

Special Educational Needs & Disability Act 2001 (SENDA)

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What is it?

- Amends the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)
- Introduces a new Part IV to DDA
- Brings education into line with other service providers

What is unlawful?

- To discriminate against a disabled student:
 - In the arrangements made for determining admissions
 - In the admission terms
 - By refusing or deliberately omitting to accept an application for admission
 - In the student services it provides
 - By excluding whether permanently or temporarily from the institution

SENDA and IT

- General teaching and research facilities
- Distance learning
- Independent learning
- Computer facilities
- Library resources

Main areas of concern for IT

- Course materials
- Computer facilities
- Institutional and departmental Web sites

Web sites

- Is it a reasonable adjustment to modify or design a Web site to make it accessible? **YES!**

Web accessibility

- Accessibility should form part of the specification for updating and redeveloping a Web site
- Web sites need to be accessible to Priority level 1 of the W3C guidelines
- Prevalent viewpoint:
 - Technology permits accessible Web sites and cost is not prohibitive

The Code of Practice in HE

- “The institution's publicity, programme details and general information should be accessible to people with disabilities and describe the opportunities for disabled students to participate.”
- “electronic information, including web sites, is accessible to students with disabilities”

Provision in other formats

- Need to:
 - Be available for the same length of time
 - Provide updates within the same timescales as those provided on-line.

Australian case

- Bruce Lindsay Maguire v Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games
- A blind user unable to access the Sydney Olympic Web site
- W3C guidelines were taken as the accessibility benchmark