



Library services for users with a disability: good practice & CLAUD

'Services For Students With Disabilities, University of London,
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Librarians in Higher Education networking to
improve access for disabled users

CLAUD: Who are we?

- **C**reating **L**ibraries **A**ccessible to **U**sers with **D**isabilities
- A network of higher education libraries who are working to improve library access for disabled users.
- Main focus is on :
 - ✓ Disseminating information on disability issues and HE libraries
 - ✓ Establishing good practice



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CLAUD: Who are we?

- Based in South and South-West of England. From four initial member institutions in 1996, now grown to around 25 institutions.
- Libraries involved are as far west as Falmouth, east to Sussex, north to Gloucester.
- Areas of interest include:
 - Physical and web accessibility
 - Service provision issues
 - Alternative formats
 - Understanding disabilities
 - Staff training and awareness raising



CLAUD: What we do

- Liaise with other organisations with an interest in library disability issues, including ALIS Wales, Open Rose and TechDis.
- Encourage new library and information professionals to develop an interest in disability issues.
- We worked with the University of the West of England on embedding disability in their MSc course
- Offer an annual bursary for UWE students writing a dissertation on disability-related topics e.g. dyslexia support within academic libraries



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CLAUD: What we do

- Share problems, advice and information on disability issues in libraries and work towards the development of effective practice.
- Host members' meetings two / three times a year on topics of common interest.
- Promote the sharing of information through our JISC email list and the CLAUD wiki site
- Provided funding for JISC Techdis research project on alternative formats



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Recent CLAUD concerns - study day topics

- Library services for students with dyslexia
- Developing alternative format and assistive technology services
- Hidden disabilities
- Mental health issues
- Supporting Deaf Students
- Autism
- Delivering disability training



Information and support: Good Practice



- Named staff with dedicated time
- Targeted induction tours
- Variety of contact methods important e.g. Texts, email, phone
- Services information in accessible formats, print and electronic, podcasts
- Staff awareness of communication issues
- Support with using specific services e.g. copying, scanning
- “Did you mean?” search

Library Loans: Good Practice

- Longer loans or additional loans – some only if approved via disability support
- Overdue / renewal communication
- Fines waivers
- Postal loans
- Proxy loans
- Book collection – fetch and carry



Building and environment: Good Practice

- Parking nearby or drop off points
- Lifts to all floors
- Automatic doors
- Ramps in areas with steps
- Furniture – height adjustable in key areas
- Toilets – accessible facilities
- Adequate space between shelves and awareness of turning spaces



Building and environment: Good Practice

- Signs / orientation – use of colours, & symbols, explanations of stock order, QR codes & links to further information
- Refuge areas / evacuation procedures
- Hearing loops, visual alarms
- Variety of study areas to suit different needs



IT provision : Good Practice

- Specialist IT areas
- Specialist Software e.g. Texthelp, Dragon
- Adjustable Seating & desks



CLAUD: Disability training

Good practice (study day)

- Explore training attendees existing knowledge of disability.
- Use short extracts from the Open Rose DVD to ensure that the voices of disabled students are heard.
- Keep the session relevant to staff – include local information on disabled student numbers, local procedures, key contacts.
- Face-to-face training may encourage greater discussion of issues than online training, though a number of University's have online equality and diversity training available



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CLAUD: Disability training

Good practice (study day)

- If your university offers disability awareness training check that the library sessions do not repeat content.
- Most induction sessions will focus on disability legislation, and the library's main policies and procedures.
- It works best if a disability awareness session is a part of initial library induction for new staff.
- The training needs of existing staff should also be addressed, often through more detailed sessions on particular impairments / conditions, new assistive technologies etc.
- Review training each time it is delivered, and add new material as necessary.



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Conclusion – key points

- Flexibility important
- Anticipate needs
- Balance needs of all users
- Mainstream provision wherever possible
- Additional arrangements if needed
- Promote electronic resources though access issues can be a barrier
- Make sure staff are disability aware
- Consult disabled students
- Review policies and procedures in order to meet equality and diversity needs

Any questions?

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CLAUD wiki:

[https://wiki.brookes.ac.uk/display/CLAUD/
Home](https://wiki.brookes.ac.uk/display/CLAUD/Home)



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