

B5: Developing Inclusive Practice in the Private HE Sector; Disability and Learning Difficulty.

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GED: The Government has put transparency centre-stage in its programme for equality and diversity for this parliament. Most companies are addressing this challenge, while other organisations are already advanced in their strategies and practices to ensure equality, diversity and inclusion in every aspect of their business. We want to hear from public and private organisations about best practice and examples of other metrics, methodologies and insights being used to address equality and diversity challenges.

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BPP University has well-established Equality and Diversity and Learning Support Strategies to facilitate an embedded focus on raising achievement and aspiration through Inclusion.

The approach has been to develop a sophisticated understanding of our students; utilising student surveys and feedback, focus groups, diversity events, diversity groups, staff feedback, inclusion reps and key programme metrics. This has enabled us to accurately profile retention and achievement by equalities groups and to match this with feedback from the student experience.

Within this framework reaching and supporting our disabled students is fundamental. Mindful of the traditionally lower disclosure rates on Law and Accountancy programmes (some of our largest cohorts) coupled with barriers to accessing the professions, employment or further study, we have carefully promoted and provided a variety of opportunities for students to engage with our Learning Support provision.

Following both the international and UK student journey, our multi-layered approach has been to work with all teams to ensure that staff have the confidence to support and encourage students to disclose their learning difficulty or disability and to direct them to the Learning Support Service.

Over the last four years the number of students in receipt of Learning Support for disability or learning difficulty has risen by 160%, whilst maintaining a continuous rise in student satisfaction results from 73% in 2014 to 92% in January 2017. Analysis of programme achievement statistics demonstrates how during the same period our disabled students' achievement was as good as or better than their non-disabled peers. The Learning Support service continues to support the rising complexity of students' disability and health problems, including mental health.

Training and development is central to our approach. Deepening understanding and contextualising inclusion and disability has proved to be invaluable; university staff, like any section of society, have a variety of experiences of learning difficulty and disability. Mental Health for example can be successfully demystified through workshops, including an approach which provides insight into individual experiences.

Our core team of experienced Disability Advisors is supported by a network of Learning Support Reps, who bridge the gap between the expertise of the core Disability team and faculty to ensure that student entitlements are founded on the student, their disability and the demands of the programme itself.

We utilise a range of specialist resources and assistive software and lectures and sample tutorials are all recorded and available on the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Library and course materials

are available in electronic format, and we provide access to specialist support staffing, including counselling and educational psychologists. We also promote and are engaged in a variety of external networks such as the Lawyers with Disability Division in the Law Society.

This presentation will outline the key success factors in developing and implementing a sophisticated and embedded Learning Support provision for disabled students in a large, multi-site, private University. Alternatively a presentation on the wider Equality and Diversity Inclusion agenda is available.