

Annual Disability Equality Report 2008

Report to Council on the Disability Equality Scheme - December 2008

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Appendix 1 – Updated Action Plan 2008

Annual Disability Equality Report 2008

1. Context

- i) This report represents the second Annual Disability Equality Scheme Report presented to Council following adoption of Aberystwyth University's (AU) Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan in December 2006, and updates on the previous year's report. The report assesses the impact of the Policy and Action Plan during the previous 12 months, as part of AU's duties under the **Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA 2005)**.
- ii) As stated in last year's report, the Disability Equality Scheme (DES) and the three-year Action Plan was designed to support and complement AU's existing Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy in respect of disability equality and to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (2005). The Act, which makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled people in terms of access to employment and the services it provides, includes in its General Duty the requirement for public bodies to:
 - Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons;
 - Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act;
 - Eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities;
 - Promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons;
 - Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life.
- iii) The Statutory Code of Practice on the 'Duty to Promote Disability Equality', published by the Disability Rights Commission's (now Commission for Equality and Human Rights - CEHR) recommends that the annual report should:
 - Monitor and demonstrate progress against the DES action plan, including progress on eliminating discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and meeting targets;
 - Show results of the year's information-gathering;
 - Indicate how the DES will continue to develop;
 - Describe how the information gathered will be used to inform action;
 - Show continuing commitment to disability equality.
- iv) This report has been prepared by the Equalities Advisor in consultation with various AU Officers and Chair/members of the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Committee. It will be presented to Council on 16 December 2008 and made available bilingually as a public document via the Equal Opportunities and Diversity website <http://www.aber.ac.uk/human-resources/en/equal-oppo>, or from the Equality Advisor located in the Human Resources (HR) Department. The previous Disability Equality Report (2007) is also available on the website. To receive the report in any other format, please contact the Equalities Advisor on opp@aber.ac.uk / (01970) 628598.
- v) The DES forms part of a full and positive agenda on Equality and Diversity that aims to deliver equality through an inclusive approach. The specific work on disability equality remains a priority for the University and assists in embedding the wider principles of equality.

- vi) In addition to the Disability Equality Policy, AU has also an Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy, Race Equality Policy and Gender Equality Scheme, together with associated Action Plans. A statement on Age is also published.
- vii) AU plans to develop a Single Equality Scheme, which will incorporate disability equality, in line with HEFCW's strategy. The initial process of consultation has just been concluded and the needs of disabled people and the equality duty will need to be considered sensitively in developing the scheme.

Summary: This is the second Annual Report for Disability Equality required under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA 2005). AU plans to develop a Single Equality Scheme during the forthcoming year.

2. Demonstrating Progress of the DES and Action Plan

- i) The scheme was designed to assist the University to deliver improvements in six core areas which formed the framework on which AU's Action Plan was developed. The following items summarise progress in these areas and are shown with updated remarks within the Action Plan (Appendix A).

- ii) **Core areas for improvement:**

- a) **Item 1 – Action Plan Tasks 4 a-c**

- Buildings access and the built environment:** (access in and between University buildings)

- Estates Department** summarised the following DDA works for 2008 as follows:

- In recent years the University has benefited from external grant funding for DDA works. For 2007 / 2008 these monies were spent as follows:

- New lift for Computer Science building (Robotics) and an upgraded lift for the Hugh Owen Library
 - Wheelchair refuges in all academic buildings
 - Nosings to external steps
 - Upgraded external signage
 - Wheelchair ramps at the Physical Sciences and Milford buildings
 - Automated external doors at the Arts Centre concourse entrance, Hugh Owen levels A, D and E
 - Upgraded disabled parking bays
 - Other reactive works.

- This year there has been no specific Government funding available for DDA, however the University has invested £100K from its Capital Investment Strategy Fund to respond primarily to DDA reactive works (responding to specific requests). To date these funds have been spent as follows:

- New automated entrance doors to the lower level of Parry Williams Building
 - Hugh Owen Building internal door automation level D
 - Replacement Arts Centre automated main entrance doors.

- Other works in hand include:

- Improved DDA access to Bay Radio in the Students' Union Building

- New automated side access doors to the Arts Centre.

The Estates Office will identify other works to be undertaken with the balance of available funding and will liaise with the Accessibility Forum (see below) regarding prioritisation.

In April 2008 AU's **IS Disability Access and Software Licensing Manager** organised a disability consultation forum including staff and student representatives and service providers, e.g. Estates Department, Information Services, Student Support Services, Careers, Student Guild, HR Department, Disability Officers, Health and Safety Advisor, etc. Issues such as current disability works, Emergency Egress, Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs), DDA Lifts, etc. were discussed.

Following this consultation process and formal recognition of this group by the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Committee, Terms of Reference were established and the forum, now named "**Accessibility Forum**", aims to meet twice a year to:

- Promote disability equality in all structures and functions of the University;
- Actively encourage disabled members of staff and students to engage in this forum as part of the consultative process;
- Offer staff and students an accessibility consultation forum on services and functions within the University;
- Discuss barriers to accessibility and consult on resolutions to such issues, whilst recognising and acknowledging progress and achievements;
- Disseminate developments, information and where appropriate, advice;
- Discuss and disseminate developments and future plans, e.g. estates works, inclusive curriculum, technological improvements, procedures and practices, etc;
- Raise mutual awareness of requirements between participating parties;
- Promote a sense of partnership between providers and consumers by raising mutual awareness of both the possibilities and the constraints in the provision of institutional obligations and goals within a Higher Education setting.

The forum met again in November 2008 with updated membership which included more senior members of staff, e.g. Director of Estates Department to aid reporting and communication issues. Notes of the meetings of the forum are to be submitted to the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Committee.

PEEPs for students continue to be coordinated by the **Disability Officer** in Student Support Services who reported that 14 PEEPs have been initiated in 2008/09, and are scheduled to be completed by December 2008. Following a review, the post of Disability Officer is to be renamed Learner Support Coordinator (Students with Disabilities) with greater responsibility for the integration (and retention) of students with disabilities and their transition into and out of the HE experience. In future, the PEEPs process will form a keystone of the transition and communications process. A **HR Manager** co-ordinates PEEPs for staff; it was reported that no PEEPs were carried out during the last year.

Summary: a) Buildings access and the built environment: in the absence of specific government funding – AU is now investing £100K per annum in DDA Works. An Accessibility Forum has been formed.

b) Item 2 – Action Plan Tasks 3a-h

Communications: (how we communicate with our staff, students and other users of our services and the necessity to provide information in accessible formats)

The DES and Action Plan are available on the HR Department website <http://www.aber.ac.uk/human-resources/en/equal-opps/> in a range of accessible formats on request. HR's website has been significantly updated over the last two years with new and updated policies and procedures. Equality policies, reports and various links (e.g. diversity e-learning training) are available on disability, as well as other strands of equality within the Equal Opportunities and Diversity section of the website. In 2007, there were no requests for documentation, e.g. application form, in other accessible formats.

Student Support Services will move shortly to a new location on the Penglais Campus which will provide a one-stop-shop student focused facility. Student Support Services provide the transcription of documentation into a range of accessible formats, e.g. audio, Braille, electronic format, etc., for departments and students. Other disability services offered are listed below:

- loan equipment, e.g. recording machines, hearing aids;
- note-taking;
- administers DSA in order to employ English/B.S.L. Interpreters;
- provide learning and study support;
- advise on special examination arrangements;
- liaise with G.P.s or Consultants;
- arrange adapted accommodation;
- arrange access to Green Card Areas which consist of specialist software and hardware to meet individual needs;
- advise on adaptive technology;
- inform on any new specialist software and equipment;
- provide a Braille or Audio transcriptions, and tactile diagrams service.

Both the HR Department and Student Support Services use the weekly email service, delivered to over 10,000 staff and students, as a means of communication. At present there is no formal communications policy or procedure. However, the Equalities Advisor will meet shortly with the Press and Public Relations Officer to advise on policy formation (equality impact assessment) and the needs of people without email access or other accessibility issues.

The newly formed Accessibility Forum should aid in promoting disability equality and engage staff and students in an inclusive consultation process.

Summary: b) Communications: - HR website has been enhanced and Student Support Services will relocate shortly to a one-stop-shop facility.

c) Item 3 – Action Plan Tasks 7a-b

Training: (the need to provide targeted training and information for all staff in order to ensure that staff fully understand their responsibilities in relation to the DES)

The Centre for Academic Development and Academic Practice (CDSAP) is looking at delivering disability awareness more effectively.

A diversity e-learning tutorial provided by HR Department has a specific module on disability and includes information on the definition of disability, Disability Equality Duty and making reasonable adjustments and links to AU's Scheme and Action Plan. This has enabled staff to be more aware of their responsibilities in relation to disability and promotes the need to deliver disability equality through an inclusive approach.

Summary: c) Training: - Diversity e-learning with a module disseminating DDA requirements and AU's policy has been delivered to the majority of staff during 2008.

d) Item 4 – Action Plan Tasks 6a-d

Service delivery: (including making effective use of technology and a one-stop-shop approach to enable easier access for all)

The new Student Support Centre is scheduled to open early in 2009. It will, for the first time, co-locate the key areas of support previously distributed across campuses. A satellite of the Centre has been established in the Cledwyn Building, in specially refurbished facilities to accommodate the University's Student Health Centre and Disabilities Unit.

A Student Wellness Group has been formed in 2008. It brings together University staff in Disabilities Support, Counselling Services, Student Health and Welfare Advice, to actively promote and integrate a variety of initiatives to improve the general quality of the student experience, and the experience of those with disabilities in particular. Student Support Services attend the newly formed Accessibility Forum which encourages student engagement in this consultative process.

The University's Language and Learning Centre is now part of Student Support and in 2008/09 will set out its vision for a dynamic, pre-emptive approach to the learning situation of students. The new "Learning Centre" will take responsibility for challenging barriers to student success, and promote awareness and training in learning diversity. It is likely that a project on Accessible Curriculum will find a permanent home in this area.

The Language and Learning Centre aims to enable students to achieve their full potential in a variety of ways: The Academic Learning Curriculum Access/Dyslexia Service (ALCADS) offers specialist study tuition advice and assistance to students who have underlying learning/communication differences, e.g. dyslexia. Initial referral and full cognitive (diagnostic) assessments (including Educational Psychologist and Specialist Teacher assessment reports) are available.

ALCADS offers National Network of Assessment Centre services and provides Study Needs Assessments as part of AU's facilitation of access to Disabled Student Allowances. Individual learning strategy development programmes are available to students and these can be complemented by a variety of group settings where sessions take account of differences in individual cognitive processing styles and consider challenges implicit in the HE environment, with the aim of increasing students' effectiveness in assessing and dealing with these and meeting their individual potential.

CDSAP also offer support in designing inclusive learning on its website with guidance from:

- [Techdis](#) which supports the education sector in achieving greater accessibility and inclusion by stimulating innovation and providing expert advice and guidance on disability and technology;
- [SWANDS](#) with guidance for dealing with admissions, teaching, learning and assessment;
- [RNID](#) for teaching strategies for use with deaf students.

Summary: d) Service Delivery: - The new Student Support Centre is scheduled to open in 2009. ALCADS continues to offer a specialist service to students with learning and communication differences.

e) Item 5 – Action Plan Tasks 5a-h

Recruitment and retention (of disabled people as students and staff and supporting them to perform to the best of their abilities)

Student recruitment and retention:

(Action Plan item 5d - Reviewing guidance material on creating accessible access to learning and teaching)

An 'inclusive curriculum' pilot exercise, **Teachability**, led by the Deputy Director of Student Support Services and funded by the Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund, reached its conclusion in July 2008. The pilot's objectives were to identify the recognised experiences of disabled students and of staff devising innovative ways of enhancing access. It explored the use of Teachability related strategies and materials to assist departments to review the accessibility of their criteria for disabled students. Two departments, International Politics and Theatre, Film and TV, were actively involved with the pilot programme.

The work of the pilot was showcased as part of the Higher Education Academy's Inclusive Practice Seminar Series, with a well attended seminar (both internal and external representation) in July 2008. Resources from the seminar are available from: http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/detail/ResearchSeminar_08Jul08.

The Student Support Committee recommended that a presentation be given to the Directors of Teaching and Learning – this currently is outstanding. The final report by the external consultant recommends that: "there requires to be put into effect a rolling programme, within a relatively short timescale of not more than three years, within which each academic department in the University will be expected to have carried out a review of the accessibility of its curricula and to have assessed major elements of its practices."

With the opening of the one-stop-shop Student Support Centre, new web pages, publicity and leaflets will emphasise the integration of student-focussed support within the University. Prospectus entries have already been re-written to emphasise the inclusion of students with disabilities, to make easier their "transition" into higher education, and to include the role of families and existing agencies of support. To coincide with the new Student Centre, a programme of Open Days and Staff Development events have been scheduled, which include briefings for administrators and Personal Tutors on disability awareness.

To reflect the integrated approach, the former "Committee for Student Support" has agreed to adopt a new title and to bring together other sections of the University with the intention of actively improving the quality of the student experience. A cross-agency approach will be actively sought, which is likely to benefit students with disabilities in particular.

The effectiveness of our outreach to students, via events like Open Days, continues to be monitored. The induction of new students and health-promotion events have been assessed for their effectiveness and, in 2009, a more comprehensive schedule will be implemented.

Staff recruitment and retention: HR Department are preparing for their **Two Ticks 'Positive about Disabled People'** reaccreditation which is due imminently. The Two Ticks symbol demonstrates commitment to good practice in employing disabled people and on a practical level means that AU will interview any disabled candidate that meets the essential criteria for a post. Further, a memorandum has been drafted for all staff who have declared a disability in order to review any developments and/or reasonable adjustments in supporting their disability.

The HR Department also continues to administer the **Access to Work scheme** which offers grants, support and advice to disabled people and employers. Access to Work can assist with:

- A communicator, e.g. an interpreter at interviews;
- A support worker, e.g. a reader for people who have sight difficulties;
- Special aids and equipment in the workplace;
- Grants for travel to work, e.g. to help cover the cost of taxi fares;
- Adaptations to premises and equipment, e.g. help towards the cost of making premises and equipment accessible.

Several staff have received support from the scheme in 2008, although staff can access this support directly from the JobCentre Plus:

http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/outofworkhelplookingforwork/Getting_job_ready/Programmes_to_get_you_ready/Dev_014875.xml.html.

The HR Department has drafted new Application and Monitoring forms which are currently being approved by Staffing Committee. These forms aim to be more inclusive and accessible, to update the definition of disability, to assist Two Ticks applicants and request for the applicant to state assistance / reasonable adjustments required to fulfill the post. These forms also synchronise categories of disability to meet Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) requirements.

Guidelines on making reasonable adjustments have not been drafted. However, a plethora of resources and guidance is available on-line.

Summary: e) An 'inclusive curriculum' pilot (Teachability) was carried out in 2008 by Student Support Services. The HR department has updated its application and monitoring forms.

f) Item 6 – Action Plan tasks 11a

Democratic participation: (including encouraging and supporting disabled people to take part in the activities and processes of the University)

It is intended that the newly formed Accessibility Forum will aid in promoting disability equality and help to engage staff and students to participate and consult on issues and initiatives.

AU aims to deliver an inclusive approach to consultation on its activities and processes and, through information and a range of consultation and training sessions, is actively working to promote the positive duty.

Summary: f) The Accessibility Forum aims to encourage further staff and student participation, together with a range of consultation and training activities.

iii) Other activities:

Equality Impact Assessment screening process is still ongoing. A report should be completed by early 2009.

As illustrated in Appendix A, the DES Action Plan contains an update in the "Comments / Further Actions" and "Completed" sections to demonstrate progress against the plan.

Summary: A review has been undertaken on key areas of the DES and the implementation of tasks on the DES Action Plan. The DES Action

Plan has been updated in 2007 and 2008 to show progress against the plan.

3. Promoting Disability Equality

i) Networking Events:

As stated above, the Accessibility Forum will aid in promoting disability equality and engaging staff / students with disability issues and initiatives.

The Equality Advisor, Student Guild's Diversity and Development Officer and other staff members continue to attend external meetings of Ceredigion Equality of Service Delivery Group, organised by Dyfed-Powys Police. During these meetings, disability issues for visitors, staff and students, together with statistics are reported. The Equality Advisor also attends quarterly Equality Challenge Unit Welsh Liaison Group Meetings attended by all Universities in Wales and HEFCW, where disability equality is discussed and good practice shared.

The Student Guild's Diversity and Development Officer reported that she intended to run a "Diversity in University" week to highlight the diversity of students within the university, including students with disabilities.

ii) Student Support Centre:

As stated above, the Student Support Services will open its new Student Support Centre in 2009 and launch new web pages, prospectus pages, publicity and leaflets to promote the integration of student-focussed support within the University. The new service will promote the inclusion of students with disabilities.

Summary: AU continues to promote and embed disability equality through a range of networking and training activities. The new Student Support Centre will promote the integration of student-focussed support.

4. Disability Monitoring:

i) Demographic Comparators:

As reported in 2007, the UK Census 2001 data indicates that almost 9.5 million people (18.2 per cent) report that they have a long-term illness, health problems or disability which limits their daily activities or the work they could do. Of these, 4.3 million are of working age. Ceredigion is recorded as having 20.7% of its population with 'limiting long-term illness' and 10.1% with 'general health not good' (source: Census: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/profiles/00NQ-A.asp>).

ii) The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) Statistics for 2006/7 (http://www.hefcw.ac.uk/Miscellaneous_Docs/Disability_Monitoring_0607.pdf) indicate that, of 139,776 students studying in HE Institutions in Wales, approximately 8,865 (or 6.34%) are students with disabilities, 4,126 (2.95%) are in receipt of Disability Support Allowance (DSA) and 4,739 (3.39%) do not receive DSA. At Aberystwyth University 8.41% of students are reported disabled, which

suggests a positive indicator for accessible HE services for students with disabilities. AU student data is shown from item viii onwards.

iii) HEFCW data indicates that of a total of 26,712 staff at Welsh HEI's in 2006/07, 574 (2.15%) are recorded as having a disability. At AU 3.70% are recorded as having a disability - a good disability disclosure rate. AU's staff data are shown in the following section.

iv) **Staff Monitoring:**

Data codes for disability were updated by the HR Department this year to match those of the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) as follows:

- 00 No known disability
- 51 Specific learning disability (such as dyslexia or dyspraxia)
- 52 General learning disability (such as Down's syndrome)
- 53 Cognitive impairment (such as autistic spectrum disorder or resulting from head injury)
- 54 Long-standing illness or health condition (such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease, or epilepsy)
- 55 Mental health condition (such as depression or schizophrenia)
- 56 Physical impairment or mobility issues (such as difficulty using arms or using a wheelchair or crutches)
- 57 Deaf or serious hearing impairment
- 58 Blind or serious visual impairment
- 96 Other type of disability
- 97 Question not answered

v) As stated above, further data collections were undertaken by the HR Department during 2008 for reporting to HESA. Data captured since 2005 is shown below –:

Staff Disability Breakdown:

	Jul-05	%	Oct-06	%	Oct-07	%	Aug-08	%
Female	26	41.94%	25	42.37%	21	42.00%	35	42.68%
Male	36	58.06%	34	57.63%	29	58.00%	47	57.32%
Total Disabled	62		59		50		82	
Total No of Staff	1844		1791		1883		2217	
Disabled %	3.36%		3.29%		2.66%		3.70%	

Type of Disability for Staff (Aug 08):

Disability Type	Female	Male	
Blind Visual Impairment		*	
Deaf Hearing Impairment	5	5	
Cognitive Impairment		*	
Long-standing Illness	11	16	
Mental Health Illness	2	*	
Physical Mobility Impairment	7	7	
Specific Learning Disability	7	6	
Other Disability Type	*	10	
	32	44	76

Note: figures under the value of 5 have been anonymised (with an asterisk) so as not to identify members of staff.

- vi) As illustrated above, of a total 2217 AU staff (those recorded as having a contract), 82 (47 males and 35 females) are recorded currently as having a disability. This represents a total 3.70% of staff with disabilities.
- vii) It is likely that this figure represents fewer staff with disabilities than the true figure. Some staff may not consider they are disabled and may not wish to be treated differently, even if law protects them. Some staff may also fear being 'labelled' and prefer not to disclose their disability. This can make monitoring processes and the delivery of 'reasonable adjustments' difficult to deliver.

viii) **Student Monitoring:**

As with staff monitoring codes, disability categories have also been updated by MIS this year to synchronise with HESA as follows:

- 00 No known disability
- 02 Blind/partially sighted
- 03 Deaf/hearing impairment
- 04 Wheelchair user/mobility difficulties
- 05 Personal care support
- 06 Mental health difficulties
- 07 An unseen disability, e.g. diabetes, epilepsy, asthma
- 08 Multiple disabilities
- 10 Autistic Spectrum Disorder
- 11 A specific learning difficulty e.g. dyslexia
- 96 A disability not listed above
- 97 Information refused
- 98 Information not sought
- 99 Not known

- ix) Data for students was captured in October 2008 and is a 'snapshot' of the current semester. It should be noted that there is a possibility that some data may not yet have been collected/input, e.g. for School of Education and Lifelong Learning students. The data also reflects counts of student registrations and not simply students. Therefore any student registered on more than one programme will be counted for each programme of study, e.g. in the case of Welsh for Adults.
- x) AU has a current total of 10,673 UG, PG and SELL Student Registrations. Of these, 898 (8.41%) relate to students with a recorded disability and 307 (2.88%) are recorded as receiving disability allowance. 6.4% are UG's, 1.4 % PG's and 0.6% SELL students.
- xi) The table below illustrates more details on these students:

Disability Allow	Disability Type	Total Disability	UG FT	UG PT	UG DL	UG Other	PG FT	PG PT	PG DL	PG Other	SELL
N	02	27	18	*	0	0	*	0	*	0	*
N	03	29	15	0	*	0	*	*	*	0	5
N	04	47	32	0	*	*	*	*	0	0	7
N	05	*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	*
N	06	23	14	0	*	*	0	*	*	*	*
N	07	100	43	*	9	0	12	10	19	0	6
N	08	15	*	0	0	0	5	*	*	0	*
N	10	11	10	0	0	0	0	0	*	0	0
N	11	212	145	*	0	*	28	15	*	*	15

N	96	126	88	*	*	*	12	*	*	0	17
N Total		591	369	8	16	6	62	37	31	*	59
Y	02	5	*	0	*	0	*	0	0	0	0
Y	03	12	10	0	0	0	*	0	*	0	0
Y	04	11	9	0	0	0	*	*	0	0	0
Y	05	*	*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Y	06	*	*	0	0	0	0	0	*	0	0
Y	07	8	6	0	0	0	*	0	0	0	0
Y	08	7	5	*	*	0	0	0	0	0	0
Y	10	9	7	0	0	0	0	0	*	0	*
Y	11	233	212	*	0	*	6	*	*	0	5
Y	96	17	13	*	0	*	*	0	0	0	*
Y Total		307	269	*	*	*	12	5	5	0	7
Grand Total		898	638	12	18	9	74	42	36	2	66

Key: UG = Under-graduate, PG = Post-graduate, SELL = Life Long Learning
 FT = Full-time, PT = Part-time, DL = Distance Learners, Other = Other

Note: figures under the value of 5 have been anonymised (with asterisk) so as not to identify students.

xii) Data for 2008/09 and 2007/08 is shown below:

	Feb-08		Oct-08	
Total Students	10,698	%	10673	%
Disabled Students	976	9.12%	898	8.41%
DSA Students	379	3.54%	307	2.88%
Non-DSA Students	597	5.58%	591	5.54%

xiii) The current level of disabled students is probably under-represented as it is felt that some data may not yet have been electronically input and data collation was taken at a different time in the previous report, i.e. February 2008. For a true comparison to be made, data should be collated again in February 2009.

xiv) The withdrawal data for students with disabilities in 2007/08 is as follows. These figures need to be discussed and examined further with Student Support Services.

Withdrawal of Disabled Students	Total Students	Total Disabled Students	Withdraws on DSA (% of 8860)	Withdraws not on DSA (% of 8860)
Total UG/PG Students Only	8860	961 (10.8%)	440 (5.0%)	521 (5.9%)
Perm Withdrawals	437	62 (14.2%)	21 (0.2%)	41 (0.5%)
Temp Withdrawals	215	37 (17.2%)	15 (0.2%)	22 (0.2%)
Total Perm & Temp Withdrawals	652	99 (15.2%)	36 (0.4%)	63 (0.7%)

xv) To summarise, AU currently has 8.41% students and 3.70% staff with disabilities. These compare positively with HEFCW's 2006/07 figures of 6.34% Welsh HEI students and 2.15% HEI staff with disabilities.

xvi) Over the last few years, the HR department has undertaken much work to promote the University as an inclusive employer (e.g. through Two Ticks and Access to Work schemes), to cleanse data held within HR systems and has attempted to increase its disclosure rate for disability.

xvii) Student Support Services will soon bring together key areas of support in specially adapted facilities and include the Student Health Centre and Disabilities Unit. A new

post, Learner Support Coordinator (Students with Disabilities), will replace the previous Disability Officer's role with greater emphasis upon integration and retention of students with disabilities and their transitions into and out of the HE experience. This new service delivery should greatly aid the promotion of disability within the University.

Summary: *AU has undertaken monitoring for both staff and students with disabilities. Current indicators show that AU's figures of 8.41% students and 3.70% staff with disabilities compare well to the benchmarking of HEFCW's Welsh HEI staff and students figures (6.34% and 2.15 in 2006/07 respectively).*

5. Conclusions and Priorities

- i) Within its Strategic Plan, AU aims to:
 - (a) comply with legislative requirements for equality and diversity;
 - (b) continue to embed equality and diversity in all areas of its functions and activities and operate in a manner which provides equal opportunities for all;
 - (c) continue to develop a culture in which students, staff and visitors are treated with respect and dignity, in an environment in which a diversity of backgrounds and experiences are valued.
- ii) AU continues to work towards its commitment to disability equality and its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA 2005). It continues to work proactively with external partners and organisations in order to collaborate and share good practice in disability equality issues.
- iii) Staff awareness of disability equality and the DDA 2005 has increased over the last year with the implementation of mandatory diversity e-learning which has been delivered to the majority of AU's staff.
- iv) AU endeavours to deliver a more 'joined-up' approach (between staff and student services) on disability equality. The Equality Advisor will meet with Student Support Services in the New Year to review and enhance disability data and monitoring mechanisms for Student Support Services.
- v) The restructured Student Support Services will continue to work to enhance the quality of the student experience, with special attention to learning support and integrated, accessible support services. In 2009, renewed efforts will be made to liaise with staff in academic departments, where student support needs appear to be increasing.
- vi) The following tasks will be prioritised over the forthcoming year:
 - Further dissemination of the Disability Equality and the DDA 2005 through training and support initiatives;
 - Development of AU's new Single Equality Scheme incorporating disability equality and being sensitive with regard to the needs of disabled people and the equality duty;
 - Development of disability monitoring mechanisms for Student Support Services to inform action and review students' accessibility to DSA support;

- Review and update PEEP's mechanisms in Student Support Services;
- Further disability awareness initiatives to promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons and encourage participation, e.g. training, mentoring and networking events;
- To continue to measure improvement of disability support (e.g. feedback questionnaires from staff and students);
- Promotion of the new Accessibility Forum to staff and students to improve participation and communication of improvements, initiatives, etc. relating to disability.

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HR Department
November 2008
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Internal information sources for this report include HR Department, Management Information Services, Student Support Services (includes Language and Learning Support and Student Disability Officer), IS Disability Accessibility Officer, Guild Diversity Officer, Estates Department and CDSAP. External sources include the 2001 National Census, HESA and HEFCW.

Please contact Ms. Olymbia Petrou on 01970 62 8598 or opp@aber.ac.uk if you would like this information in an alternative format, e.g. Braille, Audio Transcriptions, etc.