National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education

Fund for Students with Disabilities:

## Guidelines for Further Education Colleges for Academic year 2013-14

#### CRITERIA FOR EVIDENCE OF DISABILITY

Acceptable evidence of disability documentation is either

1. a report that meets the criteria as set out below, or
2. with the exception of specific learning difficulties, the CAO Evidence of Disability Form that meets the criteria as set out below (applies where the student has completed this step as part of a CAO application)

Where the CAO Evidence of Disability Form is furnished, the requirements as stated on the Form must be met (including that it be accompanied by the qualified health professional’s stamp, business card or headed paper).

**Letters from GPs are not acceptable as evidence of disability for the purposes of the Fund.**

Please also note the following:

* Where a funding request is based on needs arising from more than one disability, appropriate evidence of disability documentation for each disability must be provided by the student and retained on-file by the institution.
* All institutions should advise applicants and relevant third parties that any medical reports or professional opinions compiled by third parties in support of an application should only contain details relevant to the disability being outlined.
* Disability documentation which has been completed in a language other than English can be submitted, along with an English translation. This translation must be conducted by an individual/organisation that is completely independent of the applicant.

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| **Disability** | **Autistic Spectrum Disorder (including Asperger’s syndrome)** |
| **Report to be provided & signed by** | Appropriately qualified Psychiatrist or Psychologist who is a member of their respective professional or regulatory body. |
| **FSD eligibility** | Where the above person has provided a diagnosis of autism or Asperger’s syndrome. |
| **Age of report** | No age limit. |

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| **Disability** | **Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder** |
| **Report to be provided & signed by** | Appropriately qualified Psychiatrist or Psychologist who is a member of their respective professional or regulatory body. |
| **FSD eligibility** | Where the above person has provided a diagnosis of ADD/ADHD. |
| **Age of report** | No age limit. |

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| **Disability** | **Blind/Vision Impaired** |
| **FSD eligibility** | One or more of the following: Evidence of disability from an Ophthalmologist/Ophthalmic Surgeon, with signature;   * Letter from the National Council for the Blind confirming registration with the Council; * If a student has attended a school for the Blind, a letter on headed notepaper signed by the principal which confirms attendance at the school.   In the case of an Ophthalmologist/Ophthalmic Surgeon the evidence of disability should provide a diagnosis of severe reduction in vision that cannot be corrected with standard glasses or contact lenses, thereby reducing the person's ability to function at certain or all tasks. The diagnosis of a reduction in vision must be in relation to Best Corrected Visual Acuity or Field of Vision. |
| **Age of evidence of disability** | No age limit. |

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| **Disability** | **Deaf/Hard of Hearing** |
| **FSD eligibility** | One or more of the following:   * An audiogram from a professionally qualified Audiologist and/or ENT Consultant, with signature, clearly indicating moderate to profound bilateral hearing loss (i.e. above 40dB). * If a student has attended a school for the Deaf, a letter on headed notepaper signed by the principal which confirms attendance at the school. |
| **Age of evidence of disability** | No age limit. |

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| **Disability** | | **Mental Health Condition (including, but not exclusive to, the following: Bipolar Disorder, Schizophrenia, Clinical Depressive Conditions, Severe Anxiety, Severe Phobias, OCD, Severe Eating Disorders and Psychosis).** | |
| **Report to be provided & signed by** | | Appropriately qualified Psychiatrist who is a member of their respective professional or regulatory body. | |
| **FSD eligibility** | | The report from the above should diagnose a significant mental health condition. | |
| **Age of report** | | The report should be no older than five years from the date of needs assessment. | |
| **Disability** | **Neurological Condition (including, but not exclusive to, the following: Guillain-Barre Syndrome, Huntington’s Disease, Brain tumour, Multiple Sclerosis, Motor Neuron Disease, Friedrich’s Ataxia, Head/Traumatic Brain Injury, Stroke, Parkinson’s Disease, Spinal Muscular Atrophy).** |
| **Report to be provided & signed by** | Neurologist or other relevant Consultant. |
| **FSD eligibility** | The report from the above should diagnose a significant neurological condition. |
| **Age of report** | No age limit. |

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| **Disability** | **Neurologically-based Speech, Language and Communication Disorders** |
| **Report to be provided & signed by** | Speech and Language Therapist. |
| **FSD eligibility** | A report from the above diagnosing a moderate or severe communication disorder; or where a mild communication difficulty has a moderate to severe psychological impact on the individual. |
| **Age of report** | No age limit. |

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| **Disability** | **Significant Ongoing Illness (including, but not exclusive to, the following: Uncontrolled Epilepsy, Diabetes Type 1, Cystic Fibrosis, Severe Crohn’s Disease, Severe Ulcerative Colitis and IBS, Chronic Fatigue, Cancers)** |
| **Report to be provided & signed by** | * Epilepsy : Neurologist * Diabetes Type 1: Endocrinologist * Cystic Fibrosis: Consultant respiratory physician or pediatrician * Gastroenterology Conditions: Gastroenterologist * Others: Relevant Consultant in area of condition, or Consultant Registrar. |
| **FSD eligibility** | The report from the above, as appropriate, should diagnose a significant ongoing illness. |
| **Age of report** | The report should be no older than five years from the date of needs assessment. |

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| **Disability** | **Physical/mobility** |
| **Report to be provided & signed by** | Orthopedic Consultant or other relevant Consultant (e.g. Pediatrician or Rheumatologist). |
| **FSD eligibility** | The report from the above should diagnose a significant physical or mobility difficulty. |
| **Age of report** | No age limit. |

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| **Disability** | **Developmental**  **Co-ordination Disorder**  **(Dyspraxia)** |
| **Report to be provided & signed by each of the following:** | * Appropriately qualified Psychologist who is a member of their respective professional or regulatory body. * Appropriately qualified Occupational Therapist/Neurologist |
| **FSD eligibility requires both of the following:** | 1. A full psycho-educational assessment from the Psychologist diagnosing Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (Dyspraxia), and 2. A report by the Occupational Therapist/Neurologist diagnosing Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (Dyspraxia). 3. All tests used in the assessments must be current, valid, and reliable and age appropriate. |
| **Age of report** | No age limit. |

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| **Disability** | **Specific Learning Difficulties (Dyslexia or Dyscalculia)** |
| **Report to be provided & signed by** | Appropriately qualified Psychologist who is a member of their respective professional or regulatory body; or, an assessor who is accredited by PATOSS. |
| **FSD eligibility** | Full psycho-educational assessment from the above diagnosing a Specific Learning Difficulty. All tests used in the assessment must be current, valid, and reliable and age appropriate.   For the purposes of the Fund, the CAO Evidence of Disability Form is not acceptable evidence of disability for this category of disability. |
| **Age of report** | The report should be no older than five years from the date of needs assessment. If the tests referred to in the report have clearly been conducted using Adult Scales, then the five year time limit will not apply. |

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| **Disability** | **General Learning Difficulty (Including Intellectual Difficulty and Learning Difficulties resulting from an Acquired Brain Injury)** |
| **Report to be provided & signed by** | Appropriately qualified Psychologist who is a member of their respective professional or regulatory body. |
| **FSD eligibility** | Full psycho-educational assessment from the above diagnosing a General Learning Difficulty. All tests used in the assessment must be current, valid, and reliable and age appropriate. |
| **Age of report** | No time limit |

**Useful Links**

**AHEAD**

The Association for Higher Education Access and Disability is an independent non-profit organisation working to promote full access to and participation in further and higher education for students with disabilities and to enhance their employment prospects on graduation.

<http://www.ahead.ie/>

**Student Finance**

This website provides useful information on financial support for further and higher education.

<http://www.studentfinance.ie/>

**DARE**

The Disability Access Route to Education (DARE) is a college and university admissions scheme which offers places at reduced points to school leavers with disabilities.

<http://www.accesscollege.ie/>

**Enable Ireland**

Enable Ireland’s mission is to work in partnership with those who use our services to achieve maximum independence, choice and inclusion in their communities.

<http://www.enableireland.ie/>

**National Counsel of the Blind**

NCBI, the national sight loss agency, is a not for profit charitable organisation which provides support and services nationwide to people experiencing sight loss.

<http://www.ncbi.ie/>

**Deaf Hear**

Deaf Hear provides a range of services to over 32,500 Deaf and Hard of Hearing people and their families annually. It also has a wider impact on the lives of all Deaf and Hard of Hearing people in Ireland through advocacy and campaigning for improved health and education services, and for better access to society for all.

<https://www.deafhear.ie/DeafHear/home.html>

**Aspire**

The Asperger Syndrome Association of Ireland, aim is to support people with Asperger Syndrome (AS) to lead full and independent lives.

<http://www.aspireireland.ie/>

**Dyslexia Association**

The Dyslexia Association of Ireland (DAI) aims to promote the understanding, treatment and prevention of the problems which can be associated with dyslexia, a specific learning disability.

<http://www.dyslexia.ie/>

**The Irish Wheelchair Association**

The Irish Wheelchair Association is a driving force for change, development and enhancements in the quality of life of people with disabilities in Ireland.

<http://www.iwa.ie/>

**Irish Association of Supported Employment**

IASE is a national voluntary organisation which was established in February 1994 with the aim of promoting and developing supported employment at a national level.

<http://www.iase.ie/>

**Disability Federation of Ireland**

Disability Federation of Ireland (DFI) is the national support organisation for voluntary disability organisations in Ireland who provide services to people with disabilities and disabling conditions.

<http://www.disability-federation.ie/>

**Support for Erasmus Students and Staff with a Disability**

The National Agency (The Higher Education Authority) makes available additional support to assist students and staff with the extra costs incurred by those who wish to undertake an Erasmus mobility. Students/Staff may be awarded ERASMUS support to help cover the travel and subsistence costs (including insurance and visa costs) incurred in connection with their study period abroad.

<http://www.eurireland.ie/erasmus-programme-2013/support-for-erasmus-students-and-staff-with-a-disability.1828.html>

**European Students Union**

The European Students' Union (ESU) is the umbrella organisation of 47 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 39 countries (December 2012). The NUSes are open to all students in their respective country regardless of political persuasion, religion, ethnic or cultural origin, sexual orientation or social standing. Our members are also student-run, autonomous, representative and operate according to democratic principles.

**The aim of ESU**

The aim of ESU is to represent and promote the educational, social, economic and cultural interests of students at the European level towards all relevant bodies and in particular the European Union, Bologna Follow Up Group, Council of Europe and UNESCO. Through its members, ESU represents over 11 million students in Europe.http://www.esu-online.org/