



Numbers of Students with Disabilities Studying in Higher Education in Ireland 2012/13



Association for Higher Education Access & Disability

ISBN no: 1-899951-31-8 978-1-899951-31-4

Published by:

AHEAD Educational Press

East Hall

UCD

Carysfort Avenue

Blackrock

Co. Dublin

Tel: (01) 7164396

Email: ahead@ahead.ie

December 2013

Foreword

By Ann Heelan, Executive Director, AHEAD

This report of the participation rates of students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties (SLDs) presents an overview of data gathered from across Ireland's higher education institutions and provides us with a snapshot of the current engagement of this group with the higher education sector. Results indicate that this year has seen the biggest rise in the participation rate in seven years with over 9,000 students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties now studying across all subject areas in higher education and this trend looks set to continue.


However, while the overview is positive, the report also alerts us to the fact that the system is not barrier free for students with disabilities and there remains persistent under-representation of students with disabilities and SLDs in many schools. The overall success of the sector in welcoming students with disabilities and SLDs in higher education must be acknowledged, nevertheless the increase in overall numbers hides the fact that for many students with disabilities, equity of access and opportunity is not a reality. The numbers of students with vision impairment has actually decreased in the past two years indicating an alarming new trend. Furthermore students with disabilities are three times less likely to be studying on courses in the field of Education and are under-represented in other key areas such as the Health Sciences and Agriculture.

Only 1% of students on part time courses have registered as having a disability or SLD meaning the rate of participation of students with disabilities is five times lower on part time courses than on a full time ones.

The report highlights interesting trends such as the fact that students with disabilities and SLDs are far more likely to be studying in areas such as Humanities and Arts than other students. In addition, students in the Aspergers/Autism category are 3 1/2 times more likely to be studying in the Computing field than other students and twice as likely to be studying in the Science field while students with specific learning difficulties are over represented in areas such Engineering.

These key trends have real implications for higher education. Students with disabilities and SLDs are entering the system on merit but their choice of course appears to be more limited than other students and they are not availing of all opportunities on an equal footing. While we do not know the precise reasons why students with disabilities and SLDs are under-represented on certain courses such as teacher education, health sciences and agriculture we do know that the criteria for entry to some professions can inadvertently create barriers for many capable students with disability or specific learning difficulty.

AHEAD would like to see this approach change. Traditionally higher education institutions have supported students with disabilities with a retro fit model of



adding on supports through the disability support services. Of course these are essential services but on their own, they are not enough. Re-thinking education for all students would introduce flexibility and innovations into teaching and learning in higher education to the benefit not only of students with disabilities but all students and would benefit the institutions themselves.

A move to Flexible Learning currently promoted by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education means making changes to the design of the curriculum and embracing technology in ways that are responsive to the requirements of a diverse group of students. The return on an Inclusive/ Universal Design approach is a flexible system of teaching and learning that improves the quality of experience in higher education for all students and is much more cost effective in comparison to the retro fit model.

Contents

Foreword	2
Contents	4
Introduction	5
Survey Method	6
Findings	8
Participation Rates of Students with Disabilities	8
Full Time/Part Time Divide	10
New Entrant and Final Year Undergraduates with Disabilities	11
Mature Students with Disabilities	12
New Registrations	13
Nature of Disability	14
New Entrant Disability Breakdown	15
Final Year Disability Breakdown	15
Undergraduate Disability Breakdown	15
Postgraduate Disability Breakdown	16
Fields of Study of Students with Disabilities	18
Fields of Study Breakdown by Disability	20
Aspergers/Autism – Fields of Study Breakdown	21
ADD/ADHD – Fields of Study Breakdown	23
Blind/Visually Impaired – Fields of Study Breakdown	24
Deaf/ Hearing Impaired – Fields of Study Breakdown	26
DCD – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia – Fields of Study Breakdown	27
Mental Health Condition – Fields of Study Breakdown	28
Neurological/Speech and Language – Fields of Study Breakdown	30
Significant Ongoing Illness – Fields of Study Breakdown	32
Physical Disability – Fields of Study Breakdown	34
Specific Learning Difficulty – Fields of Study Breakdown	36
Other – Fields of Study Breakdown	38
Examination Accommodations	39
Exam Accommodations – Disability Profile	39
Exam Accommodation Types	40
Extra Time Breakdown	41
Alternative Venue Breakdown	41
Inside the Service	42
Dyslexia Screenings	42
On the Ground	43
On the Ground - Respondents Comments:	43
Conclusion	45
Recommendations	48
Bibliography	50
Appendix	51

Introduction

AHEAD (Association for Higher Education Access and Disability) is the National Centre for Inclusive Education. An independent non-profit organisation, it works to promote full access to and participation in further and higher education for students with disabilities and to enhance their employment prospects on graduation.

A core function of AHEAD's work is to monitor the overall participation and progress of students with disabilities in higher education and to identify emerging trends. To this end, AHEAD surveys all Higher Education Authority (HEA) funded Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) plus other strategically important higher education institutions in Ireland on a periodic basis. This is in order to get a snapshot of the numbers of students with disabilities entering and progressing through the higher education system in Ireland and to identify trends and areas of improvement. The objective in carrying out the survey is to provide an accurate, national measure of the numbers of students with disabilities in higher education, to identify where they are studying and to benchmark progress from year to year. It is intended that the results can be used to highlight areas of inequality and to inform future strategic planning to improve access for these students. This report details the results of AHEAD's survey on the participation of students with disabilities in higher education during the academic year 2012/2013.

AHEAD provides practical know how and information to professionals and students on what is good inclusive practice in higher education and employment. In meeting its aims and objectives, AHEAD has designed and coordinates a number of key projects. These include;

- **GET AHEAD**, a forum of graduates which listens to the voice of graduates and provides career advice and networking opportunities to students and graduates with disabilities
- The **Willing Able Mentoring** Programme which works with and supports employers to create a more inclusive workplace and provides paid mentored work placement opportunities for graduates with disabilities
- **LINK**, which is a network of worldwide organisations promoting the inclusion of students and graduates with disabilities in third level education

Survey Method

This survey was carried out by AHEAD, the Association for Higher Education Access and Disability, in collaboration with the Disability/Access Officers of various institutions throughout the country. A questionnaire was sent to the Disability/Access Officer in each of the targeted institutions. The institutions that received the survey were targeted based on those who are funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and are included in the HEA annual statistics on the total student population for the academic year 2012/13¹, with the aim of comparing our data with the recently released HEA data for 2011/12. This year we also included the National College of Ireland despite them being funded by the Dept. of Education; we included them because we felt we could not ignore an institution of this size. 28 institutions were approached and 26 of those responded to the survey, all of which are listed below. Some institutions were unable to complete every section of the survey, and this is explained in footnotes throughout the report.

Universities (later referred to as)

- University College Dublin (UCD)
- University College Cork (UCC)
- National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG)
- Trinity College Dublin (TCD)
- National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM)
- Dublin City University (DCU)
- University of Limerick (UL)
- Mary Immaculate College (MIC)
- Mater Dei Institute of Education (MDIE)
- National College of Art and Design (NCAD)
- Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI)
- St. Angela's College (St. Ang)
- St. Patricks College Drumcondra (SPD)

Institutes of Technology and Other Institutions (later referred to as)

- Athlone Institute of Technology (AIT)
- Cork Institute of Technology (CIT)
- Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT)
- Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology (DLIADT)
- Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT)
- Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB)
- Institute of Technology Sligo (ITS)
- Institute of Technology Tallaght (ITT)
- Institute of Technology Tralee (ITTRA)
- Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT)
- Limerick Institute of Technology (LIT)
- National College of Ireland (NCI)
- Waterford Institute of Technology (WIT)

¹ Higher Education Authority, "HEA Annual Statistics 2012/2013", 2013, <www.hea.ie/en/statistics> [accessed Nov 13th 2013]

In this report you will find comparisons between the findings of this survey and the findings of six similar surveys of the participation rates of students with disabilities for the academic years 2011/12, 2010/11, 2009/10, 2008/09, 2005/2006 and 1998/1999, all of which were undertaken by AHEAD. There are some differences in the approach to the seven surveys, most notably that the 98/99 survey was much larger in scale, and it is important to point out these differences if one is to make an informed comparison of the educational landscapes of the relevant years. In the 98/99 survey, 42 institutions returned information regarding the participation of students with disabilities, in comparison with 22 in 05/06, 21 in 08/09 and 26 in 09/10, 23 in 10/11, 25 in 11/12 and 26 in the current survey, although most of the major institutions are represented in all of them. There are also some comparisons made where possible, with a survey carried out by AHEAD on the same topic made for the academic year 1993/1994 and it should be noted that this survey included Northern Ireland higher education institutions, which were not included in the subsequent participation surveys.

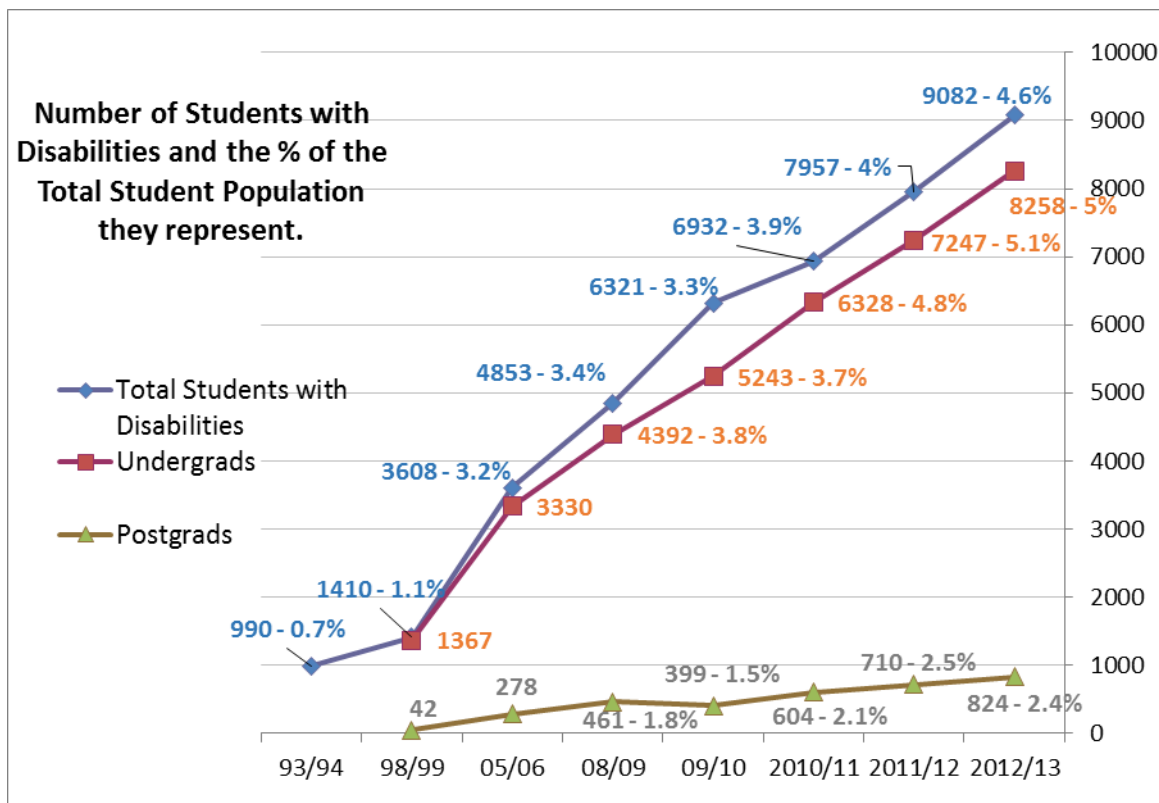
It should be noted that when the term “students with disabilities” (shortened to SWDs in parts) is used in this report, it refers only to students with a disability or specific learning difficulty who have registered with the disability/access service of one of the participating institutions who have responded to the section in question and who have declared a disability, verified by medical documentation. In other words, students with a disability who have not registered with the services of one of the participating institutions are not included in the findings.

Findings

Participation Rates of Students with Disabilities

The 26 responding institutions in Ireland identified a total of 9082 students with disabilities, representing 4.6% of the total student population, of which 8261 are studying undergraduate courses and 821 are studying postgraduate courses. This represents a 14% rise in the total number of students with disabilities from 11/12, when the figure was 7957. This means that students with disabilities now make up 4.6% of the total student population in the responding institutions, a 0.6% increase from last year's figure of 4.0%. The rate of growth of students with disabilities as a percentage of the total student population had appeared to be slowing down in recent years and was not expected to rise significantly but this 0.6% increase is the biggest year on year increase in this figure since we began carrying out this survey on an annual basis starting with the 2008/9 academic year.

Figure 1 shows the increasing numbers of students with disabilities from AHEAD's first survey of the subject in 1993/94 right through to 2012/13



The average participation rate in Institutes of Technology/Other sector was 5.2% (up from 4.7% last year) in comparison to just 4.1% (up from 3.6% last year) in the University sector. The participation rate varied significantly across different institutions with rates as low as 1.1% in some institutions and as high as over

10% in others. Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design & Technology had the highest rate of participation at 10.2%, followed by Institute of Technology Tralee at 7.8%. National College of Art & Design had the highest participation rate in the University Sector with 7.1% of their total student population being made up of SWDs. See Table 13 in the Appendix for further information on the numbers of students with disabilities registered in each of the responding institutions.

In the academic year 2012/13, SWDs made up 5% (8261) of the total undergraduate population but just 2.4% (821) of the total postgraduate population in the 26 responding institutions indicating that significant barriers still prevent students with disabilities from undertaking postgraduate studies, resulting in a notable underrepresentation at this level.

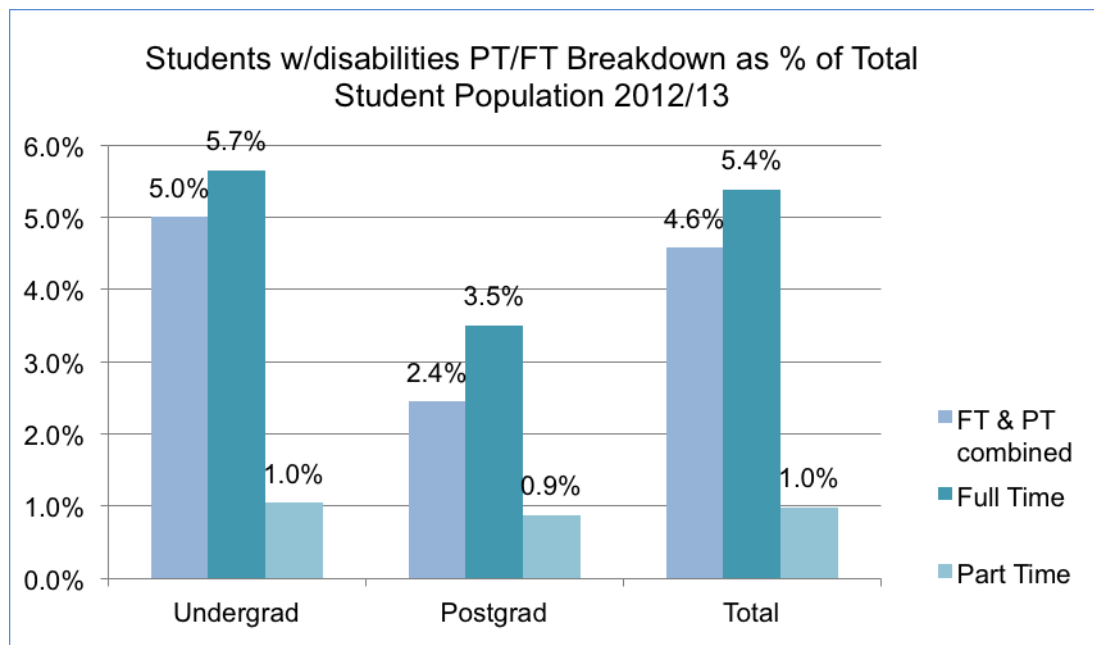
Key Point: The 0.6% rise from 4% in 2011/12 to 4.6% is the biggest year on year increase in the participation rate since we began carrying out this survey on an annual basis 5 years ago in 2008/09.

Full Time/Part Time Divide

AHEAD collected data on the breakdown of SWDs by the full time/part time status of their courses. The 26 responding institutions provided the full time/part time breakdown of all SWDs registered with the disability support services. The responding institutions identified 8722 SWDs undertaking full time courses representing 5.4% of the total full time student population (up from 4.7% in 11/12) while just 360 SWDs undertaking part time courses were reported, representing only 1% of the total part time student population (up from 0.9%).

This significant gap between the participation of SWDs on part time courses compared with full time courses highlights the considerable barriers faced by these students. One would expect given the impact of certain disabilities, that part time study would be a more suitable choice for many students and one might reasonably expect the part time participation rate to be higher than the full time rate but the data does not reflect this, suggesting that there are systemic barriers present. While we have no robust evidence of the nature of these barriers, anecdotal sources such as calls made to the AHEAD information service indicates that the lack of funding for additional supports through the Fund for Students with Disabilities in the part time sector is a real difficulty, in particular where the supports are costly as is the case with, for example, sign language interpretation or personal assistance.

Figure 2 shows the full time and part time breakdown of students with disabilities registered with the disability service of the responding institutions



Key Point: The participation rate of Students with Disabilities in full time courses is more than 5 times the participation rate in part time courses. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this could be due to the lack of funding for supports in the part time sector.

New Entrant and Final Year Undergraduates with Disabilities

The institutions surveyed were asked to supply numbers of new entrant undergraduates registered with the disability service in 2012/13, “new entrant” meaning students in their first year of study. A total of 2337 new entrants were registered with the services of the 26 responding institutions (up from 1966 in 11/12) representing 28% of the total disabled undergraduate population, up from 27% in 11/12.

The survey also asked for the numbers of final year undergraduates registered with the disability service in 2012/13 and 24 of the responding institutions completed the question². A total of 1708 final year undergraduates were registered with the services of the responding institutions, representing 21% of the total disabled undergraduate population, up from 19% in 11/12.

² CIT & DIT could not provide this information

Mature Students with Disabilities

The institutions surveyed were asked to supply numbers of mature students registered with the disability service in 2012/13. A total of 1231 (up from 1130 in 11/12) mature students were registered with the services of the 23 institutions that responded to this question³, representing 17.9% of the total population of students with disabilities in those institutions.

³ UCD, UCC and WIT could not provide this information

New Registrations

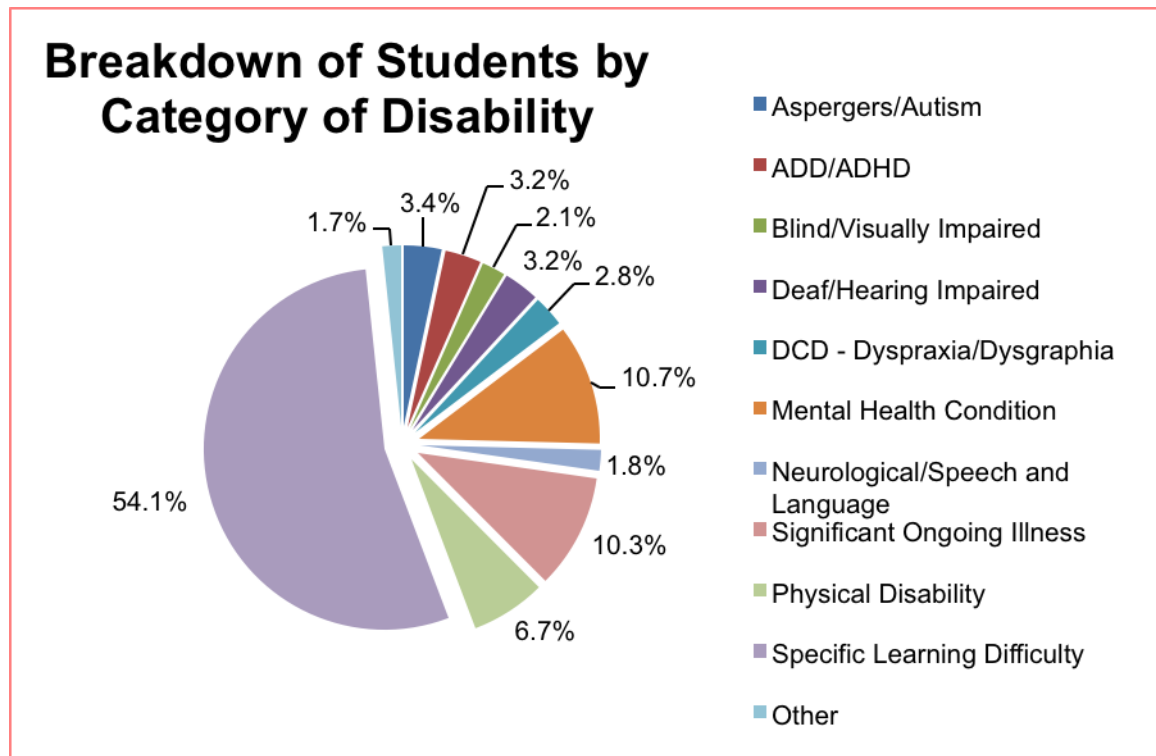
Institutions were asked to provide information on the number of all students who newly registered with the disability service in 2012/13, including those that were not new entrants to the institution. This question was asked in an attempt to capture the approximate number of students who were going through first year (or more) without support and then subsequently realised they required support and registered in 2012/13. We calculated this number by taking the number of new registrations and subtracting the number of new entrants. The 25⁴ institutions that responded to this question identified 699 students newly registered with the disability service who were not new entrants to the institution, representing a surprisingly large 8.6% of total SWDs in these institutions and 25% of total new registrations.

Key Point: It is interesting to note the high number of students who register for support in years subsequent to their first. It is important to understand the difference that support makes to the retention of students with disabilities and to identify the factors that enhance their learning experience.

⁴ UCC could not provide this information

Nature of Disability

Figure 3 shows the disability profile of total disabled student population



The categories of disability in the breakdown match those outlined in the guidelines provided by the Higher Education Authority to institutions applying to the Fund for Students with Disabilities albeit with an 'Other' category added for students registered with the services who did not fall into one of these categories.

The responding institutions provided the primary disability profile of 8258 undergraduates with disabilities and 824 postgraduates with disabilities. Of the 9082 students represented in the disability profile, 307 (3.4%) are in the Aspergers/Autism category, 293 (3.2%) have ADD/ADHD, 191 (2.1%) are in the Blind/Visually Impaired category, 288 (3.2%) are in the Deaf/Hard of Hearing category, 253 (2.8%) have DCD – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia, 976 (10.7%) have a Mental Health Condition, 168 (1.8%) have a Neurological/Speech and Language Condition, 932 (10.3%) have a Significant Ongoing Illness, 609 (6.7%) have a Physical Disability, 4913 (54.1%) have a Specific Learning Difficulty, and 152 (1.7%) were placed in the Other category.

The only significant changes in the percentage breakdown year on year from 2011/12 come in the Specific Learning Difficulty category which is down 3.2% from last year and the Mental Health Condition category up 1.9%. Other changes see Aspergers/Autism up 0.5%, ADD/ADHD up 0.6%, Blind/Visually Impaired down 0.2%, Deaf/Hearing Impaired up 0.1%, Neurological/Speech and Language Condition down 0.1%, Significant Ongoing Illness down 0.2%, Physical Disability down 0.1% and Other up 0.7%.

New Entrant Disability Breakdown

Of the 2337 new entrant undergraduate students with disabilities identified by the responding institutions, 97 (4.2%) are in the Aspergers/Autism category, 119 (5.1%) have ADD/ADHD, 31 (1.3%) are Blind/Visually Impaired, 59 (2.5%) are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, 112 (4.8%) have DCD – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia, 206 (8.8%) have a Mental Health Condition, 48 (2.1%) have a Neurological/Speech and Language Condition, 217 (9.3%) have a Significant Ongoing Illness, 124 (5.3%) have a Physical Disability, 1297 (55.5%) have a Specific Learning Difficulty, and 27 (1.2%) were placed in the Other category.

Final Year Disability Breakdown

Of the 1708 final year undergraduate students with disabilities identified by the 24 institutions who responded to this question⁵, 46 (2.7%) are in the Aspergers/Autism category, 33 (1.9%) have ADD/ADHD, 34 (2%) are Blind/Visually Impaired, 62 (3.6%) are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, 20 (1.2%) have DCD – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia, 195 (11.4%) have a Mental Health Condition, 30 (1.8%) have a Neurological/Speech and Language Condition, 178 (10.4%) have a Significant Ongoing Illness, 126 (7.4%) have a Physical Disability, 959 (56.1%) have a Specific Learning Difficulty, and 25 (1.5%) were placed in the Other category.

Behind the Numbers: While it is good to see that the recent trend of the sensory impairments falling as a percentage of the total population of students with disabilities has been arrested in the Deaf/Hard of Hearing Category, the percentage of Blind/Visually Impaired students remains a real concern.

The number of Blind/Visually impaired students as a percentage of total students with disabilities has fallen a further 0.2% to 2.1% since 2011/12 and more alarmingly they now make up just 1.3% of the New Entrant Population, down from 2.4% in 2011/12.

Undergraduate Disability Breakdown

Of the 8258 undergraduate students with disabilities identified by the responding institutions, 287 (3.5%) are in the Aspergers/Autism category, 277 (3.4%) have ADD/ADHD, 147 (1.8%) are Blind/Visually Impaired, 255 (3.1%) are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, 238 (2.9%) have DCD – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia, 853 (10.3%) have a Mental Health Condition, 146 (1.8%) have a Neurological/Speech and Language

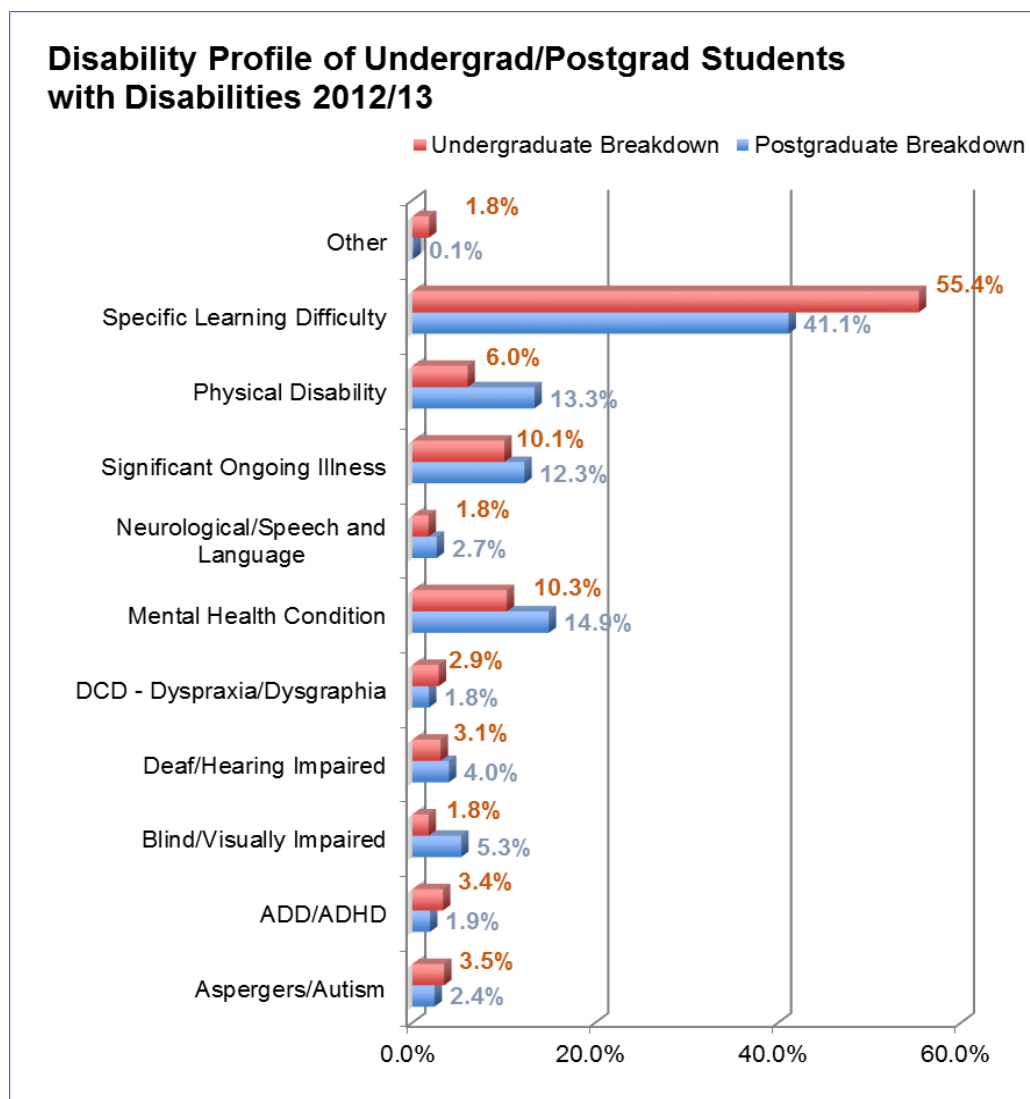
⁵ CIT and DIT could not provide this information

Condition, 831 (10.1%) have a Significant Ongoing Illness, 499 (6.0%) have a Physical Disability, 4574 (55.4%) have a Specific Learning Difficulty, and 151 (1.8%) were placed in the Other category.

Postgraduate Disability Breakdown

Of the 824 postgraduate students with disabilities identified by the responding institutions, 20 (2.4%) are in the Aspergers/Autism category, 16 (1.9%) have ADD/ADHD, 44 (5.3%) are Blind/Visually Impaired, 33 (4.0%) are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, 15 (1.8%) have DCD – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia, 123 (14.9%) have a Mental Health Condition, 22 (2.7%) have a Neurological/Speech and Language Condition, 101 (12.3%) have a Significant Ongoing Illness, 110 (13.3%) have a Physical Disability, 339 (41.1%) have a Specific Learning Difficulty, and 1 (0.1%) were placed in the Other category.

Figure 4 shows the disability profile of postgraduate and undergraduate students with disabilities



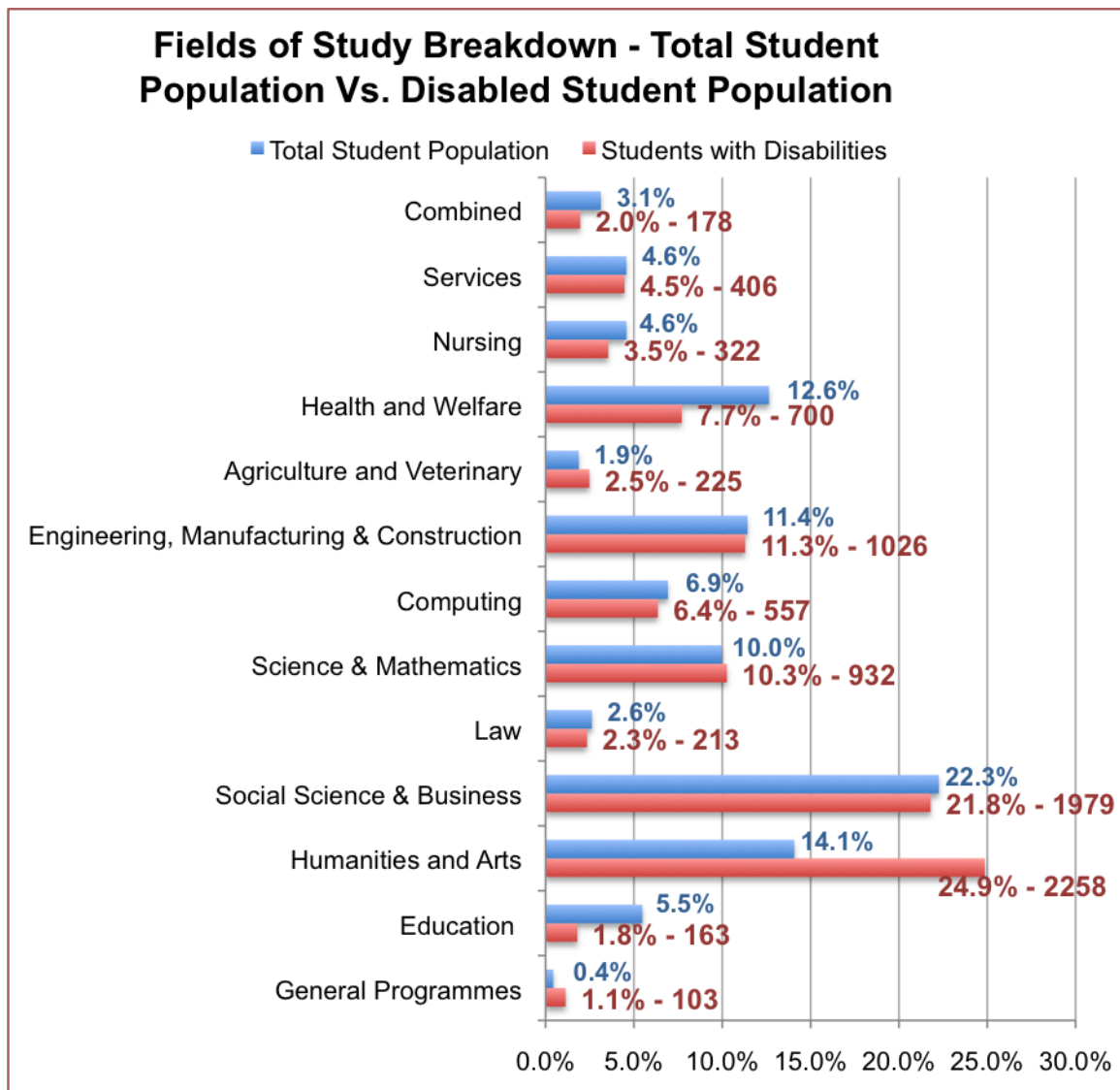
It is notable that while the total new entrant and undergraduate breakdowns are almost identical, the postgraduate breakdown differs significantly from the others. Students with Specific Learning Difficulties making up 41.1% of the postgraduate breakdown compared to 55.4% of the undergraduate breakdown. Students with physical disabilities make up 13.3% of the postgraduate breakdown in comparison to 6% of the undergraduate breakdown. Students in the Blind/Visually impaired (5.3%), Mental Health Condition (14.9%) and Significant Ongoing Illness (12.3%) categories also represent a significantly larger percentage of the postgraduate population than the undergraduate population of students with disabilities.

These significant differences deserve further exploration for example, when it comes to the breakdown of students with disabilities, why do postgraduate students who are Blind/Visually Impaired represent 3 times the number (as a percentage of total SWDs) of their undergraduate peers, or postgraduates with a physical disability twice the number of their undergraduate peers. Perhaps students with certain types of disabilities struggle to get into the third level system but having overcome that barrier, thrive and go on to further study or perhaps it suits students with particular disabilities to remain developing their skills in the third level environment rather than go immediately into the world of work.

Fields of Study of Students with Disabilities

The responding institutions reported on the number of students with disabilities in each field of study. Each institution was given the subject breakdown as used by the HEA in their statistics but modified slightly⁶, each subject coming under one of 13 categories and were asked to report the number of students with disabilities studying in each category.

Figure 5 shows the fields of study of students with disabilities and compares them to the figures for the total student population⁷



⁶ HEA statistics collate subjects under 10 categories. In this survey AHEAD provided 13 categories putting Law, Computing & Nursing in categories of their own where in the HEA statistics they were included in more diverse categories.

⁷ Higher Education Authority, "2012/13 Statistics", 2013, <www.hea.ie/en/statistics> [accessed Nov 13th 2013]

'Humanities & Arts' was again the most common field of study for students with disabilities in the responding institutions with 24.9% of the makeup, followed by 'Social Science & Business' with 21.8% and 'Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction' with 11.3%. The least common fields of study for students with disabilities were 'General Programmes' with 1.1%, 'Education' with 1.8% and 'Combined Studies' with 2%.

The most notable differences between the percentage breakdown for fields of study of students with disabilities and the breakdown for the total student population arise in the fields of 'Humanities and Arts', 'Health & Welfare' and 'Education'. 24.9% of students with disabilities study in the field of 'Humanities and Arts' in comparison to 14.1% of the total student population, 7.7% of all students with disabilities study in the area of 'Health & Welfare' in comparison to 12.6% of the total student population and 1.8% of students with disabilities study in the field of 'Education' compared to 5.5% of the total population.

Key Point: Students with Disabilities are still three times less likely to study in the field of 'Education' than their non-disabled peers.

Fields of Study Breakdown by Disability

We asked the responding institutions to provide the fields of study breakdown of students with disabilities by category of disability. The 25 institutions that responded to this question⁸ provided the fields of study of 8186 students with disabilities and the fields of study breakdown for each disability. Below you will find a section on the fields of study of each disability category, each one containing a table and a summary of interesting points about the results. Please note that when discussing the preferred subjects of each disability category, we will omit reference to the 'General Programmes' field as well as the 'Combined' field as they are by far the least popular subjects for the total student population and given their broad nature, neither reveal a great deal about the students with disabilities studying them.

The results provide us with information that has implications for the design and implementation for teaching and learning within higher education as a whole and in particular on specific fields of study.

⁸ UCD could not provide this information

Aspergers/Autism – Fields of Study Breakdown

Table 1 shows the fields of study breakdown for students in the Aspergers/Autism Category and compares with the breakdown of total students with disabilities and total student fields of study breakdown

Aspergers/Autism Field of Study Breakdown - Highlighted Green/Red are Highest/Lowest % in each category

3.4% of all SWDs are in Aspergers/Autism Category	% of Total Students Studying Field	% of Total SWD Studying Field	Numbers in Aspergers/Autism Category Studying Field	% of Students in Aspergers/Autism Category Studying Field	% of SWDs Studying Field in Aspergers/Autism Category
Broad Programmes	0.4%	1.1%	2	0.7%	3.2%
Education Science	5.5%	1.8%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Humanities & Arts	14.1%	24.9%	77	27.9%	3.9%
Social Science & Business	22.3%	21.8%	32	11.6%	1.7%
Law	2.6%	2.3%	7	2.5%	3.5%
Science	10.0%	10.3%	50	18.1%	6.2%
Computing	6.9%	6.4%	52	18.8%	9.0%
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	11.4%	11.3%	26	9.4%	2.7%
Agriculture & Veterinary	1.9%	2.5%	3	1.1%	2.4%
Health & Welfare	12.6%	7.7%	10	3.6%	1.6%
Nursing	4.6%	3.5%	1	0.4%	0.4%
Services	4.6%	4.5%	12	4.3%	3.0%
Combined	3.1%	2.0%	4	1.4%	2.5%
Total			276	100.0%	

Key Points:

- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Aspergers/Autism category are most underrepresented in the fields of Education Science and Agriculture & Veterinary.
- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Aspergers/Autism category are most overrepresented in the fields of Science & Computing.
- The institutions who responded to this question reported 0 students with Aspergers/Autism in the fields of Education Science and only 1 in Nursing.

- Students in the Aspergers/Autism category are about 3 times as likely to study in the Computing field as the average student or the average student with a disability.
- Students in the Aspergers/Autism category are less than half as likely to study in the fields of Nursing, Health & Welfare and Agriculture & Veterinary as the average student with a disability.

ADD/ADHD – Fields of Study Breakdown

Table 2 shows the fields of study breakdown for students in the ADD/ADHD Category and compares with the breakdown of total students with disabilities and total student fields of study breakdown

ADD/ADHD Field of Study Breakdown - Highlighted Green/Red are Highest/Lowest % in each category

	% of Total Students Studying Field	% of Total SWD Studying Field	Numbers in ADD/ADHD Category Studying Field	% of Students in ADD/ADHD Category Studying Field	% of SWDs Studying Field in ADD/ADHD Category
3.2% of all SWDs are in ADD/ADHD Category					
Broad Programmes	0.4%	1.1%	7	2.9%	11.1%
Education Science	5.5%	1.8%	2	0.8%	1.3%
Humanities & Arts	14.1%	24.9%	56	23.1%	2.9%
Social Science & Business	22.3%	21.8%	44	18.2%	2.4%
Law	2.6%	2.3%	11	4.5%	5.5%
Science	10.0%	10.3%	24	9.9%	3.0%
Computing	6.9%	6.4%	22	9.1%	3.8%
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	11.4%	11.3%	21	8.7%	2.2%
Agriculture & Veterinary	1.9%	2.5%	3	1.2%	2.4%
Health & Welfare	12.6%	7.7%	20	8.3%	3.1%
Nursing	4.6%	3.5%	7	2.9%	2.6%
Services	4.6%	4.5%	10	4.1%	2.5%
Combined	3.1%	2.0%	15	6.2%	9.4%
Total			242	100.0%	

Key Points:

- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the ADD/ADHD category are most underrepresented in the fields of Agriculture & Veterinary and Education.
- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the ADD/ADHD category are most overrepresented in the fields of Computing and Law.
- The institutions who responded to this question reported just 2 students with ADD/ADHD in the field of Education.
- Students in the ADD/ADHD category are almost twice as likely to study in the Law field as the average student with a disability.

Blind/Visually Impaired – Fields of Study Breakdown

Table 3 shows the fields of study breakdown for students in the Blind/Visually Impaired Category and compares with the breakdown of total students with disabilities and total student fields of study breakdown

Blind/Visually Impaired Field of Study Breakdown - Highlighted Green/Red are Highest/Lowest % in each category

2.1% of all SWDs are in Blind/Visually Impaired Category	% of Total Students Studying Field	% of Total SWD Studying Field	Numbers in Blind/Visually Impaired Studying Field	% of Students in Blind/Visually Impaired Category Studying Field	% of SWDs Studying Field in Blind/Visually Impaired Category
Broad Programmes	0.4%	1.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Education Science	5.5%	1.8%	7	4.0%	4.5%
Humanities & Arts	14.1%	24.9%	58	33.3%	3.0%
Social Science & Business	22.3%	21.8%	41	23.6%	2.2%
Law	2.6%	2.3%	10	5.7%	5.0%
Science	10.0%	10.3%	9	5.2%	1.1%
Computing	6.9%	6.4%	22	12.6%	3.8%
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	11.4%	11.3%	13	7.5%	1.3%
Agriculture & Veterinary	1.9%	2.5%	2	1.1%	1.6%
Health & Welfare	12.6%	7.7%	5	2.9%	0.8%
Nursing	4.6%	3.5%	1	0.6%	0.4%
Services	4.6%	4.5%	1	0.6%	0.2%
Combined	3.1%	2.0%	5	2.9%	3.1%
Total			174	100.0%	

Key Points:

- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Blind/Visually Impaired category are most underrepresented in the fields of Nursing, Services, Health & Welfare and Agriculture & Veterinary.
- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Blind/Visually Impaired category are most overrepresented in the fields of Law, Education Science and Computing.
- The institutions who responded to this question reported just 1 student in the Blind/Visually Impaired category in the fields of both Nursing and Services.

- Students in the Blind/Visually Impaired category are almost 2 ½ times as likely to study in the Law field as the average student with a disability and more than twice as likely as the average student.
- Students in the Blind/Visually Impaired category are less than a quarter as likely to study in the fields of Nursing and Services as the average student or student with a disability.
- Despite being less likely than the average student to study in the field of Education Science, students in the Blind/Visually Impaired category are almost twice as likely than the average student with a disability to study in that field.

Deaf/ Hearing Impaired – Fields of Study Breakdown

Table 4 shows the fields of study breakdown for students in the Deaf/Hearing Impaired Category and compares with the breakdown of total students with disabilities and total student fields of study breakdown

Deaf/Hearing Impaired Field of Study Breakdown - Highlighted Green/Red are Highest/Lowest % in each category

3.2% of all SWDs are in Deaf/Hearing Impaired Category	% of Total Students Studying Field	% of Total SWD Studying Field	Numbers in Deaf/Hearing Impaired Category Studying Field	% of Students in Deaf/Hearing Impaired Category Studying Field	% of SWDs Studying Field in Deaf/Hearing Impaired Category
Broad Programmes	0.4%	1.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Education Science	5.5%	1.8%	9	3.8%	5.8%
Humanities & Arts	14.1%	24.9%	57	24.2%	2.9%
Social Science & Business	22.3%	21.8%	57	24.2%	3.1%
Law	2.6%	2.3%	5	2.1%	2.5%
Science	10.0%	10.3%	25	10.6%	3.1%
Computing	6.9%	6.4%	17	7.2%	2.9%
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	11.4%	11.3%	20	8.5%	2.1%
Agriculture & Veterinary	1.9%	2.5%	1	0.4%	0.8%
Health & Welfare	12.6%	7.7%	22	9.3%	3.4%
Nursing	4.6%	3.5%	10	4.2%	3.7%
Services	4.6%	4.5%	8	3.4%	2.0%
Combined	3.1%	2.0%	5	2.1%	3.1%
Total			236	100.0%	

Key Points:

- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Deaf/Hearing Impaired category are most underrepresented in the fields of Agriculture & Veterinary and Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction.
- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Deaf/Hearing Impaired category are most overrepresented in the field of Education Science.
- The institutions that responded to this question reported only 1 student in the Deaf/Hearing Impaired category in the field of Agriculture & Veterinary.
- Students in the Deaf/Hearing Impaired category are more than twice as likely to study in the Education Science field as the average student with a disability despite being significantly less likely than the average student.

DCD – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia – Fields of Study Breakdown

Table 5 shows the fields of study breakdown for students in the DCD – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia Category and compares with the breakdown of total students with disabilities and total student fields of study breakdown

DCD - Dyspraxia Field of Study Breakdown - Highlighted Green/Red are Highest/Lowest % in each category

2.8% of all SWDs are in DCD - Dyspraxia Category	% of Total Students Studying Field	% of Total SWD Studying Field	Numbers in DCD - Dyspraxia Studying Field	% of Students in DCD - Dyspraxia Category Studying Field	% of SWDs Studying Field in DCD - Dyspraxia Category
Broad Programmes	0.4%	1.1%	2	0.8%	3.2%
Education Science	5.5%	1.8%	2	0.8%	1.3%
Humanities & Arts	14.1%	24.9%	64	26.7%	3.3%
Social Science & Business	22.3%	21.8%	66	27.5%	3.6%
Law	2.6%	2.3%	7	2.9%	3.5%
Science	10.0%	10.3%	23	9.6%	2.8%
Computing	6.9%	6.4%	24	10.0%	4.2%
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	11.4%	11.3%	25	10.4%	2.6%
Agriculture & Veterinary	1.9%	2.5%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Health & Welfare	12.6%	7.7%	12	5.0%	1.9%
Nursing	4.6%	3.5%	2	0.8%	0.7%
Services	4.6%	4.5%	11	4.6%	2.7%
Combined	3.1%	2.0%	2	0.8%	1.3%
Total			240	100.0%	

Key Points:

- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the DCD – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia category are most underrepresented in the fields of Education Science, Nursing and Agriculture & Veterinary.
- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the DCD – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia category are most overrepresented in the fields of Law, Social Science & Business and Computing.
- The institutions who responded to this question reported 0 students in the Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia category in the field of Agriculture & Veterinary.
- Students in the DCD – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia category are about 1½ times as likely to study in the Computing field as the average student with a disability or the average student.
- Students in the DCD – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia category are less than a quarter as likely as the average student with a disability to study in the fields of Nursing and Agriculture & Veterinary

Mental Health Condition – Fields of Study Breakdown

Table 6 shows the fields of study breakdown for students in the Mental Health Condition Category and compares with the breakdown of total students with disabilities and total student fields of study breakdown

Mental Health Condition Field of Study Breakdown - Highlighted Green/Red are Highest/Lowest % in each category					
10.7% of all SWDs are in Mental Health Condition Category	% of Total Students Studying Field	% of Total SWD Studying Field	Numbers in Mental Health Condition Category Studying Field	% of Students in Mental Health Condition Category Studying Field	% of SWDs Studying Field in Mental Health Condition Category
Broad Programmes	0.4%	1.1%	6	0.7%	9.5%
Education Science	5.5%	1.8%	13	1.5%	8.3%
Humanities & Arts	14.1%	24.9%	322	36.7%	16.5%
Social Science & Business	22.3%	21.8%	159	18.1%	8.6%
Law	2.6%	2.3%	30	3.4%	15.1%
Science	10.0%	10.3%	104	11.8%	12.8%
Computing	6.9%	6.4%	56	6.4%	9.7%
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	11.4%	11.3%	43	4.9%	4.4%
Agriculture & Veterinary	1.9%	2.5%	1	0.1%	0.8%
Health & Welfare	12.6%	7.7%	75	8.5%	11.7%
Nursing	4.6%	3.5%	30	3.4%	11.1%
Services	4.6%	4.5%	19	2.2%	4.7%
Combined	3.1%	2.0%	20	2.3%	12.5%
Total			878	100.0%	

Key Points:

- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Mental Health Condition category are most underrepresented in the fields of Computing, Agriculture & Veterinary and Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction.
- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Mental Health Condition category are most overrepresented in the fields of Humanities & Arts and Law.
- The institutions that responded to this question reported just 1 student in the Mental Health Condition category in the field of Agriculture & Veterinary.

- Students in the Mental Health Condition category are almost 1½ times as likely to study in the Humanities & Arts field as the average student with a disability and more than 2 ½ times as likely as the average student.
- Students in the Mental Health Condition category are almost 1½ times as likely to study in the Law field as the average student with a disability.
- Students in the Mental Health Condition category are less than half as likely as the average student or student with a disability to study in the fields of Agriculture & Veterinary, Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction and Services.

Neurological/Speech and Language – Fields of Study Breakdown

Table 7 shows the fields of study breakdown for students in the Neurological/Speech and Language Category and compares with the breakdown of total students with disabilities and total student fields of study breakdown

Neurological/Speech and Language Field of Study Breakdown - Highlighted Green/Red are Highest/Lowest % in each category					
1.8% of all SWDs are in Neurological/Speech and Language Category	% of Total Students Studying Field	% of Total SWD Studying Field	Numbers in Neurological/Speech and Language Studying Field	% of Students in Neurological/Speech and Language Category Studying Field	% of SWDs Studying Field in Neurological/Speech and Language Category
Broad Programmes	0.4%	1.1%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Education Science	5.5%	1.8%	6	3.6%	3.8%
Humanities & Arts	14.1%	24.9%	55	32.7%	2.8%
Social Science & Business	22.3%	21.8%	34	20.2%	1.8%
Law	2.6%	2.3%	2	1.2%	1.0%
Science	10.0%	10.3%	13	7.7%	1.6%
Computing	6.9%	6.4%	12	7.1%	2.1%
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	11.4%	11.3%	12	7.1%	1.2%
Agriculture & Veterinary	1.9%	2.5%	2	1.2%	1.6%
Health & Welfare	12.6%	7.7%	17	10.1%	2.6%
Nursing	4.6%	3.5%	8	4.8%	3.0%
Services	4.6%	4.5%	4	2.4%	1.0%
Combined	3.1%	2.0%	3	1.8%	1.9%
Total			168	100.0%	

Key Points:

- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Neurological/Speech and Language category are most underrepresented in the fields of Law and Agriculture & Veterinary.
- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Neurological/Speech and Language category are most overrepresented in the field of Education Science.
- The institutions who responded to this question reported just 2 students in the Neurological/Speech and Language category in the fields of Agriculture & Veterinary and Law.

- Students in the Neurological/Speech and Language category are about twice as likely to study in the Education Science field as the average student with a disability.
- Students in the Neurological/Speech and Language category are about half as likely to study in the fields of Services, Agriculture & Veterinary and Law as the average student with a disability.

Significant Ongoing Illness – Fields of Study Breakdown

Table 8 shows the fields of study breakdown for students in the Significant Ongoing Illness Category and compares with the breakdown of total students with disabilities and total student fields of study breakdown

Significant Ongoing Illness Field of Study Breakdown - Highlighted Green/Red are Highest/Lowest % in each category					
10.3% of all SWDs are in Significant Ongoing Illness Category	% of Total Students Studying Field	% of Total SWD Studying Field	Numbers in Significant Ongoing Illness Category Studying Field	% of Students in Significant Ongoing Illness Category Studying Field	% of SWDs Studying Field in Significant Ongoing Illness Category
Broad Programmes	0.4%	1.1%	3	0.4%	4.8%
Education Science	5.5%	1.8%	21	2.6%	13.5%
Humanities & Arts	14.1%	24.9%	223	27.3%	11.4%
Social Science & Business	22.3%	21.8%	167	20.4%	9.0%
Law	2.6%	2.3%	23	2.8%	11.6%
Science	10.0%	10.3%	119	14.6%	14.7%
Computing	6.9%	6.4%	40	4.9%	6.9%
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	11.4%	11.3%	62	7.6%	6.4%
Agriculture & Veterinary	1.9%	2.5%	1	0.1%	0.8%
Health & Welfare	12.6%	7.7%	95	11.6%	14.8%
Nursing	4.6%	3.5%	32	3.9%	11.8%
Services	4.6%	4.5%	18	2.2%	4.4%
Combined	3.1%	2.0%	13	1.6%	8.1%
Total			817	100.0%	

Key Points:

- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Significant Ongoing Illness category are most underrepresented in the fields of Agriculture & Veterinary and Services.
- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Significant Ongoing Illness category are most overrepresented in the fields of Health & Welfare, Science and Education Science.
- The institutions that responded to this question reported just 1 student in the Significant Ongoing Illness category in the field of Agriculture & Veterinary.

- Students in the Significant Ongoing Illness category are almost 1 ½ times as likely to study in the field of Science as an average student or student with a disability.

Physical Disability – Fields of Study Breakdown

Table 9 shows the fields of study breakdown for students in the Physical Disability Category and compares with the breakdown of total students with disabilities and total student fields of study breakdown

Physical Disability Field of Study Breakdown - Highlighted Green/Red are Highest/Lowest % in each category

6.7% of all SWDs are in Physical Disability Category	% of Total Students Studying Field	% of Total SWD Studying Field	Numbers in Physical Disability Studying Field	% of Students in Physical Disability Category Studying Field	% of SWDs Studying Field in Physical Disability Category
Broad Programmes	0.4%	1.1%	2	0.4%	3.2%
Education Science	5.5%	1.8%	23	4.2%	14.7%
Humanities & Arts	14.1%	24.9%	165	30.1%	8.5%
Social Science & Business	22.3%	21.8%	116	21.1%	6.2%
Law	2.6%	2.3%	20	3.6%	10.1%
Science	10.0%	10.3%	52	9.5%	6.4%
Computing	6.9%	6.4%	38	6.9%	6.6%
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	11.4%	11.3%	42	7.7%	4.3%
Agriculture & Veterinary	1.9%	2.5%	4	0.7%	3.3%
Health & Welfare	12.6%	7.7%	56	10.2%	8.7%
Nursing	4.6%	3.5%	14	2.6%	5.2%
Services	4.6%	4.5%	6	1.1%	1.5%
Combined	3.1%	2.0%	11	2.0%	6.9%
Total			549	100.0%	

Key Points:

- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Physical Disability category are most underrepresented in the fields of Agriculture & Veterinary and Services.
- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Physical Disability category are most overrepresented in the fields of Education Science and Law.
- The institutions who responded to this question reported just 4 students in the Physical Disability category in the field of Agriculture & Veterinary.
- Students in the Physical Disability category are more than twice as likely to study in the Education Science field as the average student with a disability.

- Students in the Physical Disability category are about 1 ½ times as likely to study in the field of Law as the average student or student with a disability.
- Students in the Physical Disability category are about a quarter as likely to study in the fields of Services and Agriculture & Veterinary as the average student to study or student with a disability.

Specific Learning Difficulty – Fields of Study Breakdown

Table 10 shows the fields of study breakdown for students in the Specific Learning Difficulty Category and compares with the breakdown of total students with disabilities and total student fields of study breakdown

Specific Learning Difficulty Field of Study Breakdown - Highlighted Green/Red are Highest/Lowest % in each category					
54.1% of all SWDs are in Specific Learning Difficulty Category	% of Total Students Studying Field	% of Total SWD Studying Field	Numbers in Specific Learning Difficulty Category Studying Field	% of Students in Specific Learning Difficulty Category Studying Field	% of SWDs Studying Field in Specific Learning Difficulty Category
Broad Programmes	0.4%	1.1%	8	0.2%	12.7%
Education Science	5.5%	1.8%	73	1.6%	46.8%
Humanities & Arts	14.1%	24.9%	866	19.4%	44.4%
Social Science & Business	22.3%	21.8%	1098	24.6%	59.1%
Law	2.6%	2.3%	84	1.9%	42.2%
Science	10.0%	10.3%	388	8.7%	47.8%
Computing	6.9%	6.4%	275	6.2%	47.7%
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	11.4%	11.3%	696	15.6%	72.0%
Agriculture & Veterinary	1.9%	2.5%	102	2.3%	82.9%
Health & Welfare	12.6%	7.7%	323	7.2%	50.3%
Nursing	4.6%	3.5%	164	3.7%	60.5%
Services	4.6%	4.5%	305	6.8%	75.1%
Combined	3.1%	2.0%	82	1.8%	51.3%
Total			4464	100.0%	

Key Points:

- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Specific Learning Difficulty category are most underrepresented in the fields of Humanities & Arts and Law.
- In comparison to other students with disabilities, those in the Specific Learning Difficulty category are most overrepresented in the fields of Services and Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction.
- More than three quarters of all students with disabilities studying in the fields of Services and Veterinary & Agriculture have a Specific Learning Difficulty.

- Students in the Specific Learning Difficulty Category are about 1 ½ times as likely to study in the Services category as an average student or student with a disability.

Other – Fields of Study Breakdown

Table 11 shows the fields of study breakdown for students in the Other Category and compares with the breakdown of total students with disabilities and total student fields of study breakdown

Other Field of Study Breakdown - Highlighted Green/Red are Highest/Lowest % in each category

	% of Total Students Studying Field	% of Total SWD Studying Field	Numbers in Other Studying Field	% of Students in Other Category Studying Field	% of SWDs Studying Field in Other Category
1.7% of all SWDs are in Other Category					
Broad Programmes	0.4%	1.1%	33	23.2%	52.4%
Education Science	5.5%	1.8%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Humanities & Arts	14.1%	24.9%	9	6.3%	0.5%
Social Science & Business	22.3%	21.8%	44	31.0%	2.4%
Law	2.6%	2.3%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Science	10.0%	10.3%	5	3.5%	0.6%
Computing	6.9%	6.4%	19	13.4%	3.3%
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	11.4%	11.3%	7	4.9%	0.7%
Agriculture & Veterinary	1.9%	2.5%	4	2.8%	3.3%
Health & Welfare	12.6%	7.7%	7	4.9%	1.1%
Nursing	4.6%	3.5%	2	1.4%	0.7%
Services	4.6%	4.5%	12	8.5%	3.0%
Combined	3.1%	2.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total			142	100.0%	

Due to the varied nature of the Other group, we have decided just to produce the table in this instance.

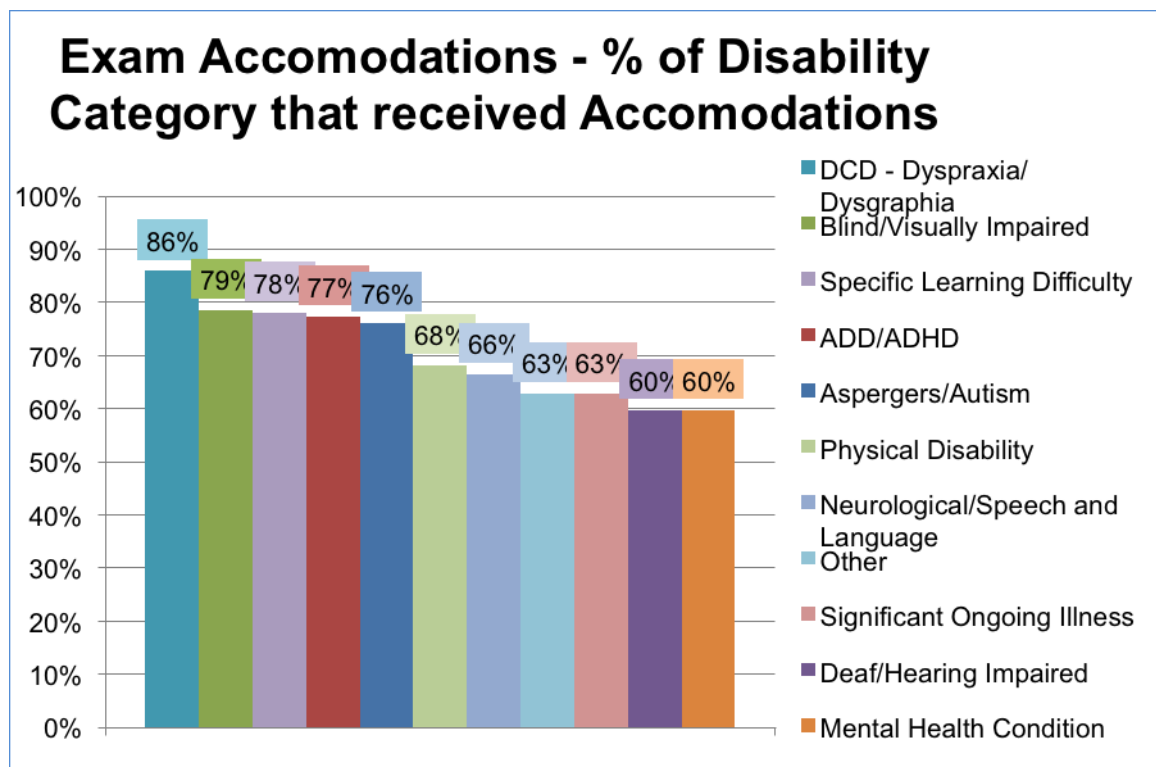
Examination Accommodations

We included a question covering the numbers of students with disabilities in the responding institutions receiving one or more exam accommodations and the kinds of accommodations received. The 25 institutions who responded to this question⁹ identified a total number of 5950 of students with disabilities receiving one or more exam accommodations in the academic year 2012/13, representing 73% of the disabled student population in these institutions, down from 76% in 2011/12.

Exam Accommodations – Disability Profile

Pro rata, the group most likely to receive an exam accommodation were students with DCD – Dyspraxia/Dysgraphia, of whom 86% received one or more exam accommodations in the academic year 2012/13. They were followed closely by the Blind/Visually Impaired group (79%) and the Specific Learning Difficulty group (78%). The groups least likely to be receiving an accommodation were those with a Mental Health Condition (60%), the Deaf/Hearing Impaired (60%) and those with a Significant Ongoing Illness (63%).

Figure 6 shows the % of students in different disability categories receiving one or more exam accommodations

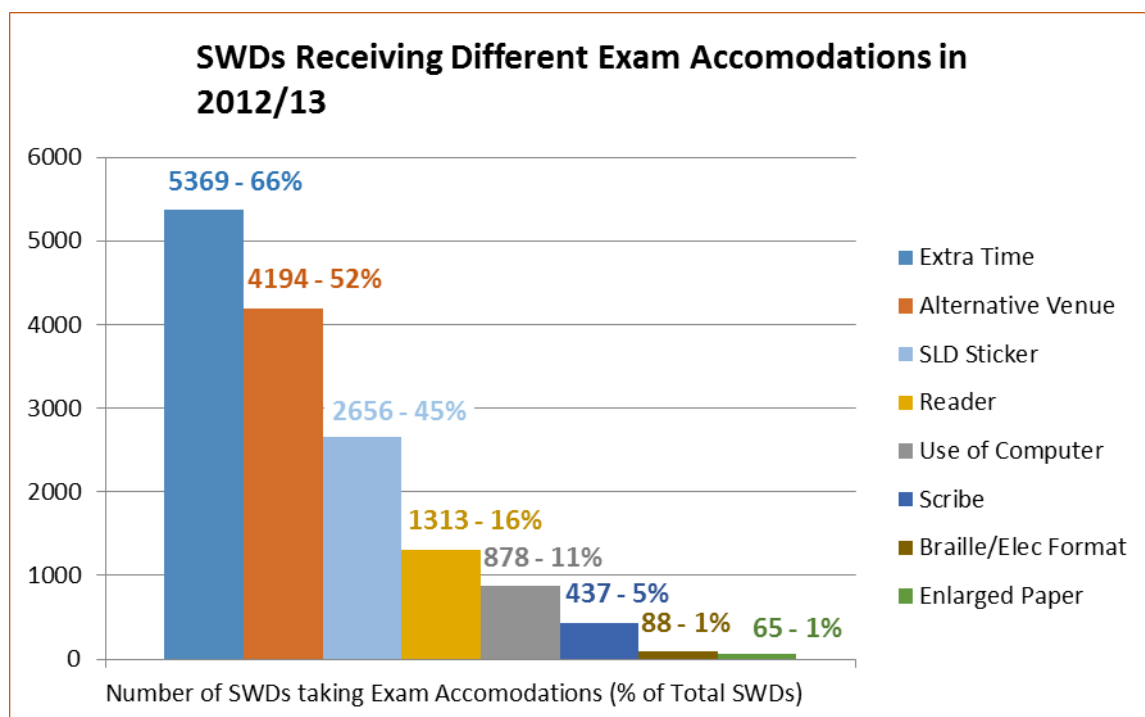


⁹ UCC could not provide this information

Exam Accommodation Types

We asked the responding institutions to provide data on the types of exam accommodations received by students with disabilities. The responses identified three major categories of exam accommodations – those related to extra time given, those related to alternative venues provided to undertake the exam and other accommodations such as the use of a computer.

Figure 7 shows the numbers of students with disabilities receiving exam accommodations in 2012/13 and the percentage they represent of total students with disabilities

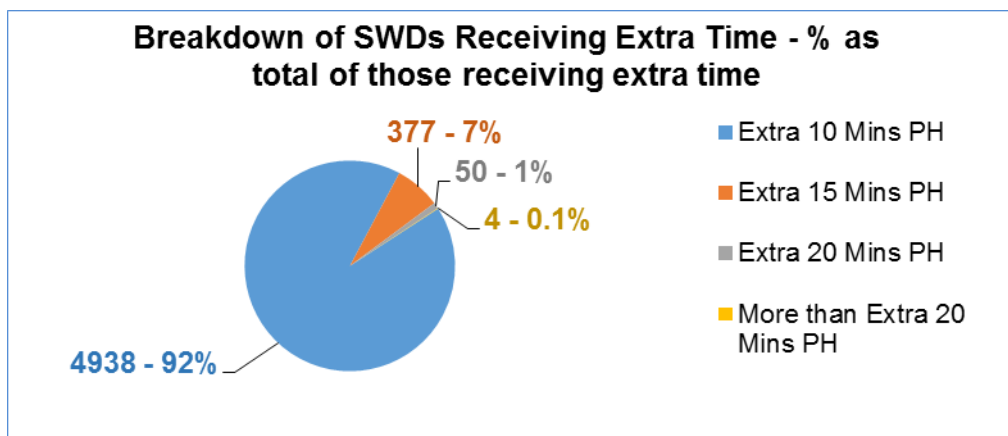


Extra time given to complete an examination proved to be the most popular exam accommodation with 66% (5369) (down from 73% in 11/12) of all students with disabilities in the responding institutions receiving extra time in examinations in 2012/13, representing 90% of all SWDs that received one or more exam accommodations. 52% (4194) of students with disabilities took their examinations in an alternative venue (down from 59% in 11/12); 45% (2656) had a sticker placed on their exam paper to notify their marker that they had a specific learning difficulty (up from 33% in 11/12); 16% (1313) had a reader to read exam papers aloud to them; 11% (878) had the use of a computer to aid them in writing their answers; 5% (437) had a scribe present to aid them in writing their answers; 1% (88) had their examination provided in Braille or an electronic format and 1% (65) had their paper in an enlarged format.

Extra Time Breakdown

Of the 5369 students with disabilities who received extra time in their examinations, 4938 (92% of those who received extra time) received an extra ten minutes per hour in their exams; 377 (7% of those who received extra time) received an extra 15 minutes per hour; 50 (1% of those who received extra time) received an extra 20 minutes per hour; and just 4 (0.1% of those who received extra time) received more than an extra 20 minutes per hour.

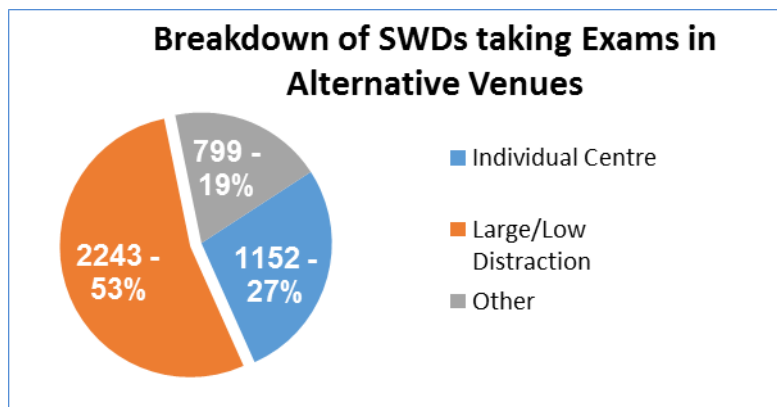
Figure 8 shows the number of students with disabilities receiving varying amounts of extra time per hour in examinations in 2012/13



Alternative Venue Breakdown

Of the 4194 students with disabilities who took their examinations in an alternative venue; 2243 (53%) took their exam in a Large or Low Distraction Venue; 1152 (27%) took their exam in an individual centre and 799 (19%) took their exam in another type of alternative venue.

Figure 9 shows the number of students with disabilities taking their examinations in different types of alternative venue in 2012/13



Inside the Service

AHEAD asked responding institutions to provide information about the numbers of staff with responsibility for supporting students with disabilities and the number of learning support staff employed by the responding institutions. Responses were delivered as a decimal number where one full time (5 days a week) staff member = 1, and part-time staff members were included as a pro rata fraction of that. For example, a college with one full time staff member working 5 days a week and one part time staff member working 2 days a week would report 1.4 staff members. We decided this number would be best represented as number of students per staff member registered with the disability service. Where staff members had shared responsibility over students with disabilities as well as other student groups, they were asked to estimate how much of their remit was dedicated to students with disabilities.

The responding institutions reported an average of 137 students per disability support staff member with responsibility for students with disabilities (up from 131 in 11/12) and 329 students per learning support staff member (up from 319) in 11/12). If we combine these figures, we get an average of 97 students per staff member (up from 93 in 11/12). In the combined figure, the University sector report an average of 103 students per staff member and the IT sector report an average of 90 students per staff member.

Dyslexia Screenings

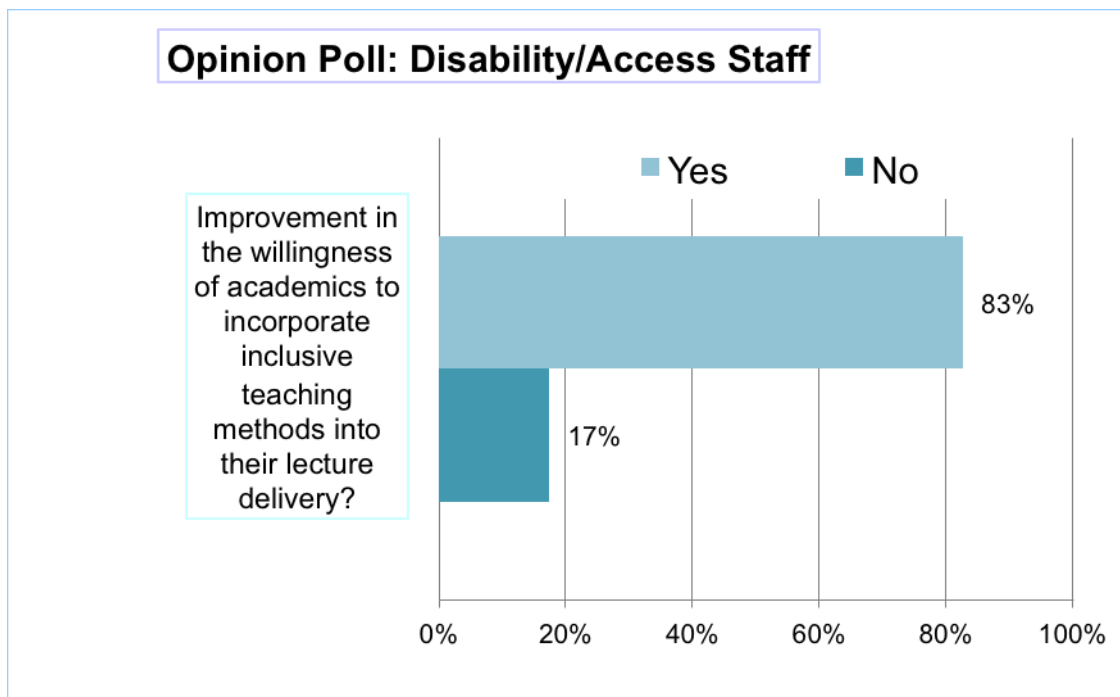
AHEAD also tried to gauge the number of students referred for specific learning difficulty screenings by the responding institutions and the diagnosis rate resulting from these screenings. The 24 institutions that responded to this question¹⁰ reported that 421 students were referred for dyslexia screening in 2012/13 (up from 403 11/12), of which 240 were successfully diagnosed, representing a 57% rate of successful diagnosis.

¹⁰ NCI & WIT could not provide this information

On the Ground

The questionnaire sent to institutions also contained a question designed to gauge the opinion of Disability/Access Staff in the responding institutions on whether the attitude of academic staff in their institutions to incorporate inclusive teaching methods in their course delivery was improving. Each respondent was asked to answer either yes or no and then given the opportunity to elaborate. The question is transcribed below, along with details of the responses and a representative selection of the comments provided.

Figure 10 shows the percentage breakdown of the yes and no answers received to the 'on the ground' question asked in the survey



Question: Over the past three years, have you seen a marked improvement in the willingness of academics to incorporate inclusive teaching methods into their lecture delivery? – Responses provided: 23, Yes: 83%, No: 17%

On the Ground - Respondents Comments:

“There is a greater level of awareness amongst academic staff; many are becoming much more open to inclusive education initiatives.”

“There has been a marked improvement in support for access / disability. Initiatives are supported via the Access Working Group, the Teaching and Learning Committee and Student Experience Committee.”

“Our students have the opportunity to check their learning styles at Induction and this gives them an indication of the best way to study and what type of learner they are.”

“Our teaching methods have always been relatively inclusive and have focused on interactive, active learning in general for some years now. In my experience, academics are usually willing to do whatever it takes to support inclusive learning.”

“The college aims to ensure that all students with disabilities receive the appropriate range of reasonable accommodations to their specific disability. As an access officer, this is particularly evident at exam time, when we have a range of different exam venues with relevant AT to suit the needs of the student.”

“Yes and no - staff are more responsive to supports required and engage actively with the Disability Service in ensuring students are properly supported. There is still more work required with inclusive teaching, learning and assessment but it is happening.”

“Over the last few years there has been some staff that are willing to incorporate inclusive teaching and learning methods into their lecture delivery and others who are more reluctant to do so.”

“Having someone with a disability is no longer a novel occurrence most academics are aware that they must be inclusive and do use some inclusive measures such as providing accessible notes prior to class.”

Conclusion

It is very clear that there has been significant progress made within the higher education sector to include students with disabilities as equality policies take effect and support improves. However, barriers still remain, with significant underrepresentation of students with disabilities in many occupational areas such as education and the health related sciences due, in part, to the lack of a holistic cross faculty approach to inclusion in many institutions.

In 2013 AHEAD surveyed all HEA funded Higher Education Institutions (plus one other institution too large to ignore) in Ireland in order to ascertain the number of students with disabilities in the Irish higher education system for the academic year 2012/2013. A structured questionnaire was sent out and responses were received from 26 institutions. Following data collation and analysis, the following represent the most salient findings emerging from the research process concerning students with disabilities in higher education for the academic year 2012/2013:

- 26 HEI's in Ireland identified a total of **9082** students with disabilities representing **4.6%** of the total student population.
- **2337** of these were new entrants, representing **28%** of the disabled undergraduate student population.
- **1708** of these were final year undergraduates, representing **21%** of the disabled student population.
- The participation rate of students with disabilities in full time courses (**5.4%**) is **more than 5 times** the rate in part time courses (**1%**). Only **4%** of students with disabilities study part time courses, well below the national average of part time students at **7%** and below the national target for participation of part time students in higher education, which is at **17%** of the total student population¹¹.
- In terms of disability profile, the vast majority of students with disabilities have a specific learning difficulty (**54%**).
- While the overall numbers of students with disabilities has increased **14%** year on year, a worrying trend among the Blind/Visually Impaired cohort has seen them drop as a percentage of the total disabled student population to just **2.1%** and a **34%** decrease in the numbers of Blind/Visually Impaired New Entrants year on year.
- When compared with the general student population, students with disabilities remain underrepresented in subjects related to 'Health & Welfare' and 'Education Science'. Interestingly a significantly higher

¹¹ HEA 2008, National plan for Equity of Access to Higher education 2008 - 2013

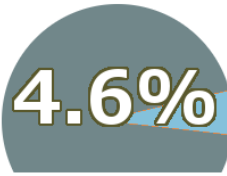
percentage of students with disabilities are studying in the fields of 'Humanities & Arts' in comparison to their non-disabled peers.

- **73%** of the disabled student population received an examination accommodation in the academic year 2012/13. Extra time was by far the most common support with 66% of students with disabilities receiving extra time in their examinations in 2012/13.
- The responding institutions reported an average of **137** students per disability support staff member with responsibility for students with disabilities and **329** students per learning support staff member.
- **83%** of disability/access staff on the ground believe that in the last three years they have seen an improvement in the willingness of academic staff to incorporate inclusive teaching methods in their course delivery.

GRAPHIC SUMMARY



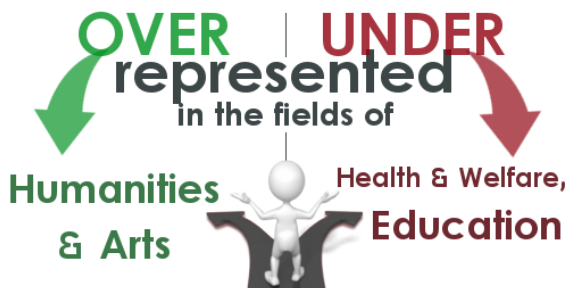
Students with Disabilities in Higher Education in Ireland



of the total student population

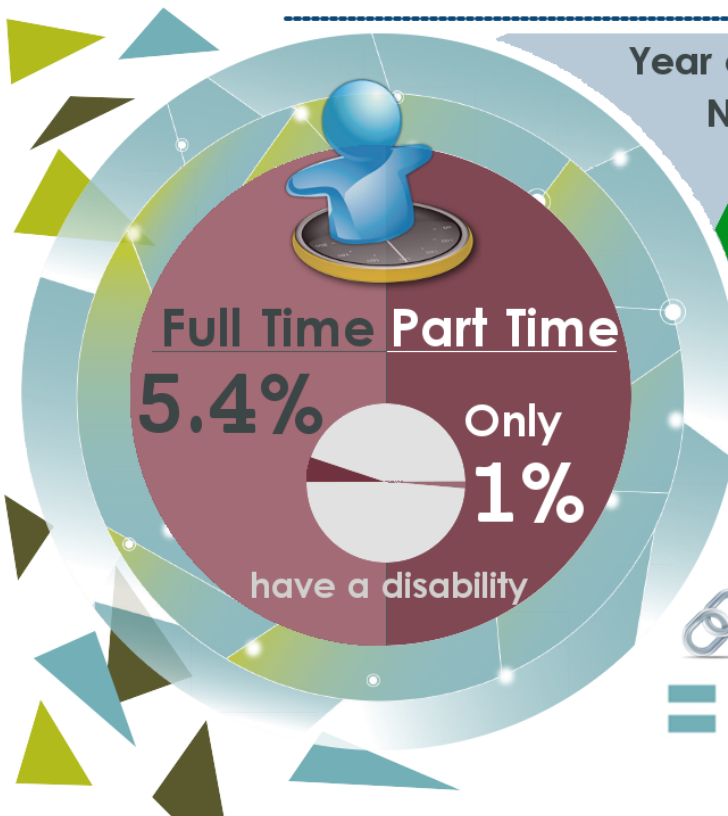


Students with disabilities are

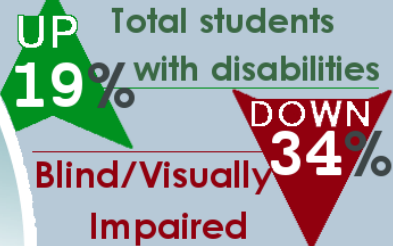


73% of all students with disabilities received one or more

Exam ACCOMMODATION



Year on Year Changes - New Entrant Students



/ahead.ie

@aheadireland

www.ahead.ie

ahead

Recommendations

1. The low level of part time learners in higher education is highlighted in the National Strategy for Higher Education 2020¹² and our survey indicates clearly that the participation of students with disabilities on part time programmes in higher education is unacceptably low. Many potential students with disabilities wish to go back into education on a part time basis due to the impact of their disability but according to a recent HEA report on part time learning, key supports are not available to them. The absence of entitlement to funding for the provision of reasonable accommodations is a very real barrier for students with disabilities.

Recommendation 1: Students with disabilities wishing to avail of part time courses should be given the same access to the Fund for Students with Disabilities as Full Time students.

2. The numbers of school leavers who are vision impaired is decreasing year on year in spite of an increase in numbers generally. There is research available conducted by AHEAD (2008)¹³ which makes a number of recommendations to improve the take up of higher education by vision impaired school leavers. Students who are blind or vision impaired require access to learning via technology, therefore a separate structured programme in specific skills such as ICT is required to enable them to reach national standards in the core skills and achieve the entry requirements for higher education.

Recommendation 2: The Department of Education and Skills together with the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment develop specific curricula and programmes in ICT to state examination standards.

3. This year has seen the biggest year-on-year increase in the participation rate of students with disabilities in higher education (up to 4.6% of total student population) since we began recording this data annually back in 2008/09. There is a danger that if the funding available to support these students remains the same, those who are perceived to have less severe impairments will lose essential supports.

Recommendation 3: The National Access Office should review the budget allocated to the Fund for Students with Disabilities in light of the increasing demands placed on it by ever-increasing numbers of students with disabilities participating in higher education.

¹² National Strategy for Higher education to 2030, 2011, Department of Education and Skills, government publications, Dublin

¹³ Seeing AHEAD: A study of factors affecting blind and vision impaired students going to higher education.

4. The numbers of students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties in higher education is increasing year on year and they are engaging across all schools and functions. Their learning needs can only be met by moving away from the traditional model to Universal Design, a more flexible approach to teaching and learning which takes in the needs of all the diversity of learners.

Recommendation 4: Institutions of higher education should address the inconsistencies across different schools in relation to their policies of Universal Design and ensuring that their teaching practice is accessible to students with different learning requirements. All staff require training in Disability Awareness and Inclusive Teaching and Learning.

Bibliography

AHEAD (2012), *Survey on the Participation Rates of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education for the Academic Year 2011/2012*. Dublin: AHEAD Educational Press.

AHEAD (2011), *Survey on the Participation Rates of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education for the Academic Year 2010/2011*. Dublin: AHEAD Educational Press.

AHEAD (2010), *Survey on the Participation Rates of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education for the Academic Year 2009/2010*. Dublin: AHEAD Educational Press.

AHEAD (2009), *Survey on the Participation Rates of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education for the Academic Year 2008/2009*. Dublin: AHEAD Educational Press.

AHEAD (2007), *Survey on the Participation Rates of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education for the Academic Year 2005/2006*. Dublin: AHEAD Educational Press.

AHEAD (2004), *Survey on Participation Rates of and Provision for Students with Disabilities in Higher Education for the Academic Year 1998/99*. Dublin: AHEAD Educational Press.

AHEAD (1994), *Survey on the Participation Rates of Students with Disabilities in Higher Education for the Academic Year 1993/94*. Dublin: AHEAD Educational Press.

Higher Education Authority (2009), "*HEA Annual Statistics 2008/2009*", <www.hea.ie/en/statistics> [accessed April 8th 2010]

Higher Education Authority (2008), *National Plan for Equity of access to Higher Education*. Dublin: Higher Education Authority

OECD (2011), *Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Tertiary Education and Employment*. Europe: OECD Publishing

Appendix

Table 12 shows which subjects are contained within each Field of Study. This breakdown is taken from the student statistics found on the Higher Education Authority website and altered so that we could identify numbers in key areas such as Law and Nursing - www.hea.ie.

Field of Study
General Programmes
(010) Basic / broad general programmes
(080) Literacy and numeracy
(090) Personal skills
Education
(140) Teacher training and education science (Broad programmes)
(142) Education science
(143) Training for pre-school teachers
(144) Training for teachers at basic levels
(145) Training for teachers with subject specialisation
(146) Training for teachers of vocational subjects
Humanities and Arts
(200) Combined Arts & Humanities
(210) Combined Arts
(211) Fine arts
(212) Music and performing arts
(213) Audiovisual techniques and media production
(214) Design
(215) Craft skills
(220) Combined Humanities
(221) Religion
(222) Foreign languages
(223) Mother tongue
(225) History and archaeology
(226) Philosophy and ethics
Social Science, Business and Law
(300) Combined Social Science, Business and Law
(310) Combined Social and behavioural science
(311) Psychology
(312) Sociology and cultural studies
(313) Political Science and civics
(314) Economics
(320) Combined Journalism and Information
(321) Journalism and reporting
(322) Library, information, archive
(340) Combined Business and Administration

(341) Wholesale and retail sales
(342) Marketing and advertising
(343) Finance, banking, insurance
(344) Accounting and taxation
(345) Management and administration
(346) Secretarial and office work
(347) Working life
Law
Science
(400) Combined Science, Mathematics and Computing
(420) Combined Life Science
(421) Biology and biochemistry
(422) Environmental Science
(440) Combined Physical Science
(441) Physics
(442) Chemistry
(443) Earth Science
(460) Combined Maths and Statistics
(461) Mathematics
(462) Statistics
(481) Computer Science
(482) Computer Use
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction
(500) Combined Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction
(520) Combined Engineering & Engineering Trades
(521) Mechanics and metal work
(522) Electricity and energy
(523) Electronics and automation
(524) Chemical and process
(525) Motor vehicles, ships and aircraft
(540) Combined Manufacturing and Processing
(541) Food processing
(542) Textiles, clothes, footwear, leather
(543) Materials (wood, paper, plastic, glass)
(544) Mining and extraction
(580) Combined Architecture and building
(581) Architecture and town planning
(582) Building and civil engineering
Agriculture and Veterinary
(600) Combined Agriculture & Veterinary
(620) Combined Agriculture, forestry and fishery
(621) Crop and livestock production
(622) Horticulture
(623) Forestry

(624) Fisheries
(641) Veterinary
Health and Welfare
(700) Combined Health and Welfare
(720) Combined Health
(721) Medicine
(724) Dental Studies
(725) Medical diagnostic and treatment technology
(726) Therapy and Rehabilitation
(727) Pharmacy
(760) Combined Social Services
(761) Child Care and youth services
(762) Social work and counselling
Nursing
Services
(800) Combined Services
(810) Combined Personal Services
(811) Hotel, restaurant and catering
(812) Travel, tourism and leisure
(813) Sports
(814) Domestic services
(815) Hair and beauty services
(840) Transport services
(850) Combined Environmental Protection
(851) Environmental protection technology
(852) Natural environments and wildlife
(853) Community sanitation services
(860) Combined Security Services
(861) Protection of persons and property
(862) Occupational health and safety
(863) Military and defence
Combined
(900) Balanced Combination across difference Fields of Education
(910) Balanced Combination of 'Humanities/Arts' and 'Social Sciences Business/Law'

Table 13 shows the numbers of students with disabilities registered with the disability/access service in each responding institutions

Institution	Students with Disabilities	
	Total	% of Student Population
UCD	896	3.47%
UCC	950	5.8%
NUIG	483	2.9%
TCD	1058	6.4%
NUIM	441	4.9%
DCU	442	4.0%
SPD	31	1.1%
UL	518	3.9%
MIC	50	1.6%
MDIE	20	3.1%
NCAD	81	7.1%
RCSI	37	1.1%
St Angela's	26	2.4%
<hr/>		
AIT	213	4.0%
CIT	525	5.0%
DIT	1105	7.1%
DLIADT	234	10.2%
DKIT	168	3.5%
ITB	193	5.6%
ITS	267	5.0%
ITT	123	2.3%
ITTRA	251	7.8%
LYIT	190	5.5%
LIT	309	6.1%
NCI	124	3.8%
WIT	347	3.6%
<hr/>		
University		
Total	5033	4.1%
Other Total	4049	5.2%
<hr/>		
Overall total	9082	4.6%

Table 14 shows fields of study data in table format

Field of Study (ISCED)	Total Students	Total Student Population %	SWDs	SWDs %	Difference in %
General Programmes	858	0.4%	103	1.1%	0.7%
Education	10,941	5.5%	163	1.8%	-3.7%
Humanities and Arts	28,106	14.1%	2258	24.9%	10.8%
Social Science & Business	44,433	22.3%	1979	21.8%	-0.5%
Law	5,234	2.6%	213	2.3%	-0.3%
Science & Mathematics	19,912	10.0%	932	10.3%	0.3%
Computing	13,827	6.9%	577	6.4%	-0.6%
Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	22,821	11.4%	1026	11.3%	-0.1%
Agriculture & Veterinary	3,756	1.9%	225	2.5%	0.6%
Health & Welfare	25,254	12.6%	700	7.7%	-4.9%
Nursing	9,143	4.6%	322	3.5%	-1.0%
Services	9,132	4.6%	406	4.5%	-0.1%
Combined	6,262	3.1%	178	2.0%	-1.2%
Totals	199,679	100%	9082	100.0%	

ISBN no: 1-899951-31-8 978-1-899951-31-4

Published by:

AHEAD Educational Press

East Hall

UCD

Carysfort Avenue

Blackrock

Co. Dublin

Tel: (01) 7164396

Email: ahead@ahead.ie

December 2013



Association for Higher Education Access & Disability

