


Hidden Disability Policy

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| Title: | Hidden Disability Policy | Date of Student Council: | 20 th April |
| Proposer name: | Emma Scriven | Role: | Disabled Students' Rep (Cambridge) |
| Seconder name: | Mary Copsey | Role: | Vice President Business and Law |

Union Notes:

1. It is estimated that 1 in 10 people have an invisible disability including physical, mental and learning difficulties.
2. The University states that one of their key values is community: "We greatly value working collaboratively, supporting each other and helping everyone to achieve their potential" <https://aru.ac.uk/about-us/our-mission-and-values>.
3. The University's Disability Support Service offers support for student reasonable adjustments, however this is not always widely shared with university staff and lecturers.
4. The Union's values state that: "We champion equality, diversity and inclusion. We respect the needs of the individual and the wider student community."
5. The Union has an inclusion fund which aim is to remove barriers to participation and engagement with Students' Union activity for any students who may incur extra costs in order to take part: <https://www.angliastudent.com/advice/inclusivity/fund/>
6. Throughout Trimester 1 and the #elephantintheroom campaign, student feedback has been gathered that suggests that students struggle with having an 'invisible disability' and that this cannot necessarily be seen meaning they lack the support which they need.
7. The 'Barriers to Inclusiveness' section of the ARUaccessible campaign highlighted that students with hidden disabilities face many barriers to education throughout university.
8. ARUaccessible Campaign student comments: "As a student with a hidden disability I face the challenge of my lecture not knowing that I have a disability and therefore my reasonable adjustment is not always given"; "staff need to be train on accessibility and reasonable adjustments" and "Lectures needs to upload all lecture notes 48 hours in advance and "When lectures are recording they are often poor quality audio or hard to hear"; and "disability awareness signage on campus for hidden disabilities would make me feel accepted as part of the ARU community".

Union Believes:

1. All students with hidden disabilities should receive the support they require without having to ensure additional stress of disclosing a disability repeatedly.
2. Every student should feel that they can openly disclose a disability to both Students' Union and University staff and fellow students, if they so choose.
3. All Students' Union and University events should be accessible for students with hidden disabilities.
4. We believe the university should ensure lecturers check reasonable adjustments for students whom they teach.
5. No student should be disadvantaged due to having a hidden disability.

6. All academic material should be accessible for everyone and uploaded in a timely manner.
7. Students should be provided with all software and other resources they need to succeed in education.

Union Resolves:

1. To lobby the university to raise awareness of hidden disabilities within both academic and support staff and students on campus.
2. To lobby the university for the wider implementation of the Sunflower Lanyard scheme following our trial in order to raise awareness of hidden disability on campus, including training for staff to ensure awareness of the scheme is widespread.
3. To lobby the university to provide reasonable adjustments that suit the needs of students and ensure these are effectively communicated to lecturers.
4. To commit to providing hidden disability awareness and inclusivity training for all staff within the Students' Union and wider University staff.
5. To lobby the university to provide more support for students with hidden disabilities, including support with personal development and seeking future employment.
6. To lobby the university to ensure all academic and lecture material meets the accessibility guidelines and are uploaded to Canvas 48 hours in advance consistently across all faculties
7. To lobby the university to ensure all communications to students is presented in an accessible format.
8. To campaign to ensure all lecture rooms are equipped with the technology needed to support students with a hidden disability i.e. hearing loops and lecture/audio capture and visual aids

Policy Summary:

We are aiming to both raise awareness and further support staff and students at ARU with hidden and invisible disabilities. The Union will continue to lobby the university to provide more support to these students whilst ensuring widespread awareness within Union staff and activities to ensure students are not at a disadvantage.