1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 This Disability Policy reinforces the University of Warwick’s commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for the diverse student and staff body and to review its policies and practices in light of developments in the Higher Education sector, the legislative framework, and the University strategy.

1.2 This document outlines the University’s duties and the options available to staff and students with disabilities in seeking support or adjustments to their working and studying environment.

1.3 The University is committed to working towards an understanding of the Social Model of disability; this includes addressing the barriers to inclusion (structural, cultural, organisational and attitudinal) which adversely impact upon disabled people, affecting the ability to meet their needs, rights and requirements.

2.0 AIMS

2.1 This Disability Policy sets out the University’s commitment to disabled students and staff, providing a framework to contribute to the ongoing development of an enabling environment for all members and service users of the University.

2.2 This policy should be read in conjunction with the University Equality Objectives and University Equality Action Plan which outline the key priorities. However, while these focus on the overarching objectives and aims relating to disability, this policy addresses some of the specific operational aspects for staff and students and aims to provide a guide for managers, staff and students.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The University is responsible for the well being of current disabled staff and students, together with actively encouraging disabled students and staff to join the University. These responsibilities are delegated via the Equality and Diversity Committee to Heads of Departments and appropriate representatives on the staff and student side to ensure support for both disabled students and staff. In addition certain departments have particular responsibilities to ensure that specific activities are achieved as part of the Action Plan objectives.

4.0 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

4.1 The disability equality legislation outlines a number of required duties. The Equality Act 2010 incorporated all nine separate pieces of equality legislation including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Equality Act 2010 places a general duty on all Higher Education Institutions to promote disability equality. Under these duties the University of Warwick is required to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- eliminate harassment of disabled people
- promote equality of opportunities between disabled people and other people
- involve disabled people in the formulation of actions
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life
- take steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment
• identify and analyse potential discriminatory policies, practices and procedures in all aspects of the University’s activities.

4.2 The University supports an anticipatory approach which requires pro-active consideration of disabled access to services and facilities to ensure adjustments are made in advance of individual disabled people attempting to use the service or access education.

4.3. The University Equality objectives as required by the Equality Act 2010 include the action plan for the institution on all aspects of equality and diversity to include the protected characteristics under the act. The objectives can be viewed on the equality and diversity pages: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/singleequalityscheme/

5.0 DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

5.1 The Equality Act 2010 uses a wide definition of disability which includes those with physical or mobility impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments, dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, AD(H)D, medical conditions, mental health difficulties, autistic spectrum conditions, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, M.E. and ‘unseen disabilities’ (e.g. asthma, epilepsy, heart conditions, diabetes). The formal definition included in the Act is:

“A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out normal day to day activities”

5.2 The definition of “day to day activities” includes mobility, manual dexterity, lifting, hearing, eyesight, speech, memory, and the ability to concentrate, learn or understand. The Act defines “substantial” as being more than trivial and “long-term” as being more than twelve months or likely to last twelve months. An impairment which would substantially affect a person, but which is controlled by medical treatment or prosthesis, is still covered by the definition of disability.

5.3 The definition includes cancer, HIV/AIDS and Multiple Sclerosis effectively from the point of diagnosis.

5.4 Discrimination and harassment is not limited to those people who are themselves disabled but also applies to those associated with disability i.e. a carer for a disabled child.

5.5 Further information on disability is available under the FAQ’s on the disability section of the Equality and Diversity Website http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/disability/

6.0 STAFF RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

6.1 It is the aim of the University to recruit, train, develop and retain disabled people. The University monitors self declaration of disability at both application and appointment stage. As part of staff recruitment, the University has an equality monitoring slip that is removed from the application form prior to sending to the department. This is to ensure that the monitoring data is not seen by the recruiters but that HR have the necessary information to inform the department of any adjustments required to the recruitment process. The University also has a minicom available for potential applicants to use and the application form is available in different formats, including Braille or audio, upon request.
6.2 The University offers a variety of training opportunities to meet the requirements of all staff. These are normally held in accessible venues with consideration of the needs of staff with disabilities including larger print handouts for those with visual impairments, or printed on different coloured paper to assist those with scotopic sensitivity. All staff attending a training programme are asked whether they have any access requirements, reasonable adjustments or requirements that need to be accommodated.

6.3 All managers who conduct the annual review of their staff pay attention to the developmental needs of disabled staff together with discussing any reasonable adjustments which may be identified.

7.0 STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

7.1 The University welcomes applications from disabled people and those with specific learning difficulties. We encourage existing students and applicants to declare a disability or specific learning difficulty either on application or any time thereafter in order that they can be made aware of possible entitlements and the support that is available to assist them to achieve their potential in university study. Information provided to the University is held in confidence, is shared with colleagues only with students’ written permission and disability is in no way linked with academic decisions regarding offers of places.

7.2 Information regarding our Disability Services is provided on website www.warwick.ac.uk/go/disability.

8.0 FITNESS TO PRACTISE (MEDICAL, TEACHING AND SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS)

8.1 Disability or specific learning difficulty does not preclude application to study for qualifications in medicine, teaching or social work. However, students who take these courses are required to comply with the Fitness to Practise policies of the bodies which govern the respective professions (General Medical Council, Department for Education and Employment and the General Social Care Council).

8.2 Applicants to the Joint Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery course must declare a disability or specific learning difficulty at the point of application in order not to be in breach of General Medical Council regulations. Advice, guidance and support to applicants and students is provided by Warwick Medical School and Disability Services. See also website http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/med/study/ugr/admissions/or/ftp/

8.3 The General Social Care Council and Department for Education and Employment place a responsibility upon education and training providers to make sure that everyone who is registered as a Social Worker or Teacher is ‘physically and mentally fit’ to undertake the work they are training to do. Applicants are thus required to declare conditions which could be viewed as having a potential impact on their fitness to practice. Advice, guidance and support for applicants and students is provided by the Social Work Department, Institute of Education and Disability Services.

9.0 REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

9.1 The University is required to make reasonable adjustments when a disabled student or member of staff may be placed at a substantial disadvantage in comparison with a
person who is not disabled. Examples of reasonable adjustments for students include making appropriate arrangements in such activities as:

- teaching, including classes, lectures, seminars, practical sessions
- examinations and assessments
- field trips and outings

9.2 Adjustments may include specific examination arrangements, provision of additional support for learning, adjustments to assessment practices, accommodation arrangements, and specific access issues such as the use of guide dogs. Further information can be found at http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/tutors/disability/legislation/rsnbladj/

9.3 Similarly there is an obligation to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees or potential employees to ensure that they are not disadvantaged. Adjustments may include:

- reallocation of duties
- altering working hours
- changing work location
- modifying equipment e.g. providing an adapted keyboard or telephone
- consideration of other roles

Consideration should also be made for those employees associated with persons with a disability.

9.4 The University via the Safety and Occupational Health Services also has the facility to conduct workplace assessments to identify if specific equipment or reasonable adjustments are required.

10.0 ACCESS TO WORK

10.1 Access to Work is a Department of Work and Pensions scheme which helps employers and people with a disability meet the cost of aids and equipment, adaptations to premises and personal help to enable them to do specific jobs. Under the rules of the scheme, applications are made by the individual employee. Assistance in completing the application is available directly from Access to Work or employees can liaise with their department or link HR Adviser. This assistance is available for existing employees who develop a disability as well as for new employees.

10.2 For employees joining the University, the grant is up to 100% of the approved costs, if the employee has been recruited in the last six weeks. For existing employees, the grant is up to 80% of the approved costs over £300 - £1000. Normally, following application, employees will be contacted by an Access to Work Adviser who will advise on the package of support they feel is appropriate. The individual and the University/department will then receive a letter informing of the approved level of support and the grant available. It will usually be the University/department which is responsible for arranging the agreed support and purchasing the necessary equipment. The University can then claim back the grant towards these approved costs from Access to Work.
11.0 DISABLED STUDENT ALLOWANCE

11.1 UK students have the option to apply for a Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). DSAs help pay for the extra costs associated with studying that are incurred as a direct result of a disability (for example, mobility impairment, sensory impairment, Autistic Spectrum Condition, AD(H)D, mental health difficulty, effects of disabling illness) or specific learning difficulty (dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia, AD(H)D). The allowances can help to pay for a non-medical personal helper, items of specialist equipment, assistive software, travel and other course-related costs. The allowance is neither means-tested nor repayable.

11.2 'Bridging the Gap' - the full guide to the Disabled Students Allowance - can be obtained from the Local Authority Student Finance Department, or downloaded from http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/EducationAndTraining/HigherEducation/DG_10034898 or from Student Finance Direct.

11.3 EU and International students’ requirements for disability-related academic support are met through University funding in consultation with the Disability Co-ordinator.

12.0 HARASSMENT AND OTHER FORMS OF UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION

12.1 The general legal duty also requires the University to have due regard to the need to eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities or to the disabilities of others associated with them. Harassment may take the form of verbal abuse or other actions which make an individual feel uncomfortable, intimidated or degraded.

12.2 The Dignity at Work and Study Policy applies to both staff and students; it is available from: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/humanresources/newpolicies/dignity/ which contains further information for staff and also from: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/insite/topic/healthsafety/welfare/harassment/ which contains further information for students.

12.3 A more detailed explanation of types of disability discrimination such as direct, victimisation and disability related discrimination may be found under the FAQs on the disability section of the equality and diversity website at http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/disability/

13.0 MONITORING

13.1 The University encourages staff and students to declare any disability either at application, appointment/enrolment or during employment/study in order that the University can understand what the potential requirements and needs of staff and students with disabilities may be and in order to fulfil the anticipatory duty. Unless the University is aware of a disability it is difficult to consider what support or adjustments may be required.

13.2 The University recognises the importance of self-declaration but also accepts that some disabled employees are reluctant to state that they are disabled. For this reason the University has adopted a choice for newly recruited staff of two levels of disclosure:

1 to HR who will keep a record and use it for monitoring purposes
2 to HR and to your line manager – staff may give HR permission to let their line manager know they have disclosed a disability. This will assist in planning and appropriate resources being available.

14.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

14.1 All information given to the University by disabled staff and students will be treated with respect and confidence and in accordance with Data Protection legislation. A disabled student or member of staff may volunteer a disability and ask that the information is kept confidential. The responsibility of the staff member informed is to ensure that the disabled person is aware that this is likely to have an effect on any reasonable adjustments which may be required and to document this.

15.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

15.1 The University of Warwick recognises its responsibility to ensure that no-one is discriminated against or disadvantaged, through membership of any particular group, or on the grounds of age, disability, gender, race, religion, or sexual orientation. For additional information please refer to the University’s Equality and Diversity website http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops/

15.2 The Disability Policy has been assessed as being of high relevance to our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the University will review its impact on disability equality and diversity, identify any inequalities by annual monitoring, and will take action where necessary.

16.0 CONTACTS AND FURTHER INFORMATION

16.1 Further information on disability in employment is available from Sandra Beaufoy, HR Adviser- Equality and Diversity on S. Beaufoy@warwick.ac.uk or telephone extension 74479 or via your link HR Adviser.

16.2 Disability information for students can be found at http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/tutors/disability/ or from Kathryn Fisher (maternity leave cover – Disability Co-ordinator for Students) on extension 73734 k.j.fisher@warwick.ac.uk // Despina Weber (Disability Coordinator for Students) on extension 73734, email address d.weber@warwick.ac.uk

16.3 If you require this publication in hard copy or in an alternative format please contact HR on 024 76523 523.

17.0 REVIEW

17.1 The Equality and Diversity Committee will review the Disability Policy for Staff and Students on an annual basis.