** to publish a disability equality scheme

(by 4 December 2006), including a three-year action plan to demonstrate how the general and specific duties are to be fulfilled; **b**) to involve disabled people in the development of the scheme; **c**) to include in the scheme statements of:

- the way in which disabled people have been involved in the development of the scheme;
- the methods for disability equality impact assessment;
- the steps that are to be taken towards fulfilling the general duty (the 'action plan');
- the arrangements for gathering of information in relation to employment and, where appropriate, its delivery of education and its functions;
- the arrangements for putting the information gathered to use, in particular, in reviewing the effectiveness of the action plan and in preparing subsequent DES;
- the steps to be taken within three years of the publication of the scheme, as set out in the action plan (unless it proves unreasonable or impracticable for it to do so) and which will put into effect the arrangements for gathering and making use of information; and
- the intention to publish a report containing a summary of the steps taken under the action plan, the results of its information gathering and the use to which it has put the information.

3 Objectives

- 3.1 Following the general and specific duties of the DDA 2005, this document identifies:
- a** how the DES fits within the LSE's vision and values;
 - b** how its development was approached;
 - c** how disabled people were involved and consulted in the formulation of the DES;
 - d** what institutional structures are being put in place to implement disability equality;
 - e** what existing arrangements are in place for students, staff and visitors to promote disability equality;
 - f** what existing and future arrangements are there to monitor disability equality; and
 - g** the three-year Action Plan.
- 3.2 The DES forms a part of LSE's overall Equality and Diversity (E and D) Strategy, which is in the process of being developed.

4 LSE's Vision and Values

Disability equality is not new to LSE. It is fundamental to LSE's vision and values.

LSE is a world-class centre of excellence for teaching and research in economics and social and political sciences. Founded in 1895 by Beatrice and Sidney Webb, it has now more than 70,000 registered alumni, including 30 past or present heads of state. 30 members of the UK House of Commons and 34 members of the UK House of Lords at present have either studied or taught at LSE.

4.1 LSE's Vision: LSE's vision is to increase the understanding of a complex and ever changing world through excellent teaching and research. In line with that vision, LSE aims to achieve the highest possible quality both in academics and standards of care and development for its staff and students.

LSE has a diverse staff and student body. It has around 3,000 employees at present, of whom approximately 0.7 per cent have declared a disability to Human Resources (Source: Human Resources Division). Its student body is also diverse. The number of known disabled students has increased from 120 in 2001/02 to 536 in 2005/06. The School proposes to grow to around 9,000 students by 2012.

4.2 LSE's Values: Disability equality stems fundamentally from LSE's core values. These include, among others:

- a Integrity**, where highest standards of ethics and conduct in all activities are upheld;
- b Intellectual Freedom**, where the rights of all staff, students, and the wider LSE community to express diverse range of views in the pursuit of understanding and knowledge are promoted;

c Diversity, where the involvement of staff and students from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds to work towards eliminating discrimination on grounds of race, gender, age, disability, religion, religion, belief and sexual orientation is well promoted;

d Participation, where participation of staff and students in the School's decision making processes is valued and sought as essential part of our organisational culture;

e Engagement, where interaction with the wider world is promoted so that insights of social sciences are disseminated as widely as possible for the improvement of the society; and

f Student Commitment, where LSE seeks to produce graduates of distinctive quality committed to its core institutional values.

4.3 LSE's Vision for Disability Equality: The above mentioned vision and values are fundamental to the way LSE approaches disability equality. LSE's Disability Policy is outlined in following box.

LSE Disability Equality Policy

LSE's Disability Policy was approved by Council in 2002 and states LSE's commitment to complying with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 by:

- Maximising accessibility to the School's services and activities for staff, students, alumni, visitors, and prospective staff and students with disabilities, and to ensure that no-one is treated less favourably on the grounds of disability.
- Developing a culture of inclusion and diversity in which people feel free to disclose a disability and to discuss reasonable adjustments in order to promote equal participation in the School's services and activities. In adherence to the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA 1998), such information is only passed on with consent and where there is a legitimate reason to do so.
- Reviewing, monitoring and revising, as appropriate, all School systems, procedures, facilities, services and buildings in compliance with the DDA and SENDA in addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 (HRA), which includes the right not be denied access to education.
- Creating, maintaining and disseminating information about services, support and facilities available for staff, students, alumni, visitors and prospective staff and students with disabilities.

5 Approach to Disability Equality Scheme

The DES is a fundamental obligation of the Disability Discrimination Amendment Act 2005. However, LSE approaches disability equality with a difference.

For LSE, disability equality is not driven by the obligation to fulfil legal requirements. It represents an opportunity to address issues and needs that LSE staff, students and visitors are currently facing. It is an extension of the quality and standards of care and development that LSE aims to achieve. As presented in Figure 1 below, the legal obligations here represent the intended outcome of these efforts.

Figure 1: LSE's Approach to Disability Equality



In addition, the scheme is based on the following principles:

- a Prioritisation of Needs/Issues** – that disability activities are in proportion to the LSE disability needs and issues which are most pressing;
- b Representation to Perspectives** – that perspectives of both staff and students, as well as visitors are taken into account when the needs and issues are being identified;
- c Involvement and Engagement** – that all people concerned are involved and engaged in the development of this scheme for ownership and commitment to be ensured; and
- d Dynamic and Continuous Process of Learning** – that the scheme is not static, and continuously develops, evolves and improves over time as new experiences and best practices emerge.

Part II – Involvement, Participation and Preparation of DES

6 Groups and Forums Involved in DES Preparation

6.1 Formation of the Working Group: To ensure compliance with the DDA and SENDA, a working group was established to develop an action plan which aimed to embed accessibility in its widest sense, into all existing systems, services and procedures at the LSE. The Working Group interacted closely with all the sections of the School, students, staff members, and visitors through a number of consultative forums, events and exercises, and was informed by the previous audit of LSE's physical environment, and by the audit of School policies and practice conducted by Bond Pearce Solicitors.

6.2 Disability Consultative Forum: The Disability Consultative Forum is a strategic body, which reports and makes recommendations to the Student Affairs Committee, the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, and the Library and Information Services Committee

on matters concerning students and staff members with disabilities. The Forum meets at least once a term and all students and staff with disabilities are invited to attend. The Disability Consultative Forum has been engaged in the Disability Equality Scheme planning process from the outset and has played an important role in shaping the DES.

6.3 Students' Union: The LSE's Student Union Society for Students with Disabilities was formed in 2000. Its purpose was to give disabled students a voice in campaigning for improved facilities and to give them a better understanding of the difficulties encountered whilst studying at the School. The society aims to increase awareness of disability issues amongst academics, administration staff and fellow students, leading to a positive institutional attitude towards disability. The efforts of the Society and its participation in consultation are best represented by a quote from one of its founding members – see box below:

'The LSE's Student Union Society for Students with Disabilities was formed in 2000, with myself as inaugural Chair. Its defining purpose was to give disabled students a voice in campaigning for improved facilities and better understanding of the difficulties encountered whilst studying at the School. The goal of the Society has always been to increase awareness of such issues amongst academics, administration staff and fellow students, leading to a positive institutional attitude towards disability.

From the outset, the society instituted a strong programme of campaigning and change, which has resulted in the creation of a permanent rest room for students with disabilities, improvements to facilities in the Library, and changes to the physical state of the campus to improve the quality of life of disabled students. The society also successfully campaigned for the post of Students' Union Disability Officer, to ensure that disabled people were represented in Students' Union decision making processes.

The society also started LSE's Disability Awareness Week, which is now a permanent feature in the LSE calendar. The event aims to highlight the wide spectrum of disabilities and to bring disabled issues to a wider audience.

I am delighted that many of the changes that the founding members of the society worked so hard to achieve are still in place and that disabled students now encounter a much better quality of educational experience at the LSE as a result. However, there is still more to do and the DES forms an integral part of this future improvement.

I am pleased that the consultation process for LSE's DES has included both current and former members of the society and that their views will be included at the heart of future equality planning.'

(Historical Perspective by **Stuart Newton**
BSc Economic History, 2000-2003)

6.4 Alumni Disability Interest Group: The Alumni Disability Interest Group is an official LSE alumni group. It was established in January 2006, and is run entirely by the LSE alumni. It provides a forum for all former LSE students with disabilities (both in the UK and overseas) to network with each other, and share ideas and experiences. The forum remains in contact with the Disability and Well-being Office, and has been instrumental in contributing to the development of the DES.

6.5 Speakers Bureau: The LSE Speakers Bureau was formed in January 2004, to provide disability awareness training for both internal and external audiences. The Bureau uses current and former LSE students to speak about their experiences of disability and the wider diversity agenda. Speakers are regularly provided for staff disability awareness training and have represented LSE at graduate recruitment events, University of London conferences and student recruitment days. The LSE Speakers Bureau provided speakers for the School's DES planning day in April 2006.

Members of the Bureau provide good quality, well researched and powerful presentations, for which they receive payment. All undergo training in presentation skills, and many have found that their work as a member of the Speakers Bureau plays a significant contribution in gaining employment after graduation.

6.6 Circles Network: The LSE Circles Network is a support network comprising people who aim to provide mutually beneficial practical, study and social support to other students. The Network aims for students with a range of disabilities, medical conditions and/or special needs to solve problems, share resources and celebrate achievements. The Circles Network at LSE has been running since 2003, and currently has 166 active members.

7 Planning and Preparation of DES

The specific duties of the new legislation which require the active involvement of disabled people in the development, evaluation and revision of the DES provide a challenge LSE was ready for. The Disability Consultative Forum took the lead in preparing for the development of Disability Equality Scheme and the School's action plan. It was decided to conduct a School-wide survey to establish an agenda which could form the basis of a whole day planning event.

7.1 Survey of Experience of Disability: In March 2006, the LSE invited the School community (students, staff, alumni and visitors) to participate in a survey on disability. The aim was to learn about and share experiences and views on disability and how it can impact on life at the School. The survey was distributed via email to all staff, students and alumni, as well as made available on line. In addition, hard copies of the survey were made available in public areas and handed out on campus. The response to the survey was very high, particularly from the students (see box below for a detailed breakdown of disability survey). Over 1,047 responses were received, and 259 respondents expressed an interest in participating in discussions on the School's DES.

Specifically, the survey identified the following significant areas for improvement:

a) Institutional Attitudes – this area included insights concerning awareness, sensitivity, corporate image and understanding of disability-related issues; **b) Student Experience** – this included issues relating to studying and student life at LSE; **c) Staff and Visitor Experience** – this included issues related to recruitment, health and employment issues for staff, including visiting lecturers, contractors and members of the public attending lectures or meetings or using our facilities; and **d) The Physical Environment** – this included issues around parking, access, signage and other features of the built environment which impact on all disabled people using the premises and surrounds (details of the survey are available on request).

Breakdown of Disability Survey

Breakdown Survey Respondents (per cent)

Students	94.6
Staff	4
Visitors	0.3

Types of Survey Respondents (totals)

Undergraduate	421
Masters	468
PhD student	137
General course student	19
Non-academic member of staff	28
Academic member of staff	4
Academic-related member of staff	12
Visitors to the LSE	3
Other	
Alumni	5
Retired staff member	1
Visitors	2
Visiting research students	3
Unspecified	2

Respondents with a Disability (per cent)

Respondents with a disability	12.9
Respondents with no disability	87.1

Types of Disability (per cent of stated disabilities)

Dyslexia/Dyspraxia	27
Blind/partially sighted	2.5
Deaf/hearing impairment	0.6
Wheelchair user/mobility difficulties	4.3
Personal care support	1.8
Mental health difficulties	20.9
Unseen disability (eg, diabetes, epilepsy, asthma)	22.7
Multiple disabilities	3.1
Other disability (not specified)	17.1

These four areas of improvement also contributed to the framework of the action plan that is presented at the end of this Scheme.

7.2 Equality Scheme Planning Day: On 28 April 2006, the Disability Consultative Forum organised a Disability Equality Scheme Planning Day. The purpose of the event was to consider the current barriers and challenges identified by the disability survey and to make recommendations on appropriate steps for improvement over a three year period. It provided a more direct mechanism of involvement for the disabled people (staff, students and visitors) to participate in the development of the DES action plan. The planning day also served as the mechanism for initial impact assessment of disability equality.

Invitations to the planning day were sent to all heads of divisions, centres and departments, Students' Union officers, members of the Disability Consultative Forum and disabled staff, students and visitors to the School who were known to the Disability Office or had indicated on the survey response form that they were willing to be involved. The planning day was held at a venue with excellent disability access facilities.

The event resulted in the formation of a team to oversee the planning of the DES. The team members included the Adviser to Students with Disabilities, the Adviser to Staff with Disabilities, an LSE based academic in the field, the Equalities Development and Projects Officer and a disabled alumnus. The team's work was also informed by a virtual steering group which comprised of staff, students, and visitors, who had expressed a disability related interest. The discussions within this team provided the initial framework for the DES action plan (findings available on request).

7.3 Needs Assessment Study of Disabled Students: The DES benefited from an earlier focus group that LSE commissioned in 2003-04 with funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England and Wales (HEFCE). The study was overseen by the Academic Registrar's Division, and conducted by an external consultant. The purpose of the study was to establish the needs of disabled students in relation to their experience of LSE front-line student services, and understand the requirements of disabled students in relation to curriculum development and delivery.

In total, 52 students (17 per cent of those with registered disabilities) were interviewed, individually or in small groups between June 2003 and March 2004. The respondents were generally happy with the level of provision and support for students with disabilities. The study identified a number of areas for future improvement, such as a learning culture, the library services, medical care, and other operational matters. The study made 18 specific recommendations which fed into the development of the DES and its action plan.

7.4 Needs Assessment of Disabled Staff: LSE's duty of care requires the School to support disabled staff while at work. In January 2004, the School commissioned specialist advice from Health Management, a company specialising in occupational health. The aim of this exercise was to assess the needs of staff, and recommend proposals for reasonable adjustments. The relationship is ongoing and the recommendations being made have proved to be very useful in improving working relationships between managers and their staff, and enabling continuation of employment.

LSE in the future will continue to consult internal and external forums and organisations, including local, regional and national organisations for disabled people.

Part III – Current Provision

8 Institutional Arrangements

8.1 Overall Responsibility: The Disability Equality Scheme is being overseen by the Equalities Working Group, which in turn reports to the Council. This working group towards the end of 2006 will be replaced by the Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC). The EDC will oversee the implementation and progress monitoring of disability equality, among other equality streams. The progress of disability equality will be reported to the Council on an annual basis.

8.2 The Disability and Well-being Office: LSE's existing disability equality efforts are being coordinated by the School's Disability and Well-being Office. Specifically, it provides support to disabled students, and advises the School on disability training and other disability issues. Reporting to the Disability Consultative Forum, the Disability and Well-being Office employs three full-time and one part-time members of staff, including specialist advisers for dyslexia and mental health. The Disability and Well-being Office works closely with other departments and services within the School, including the Student Services Centre, the Students' Union, the Students' Union Society for Students with Disabilities/Dyslexia, and the School's counselling service and the onsite medical centre. In 2004, the Disability and Well-being Office moved to an accessible venue within the School. It is based within the Teaching and Learning Centre, which is part of the Academic and Professional Development Division. The efforts of the Disability and Well-being Office are reflected, among others, in the way teaching and learning is delivered – see box:

'The lecturer gave his overview of the course at the first lecture and then said that if there was anyone in the room that felt that their learning might be disadvantaged in any way they should have a chat with him in confidence. I was really surprised when he said it. I think he meant those that could not speak English very well but it made the difference for me and I went up to him afterwards and told him about my condition.'

(Dyslexic Student)

The Disability and Well-being Office also liaises with external organisations, including the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (SKILL), the Equality Challenge Unit and the Disability Team within HEFCE's Action on Access. The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) has provided useful guidance and inputs to the development of the DES. The ECU has also been instrumental in assessing the first draft of the DES for compliance purposes.

8.3 Diversity Adviser: In October 2006, the School appointed the Diversity Adviser. The role of the adviser is to provide advice on all E and D issues, ensure that all legal obligations are being fulfilled, and that the E and D agenda is progressing well in the school.

9 Existing Arrangements for Disabled Students

9.1 Disclosure of Disabilities: LSE's disability-related efforts start well before students join the School. The promotional and admissions literature that the Academic Registrar's Division issues, urges all prospective students to contact the Disability and Well-being Office before accepting an offer of a place from LSE. The aim here is two-fold: **a)** to identify specific disability needs of students, such as access, dyslexia and learning disability support, etc.; and **b)** to convey information on the School's policy, practice and resources to the students.

LSE's disability equality efforts continue when new students with disabilities arrive. The Disability and Well-being Office invites these students to a welcome and an induction day before the start of their first term. Furthermore, an interview is offered to these students with the Adviser to Students with Disability/Dyslexia. Following that, if required, an Individual Student Support Agreement (ISSA) is agreed, which records all the reasonable adjustments that are needed to address the specific disability needs of the student. Reasonable adjustments could be varied, and may include, among others, special exam arrangements, additional services in the library, a priority place in School residences, access to a rest room during the day, adjusted timetables, notetakers/readers and use of assistive technology. Information on these provisions is available at the Disability and Well-being Office as well as on the Disability and Well-being Office's webpage. The ISSA, with the signed consent of the student, is then circulated to relevant personnel, and is revised annually or, more frequently, if circumstances change.

The role of the Disability and Well-being Office is not restricted to admission and initial registration processes. Students can be referred to or refer themselves to the Disability and Well-being Office at any point during their registration. In 2005/06, there were 536 students known to the Disability and Well-being Office. There are many long-term medical conditions, including lupus, diabetes, arthritis, Crohn's, multiple sclerosis and chronic fatigue syndrome that the Disability and Well-being Office deals with. However, as shown in Table 1, dyslexia and dyslexia-related learning difficulties are the most frequent. Students with physical and sensory impairment account for 14.2 per cent of the total number of students accessing the Disability and Well-being Office between 2001/02 and 2005/06.

9.2 Special Exam Arrangements: The School's Special Examination Panel considers requests to put in place reasonable adjustments when a student is being examined, including by coursework. 'Reasonable adjustments' are modifications, which can be made to LSE examinations and assessment for students with disabilities, without compromising academic standards. Special exam arrangements are made based

Table 1: Disabled Students at LSE

	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06
Number of 'current' student files held by the Disability and Well-being Office	120	300	440	434	536
Dyslexia (%)	50	49	49	30	41
Mobility impairment (%)	14	18	3	2	2
Visual impairment (%)	7	5	2	2	2
Hearing impairment (%)	5	2	2	2	2
Other conditions or impairments including mental health (%)	24	26	44	63	53
Disability known to the Disability and Well-being Office prior to entry to LSE (%)	-	-	-	24	19

on the provision of current, supporting medical evidence. They may include, among others, the use of a word processor, rest breaks, provision of question papers in alternative formats and, where appropriate, extra writing time. Applications should be made via the Disability and Well-being Office as early as possible and no later than the start of Summer Term.

9.3 LSE Circles Network: Direct practical support is also available through peer group supports, such as the LSE Circles Network and a Community Service Volunteer (CSV), which maintain close contact with each other. The Circles Network provides an opportunity for students to help each other in mutually beneficial arrangements, such as note taking or studying together. The CSV provides a source of practical support at short notice, and as and when needed. For instance, a student whose health deteriorates may need their room cleaning or their clothes laundered on a short-term basis. At other times, the CSV provides support to disabled students in the library by photocopying or fetching books.

9.4 Library Services: The Library at LSE is committed to providing for disabled students the full range of services and facilities that it offers to all Library users. Access to the Library building is through a set of automatic doors, activated by the press of a button. There is then a ramped walkway to Reception and the Service Counter. Automated glass gates provide access through the entrances to the Main Library and the Course Collection area (this is for use by LSE staff and students only). Accessible toilets are located on all floors.

Portable hearing induction loops are provided at all the Library's service desks. Staff are available to give assistance with using the catalogue and other electronic resources as required. Two video magnifying systems to increase text size (CCTV) are located on the ground and first floors, and staff are available for help with these.

A fetch service is available to facilitate easy access to the collections and flexible borrowing arrangements are offered to disabled students, including extended loan periods and increased borrowing allowances to suit individual needs.

Book lockers are available for disabled students free of charge and a limited number located on the ground floor are reserved for those with impaired mobility. Two ground floor study rooms equipped with IT workstations, as well as two IT workstation study areas (ground and lower ground floors), are reserved for students with disabilities. Free photocopying and printing are available in the Library for those who have been referred by the School's Adviser for Students with Disabilities. A nominated member of Library staff co-ordinates provision for users with disabilities and a buddy service provides a personal contact to advise and assist students with disabilities in using the Library throughout their time at LSE.

9.5 IT Services: IT Services is committed to the provision of facilities and support for students with disabilities, to assure equality of access to services. There are three dedicated computer rooms on campus, each with at least one electric height-adjustable desk, fully adjustable monitor stands with flat TFT screens, and equipped with adaptive technologies. Other computer classrooms and open access computer facilities include ergonomic workstations and a number of standard desktop computers and printers with restricted access for students who have been referred by the School's Adviser to Students with Disabilities. IT Services also provides a variety of assistive devices such as ergonomic keyboards which can be borrowed from the Service Counter for use in the Library, and a designated member of staff will provide one-to-one support for students with disabilities who wish to become familiar with the adaptive technologies and software provided.

10 Existing Arrangements for Disabled Staff

10.1 Employee Relations: The Employee Relations Team is a part of Human Resource Division and is entrusted with the responsibility of advising managers on staff disability issues. The Head of Employee Relations, through the Head of the School's Human Resources Division, reports to the Disability Consultative Forum. The Head of Employee Relations also provides strategic and day-to-day input on how disabled staff can best be performance managed and retained.

10.2 Disclosure of Disabilities: LSE has an open policy on disability disclosure. Staff are encouraged to disclose disabilities at the start of their employment, or may declare it at any time during their employment. Similarly, managers can also approach the Employee Relations Team for advice, if they think that a member of their staff could have a disability. Disclosures are discussed with managers if an adjustment needs to be made.

10.3 Elimination of Harassment: LSE's harassment policy and procedures include the statement that harassment on grounds of disability is a form of discrimination. The School's procedure clearly states that such discrimination is unlawful. This policy applies equally to students.

10.4 Recruitment and Retention: LSE ensures that its recruitment and retention does not discriminate against disabled people in any way. Recruitment and selection processes ensure that job descriptions and person specifications do not include unnecessary or unacceptable requirements. Similarly, an employee's performance could also be affected by a not yet known or disclosed disability. Hence, the Employees Relations Team explores the possibility of a disability prior to any disciplinary procedures being applied.

10.5 Resource Allocations for Supporting Disabled Staff: LSE has also allocated resources to support disabled staff. Until 1993, there was no central pool of money

to make reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities. The discretion to support disabled staff lay very much with the individual departments. However, it was felt that this arrangement could potentially result in inequality and inconsistency. As a result, fixed funds were allocated on a non-recurrent basis over a two-year period, to purchase hearing aids, computer equipment and employment of support staff. More recently, the fund has been used for dyslexia assessments for staff. The expenditure since then has shown that recurrent funding is necessary and a School-wide allocation is agreed annually.

'I found that once I approached Gail (the adviser to staff with disabilities), I was able to get funding through Access to Learning for digital hearing aids which are better than analogue as they are fine tuned to my needs and screen out distracting background noise, making my job easier'

(Hearing Impairment)

10.6 Information Provision: LSE has also undertaken efforts to provide greater information on disability to its staff. In 2003, a disability guide handbook was produced, titled, 'Disability: A practical guide for managers and conveners'. The guide covers areas including how to avoid discrimination during the application process and how to prepare the new recruit for work as well as giving information on where to go for further help. While it was designed primarily for management use, it is now accessible on the HR and Disability websites, for use by all staff, current as well as potential. Copies of this guide are also distributed during the induction programmes for new staff.

Whilst the above mentioned guide handbook is generic, a more specific guide booklet is also being produced, subject to the availability of resources. This guide booklet will include information on specific disabilities, such as dyslexia, HIV/AIDS, depression, diabetes,

cancer, relapsing and remitting diseases such as multiple sclerosis, and what actions managers and heads of departments take to support staff with these disabilities.

10.7 Staff Training: LSE has organised a number of training programmes for its staff. Recruitment and Selection of Staff workshops have been designed for the staff involved in recruitment and selection. The workshops specifically cover the need to ensure that job descriptions and person specifications do not include unnecessary or unacceptable requirements.

In November 2004, a workshop for senior managers was organised to raise awareness of dyslexia and dyspraxia. Similar workshops are planned for middle managers. One of the hardest illnesses for managers to cope with is depression. An analysis carried out in May 2005 showed that over the previous 18 months, 45 per cent of occupational health referrals had been for depression. In response to the findings, the School plans to organise workshops for managers on mental illness.

In addition, the Staff Development Unit has been organizing half-day Valuing Diversity workshops since 2005. There are two workshops in this sequence, one is aimed at all staff, but in particular those with no management responsibilities, whereas the other is aimed specifically at those in supervisory or junior management roles. These workshops are designed to help break down barriers between staff, and develop mutual understanding and acceptance of responsibility in the area of equal opportunities. Disability equality is an important component of these workshops, where case studies are used to discuss disability issues and how these could be addressed.

10.8 Health and Safety: An important component of the LSE's Health and Safety Policy is care for disabled people. These services are not just available to the staff but also students and visitors. All health and safety information is available on the Health and Safety website.

The School's fire safety and emergency evacuation arrangements pay particular attention to the needs of people with disabilities. These include purchase of specialist equipment such as evacuation chairs, and recruiting and training volunteers to assist disabled persons to evacuate buildings. The Health and Safety Unit interacts with disabled students and staff on a continuous basis to develop Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP), which set out arrangements for ensuring the disabled person can safely evacuate a building in the event of an emergency. Copies of the PEEP are sent to the Disability and Well-being Office, School Security and other relevant parties.

Staff computer workstations are assessed on an annual basis. Where a member of staff reports Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) symptoms, the Health and Safety Unit conducts an assessment and make recommendations on adjustments to avoid or reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injury. In appropriate cases, the Health and Safety Unit can supply equipment such as specialist mouse or chair. If the recommended adjustments involve significant cost, the individual is advised to make an application for funding under the 'Access to work scheme'.

The Health and Safety Unit also assist managers to undertake risk assessments in circumstances where an employee returns to work after a prolonged period of sickness absence, where there may be implications for their health and safety.

The School is currently reviewing its arrangements for managing work-related stress to ensure that its arrangements comply with recommended best practice and guidance recently issued by the Health and Safety Executive and Universities and Colleges Employers Association. The review will include inter alia how the School can best support staff experiencing work-related stress.

11 Existing Arrangements for Disabled Visitors

- 11.1 LSE frequently holds public events and conferences. These are usually organised by the School's Conference and Events Office. The Conference and Events Office has a public information telephone line for prospective visitors to call. The Conference and Events Office staff informs them of the facilities available at the LSE and does its utmost to ensure that any additional facilities required are provided.
- 11.2 There are other events at LSE that visitors attend, but they are organised by the departments themselves. The departments here are greatly facilitated by the computerised central room booking system. This system contains detailed information on the facilities available in various rooms across the School. The departments are thus able to book rooms which are more accessible for disabled visitors.
- 11.3 The first point of contact for visitors to the School is often the School's Security Team. The Security Team has ensured that all of its staff receive regular training on assisting people with disabilities and on the nature of disabilities, including invisible disabilities. The Security team and Health and Safety Advisor have also purchased specialist equipment for use by, among others, disabled visitors in emergencies.

12 Existing and Future Monitoring Arrangements

The DDA requires employers to undertake specific information gathering on the effects of an organisation's policies and practices on the disabled. The disability data at present is collected by the Academic Registrar's Division (ARD), including wider exit and satisfaction surveys. This data in future will contribute to the progress monitoring of disability equality. Similarly, disability at the staff level at the LSE is regularly examined by the Human Resources. Human Resources collects data on patterns across staff recruitment promotion, training and retention,

including those for the disabled. Specifically, information is collected in terms of the following:

- Applicants successful and unsuccessful for jobs at the School;
- Applicants for training and promotion opportunities;
- Workplace treatment generally, such as involvement in disciplinary and grievances procedures; and
- Information related to termination of employment (such as redundancies, dismissals, resignation, and end of fixed term contracts).

This information provides the basis to indicate where there are, if any, differentials in outcomes for disabled and non-disabled people. It serves as a trigger to investigate the underlying causes of these differentials and how these could be addressed. A detailed and comprehensive system of monitoring, as identified in the action plan, is to be developed in the near future. Baseline information will be collected once the monitoring system/mechanism is in place. These two will be developed along with the development of LSE's overall E and D Strategy.

13 Equality Impact Assessment

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of policies, functions and services is aimed at assessing their existing or potential adverse impact on different equality groups, including disabled people. Under this requirement of DDAA 2005, new policies and policies being reviewed will undergo EIA. Similarly, functions and services will be prioritised according to their relevance to disability equality, with participation of staff and students. This process will further identify any existing or potential adverse impact on disabled people and what reasonable arrangements can be made to minimize this impact. A detailed process of EIA is being developed. Specifically, it will involve what framework will be used, what will be the criteria for prioritization, how policies/functions/services will be assessed, how staff and students will be involved, and what tools will be needed to implement EIA. The EIA over time will become a routine part of the policy development process.

Part IV – Action Plan

14 Framework for the Action Plan

The framework for the Action Plan is guided by the findings of the Disability Survey, Physical Access Audit and various consultations that were carried out. These findings broadly suggested, as highlighted earlier, four priority areas for improvement to include the following:

- a Development of institutional attitudes to disability
- b Improve experience of students with disabilities
- c Improve experience of staff with disabilities
- d Improve physical environment for people with disabilities

Development of institutional attitudes to disability involves three main objectives: **a)** to address concerns about awareness of and sensitivity to disability related issues for students, staff and visitors; **b)** to give a positive message on disability equality in School ethos, information and publications; and **c)** to embed disability equality considerations into all areas of planning and decision making.

Improvement of experience of students with disabilities involves three main objectives: **a)** to provide a welcoming and responsive environment where students with disabilities can fully access life at LSE; **b)** to streamline appropriate sharing of information regarding individual circumstances; and **c)** to provide mechanisms for active engagement of disabled students in progress towards disability equality

Improvement of experience of staff with disabilities involves objectives: **a)** to create an ethos which encourages greater disclosure of disability and related issues; **b)** to provide information regarding Access to Work funding; and **c)** to encourage greater participation in impact assessments and working towards disability equality.

Improvement of the physical environment for people with disabilities involves objectives: **a)** to continue a programme of projects to improve accessibility in and around the campus and Halls; **b)** to include disabled people in decision making regarding changes to the physical environment; and **c)** to develop a quick and sensitive response system to unpredictable or unexpected access situations encountered by disabled people.

This framework was translated into the action plan based on the guidelines provided in the Disability Rights Commission report, titled *Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice, 2005*. The Action Plan is divided into eight sections: Strategy and Leadership; Governance and Institutions; Participation and EIA (Equality Impact Assessment); Information and Communication; Staff Training and Development; Learning, Teaching and Research; Physical Access; Monitoring and Reporting Progress.

LSE Disability Action Plan (2007-2010)

Key Activities	Outputs	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>Strategy and Leadership: Disability equality is proactively mainstreamed into decisions/activities, with ownership by the leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disability equality needs and issues are identified and translated into a coherent plan of action - Disability equality is reflected in LSE's business and operations plans - Leadership actively promotes disability equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Disability Equality Scheme is prepared, approved and published - Disability Equality Scheme to be integrated into overall E and D Strategy/Scheme - Disability equality departmental plans are prepared and agreed with each department - Senior leaders offer personal mentorship or shadowing to disabled staff 	<p>EDC/DA</p> <p>EDC/DA</p> <p>All Departments/DA</p> <p>HR/ DA</p>	<p>December 2006</p> <p>TBC</p> <p>TBC</p> <p>TBC</p>
<p>Governance and Institutions: Disability equality is governed and institutionalised within the routine functioning of LSE</p>			
<p>Governance arrangements for disability equality are put in place</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equality and Diversity Committee (EDC) established and approved by the Council - E and D Adviser Appointed - Disability Leads identified for each department 	<p>EDC/DA</p> <p>Secretariat/HR</p> <p>Secretariat/ EDC</p> <p>EDC/DA</p>	<p>January 2007</p> <p>October 2006</p> <p>March 2008</p>
<p>Participation and EIA: Disabled students, staff and visitors are involved in identifying pressing disability equality needs and issues</p>			
<p>Involvement of disabled staff and students on impact assessment of policies, functions and services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) framework, assessment and involvement criteria and tools are developed - EIA is made a part of LSE's policy development process - New policies and policies needing review are assessed for their EIA - Functions and services are prioritised for their impact on disability equality and assessed for EIA 	<p>All Departments/DA</p> <p>All Departments/DA</p> <p>DA</p> <p>DA</p>	<p>March 2008</p> <p>TBC</p> <p>Ongoing – 2010</p> <p>June 2008</p>

Key Activities	Outputs	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>Information and Communication: Disability equality is well communicated and promoted within and outside the LSE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Information on E and D legislation is communicated to staff and students - Disability equality efforts are promoted to internal and external stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equality statement included in policy documents and information material - Disability equality practical guide to be reviewed - Disability equality guidelines available on-line are reviewed on a regular basis for compliance with DDA requirements - Disability equality to be promoted through recruitment and Widening Access Project activities - An 'Disability Friendly Awards' continues to recognise the contribution of a department/individual on a yearly basis - Disability equality and the 'Disability Friendly Award', award is promoted on a regular basis through presentations, press statements, various consultative forums and on online 	<p>All Departments/DA</p> <p>Disability and Well-being Office/DA</p> <p>Disability and Well-being Office/DA</p> <p>WAT/DA</p> <p>Director Administration/ Disability and Well-being Office/DA</p> <p>Disability and Well-being Office/DA</p>	<p>Ongoing – 2010</p> <p>March 2008</p> <p>January 2008</p> <p>July 2007</p> <p>April 2007</p> <p>Ongoing – 2010</p>
<p>Staff Training and Development: Staff are trained on Disability equality legislation and able to access development opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training on disability is mainstreamed in staff training programmes - Disabled staff have access to development opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three-year Disability Equality Training Plan is designed - Training on disability is delivered as a regular part of staff/student induction - Recruitment and development opportunities are widely publicised - Disabled staff are encouraged to participate in staff development opportunities 	<p>HR/SDU/DA</p> <p>HR/SDU/DA</p> <p>HR/DA</p> <p>HR/DA</p>	<p>October 2008</p> <p>Ongoing – 2010</p> <p>Ongoing – 2010</p> <p>Ongoing – 2010</p>

LSE Disability Action Plan (2007-2010) continued

Key Activities	Outputs	Responsibility	Timeline
Learning, Teaching and Research: Disability equality is reflected in the way LSE governs its learning, teaching and research			
- Disability equality is reflected in learning and teaching	- Disability equality is considered in curriculum development and delivery	L and TU/DA	Ongoing – 2010
- Disability equality is integrated into research	- Collaborative or otherwise research projects on disability equality are identified and developed into concrete funding proposals	Related Academic Departments/DA	Ongoing – 2010
Physical Access: Physical access areas are in line with the DDA 2005 requirements			
- Physical Access Audit is conducted on a regular basis	- Fact finding on the progress of the Physical Access Audit	E and F/DA	TBC
- Way Finding Audit to identify gaps in signage	- New signage on-site and on-line information is consistent for style, font, size, etc. with the DDA requirements	E and F/DA	Ongoing – 2010
Monitoring and Reporting Progress: Disability equality is monitored and reported for its progress on a regular basis			
- Disability equality is monitored on a regular basis	- A system and mechanism for the monitoring of disability equality progress for both student and staff is developed	EDC/All Departments/DA	TBC
- The progress of disability equality is reported on a regular basis to internal and external stakeholders	- Monitoring indicators to be based on, among others, recruitment, selection, induction, personal development, support, promotion, retention and complaints	DA	Ongoing – 2010
	- Disability equality progress is reported to the Council and is published on-line on a yearly basis	DA	Ongoing – 2010
	- DES in the light of progress monitoring is reviewed, and if required, revised on an annual basis	DA	TBC

Abbreviations used in the Action Plan are as follows: **L and TU** Learning and Teaching Unit

DA Diversity Adviser **SDU** Staff Development Unit

E and F Estates and Facilities **HR** Human Resources

EDC Equality and Diversity Committee **WAT** Widening Access Team

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References

- 1 LSE Strategic Plan 2007-12 (www.lse.ac.uk/collections/planningUnit/pdf/Stratplan07.pdf)
- 2 Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2005/20050013.htm)
- 3 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 (www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2001/20010010.htm)
- 4 The Duty to Promote Disability Equality: Statutory Code of Practice, England and Wales, Disability Rights Commission, 2005
- 5 Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 (www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts1998/19980042.htm)

Internal Contacts and Groups

- 1 LSE Disability and Well-being Office (www.lse.ac.uk/collections/disabilityOffice)
- 2 LSE Academic Registrar's Division (ARD) (www.lse.ac.uk/collections/academicRegistrarsDivision/)
- 3 LSE Human Resources Division (HRD) (www.lse.ac.uk/collections/humanResources/)
- 4 LSE Circles Network (www.lse.ac.uk/collections/circles/)
- 5 Community Service Volunteer (CSV) (www.lse.ac.uk/collections/disabilityOffice)
- 6 LSE Speakers Bureau, Disability and Well-being Office (www.lse.ac.uk/collections/disabilityOffice)
- 7 LSE's Student Union Society for Students (LSESU) (www.lsesu.com/display/lse/Home)

External Organisations/Networks

- 1 Equality and Human Rights Commission (www.equalityhumanrights.com/pages/eocdrcre.aspx)
- 2 The National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (SKILL) (www.skill.org.uk)
- 3 The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) (www.ecu.ac.uk)
- 4 The Disability Team within Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) Action on Access (www.actiononaccess.org/?p=1_3)



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