Disability in Higher Education

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OECD

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FOREWORD

The work leading to this publication extends OECD/CERI's interest in tackling social exclusion for people with disabilities through the development of educational provision. Earlier publications have provided extensive reviews of inclusive education (*Inclusive Education at Work – Students with Disabilities in Mainstream Schools*, 1999) and have looked at the post-compulsory period (*Post-compulsory Education for Disabled People*, 1997). Higher education remains the last area to be tackled and the overall goal of the study was to gather information on how students with disabilities are welcomed and supported in higher education institutions.

The study brings together papers prepared for a meeting held in Grenoble France in 1999 supported by the French Ministry of Education and Research, supplemented by a number of case studies of facilities that were completed in 2002. The first part presents detailed information obtained from visits to Canada (Ontario), France and the United Kingdom. Case studies carried out in Germany and Switzerland by national experts of those countries – Kai Felkendorff, Professor at the University of Heidelberg (Germany) and Judith Hollenweger, Professor, Pädagogische Hochschule (Zurich, Switzerland) – are provided in the second part.

It is clear that there has been considerable progress in universities to include students with disabilities as non-discrimination policies begin to take effect, support improves and institutional strategies emerge. Problems still remain, however, with a lack of reliable statistics, difficulties with modes of funding for individual students and incomplete understanding of the needs of students with disabilities.

The document was prepared by Professor Serge Ebersold of the University of Strasbourg, France with Peter Evans of the OECD Secretariat. It is published on the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Background

Concern for improving the equality of opportunity between the lives of non-disabled and disabled people has led many OECD member countries to promote inclusive education in mainstream schools for children with disabilities. Hence the substantial amount of work conducted in this field (OECD, 1999). However, studies on higher education provision for the disabled are far less common and the few available studies are individual pieces of research (Hurst, 1998; van Acker, 1999a), or work undertaken as part of OECD research programmes (OECD, 1997), or European programmes such as Helios II (European Union, 1996).

This relative lack of interest may be due to historical factors. Many authors consider accessibility for SWD to be an issue that emerged only in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Hurst considers that the anti-discrimination legislation adopted recently in the United Kingdom has highlighted the inequalities facing the disabled in higher education (Hurst, 1999). Klaus sees the International Year of Disabled Persons as the turning point in Germany, helping to substantially improve the social perceptions and understanding of the disabled (Klaus, 1999). According to Gagliano, the adoption of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 recognised the rights of the disabled to equal access in all aspects of economic and social life (Gagliano, 1999). Van Acker links the opening up of higher education to the disabled with demands for flexibility in higher education institutes in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s (van Acker, 1999b).

Inclusion in mainstream education is a relatively recent idea. In many countries, access to higher education is contingent on specific qualifications or competencies, generally awarded by the formal education system. In France, for instance, the entrance requirement to higher education is the *baccalauréat* or equivalent, awarded only by the Ministry of Education. Over the past two or three decades however, governments have been paying greater attention to inclusive education. In Italy, it is part of the vast move away from special schools that began in the second half of the 1970s. In the United States and Canada, it developed in the 1970s at the instigation of the civil rights movement. In countries such as France or Germany, it has been developing slowly but is not widespread. Problems with access to mainstream education are clearly bound to affect the opportunities of the disabled: limited access to the

institutions that award the qualifications required for entrance to universities and other HEIs necessarily restricts their scope for admission. When opportunities do exist, they are few and far between.

Finally, certain features of the higher education system may help to explain the relative lack of interest in this issue: access is optional and, historically speaking, confined mainly to elites. Concern for SWD may seem incongruous here, since it is generally recognised that this particular group has objectively little chance of benefiting. Furthermore, as the definition of higher education can be vague and vary across countries (OECD, 1997), there is little scope for comparison. Students too may have extremely different profiles (Danermark, 1999): some of them enrol in higher education directly upon leaving school, others are more mature wage-earners who enrol as part of vocational training or lifelong learning initiatives, or they may be job-seekers benefiting from back-to-work vocational training measures. Finally, as higher education institutions are autonomous, their entrance requirements, particularly for the disabled, often depend on their specific policy approach. This makes it extremely hard and uncertain to undertake a comprehensive analysis of provision for SWD.

This relative lack of interest, however, should change soon. Access to higher education for the disabled is no longer a utopia, and concern about provision for them is taking on a high profile. There has been a noticeable rise in enrolment for around a decade in many OECD member countries. In Sweden, the number of SWD enrolled at university rose by 125% from 1993 to 1999; in Ontario, Canada, SWD enrolments at university have risen from 1 668 in 1989/90 to 6 883 in 2000/01 (Ministry of Education). Enrolment in colleges has also risen, from 3 501 in 1989/90 to 12 491 a decade later. In France the Ministry of Education figure for SWD enrolment at university in 1993/94 was 3 601. By 2000/01 the figure had risen to 7 029. According to the Ministry of Education, most SWD wanting a place at university will be accepted.

A poor grasp of the processes and mechanisms of higher education may eventually call into question the relevance of inclusive education in schools. This obviously depends on the opportunities available to students and secondary-school pupils during their education, and on how much they learn. While learning is certainly valid in its own right, mainstreaming may seem derisory, even unwarranted, if it does not allow the disabled to complete their education. Gaining a relatively clear picture of provision for the disabled in higher education today, including the resources at their disposal and the problems they encounter is therefore crucial to the development and sustainability of this move to involve them in every aspect of economic, social and political life.

Interest in the quality of provision for the disabled in higher education is not just a question of rights, however. Their access to the labour market depends on it. Owing to the faster pace of technological change, the need to be increasingly resourceful and the growing flexibility of labour relations, employers prefer graduates (OECD, 1994). There is broad agreement in the literature on the importance of qualifications, and more generally, skill levels, in the labour market. The few studies available on the labour-force status of SWD show that unemployment is much lower among those with university degrees than among those without (Danermark, 1999).

Neglecting the mechanisms at play in universities and other HEIs would amount to making the disabled more vulnerable and increasing the discrimination against them. The gradual substitution of a participatory model involving everyone in every facet of economic, political and social life, for the more traditional integration model that seeks to adapt and normalise people with disabilities, requires that the disabled become increasingly skilled individuals who see themselves as stakeholders in their own future (Ebersold, 2002). Access to higher education means acquiring the knowledge and know-how to live in a society that views itself as a partnership of responsible, co-operative stakeholders with the ability to define and shape their own roles. This perspective puts the onus on individuals to build the world in which they live.[1]

Aims and methodology

This study focuses on the higher education opportunities available to people with disabilities. It describes as far as possible the SWD in higher education who have a different epidemiological profile from those of school age (OECD, 1997).

The second aim of the study is to look at the legislation, regulation, organisation and funding governing higher education, drawing on research in primary and secondary education that suggests that these factors singularly influence educational provision for people with disabilities (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 1999; OECD, 1999).

The third aim is to identify forms of assistance and support available both to individuals with disabilities and to institutions. The extensive research on

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1.   This is the view set out in the White Paper on Education and Training published by the European Commission. It states that modernising education systems means "presenting the world not as a complete construction but as something to be constructed", European Commission (1995), *Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society*, European Communities, p. 13.

inclusive education, higher education opportunities for SWD and the quality of available programmes depend largely on how flexible institutions are with regard to special needs.

Finally, the study tries to shed light on institutional strategies concerning admissions, management and support, outcomes, access to housing, and distance learning. Quality provision is not confined to the services rendered to students by one or more individuals. It depends also and perhaps above all, on an institution's ability to consider access to higher education for the disabled as a guaranteed, tangible right.

In seeking to identify the specific conditions that facilitate or hamper SWD's access to a higher education tailored to their needs, we accept that a disability, as suggested in the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (WHO, 2001), is not inherent to the individual. Rather, a disability is the outcome of an interaction between an individual with specific characteristics and the constraints imposed by the impairment.

This study then examines provision for SWD in Canada, the United Kingdom and France and takes into account the work being done on this subject in Germany and Switzerland. A detailed comparison of practices is impossible given the influence of institutional environments and social patterns on practices. The idea is less to compare than to establish the connections between the rationales, mechanisms and practices governing higher education admissions and programmes for SWD in these relatively different countries.

The study draws on a wide range of data. It includes papers from the OECD Conference on Higher Education and Disability held in Grenoble from 24 to 26 March 1999, reviews and/or official background papers, and a European Union publication describing opportunities and resources for SWD in universities throughout EU member states (European Union, 2001). Despite problems with statistical bias,[2] we felt it was important to conduct a statistical analysis to investigate the opportunities available to SWD in Canada, France and the United Kingdom objectively. The information in the guide was therefore encoded, entered and processed. We looked at the status of the university co-ordinator (individual or a team), the university's experience of accommodating the disabled, the services available, housing, catering facilities

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2.　　One of the main examples of bias is that the guide covers only those European universities that have agreed to be included by providing the necessary information. The contents are not entirely reliable, since they have been supplied in more or less detail by the university. Finally, the reported data do not necessarily reflect actual practice.

and their accessibility, access to the university and its premises, electronic and other technical devices, accessibility of the library and its resources, and athletic opportunities.

The views of official bodies and associations were compared using semi-structured interviews with representatives of associations for the disabled, and with officials from the relevant ministries in each country. The interviews were based on a grid that focused on: policies on inclusive education; provision for disabled pupils in secondary schools, and for students in higher education; higher education organisational and funding patterns; and training opportunities available to teaching staff and other university personnel.

Third, we looked at current academic practice in higher education institutions. One university was selected in each country: the University of Grenoble in France, and the University of East London in the United Kingdom; for the province of Ontario, the University of Toronto and G. Brown City College. We interviewed the co-ordinators responsible for SWD using questions based on an interview grid aimed at identifying the institution's strategy and practices by various players. The interviews were also to include SWD, but this was not always possible; two interviews were conducted with students at the University of Grenoble.

These steps are presented in the following chapters. The first chapter shows the reasoning governing provisions made for SWD and identifies the principal factors which encourage or discourage SWD from entering higher education. The three case studies (Part I) carried out by Serge Ebersold, supplemented by two especially commissioned country studies (Part II) in Germany by Kai Falkendorff and in Switzerland by Judith Hollenweger analyse the situations in specific countries. A concluding chapter makes broader recommendations.

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CHAPTER 2. ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION: ITS DYNAMICS, SHORTCOMINGS AND OBSTACLES

Summarising the literature and our interviews is eminently difficult, given the impact of local environments and institutional strategies. In any country or institution, the quality of provision for SWD will depend to varying degrees and more or less overtly, on stakeholder strategies and on an environment in which the presence of SWD is acceptable and appropriate. Hence the wide range of situations that SWD may encounter, and the inequalities that may occur. Hence too the significance of organisational environments and autonomy for HEIs. It is, however, possible to identify some common trends and characteristics.

Growing numbers of students with disabilities in higher education

As has been previously mentioned, although SWD are clearly under-represented within higher education, the numerous disabled-student initiatives launched in recent years by governments and the HEIs covered by our study have considerably increased the numbers of SWD in higher education.

This widespread growth, however, can be interpreted differently across countries, depending on the profile of the population concerned. In France, SWD include people with sensory impairments (28.1%), health disorders (23.4%) and motor impairments (22.6%). In Ontario, SWD in higher education include the learning disabled (47.9%) and people with chronic organic disorders[1] (21.7%). The sensorially impaired account for only 6.3% of all SWD, and the motor impaired 8.7%. In the United Kingdom, the breakdown is different again, with 46.6% of SWD suffering from chronic disorders and 15.6% from dyslexia. The mobility impaired account for 6.1% of all SWD and the sensorially impaired 9.1%. A similar distribution is found in Germany: students with chronic organic disorders make up 81.2% of SWD within higher education. Of these, 52% suffer from allergies and respiratory problems, 17% affected by musculoskeletal-related disorders and 8% with psychological disorders. Students suffering from chronic disorders represent 12.5% of the total population of SWD and 6.3% recognised as dyslexic.

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1.   DSW/HIS: *16. Socialerhebung*, 2001 available on the Internet, *www.studentewerke.de*

Many factors contribute to these disparities. One is likely to be the country's policy on inclusive education for the disabled. The proportion of SWD in higher education in France, for instance, where inclusive education is largely experimental (Gossot *et al.*, 1999), is far smaller than in Canada. In France it is 0.32%, compared with 8.9% for the province of Ontario, where education in special schools (where there is often little expectation that students will qualify for higher education) is the exception. In Germany, it is clear that administrative policy can allow learning in specialised milieu. The KMK estimates that the 48 SWD[2] meeting the pre-requisites to enter higher education and who have been educated in a so-called specialised milieu were mainly young blind or deaf students who have been educated in special institutions (KMK, 2002). These disparities also result from poor accessibility to HEIs for students with specific disabilities and many interviewees stressed how restricted disabled people were by such barriers. The Swiss example illustrates this subject particularly well where HEIs tend to refuse access to students with an organic disability. As for any student, HEIs require SWD to supply their own means of access, and in addition, they will not consider any requests for help concerning access. Swiss experts, moreover, are inclined to attribute the poor proportion of SWD (0.3%) to this lack of accessibility. However, these disparities possibly reflect different approaches to the assessment of the problems raised by individual disabilities. In Ontario, a disability is apparently viewed less as a disorder than as a special need to be accommodated if SWD are to follow a course of study. As the province does not recognise disabled status, the extent of the disability depends on a student's needs in relation to his/her chosen course. As one interviewee pointed out, this approach means that an individual who has a disability but does not require specific support to complete

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2.   A possible explanation for this extremely low number is the way in which disability is defined in the German school system. Only very recently was the term *Sonderschulbedürftigkeit* (need of a special school) replaced by *Sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf* (special educational needs). The new category and its handling by special educationalists, who are still in charge of diagnosing SEN, still reflect the traditional category. Most upper secondary students who are "disabled" in a sociological or medical sense are not (and never were) given an SEN-status by the school administration, since their specific needs are not catered for by the school system but by the welfare or medical system. If Germany applied the same standards for assessing SEN as in other countries, the number of students with SEN attaining a higher education entrance qualification would be much higher. As can be seen from the information concerning numbers of HE students with self-declared disabilities, dyslexia or mental health problems, these groups are quite numerous in German HE, although individual students would not have been diagnosed as being in need of special educational measures during their schooling.

a course cannot be classed as a SWD. Conversely, a student whose disabilities are certified by expert psychologists as being linked to impairments or characteristics giving rise to learning difficulties can be classed as a SWD. It could therefore be said that an individual's special needs and the services he or she requires constitute the disability.

This contrasts sharply to the situation in France, where a commission assesses disability status according to the extent to which an individual can conduct specific life activities. Here, a disability is viewed less in terms of the needs to be accommodated for study purposes, and more in terms of the inability to play a set of social roles because of the impairment, which must be compensated for if the student is to complete the course. From this perspective, a disability can be said to be contingent on the granting of SWD status. That status, and the necessary support provided for by law, is granted to those whose disability is recognised by the commission. This leads to the fact that students who may require services but without disability status are not registered as disabled. So it is not unusual for French HEIs to admit students with physical impairments (psychiatric disorders, back pain) who may require support and special facilities to complete their studies, but who have neither applied for nor been granted the status of disabled adult. As they are not identified as SWD, they have no legal existence in official statistics and are not entitled (officially at least) to claim any form of statutory support.

A trend rooted in non-discrimination policies

Growth in the number of SWD reflects the shift of emphasis over the past 20 years in the approach to disability, as indicated in the new International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (WHO, 2001). From this new perspective, a disability stems less from an impairment than from interaction between the individual, the constraints imposed by the disability and the various forms of support available in what is known as the environment. Viewing disabled people as fully fledged members of society who are as capable as any others of contributing to its development, this approach attributes the barriers to mainstream participation encountered by the disabled to a failure on the part of the environment to meet their needs. It is on those grounds that the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), adopted by the province of Ontario in 2001, addresses the identification, removal and prevention of barriers which impede persons with disabilities from full participation. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) adopted by the United States in 1990, puts the onus on society to provide for the disabled rather than obliging the disabled to adapt to architectural and social barriers. France's Act of 12 July 1990 on discrimination condemns all forms of discrimination, including discrimination against the disabled. A mention should be given to the *Behindertegleichstellungsgesetz* in

Germany, put into effect in 2002, which prohibits all forms of discrimination, notably those met by handicapped persons which hinder their access to employment.

Thus framed in legislation, this approach has helped to impose the requirement that HEIs open up to SWD and afford them the same rights and opportunities as non-disabled students. In Sweden, universities must allocate 0.15% of the first-cycle funds they receive from government to support services for SWD (Danermark, 1999). Under the ADA, US universities and colleges must make their facilities accessible to SWD free of charge (Gagliano, 1999). The province of Ontario requires institutions to draw up an annual accessibility plan specifying measures to be taken and the means of implementing them. In the United Kingdom, the 2001 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act holds universities and colleges accountable for discrimination against SWD. All of these legal instruments make it mandatory for higher education institutions to incorporate special needs into their accessibility plans and have at their disposal, under more or less clearly defined conditions, the human, technical and financial resources to provide the disabled with physical, psychological and learning-related access.

While some countries have opted for penalties, others prefer incentives. In France, anti-discrimination legislation does not make it compulsory for schools or universities to provide for the disabled: schools are not obliged to accommodate children with disabilities, and the current legal provisions promoting access to higher education do not make institutions directly liable. The onus is on the ministry to implement central government policies. In Belgium's Flemish community, the Council for Higher Education clearly asserts the right of access to higher education. It holds the view that the options open to SWD should not depend primarily on accessibility. They should be based, as for any student, on factors such as an institution's scientific reputation or its proximity to home. However, this is not specified in the legislation (van Acker, 1999).

The impact of non-discriminatory policies is particularly clear in light of the situations in countries where, like Switzerland, such policies are lacking. Thus, in such countries, the HEIs are in no way encouraged to improve the degree of accessibility and, so, open up to SWD. In this instance, access to higher education appears to be less of a recognised right for members of a minority, but more so a favour bestowed upon those judged in difficulty by the community at large. Research recently made into HEIs showed that, in effect, more than 90% had no structural modifications specific to the needs of SWD, thus making it unlikely that they could accept SWD.

A trend linked to types and forms of support

The statutory support available to both institutions and individuals for several years now has also been a key factor in the growth of SWD enrolment.

Institutional support

Initiatives that encourage institutions to open up to the disabled and support them in their undertaking have undoubtedly helped to swell SWD enrolment in higher education. In financial terms, virtually all of the countries in our study have taken steps to facilitate work that makes institutions accessible to the disabled. The United Kingdom Further and Higher Education Act of 1992 establishes single funding bodies for each national system of higher education (Hurst, 1999). France's inter-ministerial fund for accessibility set up under the Act of 13 July 1991 on the accessibility of persons with reduced mobility provides for the shared funding of work to make institutions accessible. Such measures may be structural or case-specific. They are structural when funding is "automatically" granted to allow universities and/or colleges to meet their obligation to provide for SWD. One example is the annual grant to universities and colleges from the Ontario authorities to cover the institution's accessibility requirements. In France, financial support is awarded under four-year contracts between the central government and the institutions. Conversely, measures are case-specific when funding is allocated on an *ad hoc* basis for projects submitted by HEIs to a body set up for that purpose: in the United Kingdom, for instance, the HEFCE finances projects that improve practices and arrangements benefiting the disabled. In the United States, the federal subsidies available to certain campuses are coupled with assistance programmes for SWD.

Most countries also seek to provide institutions with methodological support and give them more scope to upgrade the skills of special staff responsible for SWD. In the United Kingdom, the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (SKILL) develops innovative practice in this field and, more generally, supports institutions and the special staff dealing with the technical and methodological aspects of provision for SWD. These special staff are given the opportunity to meet once a term to discuss matters of mutual interest and to share ideas and experiences (Hurst, 1999). In Ontario, the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS) seeks to initiate the development and expansion of a communications network for SWD and persons professionally involved in support programmes for SWD at colleges and universities across Canada. It also seeks to make timely and meaningful responses to the issues and concerns affecting the educational resources and environment of SWD. On a smaller scale, there is evidence of a similar drive for reciprocal arrangements and professionalisation in France, where the ministry

organises annual theme-specific meetings at which special staff working with the disabled can exchange ideas.

Support for SWD

The various forms of support available to SWD have naturally done much to increase their share of enrolment in higher education. It may be the same funding available to all students providing they meet pre-established criteria. SWD may thus apply for non-repayable bursaries and grants, or for student loans. They may also, as in the United States, apply for federally sponsored work-study programmes allowing them to earn money to cover their expenses. Support may also be awarded specifically to the disabled, in which case it takes the form of benefits to compensate for the consequences of the disability and to meet the student's special needs. It may come from public funds (for instance vocational rehabilitation agencies in the United States, or family allowance offices in France) or private sources. Gagliano refers to the scholarships awarded by foundations, charities and enterprises on the basis of criteria such as the student's place of residence, parent's employer, religious denomination, or course of study (Gagliano, 1999). These grants may supplement student resources and provide a decent standard of living. They may also cover additional expenditure on items such as equipment, accommodation, or travel. Or they may cover the cost of carers and assistance with special needs.

While most countries in the industrialised world provide institutions and individual students with financial and technical support, the rationales behind such provision may differ considerably. The province of Ontario, for instance, refers to it explicitly in its non-discrimination policies, linking the achievement of this goal to close collaboration between institutions and government. It is up to each institution to incorporate special needs into its accessibility plan and to ensure that it has at its disposal, under more or less clearly-defined conditions, the human, technical and financial resources to provide the disabled with physical, psychological and learning-related access. And it is up to government to contribute financially to the goals set out in each institution's annual plan. In the United Kingdom, the case is somewhat different in that the onus is on the institutions alone to ensure that there is no discrimination. The financial support they require to implement their "disability statements" is granted by intermediate structures (HEFCE) and is directly contingent on the quality and relevance of the measures set out in their statements. However, until the entry into force of the 2001 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, the use of funds earmarked for statements was not subject to any form of control. In France, the onus for implementing non-discrimination policy is on the government far more than on institutions. Funding is allocated under four-year contracts between institutions and the central government, providing these

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include initiatives to promote provision for SWD, or work to improve accessibility.

A trend rooted in institutional strategies

Whatever the rationale and the country concerned, the support available to SWD is not solely financial. In most countries, institutions are invited to write provision for SWD into their individual policy statements. The Ontario authorities ask institutions for an annual accessibility plan setting out their policies and the accommodations they have put in place, and also require them to set up a service or structure specifically for that purpose. That service or structure has a remit to help SWD gain access to their funding entitlements, assess their needs, and identify the support they will require during their studies. In the United Kingdom, universities and colleges must produce a disability statement setting out as clearly as possible their policy on provision for the disabled and how it is to be implemented. They are also asked to create a special team to implement that policy and advise students. The team co-ordinator is asked to encourage the institution to change its ethics and promote equal opportunity policies; foster links between team members and other university services as well as links with the environment; identify the needs of SWD and how they will be met; and provide the students with support. In France, the situation is somewhat different, since the legislation does not make it mandatory for institutions to set up a special service, but they must appoint an officer for the disabled, whose main task is to co-ordinate initiatives for such students and to liaise with them. A similar situation is visible in Germany where those responsible for responding to the needs of SWD, *Beauftragte für Behindertenfragen*, are teachers involved on a voluntary basis who provide information for SWD and alert the universities and their staff to these needs.

Varying in form and scope across countries and institutions, universities and colleges have put in place a range of facilities. Some focus on physical access including parking spaces for the disabled, individual travel aids, strategies to improve access to public transport, facilities to enhance mobility on campus, and better access to university premises and accommodation. Others facilitate learning-related access: examination arrangements (*e.g.* a separate room, or additional time), and assistance with note-taking, photocopying, or transcribing documents. Assistive technology may also be provided, along with interpreters and special equipment.

Provision may also include all kinds of advice from resource persons to give the SWD better access to the financial and technical support to which they are legally entitled, ensure they are in a position to make career choices, identify their needs and resource requirements, and obtain support if and when problems

arise with teaching or other staff. Some universities like New Orleans have set up information and advisory centres where services are optional but that improve the student's chances of success. These Training, Resource and Assistive-Technology Centres (TRAC) help students to assess their vocational skills, identify the most appropriate assistive technologies, and check the usefulness and efficiency of specific resources (to avoid inappropriate purchases). Where necessary, they also train SWD to use specially adapted computers, provide employment rehabilitation programmes and help with job searches. They also conduct disability awareness and support campaigns in the business community (Hurst, 1998).

Institutions are also developing regular and assertive awareness campaigns to minimise the lack of understanding about disabilities and, at the same time, to improve the situation for SWD. These awareness campaigns vary in terms of frequency and impact. They target academic staff and the university community at large, generally taking the form of leaflets, videos and information sessions which help people adapt practices to the constraints and implications of certain types of disability. In some cases, they also include events bringing together disabled and non-disabled students. Some institutions make a point of regularly reviewing accessibility by asking SWD about the barriers they encounter and the support they receive. Finally, there are universities like Grenoble which, far from confining awareness campaigns to the university community, extend them throughout the city.

The form and availability of such facilities depend very much on institutional strategies. The literature and our interviews would appear to suggest that some institutions have almost fully incorporated provision for SWD into their institutional policy, albeit imperfectly. Most services are an integral part of the institution, many specialist staff have approved vocational qualifications, their work is a collective effort and only occasionally runs into opposition. In institutions that have not managed to achieve their policy objectives, the rationale is rather different. In many cases, responsibility for SWD lies with one or at best several individuals, seldom the institution as a whole. Accommodating SWD then becomes a daily battle with both administrative and teaching staff. It requires considerable inventiveness and creativity, especially since there is little acknowledgement from the rest of the university community. In such cases, special staff are very isolated and quality provision is largely a matter of individual goodwill. Finally, there are some institutions where provision for SWD depends almost exclusively on the personal involvement of a single individual, even if it is that person's job. The facilities and services available to students are very much a matter of chance and the momentum imparted is extremely fragile.

Persistent grey zones

The growing number of SWD enrolling in higher education should not, of course, mask the fact that some grey areas persist. Many can be put down to the principles and rationales governing their access to higher education. One disincentive facing students who do not have SWD status is specific to countries like France,[3] where subsidies and other forms of support are tied to that status. Similarly, inequalities between institutions caused by the method of distributing funds reflect the United Kingdom's option of financially rewarding institutions that do more to accommodate the disabled and penalising those that do less (Gagliano, 1999). Finally, the problems highlighted by van Acker with regard to the application of non-discrimination provisions obviously relate to legal enforceability (van Acker, 1999).

Lack of reliable statistics

Apart from these disparities, however, some barriers are obviously common to many countries. One is certainly the absence of statistical data on SWD in higher education. Very few institutions keep consistent and reliable data, or profiles on students, special needs and outcomes. Responsibility for data availability is left to the institutions in many cases, with the exception of France. Quite frequently there is no information on the courses that students have chosen, or their attainment rates. Most institutions show great concern for the career prospects of their non-disabled students, but not of SWD. Such shortcomings can obviously lead to a certain ignorance regarding the numbers and profiles of SWD and as such, hinder adequate financing. They also make it impossible to assess attainment and hence to optimise inclusion and support for SWD.

Barriers linked to modes of funding

Financing is often the first obstacle. The functioning of different modes and levels of funding that have an effect on the support allocated to students, presents a major obstruction. In this way, funding is allocated by the Swiss Federal Disability Insurance giving priority to the extra costs of special provision for SWD. As a result, mainstream schools find themselves excluded from access to additional funding, as do the universities, and this exclusion is even stronger than the split dividing medical and educational provision. Since

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3. The task force responsible for revising the Outline Act of 30 June 1975 on disabled persons suggests providing explicitly for the status of disabled student and raising awareness in the academic community. See Assante (2002).

education in Switzerland is under the jurisdiction of the cantons, educational establishments are not empowered to receive funding from federal invalidity insurance. This ineligibility also affects the universities whether they are "traditional" or more focused on applied sciences. Such arrangements have an impact on SWD and the Federal Statistics Office estimates that only 0.6% of SWD receive help from the Federal Invalidity Insurance scheme.

Barriers may also stem from the way institutions are funded. According to Gagliano, for instance, the principle of equitable distribution of funds may widen disparities between institutions and hence inequalities between SWD. While the equitable distribution of funding based on efficiency criteria can, as in the United Kingdom, act as an incentive for institutions to optimise provision for the disabled, it also widens disparities between institutions: the more efficient among them are allocated more resources, and *vice versa*. Inequalities between institutions may also widen when the equitable distribution of funds is coupled with a requirement to contribute to funding, as in the United States where the more affluent states (*i.e.* those that can afford to match federal funding) can effectively use their federal grants, unlike the less affluent ones which usually have to return theirs as they are unable to match federal funding. As in the previous case, this type of funding tends to make the rich richer and the poor poorer (Danermark, 1999). In all of these scenarios, the outcome is concentration and the emergence of special or specialised universities. This probably has considerable advantages: according to Danermark, it fosters quality provision, and normalises the presence of the disabled in the institution. It facilitates not only the purchase of special equipment but also the integration of persons with disabilities into the university community. Yet it does have the disadvantage of limiting the range of options on offer to SWD and, perhaps more importantly, establishing special or specialist institutions within higher education. These run the risk of becoming segregated areas with the emphasis on SWD, thereby stigmatising those who attend. Hence the plans in some countries, such as Sweden, for reciprocal arrangements between HEIs with regard to provision for SWD.

In other scenarios, funding patterns tend to penalise institutions that are more alive to the problems of how to accommodate and support SWD. Because their accessibility heightens their appeal to such students, they are slowly but surely finding, like some Swedish universities, that the additional costs are putting a serious strain on their budgets, in spite of the government support they receive (Danermark, 1999). When these additional costs are not shouldered by a financial structure at national level, as is the case in Belgium, accommodating and supporting SWD begins to look like a counterproductive strategy that is costly and penalises them financially. Such funding structures are bound to

hinder the spread of initiatives in favour of SWD and reinforce barriers to non-discrimination initiatives.

Linked to modes of institutional funding, some barriers also stem from inadequate financial support for SWD. Government benefits schemes, for instance, do not always take into account their special needs. By coupling financial support with requirements to enrol in full-time courses or to qualify within a certain timeframe, many countries penalise part-time studies. In so doing, they fail to allow for the impact of evolving disorders on the pace at which students progress. They also misjudge the cost of time wasted on poor accessibility, be it physical or teaching-related. The Swedish example is quite revealing here: according to Danermark, the shortage of sign-language interpreters in Sweden may mean that students have to wait one to two semesters. Another penalising factor tends to be the retrospective payment of financial support to cover wages for support staff and care-givers. It forces SWD in Britain to pay up front for certain facilities, limiting some people to what they can afford instead of the full range of technical facilities they require. One final factor to bear in mind is the complexity of funding sources. SWD must often cut their way through a jungle of formalities in order to obtain financial support. To overcome this kind of difficulty, Germany created coordination structures, *Gemeinsame Reha-Servicestelle*, in 2002. These inform handicapped people, or those suspected of being at risk of handicap, of the range of aids available to them, as well as coordinating the institutions which have to pay out the financial support to the students.

Barriers linked to institutional strategies

The barriers to higher education and high attainment encountered by SWD throughout their studies are seldom official, with the exception of constraints linked to specific professions including medical doctors, special-needs teachers, etc. They are usually far more attributable to a set of factors which increase the mismatch between provision and individual needs, and can in turn be traced back to perceptions of disability and the disabled, work organisation patterns in individual institutions, and the position of disabled people *vis-à-vis* their environment.

Some barriers are structural, including architectural barriers, which seem insurmountable in the older institutions. Safety issues may also impede full physical accessibility: although some fire-doors may prevent mobility-impaired students from moving around, they can hardly be removed without jeopardising the safety of the student community as a whole. While financial matters can clearly not be eluded, it is important to bear in mind aspects specifically linked to the rationales governing higher education, such as the common view that the

admission of SWD must not be to the detriment of academic standards. Other barriers are markedly more occasional. Those that spring to mind include all the rigidities that SWD regularly encounter: problems in getting around, limited access to toilets and lifts, lack of flexibility in examination arrangements, a shortage of information, insufficient technical facilities, inadequate automatic reflexes, teaching staff who may be unaware of the university's concerns, isolation, and so on. But other factors worth mentioning relate more specifically to the emphasis placed on SWD in the institution's own mission statement, to perceptions of SWD but also of higher education, and to the institution's position *vis-à-vis* its environment and technological innovation.

Many barriers, for instance, stem from the fact that an institution has no comprehensive strategy for the disabled. The dynamics governing the admission of and support for SWD is far more tenuous when institutions have not drawn up an explicit disability statement and defined how it will be implemented. Without this comprehensive strategy indicating their commitment, institutions admit SWD more as an occasional act of philanthropy on behalf of the needy than an educational duty inherent in the institution's mission; the work involved in accommodating and supporting SWD rests on the shoulders of a single individual rather than being a community effort involving everyone, from students and academics to administrative and other staff. It is achieved primarily by relying on the goodwill and interpersonal skills of those concerned, rather than by joining forces to build on complementary skills tailored to the student's own plans. Specialist staff who have taken on the responsibility of accommodating SWD look more like "social workers" trying to assist and support students with difficulties than skilled professionals who can plan how best to tailor practices to student needs. Finally, the absence of a formal, comprehensive strategy that has the commitment of the entire academic community, and the required resources, prevents SWD from joining research teams and envisaging a career in teaching and research.

Many barriers are inextricably linked to the way institutions relate to their environments. The lack of links with secondary education emerged clearly from the interviews and is apparent in most of the literature: it contributes to the problems that some students have in identifying and stating their needs and viewing themselves as co-builders of a process; it significantly reduces their scope for choice and, as Danermark points out, makes them even more baffled by the pace and aspects of university life. This separation also causes a break in work on support and care which may, in some cases, undermine its quality: provision of the special facilities and support required for the course may be delayed to an extent that is detrimental to the student's achievement. Furthermore, because this delay establishes a link between such provision and the emergence of problems, it may expose the student to a greater risk of

stigmatisation and marginalisation within the university community. Another clearly identified barrier is obviously the absence of any link with the world of work: besides the fact that it singularly reduces a student's scope of choices, and that it confines the careers advisory process to academia, it excludes student outcomes from customised support strategies. A final barrier may be the institution's isolation from the city as a whole and the voluntary sector in particular, including associations for the disabled: the absence of such links tends to confine the issue of accessibility, and in particular physical accessibility, to the campus and the institution, rather than making it part of a broader picture covering access to leisure facilities, public transport, etc. What is more, special staff are deprived of the expertise available in these associations, and all the support and facilities they can offer SWD. This kind of isolation makes it all the harder to take a comprehensive approach that addresses the needs of SWD in all their diversity.

Other disincentives to the presence of SWD in higher education are likely to stem, as Gagliano makes clear, from a lack of standards and criteria informing stakeholders about aspects of provision that need to be taken into consideration. This is likely to create wider disparities between universities and greater inequality in the conditions and opportunities facing these students: the quality of facilities and support for the disabled thus become contingent on the creativity and resourcefulness of those directly concerned and leaves it up to them to decide what makes for quality provision. This same lack of standards and criteria also hampers the special staff responsible for accommodating and supporting SWD: by limiting the scope for identifying and formalising the skills they use or might require, it limits the recognition they might receive from other players; precludes discussion on future avenues for the work of special staff; and hampers the introduction of training initiatives based on skill acquisition for special needs procedures, at the risk of seeing professionalisation focus on a speciality – assisting SWD – rather than on the delivery of a service for students.

There would also seem to be little doubt that reasoning in terms of disability or impairment is a major curb on provision for SWD in higher education. Any approach which fails to grasp that the needs of SWD are not fundamentally different from those of any other student (Danermark, 1999), and views disability as an individual attribute rather than as the outcome of the interaction between an individual, his/her needs and the environment, will only hamper provision for SWD. This kind of approach places the emphasis on what students are unable to do, instead of focusing on the accommodations that can reconcile academic standards with the presence of SWD. It thus makes provision for SWD something of a paradox, an inherent contradiction between the academic standards required in higher education and the presence of SWD.

It fosters the kind of reservations, mentioned time and again by the professionals interviewed and in much of the literature, that special-needs students encounter when they have disabilities which are less visible than motor impairment, deafness or blindness, for instance. This approach also prevents the disabled from being viewed as a resource that will enable the community to optimise its practices and tailor them more closely to the needs and specificities of the student community as a whole. It makes awareness-raising about differently able people a one-off initiative, an act of philanthropy rather than a source of enrichment. It fails to incorporate input from SWD into strategies promoting their inclusion and support.

Finally, the lack of investment in distance learning can also be a barrier for SWD. In spite of its indisputable contingencies and constraints, distance learning is a vital resource for SWD: it helps to offset (or considerably attenuate) accessibility problems, and offers scope for more individualised teaching methods (Santacana, 1999). It is also an opportunity to tap the potential of new information and communications technologies when adapting learning resources to student needs and customising teaching practice.

Conclusions

There are six main areas that require further constructive action:

1. It is still not fully accepted that the manifestation of a disability is a product of the strengths and weaknesses of the individual and the environment in which he/she functions, and not due solely to his/her intrinsic characteristics. Thus many SWD can be successful if the learning conditions are supportive and meet their particular needs.

2. This first point is linked to the necessity to develop more open attitudes to SWD which can be achieved through various forms of development and training.

3. The funding arrangements for both the institutions and the individuals need close attention both to improve access and provide necessary support. The mechanisms are complex, the funds provided the timing of the payments can create unnecessary hardship.

4. Distance learning appears to be a useful way forward but requires further development across a range of dimensions to give SWD full access.

5. The links between secondary schools and higher education are in need of strengthening as are links with local associations for SWD and their families. SWD should also be given preferential access to their closest HEI.

6. Finally, methods to identify and assess of the needs of SWD require further development and improved data collection procedures.

These areas may be presented as a series of recommendations:

- To increase the presence of SWD in higher education presupposes policies that :

    − Are organised around an ecological definition of disability and consider a disabling condition as resulting from an interaction between the individual and the environment and not as an intrinsic characteristic of the individual.

    − Promote a legislative framework forbidding all forms of discrimination and which requires universities to mobilise the means and resources allowing them to be more open to the special needs of this category of student, including modifications to buildings for access.

    − Encourage the development of statistical tools allowing a better understanding of the population of SWD, the way in which they are received and supported throughout their time in education, their quality of life, the factors that favour or hinder their success and, more generally, their development.

    − Require universities, in their future plans and budgets, for the reception and support of students likely to require specific help.

    − Develop a funding strategy for higher education that stimulates a good balance between more specialised and more generalised institutions in terms of providing full access to SWD and adequately compensating inclusive higher education institutions.

    − Offer financial support adapted to the needs of the students, their rhythms and the constraints imposed by their disabilities by allowing them, for example, to study part-time or through distance learning.

- Increasing the number of handicapped students in higher education presupposes furthermore that universities:

  - Define their strategy of reception and support in partnership with secondary schools, associations for SWD or their parents, and fully taking into account future economic circumstances.

  - Explicitly define a policy regarding SWD taking into consideration the training of the university's staff, their presence in representative bodies of the university, the increasing of awareness among the academic staff and the university community more generally.

  - Develop procedures for fighting discrimination from within.

  - Integrate distance learning and new technologies into universities' policies.

- Increasing the number of SWD in higher education presupposes initiatives that:

  - Prepare, at the earliest possible stage, for SWD to express their needs, their expectations and more generally, to be actors in the entire process concerning them.

  - Allow the increase in the ratio of people with disabilities amongst research teams.

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PART I
CASE STUDIES

CHAPTER 3. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN ONTARIO, CANADA

Introduction

Canada is a federation of thirteen jurisdictions, ten provinces and three territories, and has a population of 30 million people. The province of Ontario accounts for one-tenth of Canada's total area, approximately one million square miles, and over one-third of Canada's population, or approximately 10 million. Approximately 5 400 000 children are enrolled in Canadian elementary and secondary schools. In Ontario, two million students attend elementary and secondary schools.

Students with disabilities at secondary level

In Ontario, during the 1999/2000 school year, 96 467 students were registered with special educational needs. 17 017 were enrolled in special education classes, and 79 450 were enrolled in regular classes. Of these, 89 189 received an individual education plan (IEP) (see Table 3.1).

Of students receiving an IEP, 54.7% have a communication exception (84.3% have a learning disability), 30.3% have an intellectual exception (50.3% are gifted), and 5.7 have non-identified special needs.

For those in special education classes, 54.5% have an intellectual exceptionality, 43.3% are gifted, 36.1% have a mild intellectual disability and 19.6% have a development disability. SWD with communication difficulties represent 27.1% of all exceptional students enrolled in secondary level special education classes. Most (77.4%) have a learning disability or a speech or language impairment (11%). Students with multiple exceptions represent 9.5% of all students enrolled in secondary level special education classes, those with a behavioural disability 5.1% and those with a physical disability represent 0.9%.

Table 3.1. **Students enrolled at secondary level**

Disability	Received IEP		Special education classes		Regular classes	
		%		%		%
Behavioural	4 155	4.6	874	5.1	3 522	4.4
Communication	48 764	54.7	4 618	27.1	45 574	57.4
Intellectual	27 034	30.3	9 279	54.5	18 405	23.2
Physical	1 032	1.6	149	0.9	920	1.1
Multiple exceptionality	3 090	3.5	1 620	9.5	1 580	2.0
Non-identified students (special needs no IPRCM[1])	3 254	3.6	321	1.9	5 803	7.3
Non-identified students with special needs (SEPPA[2] funded)	1 860	2.1	156	0.9	3 646	4.6
Total	89 189	100.0	17 017	100.0	79 450	100.0

1. Identification Placement Review Committee Meeting.
2. Special Education Per Pupil Amount.
Source: Ministry of Education, Information Management Branch.

Table 3.2. **Exceptional students enrolled in special classes**

Exception	Fully self-contained		Partially integrated		Total	
		%		%		%
Behavioural	461	6.6	413	4.1	874	5.1
Communication	1 515	21.6	3103	31.0	4 618	27.1
Intellectual	3 804	54.3	5 475	54.6	9 279	54.5
Physical	91	1.3	58	0.6	149	0.9
Multiple exceptionality	1 025	14.6	595	5.9	1 620	9.5
Non-identified students (special needs no IPRCM[1])	75	1.0	246	2.4	321	1.9
Non-identified students with special needs (SEPPA[2] funded)	29	0.4	217	2.1	156	0.9
Total	7 000	100.0	10 017	100.0	17 017	100.0

1. Identification Placement Review Committee Meeting.
2. Special Education per Pupil Amount.
Source: Ministry of Education, Information Management Branch.

Of students enrolled in special education classes, 58.9% are partially integrated. Most have an intellectual disability (54.6%) or a communication exception (31%). Of students with multiple exceptions (14.5%), 6.6% are socially maladjusted, 1.3% have a physical disability, and are enrolled in special classes that are largely fully self-contained (Table 3.2).

Of students with exceptions enrolled in regular classes, 57.4% have a communication disability (91.1% have a learning disability), 23.2% have an intellectual disability (64.2% are gifted, 33.4% have a mild intellectual impairment and 24.4% are developmentally disabled), 4.4% have a behavioural impairment, 2% have multiple exceptions and 1.2% have a physical disability. Students with non-identified special needs constitute 11.9% of the student population enrolled in regular classes (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3.   **Students with exceptions enrolled in regular classes**

Exception	Withdrawal assistance %		Resource assistance %		Indirect assistance %		Total %	
Behavioural	1 234	4.5	1 293	4.2	995	4.7	3 522	4.4
Communication	16 632	60.8	17 677	57.1	11 265	53.2	45 574	57.4
Intellectual	5 797	21.2	6 492	21.0	6 116	28.9	18 405	23.2
Physical	286	1.0	355	1.1	279	1.3	920	1.2
Multiple exceptionality	575	2.1	629	2.0	376	1.8	1 580	2.0
Non-identified students (special needs no IPRCM[1])	1 718	6.3	2 848	9.3	1 237	5.8	5 803	7.3
Non-identified students with special needs (SEPPA[2] funded)	1 121	4.1	1 635	5.3	890	4.2	3 646	4.6
Total	27 363	100.0	30 929	100.0	21 158	100.0	79 450	100.0

1. Identification Placement Review Committee Meeting.
2. Special Education per Pupil Amount.
Source: Ministry of Education, Information Management Branch.

Resource assistance is given to 38.9% of the students enrolled in regular classes, the largest proportion to students whose special needs are not identified. They are 34.4% to receive withdrawal assistance, which goes mostly to students with a communication exception (60.8%). An indirect service is given to 26.6% of students enrolled in regular classes whose intellectual impairment is proportionately higher than the average (28.9%).

The higher education (HE) system

Organisation and funding

The Canadian higher education system distinguishes between universities and colleges. Canada has 195 community colleges and 75 universities, most of which are public institutions and all of which charge tuition. The Ontario

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) provides support to 17 universities and 25 colleges of applied arts and technologies. Four other publicly-funded university-level establishments are located in the province. The Ministry of Health funds the private Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences; the Ministry of the Solicitor General supports the Ontario Fire College, which offers courses in fire protection technology to municipal fire department officers, and the Ontario Police College. The Canadian Government, which awards degrees under a federal statute, funds the Royal Military College in Kingston. In addition to the publicly-funded institutions, 500 private vocational schools are registered in but not funded by the Province of Ontario. Other private institutions run theological seminaries and bible colleges that are allowed to grant theological degrees but they receive no provincial government funding. The colleges of applied arts and technologies deliver highly practical, professional training with general education components in Ontario, which is more advanced than or not suited to secondary schools. These colleges meet the vocational needs of secondary school graduates who do not want to attend university.

Post-secondary programmes proposed by colleges are full or part time and lead to either a two- or three-year diploma or a one-year certificate. They must provide students with skills and knowledge for entry-level positions in specific occupational areas, generic skills (communications, mathematics, technology, interpersonal and analytical skills) and generic education adapted to the labour market (applied arts, business health sciences, human services, hospitality and tourism, technology). Colleges may deliver post-basic programmes that provide further specialised training beyond the basic vocational diploma. They also offer adult training and retraining programmes, apprenticeship programmes, and contact training.

The MTCU must approve post-secondary programmes after which the institution assumes responsibility for implementing it according to programme standards, and for regular programme review. The MTCU (in collaboration with all the concerned actors) is responsible for developing provincial programme standards. It provides annual operating grants to the colleges, determined by a funding distribution mechanism based on enrolment in approved programmes; the funding mechanism considers relative programme costs, college size, sparse population density and distant campuses. It also allocates an annual sum to acquire or build new facilities, make major renovations, and refitting existing facilities.

The university mission encompasses teaching, research and services. The research mission is increasingly implemented in partnership with business and industry. Universities provide the opportunity to pursue undergraduate

education and to acquire undergraduate and graduate professional education and training. Undergraduate programmes lead to a general three-year bachelor degree and a four-year honours degree that has a specific subject concentration. Universities may also offer undergraduate diplomas (one- to three-year programmes) and short (up to one year) special programmes that may lead to entry into more advanced degree programmes, or specialised certification with professional bodies. Nearly all universities offer master's level programmes and two-thirds offer doctoral programmes. Some offer professional programmes (law, medicine, engineering, and education).

The MCTU delivers annual operating grants to provide universities with basic funds for teaching and research functions, determined by a funding mechanism based on weighted enrolment. Individual universities are responsible for allocating their operating grant internally. Additional operating funds are given to support accessibility opportunities, to promote bilingual and French language education, and for the extra costs incurred in delivering education in northern Ontario.

Students with disabilities in higher education

Nearly half (42.5%) of Canada's adult population has a post-secondary certificate or diploma or university degree. In Ontario, 27.7% of the population has graduated from community colleges and 14.8% from universities. At last count, 212 880 students were enrolled in the post-secondary educational sector: 144 000 enrolled in community colleges and 68 880 in university.

The annual reports provided by university and college SWD offices show that during the school year 2000/2001, 18 981 SWD were enrolled in post-secondary education. In the school year 1992/1993, the figure was 14 433. Of these, 63.7% were enrolled in colleges of applied arts and technologies. According to the National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS), in 1991, only 6.2% of Canadian men and women with disabilities had a degree compared to 15% of men and 12.2% of women in the non-disabled population.

Nearly half of the SWD in higher education (47.9%) have a learning disability, and 21.7% have a disabling organic condition. Mobility-impaired students represent 8.7% of enrolled students, those with a visual impairment 3%, and those with a hearing impairment represent 3.3%. Students with a disability listed under relevant human rights legislation and not included in other categories (emotional disability, speech impairment) represent 7.9% of the students enrolled in higher education (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4.   **SWD enrolled in post-secondary education, 2000-2001**

Disability	Universities		Colleges		Total	
		%		*%*		*%*
Learning disabilities	2 959	42.9	6 138	50.7	9 097	47.9
Chronic medical/ systematic disability	2 043	29.7	2 087	17.2	4 130	21.7
Mobility disability	881	12.8	768	6.3	1 649	8.7
Blind/low vision	243	3.5	336	2.8	579	3.0
Deaf/hard of hearing	232	3.4	401	3.3	633	3.3
Multiple	402	5.8	977	8.1	1 379	7.2
Others	123	1.8	1 391	11.5	1 514	7.9
Total	6 883	100.0	12 098	100.0	18 981	100.0

Source: Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.

Students with learning disabilities (50.7%), or with a disability listed under relevant human rights legislation and not included in the other categories (11.5%) and those with multiple impairments are over-represented in colleges. Students with a disabling organic condition (29.7%) or with a mobility impairment are over-represented at universities. Students with multiple disabilities constitute 7.2% of enrolments. Visual and hearing impaired students are nearly equally distributed among colleges and universities. Colleges enrol more students with learning difficulties than do universities, but they admit a very high proportion of students whose learning disability is not confirmed[1] representing 25.5% of all students with learning difficulties that are admitted.

No precise data exist about the courses and programmes chosen by SWD. Our interviews revealed that SWD are not restricted in their choices unless health conditions intervene. The 1996 survey made by NEADS at national level indicates that the highest proportion of respondents was registered in social science/social service programmes (29%) and business/commerce programmes (19%) (NEADS, 1996). Students with learning disabilities responding to the survey made by the learning opportunities task force studied a wide range of subjects. College students mentioned every programme area and university students were mostly enrolled in general arts and sciences (Stephenson, 2000).

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1.   A learning disability is confirmed when established appropriate qualified individuals are allowed to make the diagnosis. These include registered clinical psychologists, registered psychological associates to delegate and to diagnose, and psychological associates supervised by a registered clinical psychologist.

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No data currently exist about graduation rates for SWD, whereas this should be emphasised in the future. However, the SWD drop out rate is fairly high for several reasons. Interviews revealed that the transition from high school to higher education is poorly prepared. It is generally acknowledged that students, especially those with a learning disability, are poorly prepared to access universities or colleges and that the Ontario schools boards do not fulfil the needs of their learning SWD. The student report in the learning opportunities taskforce study revealed that 30% of students received no special education support in secondary school, were not regularly assessed as foreseen by the legislation, and cannot advocate for themselves. A significant percentage of students answering the learning opportunities taskforce study reported having no access to the IPRC process foreseen by the legislation.

Most of the establishments have a career office and develop partnerships with the labour market but no data specific to SWD and employment exists. The learning opportunities taskforce study indicates that 39% of the pilot responding students said that they had worked while studying and 43% of them worked after graduating.

The legal framework

Policies

The human rights code regulates the access of SWD to higher education.[2] This provincial law does not define discrimination, but considers individual accommodation to be the central principle of the human rights law. It specifies that public policy in Ontario must recognise the dignity and worth of every individual, provide equal rights and opportunities without illegal discrimination, and create a climate of understanding so that each person feels a part of a community and is able to contribute to its development and well being.

The law stipulates that disabled people should have equal access to all resources and provision and specifies non-discriminatory equal rights and opportunities in jobs, housing and services. It seeks to prevent discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, colour, age or handicap. Disability is interpreted in broad terms – physical disability or illness, mental retardation or impairment, learning disability, mental disorder or an injury for which benefits were claimed or received at the workplace safety and insurance act. It includes present and past conditions and has a subjective component based on the

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2. This code has primacy over legislation and agreements such as collective agreements.

perception of disability. It acknowledges that even minor illnesses or infirmities may be disabilities if an individual can demonstrate unfair treatment because of the perception of disability.

Bill 125 is disability-specific legislation that completes this code. It is designed to identify, eliminate and prevent all obstacles[3] or barriers leading to unequal opportunities for people with disabilities that prevent them from participating fully in the life of their society. Universities and colleges are required to prepare an annual accessibility plan specifying their accessibility policy and implementation, their specific programmes, practices, and services. The plan must be public but it is not enforced: implementation is not linked to provision or penalties.

Education is not specifically mentioned in the human rights code, and Bill 125 does not impose post-secondary accessibility. However, universities and colleges are responsible for providing education and, more specifically, for providing all the necessary services or support for individuals to study and fulfil the same duties and requirements as everyone else with dignity and without hindrance. The government provides institutional incentives for meeting this obligation under the human rights code. Institutions must develop a proactive disability accommodation approach (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2000) and define all the services and supports provided to SWD.

The accommodation must be included in the standard provision so that every individual is assessed according to abilities rather than according to assumed group characteristics. The obligation to accommodate must avoid discrimination resulting from requirements, qualifications, or apparently neutral factors that adversely affect the individual. It has to consider, assess, and accommodate each SWD individually. Furthermore, this obligation must respect the individual's dignity by considering how the accommodation is implemented and by involving the individual in the process, so long as it creates no undue hardship.

Generally, accommodation is appropriate if the individual has the opportunity to achieve the same level of performance or to enjoy the same level of benefits and privileges as those experienced by other students or if disability-related needs are met. Under these conditions, the procedure used to assess

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3.   Obstacles to access for SWD that are not obstacles for other persons including physical and attitudinal barriers, methods of communication, policy or practices.

accommodation and the manner in which it is delivered is as important as the content.

Accommodation would cause undue hardship if its cost affects organisational viability, if there is no outside funding to make it reasonable and if it does not meet health and safety requirements. For educational and training programmes and institutions, the concern is more often whether the accommodation calls for or allows interference with the integrity of the programme or institution (Nichols, 2001). The institution rather than the SWD is required to prove that the accommodation can be accomplished without undue hardship.

Supports

According to the principles of the human right code and Bill 125, institutions rather than individuals are funded in order to serve all SWD.

Institutional support

MCTU provides incentive funding to colleges and universities through a SWD access fund that was introduced in 1987 for colleges and in 1988 later for universities. This fund is designed to assist publicly-funded post-secondary organisations in meeting their legal obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code to accommodate SWD. It may be used for facilities and for staffing an office/centre for SWD, specialised equipment and technology, support/contract services (diagnostic assessments, tutors) and staff professional development.

The interpreter fund, given to colleges outside the greater Toronto area (a similar fund exists for universities) is intended to assist in defraying expenses for sign language interpreters, assistants, computerised note-takers and real-time captioning for deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing students. For historical reasons, the G. Brown College runs a service for college hearing-impaired (deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing students) students in the greater Toronto area and in special programmes at the college. It includes diagnostic assessment, sign language interpreters, note-takers, tutors, specialised counselling, pre-teaching course content, special courses, and academic upgrading.

Individual support

Financial support

SWD may have access to the Bursary for Students with Disabilities (BSWD) or to the bursary support for deaf students studying out of country in post-secondary institutions

Bursary for SWD (BSWD)

To be eligible, SWD must first be eligible for the Ontario Student Assistance Programme (OSAP), which gives loans to students from lower income families to meet the cost of their studies and to promote equality of opportunity in the post-secondary sector. OSAP also provides financial assistance for basic living expenses by supplementing the student's financial resources. To be eligible for OSAP, the student must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident; live or have lived in Ontario for 12 months immediately following the most recent full-time post-secondary studies; be enrolled or plan to enrol in an approved post-secondary institution or approved programme; take at least 60% of a full course load or 40% if there is a permanent disability; take a programme longer than 12 weeks; have all previous loans in good standing; maintain satisfactory academic progress, and have passed the credit check.

Once eligible, a student must cover disability-related educational expenses that are not funded elsewhere. The bursary may fund a specialised chair, hearing or vision aids, a tape recorder, a learning disabilities assessment, tutorial services, counselling, therapy, computers and software, and special needs computer accessories. It does not fund certain expenses for services and accommodations, including those that must be provided by the institution or that are already covered by OSAP loans – tuition, equipment costs and compulsory fees, or by another agency such as vocational rehabilitation services, workers compensation, or OHIP, or expenses not directly related to higher education attendance. The institutional special needs office calculates the needs covered by the bursary which, depending on the student's situation, may be CAD 7 000 (taxed but non-reimbursable) per study year.

Bursary support for deaf students studying out of country post-secondary institutions

Deaf or deafened and hard-of-hearing students who must attend an out-of-country post-secondary institution for disability-related reasons, may access this bursary which is linked with loan assistance provided by OSAP. The loan aims to help lower-income students cover part of the costs of studying at out of

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country post-secondary institutions. Parents of students with moderate or higher incomes are expected to contribute to the children's education, which will reduce available assistance. The loan may be up to CAD 9 350.

The bursary will be given regardless of family income to assist eligible students cover tuition, compulsory fees, books and living expenses. It will not exceed the maximum combined loan entitlement of CAD 275 per week of study.

Personal assistance

Personal assistance is covered by the bursary and defined by the special needs office of the university. It includes personal support (tutors, readers, note-takers), specialised transportation to and from the institution, technical aids and equipment, software or hardware, counselling and assessment services, life line services for students living in residence, etc.

Part-time deaf or hard-of-hearing students at post-secondary institutions may access educational support services delivered under the agreement with the Canadian Hearing Society. Print-disabled students may have access to transcription services for print, which covers the expenses of alternate printed materials.

According to a 1996 NEADS study, approximately 75% of responding SWD received financial aid in the form of benefits, pension, or grant. A study made on financial assistance available to post-secondary SWD shows that 44% of the responding students indicate that their income from all sources is insufficient to cover educational services and/or equipment costs. The learning opportunities task force (Stephenson, 2000) study indicates that many students face significant pressure that can jeopardise their abilities to remain enrolled. The university's strategy determines which OSAP-eligible students receive financial support.

Higher education institutes and disability

Organisational framework

The human rights code stipulates that each university or college must have a special needs office or centre specifically devoted to SWD, that is responsible for providing aid and counselling on financial matters, assessing individual needs, and assuring the quality of the accommodation. The centre generally has a wide range of tasks concerning SWD, teaching staff, or the community. In most institutions, such as the G. Brown City College or the University of

Toronto, the office helps students access the bursary, assesses students needing an assessment, offers course counselling, helps access adaptive technology, makes recommendations about accommodations, etc. Counselling may also involve teaching staff, especially staff with SWD in their courses. A counsellor may inform the faculty about the disability or the possible accommodations and may occasionally need to persuade faculty to admit the SWD into their course. At the University of Toronto, for example, an instructor must contact the co-ordinator about any difficulties with accommodation required by an SWD. In some institutions, the office works with student organisations to develop a peer tutoring service or creates a peer tutor centre, as is the case at G. Brown City College.

The special needs office is generally a specific service with full- and part-time staff. The G. Brown City College office has 15 staff who work as counsellors, consultants, note-takers, interpreters, or psychologists making the needs assessment. They are mostly qualified and, depending on their tasks, are academics or social workers, recognised psychologists or/and with a background in vocational rehabilitation and employment counselling. Interpreters and note-takers are usually qualified.

The accessibility service of the University of Toronto is required to deliver services and develop education initiatives. Services include casework, accommodations, consulting and diagnosis, providing adapted equipment and, more generally, eliminating obstacles. Education initiatives must be developed at faculty level, for staff, for current and potential students, student leaders, in and outside the university.

According to a 1996 NEADS survey (NEADS, 1996), more than half the institutions in Canada (usually the larger ones) had such an office or centre. In another one-quarter of Canadian institutions, SWD services were part of general student services. The remaining institutions either had no SWD services, or catered to a small number of SWD on their campus on a case-by-case basis. The model of service delivery for SWD was usually centralised or partially centralised. More than half of the respondents (usually larger institutions) received an operating budget from their institution. Another one-quarter funded the service with money from the provincial government. Most institutions, regardless of size and type, provided some externally funded services, typically a provincial or government programme. Employment assistance for PWD constituted an important source of funds.

Admissions procedures

SWD must meet general programme eligibility and applicant selection criteria and follow general admission procedures. An academic department has the right and is responsible for accepting a student into a programme. To be registered full-time at an Ontario post-secondary institution, an applicant must have completed the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD) or equivalent, including six Ontario Academic Courses. Prerequisite courses must be completed with minimum academic averages for most universities' programmes. Some colleges require academic skill tests for admission. Students enrolled in Ontario secondary schools are assisted by their guidance counsellor in completing the application.

Students can apply to up to three universities or programmes for a basic processing fee, and more for an additional fee. Applications are made through the Ontario University Application Centre (OUAC) or the Ontario College Application Services (OCAS). No information on the form refers to the disability. However, SWD may be invited to submit a letter describing their situation and its impact on their grades, along with complete academic documentation, a letter from a guidance officer or social worker and from a physician where medical grounds exist. In addition, students with a learning disability can submit a recent psycho-educational assessment. The University of Toronto requests recent documentation. The type of requirement depends on the size of the establishment: HEIs serving fewer than 100 estimated full-time SWD are less likely to require documentation (NEADS, 1996).

Students are responsible for choosing an establishment and a programme adapted to their needs and interests and which prepares them for the labour market, by considering institutional requirements and programmes, services, graduation rates, graduate employment rates and default rates. They are encouraged to look at the information provided by the institution, and to inform themselves about campus life, courses and objectives, student roles, which special needs services are provided, etc. Information about the special needs services includes the institutional statement on equal access at post-secondary level. Some institutions present the type of accommodation and services, the degree of physical accessibility, housing opportunities, as well as the technical and personal support provided, where others simply announce the existence of facilities and support and expect the student to gather the required information.

Additionally, some establishments, such as G. Brown City College, organise a pre-admission period for information gathering about course requirements, expectations of students, or to evaluate classrooms. Others, as the University of Toronto, propose a summer institute, preparing students with

learning disabilities to succeed in their studies. Orientation sessions are organised to inform SWD about the services and access conditions.

SWD still face admissions barriers, including their choices. Given that accommodations are proposed to students admitted to a university, SWD may learn about the disability services offered at the institution only in the admission package, after having decided to attend. One study showed that only 59% of the institutions surveyed in 1996 in Canada provided written material to SWD concerning available services (NEADS, 1996). Moreover, lack of secondary level assessment means that students who may be unaware of their learning disability or have only a very limited knowledge and understanding of it or its impact on their lives, cannot choose programmes adapted to their skills.

Another obstacle is that students cannot advocate for themselves. Students with learning disabilities are legally required to be reassessed every five years but reality does not always follow the law. A significant number of students arrive at college or university with limited, outdated or no documentation, or without diagnosis assessment data describing the accommodations that were tried and evaluated in secondary school. These students are unaware of their needs and may, therefore, have difficulties advocating for themselves and providing the documentation generally required for passing an academic skill test required by some programmes and courses. These students cannot discuss accommodations with the special needs service.

Lack of linkage between the secondary and the post-secondary sector constitutes a third obstacle. Students are not always well informed about the gap between the two levels and may choose ill-adapted programmes. They may also be poorly informed about accommodation opportunities at universities and therefore prefer college programmes and courses (Stephenson, 2000).

Supports

Ontario's HEIs are responsible for accommodating student needs. This includes providing access to extra time for time-related tasks, to assistance devices, alternative formats for assignments and examinations, supports systems (a scribe, reader, or note-taker) or to remedial programming and special courses, advocacy support, and a reduced course load, if needed.

Type of accommodations

Most institutions have a policy statement on commitment to SWD and have adapted their requirements in order to favour better access to post-secondary education. They have adopted modified programming strategies,

reduced the workload, and modified admission policies or procedures. Most have made accommodation available and have given SWD the opportunity to meet basic requirements by doing things differently.

G. Brown City College proposes a wide range of services and accommodations. These include access to an assistant: note-taker, reader, scribe, typist, interpreter, assistant, personal attendant to assist in dressing or eating, an educational attendant for communication aids, testing aide for interpreting test questions and instructions as directed by the teacher, a proctor, or a tutor. The student may have access to a specific orientation needs evaluation, a diagnostic assessment or counselling support. Academic accommodations may include an adapted schedule or supplementary remediation, special courses, or tape-recorded lectures. The college provides technical support (computer, software/hardware, material on tape or disk, FM auditory system, print enlargement system). The student may also be able to use adapted technology funded by the bursary.

The disability service unit of G. Brown City College made 1 052 accommodations to SWD during school year 2000/2001, including a proctor (33.8%), counselling support (16.5%), a note-taker (9.8%), an adapted schedule (7.6%), a diagnostic assessment (5.6%), and computer software (3.2%). Educational attendants (0.1%), orientation sessions (0.1%), dicta-typists (0.2%) were the rarest services delivered by the SWD centre. The type of services required depends naturally on the impairment. G. Brown City College data showed that note-takers are mostly provided to students with learning difficulties (53.9%), who have disabling organic conditions or agility impairments (17.6%) or with multiple impairments (13.7%). The proctor is used by 352 students, the majority of whom have either confirmed learning disabilities, other learning disabilities or multiple impairments. Counselling support is available for students with emotional disabilities or speech impairments and for those students with a disability listed under relevant human rights legislation. In addition, the service is also used by students with multiple impairments.

The University of Toronto also proposes a large range of services. SWD may access student housing and residence life. There are five accessible townhouses with two bedrooms on the main level. The houses are self-contained, and the main floor has accessible features. SWD may receive academic adjustments including extended time for course work after discussion with the instructor, alternate course projects, and field trip waiver. The university provides alternate communication possibilities (sign/oral interpreters and assistants) and formats (enlarged readings, exams, talking books, Braille materials), personal assistance and aids (note-taking reader, personal attendant),

taped lectures, alternative tests (extended time, breaks, reader, modified response format, alternate schedule, scribes) and adapted equipment and devices to assist the student.

Additionally, accommodations may be provided for specific disabilities or conditions. For example, alternate testing for students with an acquired brain injury may include a distraction-free environment, extended testing time, the use of a computer with spell and grammar checks, a scribe or alternate test schedule. Alternate testing for chronic medical disabled may include extended time and/or rest breaks, adapted testing methods, use of a computer, washroom breaks, consumption of food and beverages during exams, testing in hospital if necessary. To facilitate accessibility, mobility-impaired students may receive an elevator key, access to a scooter room,[4] accessible classroom or test site. No data exists currently to describe the special needs service of the University of Toronto, however the gathered information at the office reveals that between June 2000 and May 2001, 2 977 test and exam facilities were given to SWD.

Interviewees agreed broadly that the situation of SWD regarding higher education access had improved. More SWD enrol in higher education, the range of services are quite wide and take most issues of accessibility into account. The situation varies by institution depending on size and type and the existence of a separate unit. Institutions serving more than 100 SWD or with a full-time enrolment fee in excess of CAD 10 000 were more likely than others to give written material to applicants. Those with a separate unit for SWD are more likely to plan modifications of their programmes or policies and physical accessibility whereas others prefer to modify physical accessibility rather than to modify programmes or policies. Universities are more likely to modify programmes and policies than are colleges.

Students and staff members find the technical (special equipment, computer accessibility, Internet access, etc.) and administrative support satisfying whereas physical accessibility remains a concern. The variations in buildings on and across campuses, depending on their type and age, vary tremendously. Furthermore, acoustically treated rooms and specialised technology in the physical sciences are not always available or appropriate to student needs.

Finally, the attitudes of certain teachers towards the "invisible disability" is troublesome, when they do not accept a learning or other disability that may be

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4.   These are vehicles that disabled students may use in the university.

related to the human rights codes as a disability and may be indifferent to accommodating special needs.

Registration and assessment procedures

The accommodation process depends on a registration and needs assessment procedure, which is important for the disclosure and self-advocacy abilities of students. Students are responsible for identifying their disability to the SWD office and for requesting reasonable accommodations in a timely manner. It is also their responsibility to develop self-advocacy skills before entering the post-secondary system, to investigate accessible housing on or off campus before the beginning of courses and to collect whatever information is pertinent for their success. Admissions documents encourage SWD to contact the institutional co-ordinator to discuss accommodations and educational support services. They are invited to write directly to the office responsible for SWD or to write to the appropriate residence administrator if they seek an appropriate residence. SWD are urged to discuss accommodations and disability with teaching staff. The University of Toronto, for example, specifies clearly that it is the students' responsibility to take the initiative, to make the request in a timely manner so that their university experience may be as positive as possible. They are expected to inform the service about the accommodations they need and to keep in touch throughout the semester, so that the necessary arrangements can be made (for example, test/exams). They are also expected to keep the office informed of any changes in their personal information. G. Brown City College invites SWD to contact the disability/deaf and hard-of-hearing services as soon as possible, and invites students who suspect that they may have a disability to meet the service for the necessary assessments.

To receive an accommodation, students first complete a form and document the disability but the procedure to access the special needs service may differ from one establishment to another. The G. Brown City College requests a medical, psychologist's or audiologist's report clearly specifying the nature of the disability and the accommodation required or the Identification, Placement and Review Committee Report (IPRCR) forms. Students must also complete forms for general information, financial matters (OSAP appliance, eligibility, sponsors, disability support programme, etc.), services used previously at the college (counselling, disability services, peer tutoring, life works, academic advisor, etc.) and outside (doctor, psychiatrist, social worker, psychologist, etc.), prior education, disability (type, assessment date, medication, side effects, hospital, impact on learning, services requested), and the programme for which s/he is registered and attach a copy of their registration form. Eligible students are notified about the consultant they must contact five days after receiving the form and are invited to participate in

orientation sessions on the service and available services, equipment and technology, support groups. Their meeting with the consultant provides the opportunity to assess their needs and to define the necessary accommodations.

The procedure differs somewhat at the University of Toronto. Before entering, students are required to inform themselves about the university, its services and equipment. They are asked to understand their responsibility, identify their disability to the office, and request reasonable accommodation, and to develop self-advocacy skills. They are invited to develop academic skills before entering the university, especially if the disability affects learning (acquired brain injury, learning disability, etc.) and to set appropriate and attainable educational plans. To facilitate the accommodation process, students are encouraged to prepare a personal transition portfolio with updated documentation about the disability (how it affects education, and recommended accommodations), their situation at secondary level (IEP, IPRCR, and the assistance that was offered), available financial support and their educational and career goals. Students must then book an accommodation with the co-ordinator (they bring their personal transition portfolio, and must be aware of their financial conditions) to evaluate available accommodations services and resources.

Once the accommodation has been defined, some establishments, such as the G. Brown City College, write up a document signed by the student, teacher, and the service, clarifying the accommodation and the responsibilities of each party. At the University of Toronto, by contrast, the accessibility service finds a note-taker, if necessary, and writes a "letter of introduction" describing the required accommodation to instructors, etc. In this case, students must deliver the letter, discuss accommodations, and develop a plan such as writing with extra time, receiving permission to tape-record lectures, obtain a reading list, etc. In all institutions, students are invited to contact the special needs service for problems with instructors, or with the note-takers and generally for accessibility.

The implementation and quality of the registration and needs assessment procedure depend largely on the students' ability to disclose ability. If they have a "visible" or severe impairment (wheelchair user, sensorial impaired, confirmed learning disability) the procedure is quite simple. The student is usually aware of the needs, earlier accommodations are documented, and partnerships with high schools are possible. In some cases, pre-admission periods can be defined to inform the student, facilitate choices and discuss accommodations and educational support services. But it is not uncommon for instructors to observe a student's disability, especially a learning disability that appears while taking a course and managing a workload. In this case, the

services must assess the student, indicate the disability, define the required learning strategies, and inform teachers once courses and programmes have begun. This type of situation puts the students at a significant disadvantage by delaying them in their study. They must cope with a new identity since they have been unaware of their needs, and unable to disclose or to advocate for themselves. They may become, therefore, very dependent on the service.

Depending on the links between secondary school and higher education, the quality of the registration and needs-assessment procedure depends also on the recognition opportunities given to the special needs services staff. The co-ordinators who were interviewed indicated that staff qualifications (the fact that they are academics or recognised by professional organisations) play an important role in their ability to negotiate accommodations with teaching staff. They consider that after training, working with other institutions greatly increases their credibility and empowers them to implement their tasks by attesting professionalism.

An institutional equal opportunity statement also affects the quality of the registration and needs-assessment procedure. This statement helps the special needs service to be recognised as a partner by the departments, faculties, and teaching staff. It is therefore used to negotiate, if necessary, the accommodations with teaching staff, and eventually to convince faculty to adapt their pedagogical practices or to participate in training.

The quality of the registration and needs-assessment procedure has clearly improved. However the learning opportunities task force survey revealed that many institutions consider granting extra time to be an automatic, imprecise reaction that does not respond to an assessment of individual needs. The authors claim that this perspective ignores too much the use of other supports like assistance technology or alternate formats that could reduce reliance on extra time.

Awareness strategies

To implement their equal opportunity policy and service quality, most institutions develop an awareness strategy for SWD. This may be written documentation to make them aware of their responsibilities, transition and admission issues, and about the criteria used to assess time needs, procedures for getting adapted technology, extra time, or access a note-taker, etc.

Most universities and colleges consider this policy to be a collective task and may therefore create an advisory committee on accessibility for SWD. At the University of Toronto, this committee includes clients of the accessibility

service and its co-ordinator, and representatives of the different university divisions (buildings, parking, utilities, etc.) concerned by accessibility. This committee must make periodic accessibility audits, recommendations for working with SWD, a barrier-free design of campus, advise and associate management and, more generally, act as an advocacy group on campus for SWD. G. Brown City College has a human rights adviser to work with everyone concerned by SWD to give them better accessibility.

Most institutions try to involve teaching staff in their equal opportunity policy. They publish a special needs policy document that usually specifies the policy, guidelines, policy implementation, referral and appeals processes. They organise annual information sessions, develop staff training, and try to involve teachers as early as possible in defining learning strategies, and publish a guide. The University of Toronto published an instructor's handbook to assist in implementing the equal opportunity policy. It gives a short introduction to each disability, and offers detailed advice on available communication, instruction and assessment strategies. It also produced a booklet with interviews with SWD about their life at university that it sent to all academic heads. The G. Brown City College guide informs instructors about the specificity of each type of disability and its main requirement.

Most awareness strategies aim to facilitate student integration into the university community. Some try to make events accessible to all students. At G. Brown City College, all students are involved in the peer tutoring programmes. Most events related to SWD take place in open area to allow valid students to participate. SWD are also encouraged to participate in all mainstream activities. If student unions arrange an event, SWD may have interpreters and necessary accommodations; some institutions have a SWD union.

Distance learning

Most universities and colleges have distance-learning opportunities for all students, although it is difficult to obtain information on participants. However, the adapted technology resource centre of the University of Toronto tries to make distance learning as accessible as possible on Web sites. They have installed the Special Needs Opportunity Windows (SNOW) project, an online resource provider and professional development opportunities for educators and parents of SWD. SNOW provides tools, information, online workshops, curriculum materials, discussion fora and other resources to assist in using new technologies. Students may also access an alternate format online catalogue provided by an NGO for blind and dyslexic persons (Recording for the Blind and the Dyslexics, FB&D). G. Brown City College has a committee working on online courses.

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CHAPTER 4. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN FRANCE

Students with disabilities attending secondary school

In France, 12 236 000 students were enrolled in primary and secondary education in academic year 2000/2001. Of these, 6 572 000, or 53%, were in primary school and 5 664 000 in secondary. According to the Ministry for Education, 18 812 secondary students, the vast majority of whom (91.1%) are enrolled on a full-time basis, have some form of disability (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1.   **SWD attending mainstream schools**

	Full time	%	Part time	%	Total	%
Lower secondary (*collèges*)	11 526	67.2	1 352	81.2	12 878	68.5
Upper secondary (*lycées*): vocational	2 014	11.7	187	10.9	2 201	11.7
Upper secondary (*lycées*): academic and technological	3 510	20.5	111	6.7	3 621	19.2
Regional Remedial Education Establishments (EREAs)	93	0.5	19	1.1	112	0.6
Total	17 143	100.0	1 669	100.0	18 812	100.0

Source: Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche.

Of disabled secondary school students, in decreasing order, 26.8% had intellectual or mental disabilities, 19.4% had motor disabilities, 19.3% had hearing disabilities and 15.2% had metabolic organic disabilities. Only 8.1% of disabled secondary school students had impaired vision, and 3.9% had language or speech impairments (Table 4.2).

Of this total, 68.5% were attending lower secondary schools (*collèges*), 19.2% were in academic or technological upper secondary schools (*lycées*) and 11.7% were attending vocational *lycées*.

Table 4.2.   **Disabled secondary school students enrolments by disability**

Disability	Enrolments	%
Intellectual or mental disability	5 048	26.8
Language or speech impairment	747	3.9
Motor disability	3 656	19.4
Metabolic organic disability	2 856	15.2
Hearing impairment	3 642	19.3
Visual impairment	1 518	8.1
Other disability	1 345	7.1
Total	18 812	100.0

Source: Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche.

Youth with intellectual disabilities (88.1%) were proportionally the largest group attending lower secondary school. In contrast, among children attending upper secondary school there was an above-average incidence of metabolic organic disabilities (45.4%), impaired vision (40.5%), motor disabilities (37.9%) and impaired hearing (37.3%).

Of the 5 822 young people attending upper secondary schools, 1 266 (21.7%) were in their final year. Of the seniors, 24.5% had motor disabilities, 23.3% had metabolic organic disabilities, 20.6% had impaired hearing, 12.5% had intellectual disabilities, 10.8% had impaired vision and 4.1% had language or speech impairments.

The higher education system

Organisation and funding

Public higher education encompasses all of the post-secondary learning tracks administered by French Government agencies. Their missions include initial education and continuing training, scientific and technological research and the application of research findings, dissemination of culture and scientific and technical information, and international co-operation.

Higher education institutions are very diverse, and their organisation and admission requirements depend on the nature and mission of the institution. The system comprises public and private colleges and universities overseen by a variety of different ministries. Universities are public establishments which enjoy administrative, financial, educational and scientific autonomy. They admit all applicants holding a *baccalauréat* (secondary school diploma, or "*bac*") or the equivalent and wishing to enrol for a "short" (two years) or "long"

(three or more years) course of study, except in medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy, and at University Institutes of Technology (*Instituts Universitaires de Technologie*, IUTs), where admission is selective. At the present time, the higher education system comprises 83 universities, three national polytechnic institutes (Grenoble, Nancy and Toulouse) and three technological universities – Belfort-Montbéliard, Compiègne and Troyes.

Long university studies may be lengthy consist of three successive "cycles". The first is a two-year cycle of general education and orientation leading to a Diploma of General University Studies (*Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires Générales*, DEUG) that prepares students for the second cycle. During the 2000/01 academic year, 600 000 students were enrolled in this first cycle.

The second cycle lasts one or two years, and prepares students for professional life. At the conclusion of the cycle, graduates obtain a bachelor's (*licence*) or a master's (*maîtrise*) degree. Apart from the national diplomas accredited by the Ministry for Higher Education, universities may introduce their own diplomas (university or institutional diplomas).

During the second cycle, students can take general, vocational and/or specialised courses of study leading to a bachelor's degree (DEUG + one year) and a master's (bachelor's degree + one year). They can also take two-year vocational courses leading to master's degrees in science and technology, management sciences, or computer methods applied to management. After one year of higher education, students may opt for the academic or vocational programmes offered by vocationally-oriented University Institutes (*Instituts Universitaires Professionnalisés*, IUPs). These three-year programmes lead to a master's degree ("*bac*" + 4 years) and the title "master engineer" (*ingénieur-maître*). Lastly, students who have completed three years of post-*bac* university studies may enrol in the teacher training courses offered by the University Teacher Training Institutes (*Instituts Universitaires de Formation de Maîtres*, IUFMs). During the 2000/01 academic year, 488 000 students were enrolled in university second cycles, and 80 000 students were attending IUFMs.

The third cycle leads either to research (doctorate or Diploma of Advanced Studies, *Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies*, DEA) or to greater specialisation (Diploma of Specialised Higher Studies, *Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures Spécialisées*, DESS). A Diploma of Technological Research (*Diplôme de Recherche Technologique*, DRT) has been created to train engineers and master engineers in technological innovation through research. After earning a doctorate, a person may obtain a diploma certifying that s/he can carry on original, high-level scientific research and supervise young researchers. The

essential purpose of this diploma is to open the doors to a university teaching job. During the 2000/01 academic year, 220 000 students were enrolled in the third cycle.

Short-term tracks are two-year technological training courses that prepare for working life. They may culminate in a University Diploma of Technology (*Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie*, DUT), in preparation for careers in the secondary and tertiary sectors and earned, upon acceptance, in a University Institute of Technology. They may also lead to a Diploma of Scientific and Technical University Studies (*Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires en Sciences et Techniques*, DEUST) obtained from a university, or to an Advanced Technician's Diploma (*Brevet de Technicien Supérieur*, BTS), after study in an Advanced Technical Section (*Section de Techniciens Supérieurs*, STS), which is generally located within a *lycée*. Advanced Technical Sections offer more sharply focused specialisations than IUTs that are generally tailored to specific functions.

Career-oriented higher education is dispensed by schools offering two-year courses to prepare students for the entrance examinations of a variety of specialised higher education institutions, including Higher Teacher Training Colleges (*Écoles Normales Supérieures,* ENS) and engineering schools. These preparatory classes (*Classes Préparatoires aux Grandes Écoles*, CPGE)[1] train engineers in the manner of public engineering schools,[2] nurses, paediatric nurses and social workers, as do paramedical schools and schools of social work.[3] Higher Teacher Training Colleges have a highly selective entrance examination requiring two years of post-"bac" preparation in scientific (and particularly higher mathematics and then "special mathematics") or literary courses ("higher letters" and then "upper first"). These classes prepare students

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1. There are three broad categories of CPGE: literary, economic and business, and scientific. Except for pre-veterinary studies, these courses of study take two years.

2. Public engineering schools (*Écoles d'ingénieurs publiques*) admit students on the basis of an entrance examination or prior diploma, either after the "bac" or after two years of higher studies (CGPE, first cycle university studies, IUT, STS). The course of study varies in length from two to five years, depending on the school. At the end of the course, students are presented with an engineering diploma.

3. Students are admitted to these schools either directly after the "bac" or on the basis of a competition, examination, test or interview. Courses of study can take up to four years.

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for national university diplomas and teacher recruitment examinations, primarily for the *agrégation*, the most advanced such examination.

In addition to schools overseen by the Ministry for Education, other HEIs include the *École Nationale d'Administration* (ENA), which is placed under the responsibility of the Prime Minister and trains students destined for the senior civil service. In addition, specialised HEIs exist in agriculture and veterinary medicine (both under the Ministry of Agriculture) and fine arts and architecture (Ministry of Culture).

During the 2000/01 academic year, 76 000 students were enrolled in preparatory classes, 59 000 in engineering schools, and 258 000 in other preparatory institutions.

Resources and authorisations are issued in connection with four-year contracts between the state and educational establishments. Each school formulates its own development plan on the basis of both national objectives and local educational needs. The plans encompass all school activities, and are sent to the relevant ministerial departments and then negotiated: the discussion leads to signature of a contract committing the state to provide specific resources (teaching positions, operating appropriations, etc.) over a period of four years.

Students with disabilities enrolled in higher education

In 2000/01, 2 143 000 students were enrolled in higher education, of which approximately 1 308 000 were enrolled at universities, 119 000 at University Institutes of Technology (IUTs) and 80 000 at University Teacher Training Institutes (IUFMs). In addition, 243 000 students were enrolled in Advanced Technical Sections (STSs), 76 000 in Preparatory Classes for *Grandes Écoles* (CPGEs) and 59 000 in engineering schools. Enrolments at schools of social services, nursing schools and so on totalled 258 000 students.

The proportion of SWD enrolled in higher education has virtually doubled in just ten years. According to the Ministry for Education and Research, 7 029 SWD (0.32%) were enrolled at an establishment of higher education during the 2000/01 academic year compared to only 3 601 of them in 1993/94.

SWD were enrolled at universities (72.3%), Preparatory Classes for *Grandes Écoles* (CPGEs) (21.7%) and other specialised preparatory schools (5%). Only 0.9% of them were studying at University Teacher Training Institutes (IUFMs) (Table 4.3).

Their profiles differed significantly from those of disabled secondary school students. 23.4% of them had health problems, 22.6% had motor disabilities and 17.3% had impaired vision. Students with mainly psychological disabilities accounted for 11.4% of the SWD enrolled in 2000/01, while those with impaired hearing accounted for 10.9%.

Table 4.3. **Disabled higher education students enrolments by disability and type of establishment**

Disability	CPGE		University		Public engineering schools and other HE establishments		IUFM		Total	
		%		%		%		%		%
Impaired vision	245	20.2	901	74.4	43	3.5	22	1.8	1 211	100.0
Impaired hearing	144	18.8	570	74.5	49	6.4	2	0.3	765	100.0
Motor disability	155	9.7	1 390	97.3	27	1.7	20	1.2	1 592	100.0
Largely psychological disability	121	15.0	639	79.6	37	4.6	6	0.7	803	100.0
Health problems	702	42.7	752	45.8	180	10.9	8	0.5	1 642	100.0
Temporary disability	27	11.2	212	88.3	1	0.4	--	--	240	100.0
Other	138	17.8	619	79.6	14	1.8	5	0.6	776	100.0
Total	1 532	21.8	5 083	72.3	351	5.0	63	0.9	7 029	100.0

Source: Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche.

The largest group of SWD at CGPEs was those with health problems, who accounted for nearly half (45.8%) of all SWD enrolled in such establishments. In this, the Preparatory Classes differed from the universities, which had comparatively above-average enrolments of people with motor disabilities (27.3%) and temporary disabilities (12.2%). Enrolments of students with health problems were proportionally greater in engineering schools (attended by 10.9% of such students). Enrolments of visually-impaired students were greatest at universities (attended by 74.4% of such students) and smallest at IUFMs (1.8% of them). In this, they differed from hearing-impaired students, who, in addition to having easier-than-average access to universities, also had the highest enrolments in engineering schools and other HEIs.

On the whole, and excepting certain courses of study that impose health requirements, SWD can access the same types of studies as non-disabled students. 39.2% of them were studying literature or the humanities, while 25.8%

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were studying law, economics or business administration. 17.3% were studying physical sciences and 5.6% health sciences. 10.3% were enrolled at IUTs or in engineering courses and 1% were studying the science and technology of sport. 62% of the students enrolled in Advanced Technical Sections were preparing for service-related occupations. In the Preparatory Classes, a majority (51.4%) were heading for scientific courses of study and 28.2% for literary studies, while business and economics was the chosen field of 20.4% of the SWD in attendance.

In the universities, 59.7% of SWD were enrolled in the first cycle, 31.9% in the second cycle and 8.4% in the third. In the engineering schools and other HEIs, 51% of SWD were enrolled in the second cycle, 29.3% in the first cycle and 19.6% in the third. Of those enrolled at IUFMs, 57% were in their first year.

We found no statistical data concerning diplomas. According to a survey on the labour market entry of disabled former students conducted by the Higher Education Directorate of the Ministry for Education (Palauqui and Lebas, 2000), 82.1% of the sample population had a first-cycle diploma, 46.5% a *licence*, and 37.7% a *maîtrise*. Even if there is generally a sharp decline between the first and third cycles, the survey shows that 23.6% of the sample population had a third-cycle diploma, and that 3.7% held a doctorate.

Access to employment for SWD does not always figure among the strategies developed by HEIs. In many cases, schools work closely with associations of disabled persons or parents of disabled children. The universities in Grenoble, for example, do so through a special unit of their disabled persons' co-ordination service – *Service d'Accueil Universitaire des Personnes Handicapées* (SAUH) – known as SCAPH 38. SCAPH 38 serves persons with physical or sensory disabilities in the Isère, promoting ways to keep them from having to be institutionalised, and reducing the obstacles to their social and occupational integration. The unit assists disabled people by arranging for specialists (human factors engineers, occupational therapists, social workers, and so forth) to assist them in making plans for, and living, lives best suited to their wishes and their potential. It also provides information and advice, performs workplace analysis and alterations, and furnishes interpretation between French and French sign language (for persons with sensory disabilities). A multidisciplinary team arranges for these services at the request of the people concerned. SCAPH 38 is also a resource centre for professionals involved with disabilities.

The Ministry's survey shows that two-thirds (66%) of the disabled former students were working and that 30.4% were looking for jobs. 3.6% were doing internships or pursuing their studies. A large majority of respondents had made

preparations for their entry into the workforce: nearly four-fifths (79.8%) had had some contact with the world of work during their studies, either through internships or by working during their school holidays.

Legislative framework

General guidelines

Broadly speaking, access to higher education is governed by the Act of 30 June 1975, which made education and training of the disabled a national obligation. The act therefore invites all persons and institutions concerned to help fulfil that obligation, and to open doors as widely as possible, so that disabled persons can be as independent as other citizens. The law stipulates how SWD should be examined, and the support and resources to which they are entitled, both financially and in terms of transport.

The Act of 13 July 1991 promotes the accessibility of persons with reduced mobility, calling for the accessibility of university campuses and training facilities for SWD. It requests the Ministry for Higher Education to implement a policy of accessibility for buildings open to the public, and to ensure that HEIs are accessible. Since this requirement must now be incorporated into all architectural plans, most of the more recent buildings are now accessible and the others are gradually being made accessible, especially in conjunction with maintenance work.

This relatively restrictive view of accessibility is limited to physical accessibility alone, whereas the act stipulates: "An establishment or facility shall be deemed accessible to disabled persons if it enables such persons, and in particular those confined to wheelchairs, under normal operating conditions, to enter the establishment or facility, to move about freely therein, to exit it and to avail themselves of all of the public services for which that establishment or facility was designed."

The Act of 12 July 1990 bans all forms of discrimination against persons on the basis of illness or disability, considering that such persons should have the same opportunities as non-disabled persons.

While these provisions aim to facilitate access to higher education for SWD, they do not require direct commitments on the part of the establishments concerned. Currently, the law neither confers special status on SWD nor makes any stipulation to define their needs for assistance or support during their studies, nor, more generally, does it make any provision specifically imposing

any responsibility on an establishment. It is the ministry's responsibility to formulate and implement policy nation-wide.

Assistance and support

Implementing a policy to integrate disabled persons is predicated on grants of assistance to establishments and to students alike.

Assistance to HEIs

The funding needed to admit and integrate SWD is allotted to establishments as part of their four-year contracts with the state.

In addition, an Inter-ministerial Accessibility Fund (FIA) has been established to co-finance the accessibility work that the ministry decides to undertake. The FIA helps establishments with accessibility work costing in excess of EUR 15 245. Such work involves essentially (but not exclusively) alterations to parking spaces, outdoor and indoor passageways, removing obstacles, laying non-stick flooring, widening doors and corridors, reserving offices for personalised reception of the public, installing lifts or elevators, and sound amplification systems, adapting signs and telephone facilities open to the public.

Projects are formulated by HEIs and submitted to departmental prefects. Regional prefects then rank them by order of priority.

Assistance to individuals

Financial assistance

SWD have many sources of financial assistance available to them that are the same as those available to any disabled adult. SWD are eligible for the Disabled Adult Allowance (*Allocation Adulte Handicapé*, AAH). Introduced by the Planning Act of 30 June 1975, the allowance is granted to disabled persons aged 20 or older whose degree of incapacity is between 50 and 80% and are unable to find work. This is classified as a family benefit and paid monthly by the General Child Benefit Fund to persons ineligible for any other compensation through disability or work-related accidents legislation, and whose resources do not exceed a specific ceiling that varies by marital status and number of children.

In addition, if students require another person's assistance for most of the essential acts of daily life, and if they live at home, they may claim the

compensation allowance for third-party assistance. This assistance may be supplied by one or more persons on a paid basis, by one or more of the disabled person's family or friends who volunteer their time and thus forego an opportunity to earn income, or by a licensed care facility. Granted upon approval by COTOREP, the amount of the allowance depends on the nature and degree of a person's disability, paid by departmental welfare authorities.

Other sources are directly linked to being a student. Like any other student, a SWD may apply for a scholarship on the basis of need. Regional education authorities attribute scholarships on the basis of social criteria – primarily the income and financial obligations of the students and their families, as measured against a nation-wide scale which is adjusted annually. They do, however, qualify for special provisions that singularly enhance their chances of obtaining such scholarships: when they have a rate of permanent disability and do not live on campus, they are granted two extra points for the assessment of their financial obligations. The same applies if they require another person's constant assistance. Lastly, no age limit applies to them, as it does in the case of non-disabled applicants for scholarships.

Students whose disabilities have been officially certified by COTOREP may also apply for a "cycle grant" that can double the length of time of a needs-based scholarship. For example, a first-cycle student may obtain a scholarship for up to four years to earn a DEUG or any other first-cycle diploma. For the second cycle, scholarships may be granted for two years longer than the cycle if the competent educational authorities show good cause. In the event that studies must be repeated or re-oriented for reasons related to a student's disability or health problems, the scholarship may be extended if the competent authorities show good cause. Lastly, students whose incapacity rates exceed 80% are exempt from enrolment fees.

Students may also qualify for transport assistance. The transport costs of students unable to use public transport because of the medically-established severity of their disabilities are met by the regional educational authority if they live in the Île-de-France region (Greater Paris), and by their respective departments if they live elsewhere in France.

Lastly, under certain conditions, the National Association for the Management of the Occupational Integration Fund for the Disabled (*Association nationale de Gestion du Fonds pour l'Insertion Professionnelle des Handicapés*, AGEFIPH) may award individual grants, including technical assistance, housing grants and supplemental tuition grants. For example, the Association may finance certain materials that can ease the burden of a person's disability.

Personalised assistance

As a rule, there are no provisions to arrange for other people to accompany students throughout their studies. Nevertheless, students whose degree of incapacity makes this necessary are eligible for a compensatory allowance. Such grants, which are awarded at COTOREP's discretion, are intended to enable the student to call upon a helper for most of the essential acts of everyday life.

Even so, some universities have decided to provide escorts and auxiliaries to students who require them. In most – but not all – cases, these escorts are specially trained university workers whose functions are to guide and assist SWD.

Special arrangements for examinations

To preserve SWD's chances of success, the authorities make special arrangements for examinations and public competitions. It is the establishment's responsibility to ensure that an examination room is accessible, and, to the fullest extent possible, that suitable toilets are provided close by. In addition, disabled candidates must be grouped together in a special room whenever it is not possible for them to be with others; they must have access to the equipment they ordinarily use (Braille typewriter, micro-computer); and, if necessary, they must be given extra time or supplied with a secretary who should be an instructor in the field being tested or someone at the same level as the student, if s/he is in a different field, or at the level immediately below the student if they are both in the same field.

In addition, during the jury's deliberations, the instructor assigned to assist the student during the examination must be present in an advisory capacity. No student may be failed without a special deliberation subsequent to review of the candidate's test papers.

These provisions fall far short of eliminating all of the barriers that could impede SWD's access to higher education, however. The lack of special status for such students is no doubt one of them. Indeed, a great many disabled persons consider that a "disabled worker" status is inappropriate to their circumstances and needs, and they refuse to register with COTOREP. In so doing, they forego all their legally provided options for support and special arrangements and face insurmountable difficulties as a result. Moreover, without special status, financial support is means-tested and thus excludes everyone whose family incomes exceed the stipulated income ceiling.

Furthermore, while regulations exist regarding examinations, and while it is legally possible to extend the length of studies, scheduling adjustments are left to the discretion of each establishment and thus vary. They are non-existent or limited to certain programmes of study, or, as in Grenoble, require a certificate from the staff physician.

HEIs and disabilities

Organisational framework

Each HEI typically has an official responsible for co-ordinating institutional dealings with SWD. Appointed by the university president, he or she co-ordinates actions on their behalf and acts as a special go-between to smooth out any difficulties. But the position varies from one university to another. In most cases, co-ordinators are researchers who take on the responsibility of supervising SWD in addition to their teaching and research. The quality of supervision quite frequently depends on the energy and determination that co-ordinators can harness to juggle activities that are not always easy to reconcile. In a smaller number of other universities, co-ordinators are members of the orientation and information group or the preventive medicine and health promotion department. In such cases, dealing with the disabled is part and parcel of the department's missions. In other universities, a network comprising a wide spectrum of professionals deals with SWD: at the University of Burgundy, the network includes the Vice-Chair of CEVU (in charge of orientation), the central curriculum director, the head of the Information and Guidance Service, the physician heading the university preventive medicine department, a CROUS[4] social worker, and the SWD's association. An even smaller number of universities, like Grenoble, provide a special location for dealing with SWD. In these cases, the co-ordinator is head of a University Orientation Service for Disabled Students (*Service d'Accueil Universitaire des étudiants Handicapés*, SAUH[5]), in most cases in association with a resource centre which consolidates a range of services for SWD, but also with all concerned parties.

The roles and missions of these co-ordinators are many and varied. Far from dealing exclusively with SWD, they bring together all involved parties. The co-ordinator implements the policy formulated on an establishment-wide basis, and, to this end, to make the university community as a whole aware of

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4.   *Centre Régional des Œuvres Universitaires et Scolaires*.

5.   The SAUH team currently comprises three persons working full-time, contract workers, youth employment scheme workers and secretaries.

the special needs of SWD.[6] Co-ordinators must also work together with the students. This work involves more than just responding to difficulties or harnessing the resources needed to make students comfortable and see that their studies go smoothly. In many cases it also involves making students accountable and fully-fledged partners in the process. He or she must also address the concerns expressed by members of the faculty. This involves answering their questions and finding concrete solutions for examination arrangements.

The missions of the Grenoble SAUH illustrate this diversity well. The unit's tasks are to inform, guide and heighten the awareness of the various parties concerned by the presence of SWD: in this, it works closely with certain teachers and designs certain awareness-building documents. Another aim is to provide material aid to the students by organising note-taking options, offering document reproduction facilities or secretarial services, and obtaining documentary assistance. Moreover, the unit not infrequently identifies funding possibilities so that students can pursue their studies. This also involves a mediation role, since when necessary it intervenes to try to adjust schedules or modify workstations and enforces compliance with regulations governing examinations. Lastly, and more generally, it seeks to promote all actions to enhance the accessibility of facilities where people live and study. To this end, it is endeavouring to set up a rapid information network facilitating the networking of means of communication and, along with them, opportunities for students to communicate.

This diversity reveals the complexity of the co-ordinator's tasks and the multiplicity of skills needing to be harnessed. Co-ordinators have to be managers, educators, counsellors and innovators who push people in new directions and resolve daily difficulties with the institution, the teachers or the students. And yet only rarely have co-ordinators received any special training in these areas. Most of them have had to build up their functions themselves. Moreover, it is to remedy this state of affairs that plans are being made to engage a process to pool existing resources and skills to break the isolation in which certain co-ordinators find themselves, to identify training needs, to share tools and resources, and to generally create the conditions for making the co-ordinator's function more professional.

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6.   To this end, the Ministry is planning to make a film specially produced for non-disabled students, teachers, administrators and, more generally, the university community.

This diversity in the approach to SWD co-ordinators in fact reveals substantial disparities in the strategic choices made by establishments, and, as a result, in how they situate SWD within the university community. The lack of an overall strategy probably characterises establishments that have conferred these responsibilities on a single individual, even if that individual is a teacher-researcher: co-ordination is then an individual matter before being an institutional one. In many senses, the establishment's entire strategy rests on the shoulders of the co-ordinator, his/her inventiveness, vitality, and the time that can be devoted to students to inform, help and support them. When an individual bears all the responsibility, the dynamics are eminently fragile: any prolonged absence jeopardises the continuity of the initiatives and actions taken, and the forms of support developed for students, and thus threatens to put students in difficulty. The situation is substantially different when co-ordination is vested in a department, since the established dynamics are part of a departmental or team mission: the manager's absence can be compensated by another member of the department, and initiatives can be carried on collectively. The dynamics may integrate those of the local community. The SAUH of Grenoble, for example, uses a network of non-profit organisations to promote the occupational integration of students, to optimise the quality of services offered to them and, more generally, to bolster accessibility. For its part, the University of Orléans has established very close ties with an association of SWD.

The perception of disabilities strongly influences the choices and strategies of HEIs. Those that have set up SWD's co-ordination offices in their preventive medicine and health promotion departments are no doubt driven by a "medical" vision of disability. It stems from an assistance-oriented approach that views SWD as having problems and potentially being in difficulty, who require assistance and support, which tends to make SWD co-ordination a medical matter and perceives accessibility as individual assistance by social workers to persons in distress or problem populations. The risk of such a viewpoint is that SWD who do not wish to be categorised institutionally, feeling that the status and label of being disabled in no way reflects who they are and what they do, will try to mask their particularity.

A more "ecological" vision would appear to prevail in establishments that have set up special departments. For example, Grenoble's HEIs do not restrict the accessibility issue to access to university buildings. The SAUH's activity reflects a more comprehensive approach linking physical accessibility and social accessibility and is carried out in association with all concerned parties and partners. As a resource centre for SWD, local authorities and associations, the department prepares informational documents (CDs, videos, etc.) for the whole population and not just for students. Moreover, it works closely with

teachers to arrange for assistance and special provisions for students since it administers six lecturers' posts specially intended for SWD.

Admission procedures

There are no restrictions for SWD. Like all students, they must have a "bac" to be admitted. In addition, although nowhere formally stated, HEIs must accept SWD who satisfy admission requirements.

To enrol in a HEI, and after choosing a field of study, students must make an appointment by Minitel or Internet with the registrar's office, after which their administrative enrolment is official. Before they can matriculate, students must pay tuition fees, which are relatively low. Access to lectures and tutorials, as well as presentation at examinations, requires class registration. This is done, after administrative enrolment in the establishment, in each faculty, department or institute offering the chosen subjects. When they register for classes, most students are invited, if necessary, to request a dispensation from attendance requirements at lectures and tutorials, and from periodic testing.

To facilitate choices, most HEIs organise orientation days, through their Joint University Information and Guidance Departments (*Services Communs Universitaires d'Information et d'Orientation*, SCUIOs). To this end, the Pierre Mendès France University in Grenoble organises such events for upper secondary school students, with information desks and conferences and opportunities to meet with teachers and students. It also takes part in informational exhibitions to present the university's various academic programmes.

SCUIOs also implement the policy of relations with secondary education to facilitate the transition from high school to university. During their studies, students can go to the departments to seek help in planning the rest of their studies, in the form of information about courses or advice about career plans or personal goals.

Even if there are no official restrictions, accessibility problems do exist. The first stems from the fact that certain buildings are not physically accessible. As a number of the people we talked to mentioned, despite years of unquestionable efforts in this area, older buildings are generally still not accessible. Such difficulties may prompt students to leave their home regions to matriculate elsewhere. One example of this was a SWD forced to leave Greater

Paris and to enrol at the University of Grenoble[7] because of the university's degree of accessibility. This need to go elsewhere in turn generates difficulties because students are far away from their homes and familiar surroundings, but also because of a shortage of suitable housing.

The inaccessibility of certain HEIs does not stem from architectural factors alone; the suitable housing shortage is also part of it. Yet housing is administered neither by the establishment nor the Ministry for Higher Education, but rather by local and regional authorities and the state. As one respondent pointed out, very little private accommodation is suitable, and there is a relatively long wait for government-owned housing, since so few of those units are suitable.

Despite the initiatives that establishments may take in this area, the lack of linkage between secondary and higher education is another inhibiting factor. Students do not always have accurate information about existing forms of accessibility; Internet sites do not always include information relevant to SWD. For this reason, the University of Grenoble has developed information sessions for upper secondary school students.

According to one of our sources, the fact that SWD have no special status is a major impediment to accessibility: it helps make access to university seem like a favour and not a right; it makes the financial compensation available to SWD subject to means-testing.

Lastly, the information given to SWD is relatively general and scarce. As a rule, there is little written documentation setting forth their rights, options, etc. Moreover, university Internet sites do not always feature special sections for SWD. When a site does have such a section, it tends to be relatively vague and lacking in detail, even if efforts have been made.

Support

As a rule, HEIs are responsible for planning and implementing forms of support.

Types of support

While it is quite obvious that the degree of accessibility varies significantly from one HEI to another, an analysis of the *European Guide for Students with*

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7.   It should be noted in this regard that 40% of the disabled students enrolled in Grenoble were not originally from that area.

Disabilities nonetheless makes it possible to spot certain trends. It shows, for example, that while all respondent universities have apartments suitable for persons with reduced mobility, far fewer schools offer occasional (38.5%) or permanent (15.4%) assistance. For its part, the University of Grenoble offers a service known as *Prélude*, consisting of a social housing complex containing 20 studios set up to house severely physically SWD. The complex provides the security of a team of nursing aids and personal assistants. In addition, it comprises a meeting room in which each of the 20 boarders can also take their meals. The particularity of this complex is how it incorporates studio apartments into a perfectly traditional university dormitory.

Analysis of the *European Guide* also shows that the use of special means of transport and the availability of reserved parking spaces are quite common. On the other hand, only a little more than two-fifths (43.2%) of respondent universities offer personalised mobility assistance, and two-fifths (40.5%) of them offer visually impaired students training sessions to help them make their way around the campus. Only about one-fifth are accessible by public transport as at the University of Grenoble, where the tramway cuts across the campus. However, since the tram does not cover the entire campus or is not accessible during rush hours, Grenoble's universities have provided SWD with a shuttle service managed by a public transport company subsidised by the department as social assistance and school transport. To use the shuttle, students fill out a transport sheet indicating their schedules and location and submit it each Thursday to the SAUH, which forwards it to the carrier.

From analysis of the *European Guide*, it would also appear that most French establishments listed offer SWD assistance with note-taking, making photocopies and transcribing documents. Here, the Grenoble SAUH offers a fairly comprehensive range of services, since students may come to make photocopies, receive the services of a tutor or find someone to take notes. Note-takers are generally students in the same field and taking the same courses as the SWD. Students are paid per session. They serve voluntarily and are generally recruited by their instructors.

Thanks to the SAUH, students also have access to technical media such as audio cassettes, translations into Braille, computer equipment, etc.[8] Moreover, and although libraries are generally physically accessible, the SAUH introduced a system of library lending that allows books to be taken out for longer than the

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8. Grenoble universities stand out in this respect from many French universities, only about two-thirds (65%) of which offer such assistance, according to the *European Guide for Students with Disabilities*.

standard period. This makes up for the inadequate traditional library lending period, which in many cases is deemed too short for SWD.

On the whole, respondents were fairly unanimous in stressing the progress made in higher education in recent years: the number of students has increased substantially, and establishments have greatly enhanced their accessibility. According to one respondent, more and more university libraries have made provisions for persons with impaired vision; more and more establishments are opening up to persons with hearing impairments; a dynamic of knowledge-pooling has gradually been put in place to explore jointly how people can be assisted, and how awareness of the disabled and their needs can be enhanced; an Internet site publicises workshops and job offers for SWD. The students surveyed, despite some severe failings in terms of accessibility (poorly functioning automatic doors, relative inflexibility of certain personal assistants), are on the whole satisfied with the conditions available to them at university.

Even so, difficulties persist. Many universities still lack technical materials for their students. In some cases, students may be forced to take it upon themselves to make special arrangements for examinations. Some lecture halls may be difficult to access if stairways must be used. Lack of physical accessibility of certain establishments, and especially older ones, is flagrant. Moreover, some of our respondents considered that this was inevitable.

In a great many cases, these difficulties are the result of local circumstances and the strategies that establishments develop to provide for SWD and their companions. Our respondents unanimously stressed the importance of special arrangements that people make to enable SWD to attend. They also emphasised that the coherence of a student's higher education often depended upon the degree of commitment of all parties involved. Such a comment reveals the role played by chance and hazard in the higher education of SWD: in many respects, their education hinges on the actions of local people and local circumstances, which may result in inequalities between students. As one of the respondents stressed, in some schools or departments, teachers were willing to give students copies of their lectures, while in others they were not. This would suggest the need for a regulatory framework stipulating the educational obligations of establishments and the people involved.

In addition, many respondents cited the role played by students. The quality of assistance and support cannot hinge exclusively on the work of co-ordinators alone. Just as often, it depends on the extent to which students show their willingness to open up to their teachers and other students. This is why in most cases the Grenoble SAUH asks students to introduce themselves to their

teachers to explain their needs. Any intervention with teachers is made only after that initial contact.

Nevertheless, respondents also stressed the need to heighten awareness among the faculty. In many cases, the propensity of teachers to adapt their procedures requires a certain familiarity with the disability in question, its constraints and the opportunities it offers. The example of Grenoble is fairly illustrative in this regard, since our respondents experienced only very few problems with the teaching staff. According to the respondents, this may stem from the fact that some teachers may have had personal experience with a disability or a disabling illness. It may also stem from Grenoble universities' tradition of association with SWD – a tradition whereby education is custom-tailored to the needs of ill and/or SWD. Moreover, the SAUH can make use of a number of teaching posts specially dedicated to SWD. At the beginning of each academic year, it tells the teachers which students they will be teaching and works with them on teaching methods.

Admission procedures

It is obvious that the quality of the assistance provided and of the support made available to students cannot be separated from admission procedures. In order to qualify for the assistance provided by law, students must be certified by COTOREP as disabled workers and then introduce themselves to the administrative or academic authorities. In some establishments, as in Evry, they are asked to fill out a confidential form during registration, and to contact the department secretariat to receive several items to facilitate their access, such as parking cards or lift keys.

Most establishments, including Grenoble's universities, encourage SWD to make appointments with their co-ordinators who work with them to formulate types of aid and assistance and how it can be implemented. The SAUH assists students in compiling their social services application (for housing, scholarships and their AGEFIPH[9] files), ascertaining the required assistance and support and deciding how to provide it. It is not infrequent, when possible, that this process draws on the assistance and support that the students had been receiving at their secondary schools. This work is very rarely formalised in a document. Similarly, it would seem that the admission phase does not always include identifying educational needs in the strict sense. In most cases, as in Grenoble, students' needs with regard to matters such as examinations are formalised by

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9. *Association de Gestion des Fonds pour l'Insertion Professionnelle des Personnes Handicapées.*

the health centre staff physician on the basis of a medical certificate. Elsewhere, social workers may meet with students who contact them to make certain special arrangements (Association étudihand'orléans, 1998).

Awareness-building strategies

As the Helios II Programme (European Union, 1996) emphasises, the existence of an awareness strategy for the university community is an essential component of access to higher education and a decisive factor in a student's university experience. Thanks to it, non-disabled persons' prejudices against the disabled can be overcome, and it facilitates synergies promoting better acceptance of the special needs involved.

The ways in which HEIs build awareness can vary. In some universities, they take the form of a special day devoted to disabilities, during which presentations are made of the opportunities available to SWD, the situations such students encounter and the means to surmount them. Other universities, such as that of Grenoble, have made public videos or CD-ROMs portraying the situations of certain SWD, their needs and the technical and educational aids likely to assist them, but also the importance of the attitudes of all members of the university community, be they teachers, technical or administrative staff or other students.

At the present time, HEIs conduct special actions targeting their teaching staff only rarely and rather sporadically. However, a ministerial project has been prepared along these lines that would provide establishments with a film presenting a comprehensive set of information about disabilities and reaching out to the faculty in particular to make teachers aware of the constraints on students, enable them to find solutions to situations they might encounter, and help them find people who might be able to assist them. Here, one respondent felt it was necessary to enhance the visibility of certain co-ordinating teams and make it easier to identify the people in charge.

Distance education

More and more HEIs are offering distance education (DE) programmes. Establishments interested in such schemes sign agreements with the National Centre for Distance Education (*Centre National d'Enseignement à Distance*, CNED) or the National Conservatory of Arts and Trades (*Conservatoire national des arts et des métiers*, CNAM), or form associations among themselves and/or in some cases with private partners within the "Digital Campuses" (*Campus Numériques*) programme.

Headed by a Regional Academic Director, the CNED is a public establishment of the Ministry for Education whose mission is to dispense distance education from the elementary to the higher level, in both initial learning and ongoing vocational training. It strives to enable people to learn at their own pace and according to their own abilities, making use of interactive services and, in particular, new information and communication technologies.

CNED serves over 350 000 students, two-thirds of whom are adults, over half of whom are enrolled in higher education courses, and of which 36 000 are taking further vocational training. The plan employs over 8 000 teachers and trainers from the Ministry for Education and offers over 3 000 courses.

Since 1997, the system has included a Training School on Distance Education Methods and Techniques (*École d'ingénierie de la formation à distance*) to satisfy the training needs of professionals involved in the distance teaching chain. It capitalises on CNED know-how by putting it into models and distributing them. The school is intended for CNED staff (educators and re-employment and rehabilitation instructors), the academic community in general and other groups wishing to initiate, supplement or enrich their distance education practices.

In addition, for the past year and a half, prompted by the Ministry for Education and Research, CNED has been conducting a partnership strategy to set up some 20 digital campuses that give it a unique opportunity to help create a source of French online higher education. 116 digital campus projects have been recorded by the Technology Directorate of the Ministry for Education and Research in connection with the second call for projects. 66 of these projects have been selected for state funding: 27 for feasibility studies (Level 1) and 39 for implementation (Level 2). CNED is taking part in 17 of these digital campus projects: three at Level 1 and 14 at Level 2. It should be noted that eight of the ten projects selected during the ministry's first call for projects in 2000 have been extended and will be funded again this year.

Accessible through the CNED, distance education can also be dispensed through the CNAM. The Conservatory has long offered open distance training (ODT). ODT is being developed at 135 educational centres throughout France and its overseas departments and territories. Today, nearly half of CNAM's units of instruction are available via ODT, as are qualification certificates (*certificats de compétence*). While the regional centres' curriculum is now available throughout France, certain subjects require students' physical presence for certain meetings and examinations.

ODT now offers nearly 200 units of instruction in four different fields of study: economics and business administration; human and social sciences; industrial science and technology; and IT, mathematics and statistics. During their studies, students may receive assistance, essentially from their teachers, whom they may contact by e-mail. Students may also take part in dedicated discussion and publication forums in which they can communicate with other students and help each other with regard to topics chosen by all students. A number of educational monitoring centres have added group meetings (at the regional centre) or "tele-tutoring" sessions to their tele-teaching sites throughout the region. The proportion of these group meetings can vary considerably from one line of study to another (from less than 10% of total teaching time to more than 30%). Depending on the field, attendance at group sessions may be optional, suggested or mandatory. Examinations are given at the educational monitoring centres.

Establishments may therefore get together and form networks and join the Inter-University Federation of Distance Education (*Fédération Interuniversitaire de l'Enseignement à Distance*, FIED), which was set up in 1987 at the request of the Ministry for Education. The Federation brings together universities interested in distance education in all its forms. The objective is twofold: to ensure that France and French universities are represented throughout Europe in the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU); and to co-ordinate the actions of the various centres on a nation-wide basis. 24 universities, most of which have set up a University Distance Teaching Centre (*Centre de télé-enseignement universitaire*, CTEU), belong to the Federation.

The French authorities wish to develop distance learning and this would give a further opportunity for SWD to access higher education.

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CHAPTER 5. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Students with disabilities at secondary level

During the school year 2000/2001, 10 million full- and part-time students were registered in 34 700 schools in the United Kingdom. 3% of these students (300 800 students) had statements of special educational needs (SEN). Of these SEN students, 64% (192 400) are being educated in mainstream schools, and the remaining 36% (108 300) are being educated in special schools (Department of Education and Skills, 2001). Secondary SEN students number 724 700, or 18.5% of the total (Department of Education and Skills, 2001), of which 96 200 or 13.2% had a statement. This represents 2.5% of all registered secondary level students.

Higher education

Organisation and funding

The primary mission of the British system of higher education (HE) is to enable people to develop their capability and to fulfil their personal and professional potential, to contribute to an economically and culturally successful nation, and to advance knowledge and understanding through scholarship and research. The system, which distinguishes between higher education and further education, includes 90 universities, 60 other higher education institutions (HEI) and 499 professional, technical or art colleges.

Funding of university teachers is distributed largely on the basis of student enrolment and of subjects taught. Nearly all research funding, however, is related directly to the quality and volume of research. Universities and colleges also generate funds from a wide variety of private sources, including sponsorships, student fees, conferences and donations, and by providing services. Overseas student fees generated approximately GBP 563 million in 1996/97. Overseas students attending universities and colleges in the United Kingdom are funded by their home institutions, including the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI), the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE, which advises DENI), the Northern Ireland Higher Education Council (NIHEC, created to advise DENI on planning and funding higher education in Northern Ireland), the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council

(SHEFC), and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW). With the exception of Northern Ireland, these bodies act as intermediaries between the government and HEIs that allocate funds to institutions and provide advice and policy guidance to government and promote good practice in the higher education sector.

Universities and colleges offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses. Undergraduate courses lead to Bachelor's degrees (BA, B.Sc, B.Ed, B.Eng, B.Mus, or at some Scottish universities B.Med), an undergraduate Master's degree usually in science or engineering (M.Eng, M.Sci, M.Pharm., Mphys), a higher education diploma (Dip.HE) or other job-related courses, such as social work (Dip.SW) and, finally, a Higher Education Diploma (HND) or Higher National Certification (HNC) that is often more professional than other undergraduate qualifications. Postgraduate courses offer a wide variety of qualifications including a Master's Degree (M.A., M.Sc., M.Ed., M.Phil.), doctorate (Ph.D., D.Phil.) and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE).

Further education is any type of education for non-traditional school age students that does not involve studying at degree level or higher. It may include work-related courses that can lead to national vocational qualification, general NVQs, BTEC national diploma, access courses, academic courses up to A level standard, including GCEs, basic skills courses, or courses that do not necessarily lead to a particular qualification that range from levels 1 to 3. At level 1, students may take four or more GCSEs (General Certificate of Secondary Education) at grades D to G, a foundation GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualifications), or an NVQ (National Vocational Qualifications) level 1. At level 2, they may take four or more GCSEs at grades A to C, an intermediate GNVQ, or an NVQ level 2. At level 3, they may take two GCSE A levels or one A level and two AS levels, or four AS levels, an advanced GNVQ, or an NVQ level 3.

Further education courses may be given in schools with sixth forms where it is possible to follow A level work-based courses (GNVQ). Further education colleges may also offer academic courses (GCSEs, AS levels, A levels), work-based courses (NVQ) or general courses preparing for adult life. Some colleges specialise in teaching SWD; they are usually residential and offer the same type of courses as other colleges.

Students with disabilities in higher education

Over two million higher education and nearly 4.1 million further education students were registered during the academic year 2000/2001. Three-quarters of the registered students were part time. Of the higher education students, 800 000

were part time, 650 000 were enrolled in undergraduate courses, about one million were enrolled in first degree courses and approximately 400 000 were postgraduates.

According to a 1997 report on broadening participation,[1] 14 900 students or 3.8% of first year higher education students declared a disability in 1995. However, the data is not very reliable, since 181 600 students or 31.2% of the total are registered as "don't knows"[2] and 2 000 students or 13.4% of the total reported an unlisted disability.

Table 5.1. **Percentage of disability and participation in higher education, by qualification, 1995**

Level	Not disabled	Disabled	DK/not disabled	Total
Higher degree	90.4	3.1	6.4	100
First degree	66.8	4.4	8.6	100
Other degree level	91.1	3.2	5.7	100
Other HE qualification	89.6	4.5	5.9	100
Total	88.6	4.1	7.2	100

Source: HESA.

SWD represent 3.1% of all higher-level students, of which 4.4% are at first level and 3.2% are at other levels. There are proportionately more SWD at first degree or other qualification levels (Table 5.1). Of students who reported a disability, 46.6% report an illness (diabetes, epilepsy, asthma), 15.6% report dyslexia, 6.9% report deafness or a hearing impediment and 6.1% report a mobility problem or use a wheelchair. Only 2.2% of the students report mental health problems, 4.4% have multiple disabilities, and 4.3% are blind or partially sighted. Of the 77.1% full-time (115 000) students, 13.4% report dyslexia, and 41.6% report diabetes. Over half of all part-time students (58.8%, 3 400 students) report mostly a physical or a sensory impairment such as blindness. Students with diabetes (58.8%), with dyslexia (17.6%) are over-represented by full-time SWD. Those with mobility difficulties represent 16.4% of higher education students.

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1.   Widening participation for students with disabilities, 1997.

2.   Some applicants fear that disclosure may prejudice the likelihood of being offered a place; despite UCAS guidance notes, many applicants classify themselves as disabled even if their condition is not significant "disabling"; some students apparently misunderstand the question and interpret a declaration of "special needs" to be a request for childcare, financial support, or a preference for a special diet.

While the number of SWD in higher education does not reflect their numbers in the population in general (Parker, 1997), our analysis of a European Union document (European Union, 2001) indicates that access to higher education has been increasing during the last decade. Indeed, most of the English universities that responded to the enquiry have developed services since 1991. Of these universities, 57.5% began services for blind or partially-sighted students during the 1990s; 68% did so for students with specific learning disabilities; 60.5% opened to deaf and hard of hearing students; 59.1% to mobility-impaired students, and 57.1% began to offer services for students with writing difficulties. Institutions that began to provide services earlier worked mostly with visually- (42%) or mobility-impaired students (39%). The most recently-admitted students are those with specific learning disabilities. Universities have less experience with students with writing difficulties, but a HEFCE study shows rising numbers of students with dyslexia or with mental health difficulties (HEFCE, 1999). Nevertheless, 25% of the responding universities had no statistics about the number of SWD they admitted.

No precise data is available on the choice of courses and programmes made by SWD who are restricted in their possibilities when health conditions intervene. However, the people we met insisted on the obstacles that SWD must overcome. The choice of a course depends on institutional accessibility whereas mobility-impaired students can be hindered by a lack of physical accessibility. The attitudes and strategies of local education authorities may also influence student choices, since the timeframe for delivering allowances affects whether or not they can choose certain universities or colleges. Institutional strategies are also important. Some universities and colleges appear to have specialised in accessibility issues or to be more sensitive, which leads many SWD to choose their courses, even when they must move to do so.

No data on SWD graduation rates was available. However, a HEFCE study highlighted the fact that there are no significant differences between SWD and other students. Other sources indicate that many students struggle with their courses, and receive lower marks than might be expected if they had proper support. The reports also point out that, since the reforms of the mid-90s, many students drop out for financial reasons. Current studies suggest that SWD tend to work much harder than non-disabled students to be successful. They do, however, mention that higher expenses and, more generally, the need for more time or adaptive technologies, may heighten their difficulties and result in higher drop out rates.

Preparing the transition between secondary schools and higher education is also mentioned as a problem. Students, especially those with a learning disability, are poorly prepared to access universities or colleges, and there is no

needs' assessment. Therefore, despite the legislation, they are either unaware of their disability or were not regularly assessed and cannot therefore advocate for themselves. A significant percentage of the students responding to the learning opportunities taskforce study reported that they had no access to the IPRC process foreseen by legislation.

Most establishments have career services and develop partnerships with the labour market, however we found no specific data on SWD and employment. Some interviews indicated that disability and careers advisers do not always work together, are rarely located proximately to each other, and have increasingly large student loads and therefore less time to devote to individual students.

The legal framework

Policy

UK public policy seeks to broaden access to higher education. Access means more than physical access. It includes the implementation of strategies to support SWD so that they can enjoy the same quality of educational experience as non-disabled students, participate fully in institutional life, and be valued for their contribution.

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act of 2001 (HMSO) regulates access to higher and further education and deals specifically with post-16 education and training. It considers that disabled and non-disabled people should have equal opportunities and benefit wherever possible from available education or other related provision and forbids discrimination on the basis of a disability. The code of practice (HMSO, 2001) defines discrimination as the failure on the part of the responsible body to make a reasonable adjustment when SWD are or are likely to be placed at a "substantial disadvantage."

Universities and colleges are responsible for providing services for SWD and must foresee and make adjustments for them where appropriate. They are legally responsible if their staff act in a discriminatory manner during the course of their work, even if instructions not to discriminate have been issued. Institutions must be proactive by taking reasonable steps to discover a disability, by encouraging people to disclose their disability and, more generally, to prevent, as far as reasonable, the disadvantages that SWD might encounter during their course of study. They are responsible for making reasonable proactive adjustments for duty owed to people with disabilities and students at large on an ongoing basis, particularly for buildings. If there has been a discriminatory action, the responsible body must justify it.

The definition of reasonable depends on the type of service provided, the nature, size and resources of the institution or service, and the effect of the disability on the individual. Any adjustment must also consider academic and other standards, the availability of financial resources to the responsible body, the likelihood that grants and loans will be available to SWD for services (disabled students' allowances), the cost and practicality of any given step, the extent to which aid or services will otherwise be provided to SWD, health and safety requirements, and the relevant interest of other people, including other students.

Supports

Institutional supports

Some organisations advise both SWD and HEIs. The National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (SKILL) promotes opportunities to empower young people and adults with any disability to realise their potential in further and higher education, and training and employment throughout the United Kingdom. It works in partnership with disabled people, service providers and policy makers (tutors, lecturers, student services, SWD's advisers, learning support co-ordinators, careers officers, etc.) It promotes good practice by organising regular events/meeting for staff development and mutual support, by offering a membership plan with regular mailings to update members, by producing staff publications including a regular journal and good practice guide, and by providing consultancy support. It wants to influence national policy by liaising with government and government agencies, participating in committees established to influence national policy (*e.g.* vocational qualifications), and by running working parties on key issues (*e.g.* mental health).

HEFCE also facilitates the access of disabled people to higher education by funding programmes to improve provision and widen participation of students with learning difficulties and disabilities. Between 1993 and 1995, HEFCE funded (GBP 6 million) a special initiative to encourage broader participation for SEN by encouraging higher education institutions to improve their provision. 86 projects were funded dealing primarily with sensory impairment and dyslexia, and covering access to information, to the curriculum and learning support, and developing IT applications and career counselling. Between 1996 and 1998, HEFCE funded (GBP 6 million) 31 new disability projects for SWD to enhance the quality of provision and to increase their higher education participation. Between 1999 and 2002, the special funding programme sought to improve SWD provision by funding 50 projects (GBP 6 million) including 29 projects to develop basic provision at institutions that currently have little provision for or experience in supporting SWD; eight

projects to promote and transfer existing disability-related expertise; and 13 projects to allow institutions to plan complementary provision to optimise the use of existing resources.

Individual support

In addition to supporting universities to meet the needs of students, individual financial opportunities are also provided to institutions (government benefits), students (the student funding system), and from institutions like HEFCE.

Financial support

- *Income support*

Income support is a welfare benefit providing basic income to people who cannot meet their needs. It is provided alone or to top-up to other benefits or earnings. All received income, loan grants, or bursary for daily living expenses are considered when assessing income, except those parts of the grant intended for study or related costs, such as fees. Conditions depend on a student's age, study conditions, and course level. Full-time students under 19 years of age enrolled full-time and in a non-advanced course[3] must be either unable to find a job within 12 months because of their disability, or be responsible for a child or an orphan, or be living apart from parents because of a moral and social danger in the family environment, or be a refugee, or have left care and be living independently. To claim income support, full-time students over 19 must meet basic conditions, and be qualified either for the disability or for the severe disability premium, or for a disabled student's allowance because of deafness, or for having been unable to work for 28 weeks. A single parent, or married students responsible for a child or a young person during summer vacation, or a refugee learning English can also claim income support. This also concerns full-time students under 19 in advanced courses. Part-time students over 19 can also claim income support if they meet the basic conditions.

- *Disabled Student Allowances (DSAs)*

Full- or part-time SWD are eligible for DSAs. These needs-based allowances are intended to cover extra study costs or expenses (specific equipment or human costs) arising from the disability. DSAs are awarded

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3. Non-advanced courses include GCSEs, A-levels, NVQ (level 3 or below), an ordinary national diploma, Scottish Certificate of Higher education, Scottish Certificate of Sixth Year Studies, Scottish vocational education council certificate or a business and technician education council diploma.

regardless of individual or family income, and may be paid to the SWD or directly to a helper or equipment supplier. If the student needs to adjust to the equipment, s/he can receive a grant before the start of courses. Payment for regular costs may be made in instalments.

To be eligible for DSAs, students must provide a supporting letter from the college tutor, a doctor or other authority. Dyslexic students or students with specific learning difficulties must be assessed by an educational psychologist or provide equivalent evidence. Eligibility also depends on course level. Even if there is no previous study restriction on DSA eligibility, students cannot get DSAs as part of the higher non-means tested bursaries available for diploma courses. The National Health Service (NHS) funds courses in nursing, midwifery or other paramedical professions. It is very often recommended that students apply for funding through the training institution as early as possible, so that the information can go to the student grant unit simultaneously.

Full- or part-time postgraduate student situations vary from one country to another within the United Kingdom. English or Welsh postgraduate students receive DSAs from their local education authority. They may be eligible for annual allowances of up to GBP 5 000 for all costs if the course requires a first degree as an entry qualification and lasts for a minimum of one full term. To be DSA-eligible, Scottish postgraduate students have to be awarded through the Scottish Studentship Scheme (SSS) or the Post-graduate Student Allowance Scheme (PSAS). DSAs are given by SAAS.[4] Northern Irish postgraduate students are considered DSA-eligible if they receive a studentship or bursary from the Department of Higher and Further Education, Training and Employment (DHFETE), or a discretionary award from the education and library board, or a research council award.

Students need not be registered as disabled or be required to disclose their disability to the university, but they must be assessed by university staff or by an independent assessment centre. The needs-assessment can be paid for by the DSAs. If an assessment is required to establish a disability, diagnostic assessment costs cannot be claimed but college access or a hardship fund can help. Depending on the needs to be covered, four types of allowances may be given:

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4. A Scottish student receiving a bursary for a postgraduate Diploma in Social Work is eligible from the General Social Care Council or from SAAS in Scotland.

- *Specialised Equipment Allowance* so that the student can benefit fully from the course. This can include a computer or word processor (possibly with adaptive technology), a tape recorder, versa Braille, radio microphone system, specialist furniture (chair, table or back support), any repair, insurance or extended equipment warranty, training for the specialist equipment, an assessment of equipment needs.

- *Non-medical Helper Allowance* for any human support or personal assistance (sign language interpreters, note-takers, mobility enablers) or specialist tutorial support specifically related to the disability (dyslexia). Maximum amounts for part-time students may differ by country. In England and Wales, the amount is adjusted on a fixed-price basis; in Scotland it is calculated on a pro-rata basis. Students who need daily personal assistance must get it from local social services or a social work department.

- *General/other Expenditure Allowance* covers disability and study-related costs not covered by another specific allowance. This covers extra books or photocopies if the student cannot study for long periods in the library, or if a book is needed for longer than normal; extra heating costs if a student studies for long periods at home; tapes and disks needed for work. This allowance may be used to top up other allowances. Extra costs must be proven and compared to those of non-disabled students. As before, the amount given to part-time undergraduates in Wales is reduced on a fixed-price basis depending on the duration of the part-time course. In Scotland, the amount is referred to the pro rata of the FTE.

- *Travel Costs Allowance* cover any additional travel costs related to the disability. A student must use a student loan or grant to meet a given amount of travel costs. There is no maximum, but for FTEs with LEA award, the set amount is part of the student loan; for SAAS students, it is lower. The DSA can pay the difference between this amount or between this and the travel cost of a non-disabled person, and actual travel costs.

A Students First study[5] showed that SWD are generally positive about their DSA support. They regret that current rules discriminate against students with no maintenance grant or who can only study part-time. DSAs are tied to the

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5.   Students First: The Experiences of Disabled Students in Higher Education.

student maintenance award and are available only to full-time initial undergraduates. The criteria of the different awarding authorities lead to different eligibility rates and creates inequalities between students because of geography, funding levels, and the perception of aids that can be purchased to assist students.[6]

Another study (Clode, 2000) showed that difficulties with grants and benefits are a serious disincentive to SWD entering higher education. Delays in local education funding deferred support for some students. SWD emphasised that either lack of or incorrect information about possible benefits or grants affected their decision to matriculate. Our interviews also revealed that financial supports do not always protect SWD efficiently, especially those with an evolving illness or pathology who must occasionally withdraw from school. For example, students who must withdraw for a year risk being asked to withdraw permanently and to reimburse the government or continue without income.

Personal assistance

The code of practice for ensuring academic quality and standards in higher education stipulates that universities and colleges must make it possible for SWD to participate in all aspects of academic and social life. They must ensure access to the physical environment in which SWD will study, learn, and live and provide adapted opportunities. The 1970 Chronically Sick and Disabled Act stipulates that every person defined as disabled has the right to a needs assessment for everything covered under Section 2:

- Practical help in the home.

- Providing or help obtaining a radio, television or other recreational facilities.

- Attending lectures or games, going on outings or other recreational facilities outside the home, and help needed to take advantage of educational facilities. Help with travelling to any of these or similar activities.

- Any adaptations needed in the home for greater safety, comfort, or convenience.

- Meals in the home or at a local centre.

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6.   Unlike Scotland, where support funding for SWD is centralised.

- A telephone and any equipment necessary to use it, such as a minicom.

The needs assessment is intended to establish a student's eligibility for services, the needs of a SWD, and the social services which can meet them. The SWD can be assessed by a local social services or social work department that should consider any disability-related cost in the assessment, such as additional heating because of poor circulation. If the SWD is assessed as needing one of these services, the local authority must provide it, but is not required to provide other services. They can charge for services but must consider ability to pay. If the SWD who wants to go to university already receives services, there is usually a reassessment to adapt personal assistance and to engage the social services department where s/he normally lives.

The more common forms of study-related assistance for SWD include:

- Amanuenses, or scribes for use during examinations, tests and assignments.

- Communication Support Workers (CSWs), qualified workers for deaf and hard-of-hearing students using sign language, note-taking and lip-speaking, and to offer general support.

- Library assistance for a physically inaccessible library or shelves or to use the catalogue. Fellow students or staff may provide this assistance.

- Lip-speakers to silently repeat words.

- Note-takers (can be fellow students) who should have some knowledge of the subject matter.

- Readers to read written materials aloud or to record materials.

- Sign language interpreters to translate words into British Sign Language and to interpret sign language into spoken words.

The type and form of support depend on individual needs. For example, blind or partially-sighted students may have access to a Braille note-taker or embosser, a closed-circuit television, a computer with speech output, a reading machine, tape recorder or personal reader or scribe, or someone to assist in getting books from the library. Students with a specific learning difficulty, such as dyslexia, may have access to a computer with a spell-check facility and/or

specialist dyslexia software or to extra tutorials from a dyslexia support tutor, a note-taker, a personal reader, or a proof-reader for essays.

Implementation of the supports depends on the institution. Some universities and colleges employ support workers for SWD for the number of hours that they are assessed as needing. Others use volunteers or staff from private agencies. Some institutions have no such system in place and students must recruit their own assistants, who may be fellow students. Personal assistance may be particularly difficult for part-time students who must pay out of their own pockets because they are excluded from DSA.

Examinations

No national exam arrangement guidelines exist for examining bodies other than those for the GCSE. Institutional arrangements are made on individual bases and therefore vary from institution to institution. Very often, institutions develop links with NGOs for training staff, for better access opportunities or to co-fund equipment. Institutions should consider the nature of the disability and how it affects the student, the study method, the arrangements used in previous examinations, advice from a specialist external agency or educational psychologist, the nature of the examination (*e.g.* length, format). Arrangements may include granting extra time or rest periods during exams, papers in the student's usual format, specialist equipment, and personal assistance.

Higher education institutions and disability

Framework

The Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 sought to broaden SWD participation in higher education and therefore pushed HEIs to include disability in their strategies. Every institution must therefore produce a disability statement describing the available education and research facilities and to prepare SWD for the support that they can expect. The document also informs the funding council of the provision, and highlights good practices that could be disseminated.

HEFCE[7] considers that the disability statement should be written, concise, informative and developmental, available in large print, Braille, cassette and video. It should describe general policies and procedures for SWD, the current

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7.   Higher Education Consultancy Group, Commonwealth Higher Education Management Service, *Evaluation of the 1996-1999 HEFCE/DENI Disability Special Initiatives,* October 2000.

provision for access and admissions, available facilities and equipment, and academic services and support arrangements (special marking provision, special arrangements for examinations, support for placement). It should describe the physical accessibility opportunities and the assistance for establishing personal care support systems and indicate possible financial support and future options, be produced tri-annually and disseminated as widely as possible.

The statement depends largely on the type and size of the institution and the number of SWD admitted. Established universities and those with high numbers of SWD tend to have a longer, more precise statement while colleges and specialised institutions tend to have shorter statements. Initially, the document was perceived as a modest requirement unlikely to have any significant impact on improving higher education access for applicants with disabilities, whereas the impact was, in fact, significant. Applicants had more choices and HEIs therefore made their documentation more comprehensive, consistent, coherent and accessible. SWD provision became an institutional issue, and generally enhanced access (Parker, 1997). Students involved in the HEFCE study indicated that the statements broadly covered their needs, informed them about their study conditions and minimised their sense of isolation (HEFCE, 1999).

Universities and colleges must have a dedicated staff if they want to widen participation policy. The Discrimination Act of 1995 obliges every HEI to designate special staff to advise people with disabilities; staff size depends on total student enrolment. The service comprises a disability co-ordinator or SWD's adviser, whose contact information should be available in the university disability statement. The co-ordinator must play many roles, be a mover and a shaker so that the institution accepts a different ethos and develops equal opportunities policies. The co-ordinator must develop working relationships with policy makers institution-wide and with all staff experienced in working with SWD, help students to assess necessary study supports, negotiate with the local education authority and social services about getting funding, and help find and manage student assistants. Finally, the co-ordinator must ensure equal opportunity by helping SWD to access the curriculum and to empower them (SKILL, 1997).

Nearly all universities have a disability co-ordinator or adviser. HEFCE estimates that nearly 400 people in England and Wales work directly to support SWD, many of them part-time. Staff turnover is frequent. Some staff work in a special disability unit, others work in student services, or career or counselling services. In HEIs that consider disability to be a welfare issue, the welfare or student care unit provides information. Staff are trained in informal regional networks, local partnerships and networks and special interest groups or

conferences. Some universities organise formal training in specific areas (training trainers, time management, advocacy skills, etc.), provide training from specialist organisations or seek advice.

At the University of East London, for example, the co-ordinator works half-time in a disability service, managing it and working with two full-time advisers and a dyslexia adviser (60%). The service offers support, advice and guidance to the staff, students, and applicants. It includes an access centre that assesses study support needs. It provides training and dyslexia tutoring to those eligible through DSA. The access centre is managed by the disability centre manager (half-time) and includes a full-time technology manager, an administrator (70% FTE) and half-time secretary. In addition, 10 to 15 educational psychologists are paid hourly to do assessments.

A disability service and its co-ordinator may work under very complex, stressful conditions. Historically, most co-ordinators or advisers have only on-site training but they must nonetheless bring the skills of a manager, educator, counsellor, and creative person, who provides new orientations, serves as an advocate, and more generally guarantees the quality of services while playing multiple institutional roles that may create conflict particularly for a low status staff member (SKILL, 1997). The service must advocate for disability issues and implement policy in a context that is not always favourable, particularly when academic staff resist implementing accommodations.

Most co-ordinators consider that they have to empower SWD by having access to adapted services rather than by helping them through a course. They must give them the same autonomy as other students for deciding how and whether they want to work. They may therefore be in conflict with the expectations of the other actors involved in the student's study process – the local authorities, parents or students seeking aids.

Supporting SWD is rarely perceived to be a collective enterprise. A single individual, team, or staff is usually responsible for information and team or staff, but the institutional approach to disability is an important issue. Developing an institution-wide approach produces quite complete, comprehensive and updated policy statements that present the institutional commitment to equal opportunities issues, describe available accommodations and supports, of the possible arrangements for examinations, etc. The disability statement is a tool that can be used by all members of the institution. The service may be a single staff member with the resources to implement institutional policy and to meet student needs; the co-ordinator is an academic whom other members of the institution can recognise as a partner.

Institutions that minimise their disability issue strategy perceive the disability statement to be imposed by HEFCE. It becomes a minimally informative tool for special kinds of students. The document is rarely comprehensive or sufficiently accurate, often outdated, poorly disseminated and usually available on demand. The disability service may be comprised of a small team, whose co-ordinator feels isolated, unempowered, and struggling to be taken seriously, with no specific system for monitoring statistics on student applications, enrolment, or tracking (see Note 7).

Admission procedures

SWD follow standard admissions procedures. For most degrees, higher education diplomas, higher national diplomas and some universities, SWD must apply through the university and college admissions services (UCAS).[8] The application form allows a student to select six courses at one or several institutions. A student who wants to study medicine has four choices and can make two further choices for a different degree if none of the initial institutions admit him/her. Most forms request additional information, including the student's reason for taking the course, hobbies, work experience, or work responsibilities; they request that a tutor or a teacher, or alternatively, a prior employer or family member or friend to assess the student's ability and the appropriateness of the choice. Most forms ask about disability and request details on any additional needs. The UCAS form asks students to specify their disability from a list [dyslexia, visual impairment, sensorial impairment, mobility difficulties, mental health difficulties, long-term illnesses (diabetes, epilepsy, and heart condition) and multiple impairments].

Most students are admitted provisionally, on the strength of their applications. The final decision depends on exam results. Some universities or colleges interview students. If an application is unsuccessful students can access a course through the clearing done by most HEIs. A student who is not admitted, declined an offer, or was unsuccessful in getting results, automatically receives a clearing entry form. A student can repeat exams and apply the following year.

When an application is rejected because of a disability, a student can substitute another choice; however, institutions rarely explain rejections and students cannot easily find out if the admission process discriminated for the

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8.   Students who wish to do a postgraduate degree (MA or doctorate) have to apply directly to individual establishments that send a prospectus and an application form. If the form does not ask about disability, it is recommended to explain the needs and find out possible arrangements.

disability. Those experienced with the Nottingham Trent University procedure (Figure 5.1) insisted that fewer SWD were rejected now than in the past. SKILL indicates that the number of SWD admitted is only slightly less than for non-disabled students relative to the numbers applying. Nevertheless, some obstacles still remain, especially with regard to a lack of information. Students are informed by the HEI promotional literature, which generally invites them to contact the institution early for assistance. Special literature is also accessible upon demand or electronically. However, very few HEIs co-ordinate their information strategy with a specific impairment; most offer no specific information concerning specific learning disabilities, or mobility, hearing, or vision impairments. Students do not always have the opportunity to discuss needs application or to meet the designated admissions officer. The links between secondary education and higher education are quite deficient. Most disability units, like the one at the University of East London, have insufficient staff to meet all students who therefore neither have the opportunity to identify services or to work with a disability unit to ascertain the possibilities that could be implemented to permit their access. All interviewees agreed that lack of support was the most important obstacle.

Support

The quality of support for SWD depends on the balance of financial resources provided by the LEA, the services bought by the SWD, and the help given by HEIs to identify and meet their needs and find the required supports. Even today, universities and colleges are not responsible for housing: the yearly block grants allocated by HEFCE to each university can be spent as the institution wishes. It is generally agreed, even if it is varying, that HEIs often rely on LEAs to provide support staff or on disabled organisations to have adaptive devices.

According to a SKILL study, HEIs developed two approaches to providing personal assistance. One is institutional, whereby the university co-ordinates personal assistance by adapting or building accommodation so as to provide facilities, rooms and assistants (this may include night and day care, full board and transport), to have a staff responsible for assistance and specialised nursing back up. Local social services or the social work department would pay the institution directly. A second strategy engages volunteers – students or recent graduates for which it arranges accommodation and to whom it gives an allowance. The funding may come from the local social services or social work department, the student, and the awarding authority if the volunteers also assist with study-support needs.

Figure 5.1.   **The Nottingham Trent University's procedure for application**

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                    ┌─────────────────────┐
                    │ Application received│
                    │  by Faculty Office  │
                    └─────────────────────┘
                              │
                         Highlighted
                              ↓
    ┌──────────────┐   ┌────────────────┐        ┌────────────────┐
    │  Rejected on │ ← │ Initial        │ →      │  Offer likely  │
    │  academic    │   │ consideration  │        │  on academic   │
    │  grounds     │   │ by admission   │        │  grounds       │
    └──────────────┘   │ staff          │        └────────────────┘
                       └────────────────┘
                Code 1 (dyslexia)          Codes 2-6, 8, 9      Code 7
```

Application received by Faculty Office

Highlighted

Initial consideration by admission staff

Rejected on academic grounds

Offer likely on academic grounds

Code 1 (dyslexia)

Considered normally (advice available on dyslexia)

Codes 2-6, 8, 9

Code 7

Further detail to be requested by faculty

Invitation to visit from Student Care Services

Support needed

Visit declined?
Reasons

Report to admission staff

No support needed

Application considered

Visit

Faculty Dean makes decision

Faculty of Education undertakes medical screening applicants for initial teacher training

Note: The codings refer to as follows: 1-dyslexia, 2-blind/partially sighted, 3-deaf/hard of hearing, 4-wheelchair user/mobility difficulty, 5-need personal care support, 6-mental health difficulties, 7-unseen disability (diabetes, epilepsy, asthma), 8-two or more above disabilities/special needs, 9-a disability or special need not listed above.

Source: SKILL (1997).

In the second approach, students are responsible for accommodation and must co-ordinate the personal assistance supervised by a university staff member. The social services or DSA funds them to hire volunteers interested in or experienced with the university environment proposed by the Community Service Volunteers (CSV).[9] SWD can also get help from the Community Nursing Service if they attend a university away from home and reside temporarily in the area, or use private agencies which are considerably more expensive but useful to fill gaps (for instance, to replace an ill assistant, or for time off). Funding for private agencies may come from a student's local social services or social work department and from the disabled students' allowance if s/he receives study-support assistance in university. SWD can also arrange their own personal assistance to assess their study support needs, and negotiate funds with the local education authority and social services. They can choose a relative or friend as a personal assistant,[10] or recruit and pay someone.

These two approaches can be combined. If students receive no DSA, the institution can fund the assessment or the support, as at the University of East London. Some colleges and universities fund the personal assistants needed by SWD who do not receive the necessary DSA funding for this support. Several concerns were raised (Parker, 1999). Financial provision does not always secure the necessary amount of support, so individuals hire unqualified people on the black market. LEA funding is also frequently paid retrospectively after detailed receipts have been turned in, so that students hire assistance for the hours they can pay rather than for the hours they need. Qualified assistants, however, are reluctant to accept such precarious jobs making it very difficult for students who are also inexperienced employers. This profoundly disturbs the relationship between students and assistants and hinders the implementation of quality support.

Types of supports

Most universities and colleges try to facilitate access to buildings and facilities for SWD. All provide special parking places, most (90.8%) provide orientation and mobility training to students with vision impairments; nearly

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9. The CSV is the national volunteer agency that recruits full-time volunteers to help people with disabilities live independently in the community. CSV volunteers are between 16 and 35 and work for four to twelve months in exchange for accommodation, food, pocket money and travel expenses.

10. Direct payments from a student's social services or social work department cannot be used to pay a partner or close relative to provide personal assistance.

half (42%) offer personal assistance for wheelchair users during travel to and while on campus. They also generally provide adapted housing, even if it is not always sufficient, and most (66.7%) of the universities presented in the EU document have limited day-to-day assistance. Nearly half (42.7%) deliver 24-hour a day help, and meal facilities. Nearly three-quarters (74.7%) have food services near the different campuses, and 89.9% have a dining hall accessible for manual and electric wheelchair users. If difficulties occur, some universities, like the University of East London, use the DSA to pay for an assistant to make meal facilities accessible

In addition to physical access, nearly all HEIs provide learning support. SWD generally have access to note-takers or obtain photocopied notes. Half (52.5%) of the universities presented in the EU document provide support for transcribing syllabuses and reference books into Braille, for large print and onto computer disks, for scanning texts, for making cassette recordings. Almost two-thirds (63.7%) supply magnifying glasses in lecture halls and half provide a lip-speaker or sign interpreter.

Electronic study aids are also generally provided. The EU document indicates cassette recorders provided at 76.2% of the universities, personal computer with printers (for 72.5% of the universities), closed circuit TV (for 56.2% of the universities) and text scanner (for 56.2% of the universities). Voice recognition personal computers are made available by 27.5% of the universities; an electronic Braille note-taking service or printer by 38.7%; a computer with speech synthesiser by 48.7%. Half the universities provide enlargement computer software that usually can be used only in laboratories or university centres. With the exception of the cassette recorders (which may be borrowed 90% of the time) and the personal computer with printer, which may be borrowed in half of the universities providing it, other technical supports must be used in the laboratories.

Nearly all (96%) of the universities offer assistance in campus libraries for consulting catalogues, taking books from shelves, or searching for specific articles. Nearly half (44.7%) provide a relatively independent scanner, and for reading scanned material on the spot using a large-character computer software on a personal computer; in 27.6% of universities, catalogues are accessible using large character computer software. A national or regional library stocks specific syllabi and reference books in large print, Braille, on diskette, or cassette exists in 59% of the UK universities listed in the document.

Nearly all universities (98.7%) presented in the EU document offer institutional provisions for special examination facilities for SWD that may be adapted to special requirements for different types of disabilities for 95% of the

SWD. Adaptations are usually extensions of time, the use of word processors, separate accommodations and employing readers and amanuenses. The University of East London provides additional time, an alternative exam room, a portable spell-checker during the exam, tinted paper for exam questions and answers, reader, scribe, alternative forms, words processor, and supplementary oral exams. Exam arrangements are defined with the disability unit according to student needs, and discussed with the subject area co-ordinator each semester for each subject area setting an exam. The student must complete an arrangement form at the beginning of each semester and one month before the exam date. The form, which is signed by the subject area co-ordinator and student, indicates the impact of the disability or the dyslexia on the examinations, the provision recommended by the disability unit, the provision agreed upon by the subject area co-ordinator, and the student or tutor. Where recommendations cannot be met or agreed upon, justifications must be provided. The disability and dyslexia service sends a questionnaire to registered students inviting them to indicate the quality of the support they have received from the services and departments, including the learning resource centre, student services, lecturers and tutors in their subject area, other university staff and the disability statement.

All agree that the numbers of opportunities to access universities and colleges are increasing. However, the interviewees and several reports and studies pointed out that the facilities and services that HEIs claim to provide are not always guaranteed. Indeed, obstacles remain to physical access: only 19.7% of the universities in the EU document are accessible by public transportation, and 28.9% organise special transportation for the mobility impaired.

Some obstacles are structural: architecture makes it difficult to enforce physical accessibility in older universities and colleges, as in central London. Security, as for example for some doors at the University of East London, also makes it difficult to improve full physical access. Some obstacles reveal lack of awareness: students at the University of London claim lack of space at the canteen, crowded classrooms, tables that they must circumnavigate, poor access to toilets or lifts, or overly long distances between housing and lecture halls. Other obstacles are linked to finances, as in developing adapted housing, for example.

All institutions have introduced adaptations and allow additional provision to support SWD in examinations and assessments, but other obstacles remain. According to SKILL, special conditions may be available for final examinations but are not made available for exams during the year. In some cases, the same allocation is made for all examinations, irrespective of their nature or the assessed needs of the student. Some teachers or professors, as it occasionally

occurs at the University of East London, are unwilling to implement recommendations made by the co-ordinator or the disability unit forcing students to prove that the special conditions are not a favour but a necessity.

Students are generally satisfied about their learning support and with the help given by some institutions to find interpreters, note-takers, etc., although some complain about staff attitudes, and criticise the difficulties of some teachers or tutors in adapting teaching methods to student needs (Clode, 2000). They also regret the limited access to signers, note-takers, amanuenses or readers, and the lack of training and qualification of some assistants.

Registration needs and assessment procedures

The quality of the supports and services delivered by a university or college depends very much on its assessment procedure. According to HEFCE, student support services in most institutions are actively involved in the preliminarily assessment of student needs (HEFCE, 1999). Some, like the University of East London, are accredited access centres. Others are part of a joint centre or delegate the assessment to an independent structure. In some, like the University of East London, separate arrangements are made for students with dyslexia.

To assess needs, some universities, like the University of East London, send a questionnaire to the SWD that disclosed their need in the enrolment form. The questionnaire aims to inform the disability and dyslexia service about the number of SWD enrolled, the nature of their disability, the resources given to them by the LEA, the special equipment they have used previously and the services they have received.

The procedure at University of East London varies according to whether students are DSA eligible or not. An assessor or disability adviser makes the assessment and writes a report to the responsible local educational authority for eligible students. For non-eligible students, an assessment and formal report is made that specifies examinations and assessment conditions.

Some institutions provide full support. At the University of East London, all students must find the assistant they need. The university provides names and addresses and occasionally uses the HEFCE premium funding to pay for the needed interpreter or personal assistant for non-DSA eligible students.

The implementation of assessment procedures always depends very much on the disclosure strategy selected by the students. Those who contact the disability unit or the co-ordinator as early as possible have the best

opportunities to plan for their support, be well informed about services, introduce a DSA demand in a timely fashion. By contrast, those who disclosed and introduced their DSA demand at the beginning of the semester face tremendous difficulties in getting their money on time, and are delayed in receiving the assistance they may have. Most of the institutions therefore invite students to contact them as soon as possible or propose information visits. Aston University uses a system for arranging visits (pre-application if possible) for candidates with disabilities as an opportunity to meet academic staff, the assistant registrar for student welfare, accommodation office staff and, if necessary, health centre staff.

The independence of SWD concerning the institutional strategy on disability is another important dimension in quality assessment. Part-time students, and, more generally, those who are not DSA-eligible, depend totally on the resources given by the HEIs for disability. Some universities, like Lancashire University, give resources to empower students and professionals to implement a high quality assessment procedure. Others are much poorer or do not consider disability to be an important issue. They tend to make the co-ordinator or the disability service responsible for the quality of the assessment, without providing the necessary resources.

Awareness strategies

It is generally acknowledged that the quality of access to HEIs depends on an awareness strategy concerning SWD; the attitudes of individual tutors or staff members are linked with institutional attitudes. The quality of the supports depends entirely on a system that monitors application and enrolment statistics.

The awareness strategy is generally addressed to teaching staff, and more generally to all staff. Some institutions, like the University of East London, deliver written documentation outlining ways to identify needs and assist students. Staff receive information about disability service tasks, missions and references, the general supports provided by the university, and the funding opportunities for SWD. They are also made aware of the main types of disability, their consequences for learning, and how to adapt pedagogy. The University of Bradford has an information packet for academics and related staff with material on dyslexia, its effects, special procedures for assessment, supports services for students and details of staff development programmes.

Staff development on disability and dyslexia is another opportunity for making tutors and lecturers aware. The disability service of the University of East London proposed, for example, a deaf-awareness session or a session on the new legislation for all staff and departments. To overcome the lack of

interest among teaching staff, some establishments, like the Heriot-Watt University, include a workshop on disability in the induction course for new staff. The University of East London requires all new academic staff to take a post-graduate certificate in teaching and learning that includes sessions on meeting the needs of SWD and dyslexia.

To strengthen the quality of the supports and to empower students, some universities include SWD in their awareness strategy. The University of East London questionnaire is considered to be an awareness tool too that informs students about available services, the disability and dyslexia service they can contact if there is a problem, the funding they may access. They receive also a copy of the university's own *Diagnostic Pack, Skills for Success Guide* as well as an information document called the *Handbook for Students with Disabilities*. This strategy aims to empower the student to disclose to the tutor or lecturer and to advocate.

To facilitate the integration of the SWD, universities are required to involve them in their equal opportunity committee and therefore in the university community. Student unions or associations are expected to make their services available. To implement these requirements, most universities offer athletics opportunities to SWD or try to make leisure available for them, or include the disability adviser or co-ordinator in the committee. However, access to social facilities may be hindered by the extra time that SWD need for their work.

Distance learning

It is widely acknowledged that distance learning heightens the access of SWD to higher education, and to study when and where they can. It offers more flexible, more suitable, needs-adapted learning opportunities. It allows students with mobility impairment to study at home rather than to travel to a course at a set place and time. Six organisations[11] currently offer open learning courses. Some, especially the National Extension College, have an equal access to open learning project for PWD and for careers for UK residents over 16 years of age who would find it hard to attend classrooms and cannot afford the fees. Up to 90% of course fees are paid, and students also get learning support and guidance from student advisors before they join.

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11. The Association of British Correspondences Colleges, the National Extension College, the Open College of Arts, the Open University, the Open and Distance Learning Quality Council and the Royal College for the Blind.

The Open University is the largest open learning institution in the country, and offers short courses, to undergraduate and graduate degree courses, at varying costs. Some are designed to help students enter a specific career, others are more general. Learning material often include video, audiocassettes, computer software, TV and radio. Many courses involve some tutorials that the student must attend and there is a support from tutors and regional centres. No specific qualification is required, unless the student wants to do a postgraduate course. Low-income UK students or students who receive certain benefits can apply for help with fees from the Open University Financial Awards Fund, with the exception of law, business, or management courses. The Open University also provides notes and a sponsor form to help students get money for a course from an employer. Students experiencing financial difficulties whilst enrolled in an Open University course may be eligible to claim from the access fund.

According to SKILL (*Opportunities in Open Distance Learning*), it is very difficult to get a grant or a bursary for open learning courses. No mandatory grants are available for home study. Local education departments have policies for discretionary grants and most do not award them for study. Students who may have to study at home because of their disability may have a better chance of being funded by local authorities.

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PART II
COUNTRY STUDIES

CHAPTER 6. DISABILITY AND HIGHER EDUCATION IN GERMANY

Introduction

Higher education policies on the one hand and policies dealing with disability on the other form two highly separated systems in Germany. Although both of them are rooted in the constitutional principles of the welfare state, the prohibition of discrimination against persons with disabilities and the right to freedom of profession and place of training, the two systems, in practice, seem to have but little in common but there are encouraging efforts to improve the situation in the direction of integration.

The social and civil rights of persons with disabilities are determined by nation-wide legislation on social security, health, building construction, and legal policy as laid down in the eleven books of the Social Code (SGB I-XI), the Federal Social Assistance Act (BSHG), the Federal Education and Training Assistance Act (BAföG), the Federal Law for the promotion of equal treatment of the disabled (BGG) and legal standards concerning public and private construction of buildings. SWD's access to many key resources such as personal assistance and care, public transport, income support and allowances, employment-related support in dual courses of study/co-operative education, physio- and psychotherapy, or personalised technical equipment is administered by institutions outside of higher education.

Higher education policies are traditionally a domain of the 16 federal states *(Länder)* of the FRG. The constitutional principle of cultural sovereignty of the *Länder*, however, is limited in some respects by the regulations of the Framework Act for Higher Education *(Hochschulrahmengesetz, c.f.* chapter III.1). Section 2 of this Act decrees that all institutions of higher education have to cater to the special needs of SWD in such a way that they are not disadvantaged in their studies, and giving them the opportunity to make use of all the institutions' facilities, if possible without depending on the help of others. In practice, however, the role of higher education institutions, of affiliated institutions such as the national or local associations for student affairs *(Studentenwerke),* and of the coordinators of disability affairs *(Beauftragte für Behindertenfragen)* is restricted to striving for barrier-free campuses, to supplying certain forms of counselling, support and equipment for higher

education, and to guiding SWD through a jungle of responsible bureaucracies and authorities, many of which are located off-campus.

In fact, most informational brochures that inform SWD about their rights and the details of their participation in higher education resemble mere address books, representing the host of arrangements SWD must make to claim their right to full participation in higher education. Far from being treated first and foremost as students who also have a disability implying certain special needs, most SWD, especially those with severe disabilities, are treated like disabled persons who happen to be students as well.

Regular surveys on the social situation of students also show very clearly that the SWD's studies run much less smoothly than those of non-disabled students. Among SWD there is a much stronger tendency to change their subject of studies, interrupt their studies or break off completely (DSW/HIS, 2001, p. 25).

In 1982, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* (*Kultusministerkonferenz*, *abbr. KMK*) published recommendations for a code of practice aimed at improving the study conditions of SWD (KMK, 1982). The major objective was to ensure that every student with a disability could study at the institution of her or his choice (*ibid*.). The KMK declaration of 1982 recommended the following key points and measures:

- Special counselling in secondary schools and during courses of study, carried out in a coordinated approach by all institutions concerned (transition and career guidance services of the federal employment agency, schools, universities, welfare authorities, and associations for student affairs).

- Modification of the studying and examination regulations and arrangements according to the individual disadvantages of SWD, thus granting them equal chances.

- Improvements to technical and architectural features of buildings and other facilities, such as the installation of ramps, specially designated parking places, loop systems, special food and refectory services, and halls of residence with integrated care resources

- Promotion of the students' involvement in social life on the campus as well as within halls of residence.

- Installation of athletic facilities and extension of sports programmes for SWD.

- Designation of coordinators for disability affairs (*Beauftragte für Behindertenfragen*) in all institutions, who are responsible for promoting the adaptation of regulations and facilities to the needs of disabled persons, offering and coordinating counselling, and regularly reporting to the institution on the situation and problems of SWD.

- Participation of SWD and their associations in all relevant matters.

The notion of access to higher education underlying this declaration obviously reaches beyond that of a mere physical access. Even today, the points mentioned can still serve as an important guideline for enhancing and assessing progress in the development of barrier-free institutions of higher education. It is to be noted that the KMK aims primarily at the integration of SWD into the existing structures of higher education institutions, rather than suggesting segregative solutions such as "universities for the disabled" or courses of study designed especially and exclusively for SWD.

The recommendations' details were not focussed solely on students with physical or sensory impairments, but barriers to other groups of SWD, *e.g.* students facing chronic mental health problems or dyslexia, have come into focus only quite recently. Moreover, the recommendations did not include any specific statements about how legislators should ensure that SWD receive not only information, but also any services they required, all from one institution.

Categories and dimensions of disability

The term "disability", which is central to this study, has been defined in very different ways by the relevant institutions in Germany. Thus, the present section will offer an explanation of categories and an overview of the dimensions of disability.

Until 1994, the relevant category as applied by school administrations was that of a need to be educated in a special school – in other words, by definition, special education was conceived as an institution or location, separate from regular schools. The "new" category of "special educational needs" still reflects its historical predecessors by excluding many pupils who are faced with disabilities in a legal and sociological sense.

The category "special educational needs" varies considerably from other categories, such as the medical model of "disability" as implemented by the

federal legislation or even from the students' self-perceptions (see below). Although only 48[1] pupils who attended Germany's special schools attained a higher education entrance qualification in the year 2000, at least 6 000 students declaring that they face disabilities and a further 6 000 students declaring that they face mental health problems or dyslexia took up a course of study at an institution of higher education.

"Special Educational Needs" within the school system

Within the German school system, which is entirely administered by *Länder* legislation following the principle of cultural sovereignty, the term "disability" has been out of use since 1994. In that year, the term was replaced by the term "special educational need(s)" *(Sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf)* in a declaration of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK, 1994). The term "learning disability", for example, was replaced by "special educational needs in the field of learning" (*Sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf im Bereich des Lernens*). Since then, pupils are judged to have special educational needs when schools find it impossible to sufficiently meet their needs without any of the forms of special education mentioned below. Except for some integrative pilot school projects, up to 1994, nearly all pupils identified and certified as "disabled" were sent to a special school, thus resulting in parity between the group of pupils with disabilities (as an educational category) and pupils attending special schools. The foci within the newly created category are presented in Table 6.1. It was also asserted that special education is to be provided under certain circumstances and within certain institutions:

- Preventive measures.

- Joint lessons at mainstream schools.

- Special schools.

- Cooperative measures.

- Special education units.

Apart from curricula for children with special educational needs in the fields of "learning" and "mental development", all curricula for pupils with special educational needs match those of the "general" schools (primary

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1.   See Footnote 2, Chapter 2.

schools, secondary schools, comprehensive schools and grammar schools) in terms of educational goals, contents and assessment requirements. Additional curricula adapt teaching methods to the students' learning requirements according to their individual focus of special education as listed in Table 6.1.

During the school year 2000/2001, 487 904 pupils certified to be in need of special educational services were recorded in Germany (KMK, 2002), thus making up 5.3% of all pupils, with 14% (68 430) of them being educated in mainstream schools. However, these figures must be analysed with caution, since there are only general guidelines and no nationwide definitional standards. And, these figures have only been published for two years, 1999 and 2000, with considerable variation among categories.

Table 6.1. **Pupils with special educational needs in the German school system in the school year 2000/2001**

Focus of special education	Mainstream schools	Special schools	Total (in % of all pupils)
Learning	28 207	230 647	258 854 (2.836)
Seeing	1 675	5 174	6 849 (0.075)
Hearing	2 856	11 296	14 152 (0.155)
Speech/Language	9 598	34 218	43 816 (0.480)
Physical and motor development	3 985	21 338	25 323 (0.277)
Mental development	1 844	64 337	66 181 (0.725)
Emotional and social development	9 200	25 702	34 902 (0.382)
Multiple or unclassified	11 000	17 665	28 665 (0.312)
Ill pupils	65	9 097	9 162 (0.100)
Total	68 430	419 474	487 904 (5.345)

Source: KMK (2002).

In the year 2000, 48 pupils with special educational needs educated in special schools attained a higher education entrance qualification (KMK, 2002, p. 6). Detailed data about pupils with special educational needs in mainstream schools is not yet available, but taking into account the proportion of pupils with special educational needs being educated in mainstream schools, their number cannot be expected to be very much higher.

Disability within the welfare system

German social legislation defines a person as having a disability "if their physical functioning, mental capacities or mental health are very likely to deviate from a condition typical of their age during a period of more than six months, therefore hampering them from participating in society and everyday life in a way which would otherwise be open to them" (section 2, subsection 1

Social Code IX). A person is in danger of disability when a barrier to full participation is foreseeable (section 2, subsection 2 Social Code IX).

Eligibility for benefits according to section 1, subsection 1 of the Social Code IX fundamentally covers anyone "in danger of being disabled" or affected by disability. A "degree of disability" *(Grad der Behinderung)* is measured on a scale of 20 to 100. People with disabilities ranging from 50 onwards are regarded as "severely disabled" (*Schwerbehinderte)*. They are subject to the most far-reaching provisions and compensatory measures open to people with disabilities. People with a degree of 30 upwards are entitled to treatment equalling that of people with severe disabilities if otherwise they were hampered in reaching or maintaining appropriate employment.

The degree of disability can either be certified by the supplying authorities, the institution responsible for rehabilitation measures or the employer (within the civil service). The competent authorities issue an individual certificate stating the degree of disability and further features of individual health which entail certain compensatory measures. This certificate is required, for example, for public transport services (section 69, subsection 5, Social Code IX).

There is a tight net of potential diagnoses by which the legal status of a person with a disability is defined (see Table A in the annex). A large number of pupils with a right to this status, generally speaking, are not entitled to measures of special education. This holds for many young people, such as those who have lost a toe, have a serious skin disease, diabetes, neurodermatitis, anorexia nervosa, moderate muscular weakness, or various chronic psychological diseases.

Since the right to numerous benefits, especially to many forms of medical care, does not depend on the legal recognition of a person as being disabled, many people with disabilities as recognised by social legislation have little motivation to apply to be officially certified as disabled. Among those who often will not do so are alcohol or drug addicts, as well as people with chronic psychological diseases. Many people who would by rights be entitled to official recognition – and the resources that flow from that official status – have good reasons not to apply. One possible reason is the obligation according to labour legislation to disclose the status of disability when applying for a job. Numerous studies have proven that despite the special benefits which the employment of a disabled person entails, the disclosure of the status of disability does represent a severe deterrent for employment, whether due to negative stereotypes, stigma or discrimination.

Official statistics about the prevalence of disability only register people with severe disabilities. Thus, there is no data available concerning the overall prevalence of disabilities. The total number of people registered by the competent authorities as having a severe disability ran up to 6.6 million in 1999, with severely disabled people representing approximately 8% of the German population (Table 6.2). Table 6.3 offers an overview of the dimensions of disability as a social problem within the age category relevant to this study.

Table 6.2.   **Persons with severe disabilities registered in 1999, according to age**

Age	Number	Percentage
6-15	97 394	1.2
15-18	36 114	1.3
18-25	96 482	1.5
25-35	247 819	1.9
35-45	442 721	3.4
45-55	665 975	6.6
55-60	688 449	12.1
60-62	381 717	16.9
62-65	541 288	17.8
>65	3 405 470	26.1
	Total: 6 633 466	Average: 8.1

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2001).

Table 6.3.   **Persons with severe disabilities between 18 and 25 years of age registered in 1999, according to type of disability**

Type of disability	Male	Female	Total
Loss, partial loss or functional limitation of limbs, the dorsal spine, the body or the chest	6 220	4 781	11 001
Blindness, visual impairments	2 432	1 805	4 237
Speech and language impairments, hearing impairments, deafness	3 330	2 874	6 204
Loss of one breast or both breasts, cosmetic impairments	121	131	252
Organic dysfunction	7 405	5 812	13 217
Paraplegia, brain disturbances	4 369	3 181	7 550
Brain-induced psycho-syndrome	4 920	3 257	8 177
Disorders of mental development	15 730	10 669	26 399
Schizophrenia, affective psychoses	1 197	649	1 846
Neuroses, personality and behavioural disorders	630	432	1 062
Addictions	90	44	134
Other disabilities	9 302	7 101	16 403
Total	55 746	40 736	96 482

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2001).

As Table 6.2 clearly indicates, the proportion of severely disabled persons increases massively with increasing age. It is likely, however, that the noticeable 20-fold increase of this proportion is not solely due to more severe health problems later in life: age-related diseases are not, per definition, considered as disabilities and statistics include only those registered (as discussed above, many people resist registration). At least part of the increase is probably caused by the very different motivations, depending on the biographical situation of a person, for applying for a status of disability at all.

Disability in institutions of higher education

The National Association for Student Affairs (*Deutsches Studentenwerk, DSW*) periodically conducts a survey on the social situation of students in Germany. These samples are regarded as being representative, and data are based on anonymised information of the surveyees about themselves. The latest survey was carried out in the summer semester 2000 (DSW/HIS, 2001). According to this study, 2% of all students consider themselves as being "disabled", and 13% have chronic diseases, (*ibid*.: p. 25 and 65). In addition, the previous survey provided evidence of 1% of the students suffering from dyslexia (Rath, 2001, p. 395). Of the students with chronic diseases, 52% suffered from allergies and diseases of the respiratory tract, 17% from diseases of the musculo-skeletal system and supporting tissue, and 8% from chronic psychological diseases (DSW/HIS, 2001, p. 25).

We can assume that a considerable proportion of the students who describe themselves in the surveys as "suffering from chronic diseases" would match the criteria of social legislation for an official disability status. The proportion of students with severe disabilities according to the DSW/HIS survey approximately equals that of severely disabled persons of the appropriate age group. However, this may not be considered as an indication that all or even a majority of those students who consider themselves disabled have an officially recognised disability status, nor can it be taken as proof that German institutions of higher education integrate severely disabled persons into their body of students proportionate with disabled persons in society generally. The data given can only be taken as a basis for legitimising further support of the integration of disabled people in higher education (DSW, 2001). In the case of disabilities and chronic diseases, anonymised information of the surveyees about themselves may be considered a valid instrument for assessing rates of prevalence, as positive and negative desirability effects occur much less frequently than in self-initiated official registration processes. Taking into consideration the present numbers of students and entrants, these data lead to the information as presented in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4. **Approximate numbers of SWD and chronic illnesses in institutions of higher education in 2000 (DSW/HIS-Survey)**

Category	Students	Entrants
Disability (2%)	36 000	6 000
Dyslexia (1%)	18 000	3 000
Chronic illnesses (13%) of which	234 000	39 000
– physical illnesses	216 000	36 000
– mental illnesses	18 000	3 000
Total	288 000	48 000

Source: DSW/HIS (2001), original representation.

Institutions of higher education[2]

Numbers of students and institutions

In the academic year 2000/2001, 355 publicly maintained or officially recognised institutions of higher education were registered in Germany. Among them were 120 universities and equivalent institutions, 50 colleges of art and music, and 185 universities of applied sciences.

Overall, approximately one third of the age group began a course of study in 2000 (34% of men vs. 33% of women). Compared to 1996, this is an increase of approximately 2% points (DSW/HIS, 2001, p. 7) (Table 6.5).

Table 6.5. **Students and entrants at German institutions of higher education 1999, 2000 and 2001 (in 1 000s)**

Type of institution	*Students*			Entrants		
	1999	2000	2001	1999	2000	2001
Universities and equivalent institutions	1 301	1 308	1 346	195	211	230
Colleges of art and music	30	31	31	4	4	4
Universities of applied sciences	443	450	484	92	97	107
Total	1 774	1 789	1 861	291	312	341

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (*www.destatis.de*).

In addition to the institutions already mentioned, Germany's tertiary sector includes 35 *Berufsakademien (*Professional Academies, Universities of

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2.   Parts of this section, especially those containing general information on the regulations governing higher education institutions, are extracted from KMK (2001a).

Cooperative Education*)* which are to be found in certain *Länder*. Training at *Berufsakademien* is governed by the *Berufsakademie* laws in force in the individual *Länder* and by the training and examination regulations of the relevant Ministry of Science. Thus by law, the *Berufsakademien* do not yet form part of the higher education system, for they originated from the vocational training sector only quite recently. However, they represent an integral part of what the public and the media regard as the system of higher education. The final qualifications awarded by the *Berufsakademien* in several *Länder* have been recognised as tertiary sector qualifications which are covered by the EU directive on higher education degrees. Therefore, the *Berufsakademien* are included is this analysis.

General features

Legislative framework

According to the principle of cultural sovereignty laid down in the Basic Law, higher education policies and funding are traditionally a domain of the 16 *Länder* (federal states). By means of a constitutional amendment made in 1969, the construction of higher education institutions, educational planning and the promotion of research activities were declared joint tasks of the Federal Government and *Länder* governments. In 1976, the Framework Act for Higher Education *(Hochschulrahmengesetz, HRG)* was passed (last amended in 2002). Since 1976, the legal basis of higher education in the FRG has been provided by the Framework Act for Higher Education and the *Länder* legislation on higher education. It describes objectives and guidelines with regard to studies, teaching and research, admission, membership, participation and the qualifications of academic staff. *Länder* laws on higher education cover those areas in detail, with the *Länder* retaining substantial influence. Federal and *Länder* legislative regulations apply to all institutions of higher education, including private ones.

Purpose of study

The purpose of study at all German institutions of higher education is laid down in Section 7 of the Framework Act for Higher Education as follows:

> "Teaching and study are to prepare students for a profession in a certain sphere of activity, imparting to them the particular knowledge, skills and methods required in a way appropriate to each course so as to enable them to perform scientific or artistic work and to act responsibly in a free, democratic and social state governed by the rule of law."

Taking up the traditional principle of the unity of teaching and research, this statement aims at enabling a direct contact for all students with the most recent developments in research or artistic development. Whilst this purpose of study applies to all types of higher education, basic and theoretical research as well as the training of academic staff for all institutions of higher education remain a domain of universities and equivalent institutions.

Cost of studies

According to Section 27 of the Framework Act for Higher Education, courses of study at publicly maintained institutions of higher education are generally free of charge up to a first degree qualifying for entry into a profession. If students follow a consecutive course of study including an intermediary academic degree (*i.e.* the Bachelor's degree), the whole course of study up to the Master's, Diploma, or state examination degree level is free of charge. In special cases, *Länder* legislation may have provided for exceptional handling. Several *Länder* have already made use of this possibility by introducing certain fees for long-term study.

The average monthly cost of living for students in Germany was approximately EUR 620 in the year 2000. The cost of living for students in the *Länder* of the former GDR averages approximately EUR 120 below that of students living in the old *Länder* (DSW/HIS, 2001, p. 15). The average extra cost of living for SWD reaches approximately EUR 60 per month according to various sources. Roughly 29% of all students receive benefits through the Federal Education and Training Assistance Act (BaföG). 72% of those receiving these benefits state that they would not be able to follow a course of study without them (DSW/HIS, 2001). This highlights the importance of financial support to enable the higher education participation not only of disadvantaged population groups, but the large majority of students in Germany.

Entry requirements

There are three types of higher education entrance qualifications to be obtained in German upper secondary schools: *allgemeine Hochschulreife*, *fachgebundene Hochschulreife* and *Fachhochschulreife*. The certificates *allgemeine Hochschulreife* and *fachgebundene Hochschulreife* are normally obtained after 13 school years (12 years in some *Länder*), upon completion of the *Gymnasiale Oberstufe* or certain courses of vocational education on the upper secondary level. The *allgemeine Hochschulreife* (general entrance qualification to higher education) entitles school-leavers to study at any institution of higher education in any subject or field, while the *fachgebundene*

Hochschulreife (subject-related entrance qualification to higher education) permits entry only to specified courses of study. The *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* can also be acquired at *Abendgymnasien*, *i.e.* evening schools for working people, and *Kollegs*, *i.e.* full-time schools for those who have completed vocational training. A third type of entrance qualification is the *Fachhochschulreife* (entrance qualification only to universities of applied sciences)*,* which is acquired after 12 grades at a *Fachoberschule* or by taking additional classes at a vocational school, *e.g.* a *Berufsfachschule* or *Fachschule.*

In most *Länder*, there are certain ways for vocationally qualified applicants not holding any of the entrance qualifications listed above to obtain access to certain courses of higher education. The applicants must prove they have the requisite knowledge and abilities for higher education by undergoing an entrance procedure (*e.g.* by provisionally enrolling for a probationary period of study) or an examination procedure (*e.g.* placement or aptitude test, interview). Based on their previous vocational qualifications, they are usually granted the right to study only in a specified discipline or course of study.

If the demand for places in a certain course of study at publicly maintained institutions is higher than the number of places available, a nation-wide or local selection procedure may be carried out. Formal criteria for admission are the results of the entry qualification (average mark) and the time an applicant has spent waiting for a position (waiting period).

The aforementioned formal criteria can only be outweighed by social criteria such as an officially accepted application for the acknowledgement of a case of hardship. The eligibility for admission by means of such a request is based upon the presentation of a thorough medical attestation giving proof of the applicant's exceptional situation. If study places are granted by means of a nation-wide selection procedure carried out by the Central Office for the Allocation of Study Places (ZVS), people with an officially testified status of severe disability are given preference in the process of allocation. People with other forms of disability must supply proof of their preference for a particular university on grounds of health, family affairs, or financial matters in order to be preferred in the allocation of a study place at the institution of their choice. A compensatory request for prior disadvantage may result in a slight improvement of the average mark and the accounted waiting period, but specific proof is needed of circumstances which had a negative impact on the average mark.

In subjects like sports, the arts, and architecture, additional aptitude tests have to be taken. The aptitude tests can be highly challenging and selective. In some subjects, especially in the field of performing and creative arts, private preparatory schools prepare prospective students for specific aptitude tests.

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There is no information available on how the selection processes in these cases are modified by the institutions to take into account the specific abilities of disabled persons. The same observation applies to private institutions of higher education carrying out their own admission procedures. The resulting procedures usually take several days and typically include an assessment of abilities in fields like complex problem solving, presentation, debating, or general knowledge. Similar admission procedures can be encountered in publicly maintained institutions, mainly in the admission procedure for integrated international courses of study.

If students apply for a place in a dual course of study, *i.e.* a course combining academic training with periodical and regular professional training throughout the course of study, they have to undergo a staff recruitment process. This procedure not only requires truthful information about an individual's disability status. Applicants are also required to truthfully reply to any question about diseases, impairments or disabilities likely to have an impact on their fulfilment of the training or employment contract. On the other hand, students with an officially recognised disability status, and their employers, are entitled to claim all rights related to vocational or professional participation of persons with disabilities, *e.g.* subsidies to the trainee compensation and technical equipment, or professional assistance at the workplace, to name just a few.

Courses and degrees

Students in the traditional courses of study are not classified by years of study, but by semesters and levels of study (basic and advanced). If students do not gain a compulsory certificate, they must repeat that class/certificate only, not the whole semester. Nevertheless, failing classes usually prolongs the overall period of study. Study and examination regulations lay down the requirements for entry to a certain stage of studies. Intermediate and final examinations may usually be repeated once. SWD and chronic illnesses may be granted additional attempts if individual applications for the acknowledgement of a case of hardship are accepted. In order to shorten study times in practice, the mentioned provisions have been partly amended, so that failed attempts at the final examination within the standard period of study (*Regelstudienzeit*) are disregarded (so-called free attempts, *Freiversuch*).

Changing the course of study is possible provided that the student in question obtains a study place for the course of his choice. Years already spent in higher education and the courses and examinations that have been passed will be credited towards a different course of study, provided they are deemed equivalent by the accepting institution.

At the moment, the average age of German graduates is approximately 28 years. According to various sources, approximately 28% of all students at universities and equivalent institutions and about 20% of the students at universities of applied sciences drop out of higher education without being awarded any degree.

Academic degrees

Institutions of higher education are authorised to administer academic examinations (*Hochschulprüfungen*). In the traditional graduation system, a first academic degree is conferred on the basis of a *Diplomprüfung* (leading to the awarding of the *Diplomgrad*, bestowing such titles as *Diplom-Ingenieur* or *Diplom-Musiklehrer*) or a *Magisterprüfung* (leading to the awarding of the *Magistergrad*, bestowing the title of *Magister Artium,* M.A.). To ensure that the various institutions of higher education have comparable standards in terms of training and degrees, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the *Länder* (*Kultusministerkonferenz*) and the Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz)* set up a *Joint Commission for the Coordination of Study and Examination Regulations*, which draws up framework regulations and general provisions concerning academic examinations. The examination regulations (*Prüfungordnungen*) prescribe the objectives and subject matter of the examinations, the required standards and the examining procedures for each study course. The examination regulations have to be approved by the Ministry of Science of the respective *Land.*

The academic degrees of Bachelor's/*Bakkalaureus* and Master's/*Magister*, based upon the Anglo-Saxon model of a consecutive system of courses of study, are relatively new to German higher education. Since 1998, institutions have been entitled by the Framework Act for Higher Education to award Bachelor's or Master's degrees independently of any cooperation with a foreign institution. Bachelor's/*Bakkalaureus* study courses generally concentrate on a scientific core subject. Admission to Master's study courses requires a first academic degree or state examination. The institutions usually add a supplement to the leaving certificate that describes the study course in English. The Master's degree is an academic degree corresponding to the *Diplom* or *Magister* in the customary university graduation system. Thus, the latter will be supplemented rather than replaced by the new consecutive system. The total standard period of study for consecutive *Bachelor*'s and *Master*'s study courses should not exceed five years. The standard period of study for Bachelor's study courses can be three to a maximum of four years, and for the Master's study courses one to a maximum of two years.

State examinations

A state examination or *Staatsprüfung* has to be taken in courses of study that prepare students for professions of particular importance to the public interest (medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, pharmacology, food chemistry, law), and generally in courses of study that are directly linked to civil service. The latter applies, for example, to the teaching professions (at school level). Regulations governing *Staatsprüfungen* are issued by the competent federal and *Länder* ministries. The standards of performance for state examinations generally correspond to those for academic examinations. In many cases, students can undergo academic and state examinations at the same time, or their academic examinations can be recognised as state examinations later (*e.g.* in the recruiting process of civil servants in the fields of architecture, diplomacy or public engineering). In the case of state examinations, representatives of the state examination bodies act as examiners along with university teachers. After the first state examination, prospective lawyers, teachers and all prospective civil servants have to undergo a second phase of training called preparatory service (*Vorbereitungsdienst* or *Referendariat*). This phase is concluded by another state examination. Only this second state examination entitles them to practise their profession. Ecclesiastical examinations are held within the subject of theology and correspond to a certain extent to the state examinations, with the examiners appointed by church authorities.

Institutions by types

Traditionally, higher education in Germany is a hierarchical system of different types of institutions of higher education. However, the remaining hierarchical structures prescribed by law, are replaced more and more by unofficial differences in status. The internationalisation of courses of study and final qualifications and the increasing accreditation of individual achievements through the "European Credit Transfer System" (ECTS) do not only increase the formal permeability between types of educational institutions with traditional differences in status. In fact, public awareness of traditional differences in status also decreases and is more and more replaced by new assessments of quality or reputation of the institutions, based on observations and/or reflected by rankings.

An example for this is the development of the universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*). Originally founded to give vocationally trained applicants without an entry certificate to traditional universities the opportunity to attain academic degrees, though with a status clearly below that of university

graduates, many *Fachhochschulen* have developed into highly acclaimed, highly selective and internationally oriented institutions.

Universities and colleges of art and music

Other institutions besides the "traditional" universities, but enjoying full university status, are the universities of technology *(Technische Hochschulen* or *Technische Universitäten)*, medical and veterinary colleges *(Medizinische* and *Tiermedizinische Hochschulen)*, theological colleges *(Theologische Hochschulen)* and universities of education *(Pädagogische Hochschulen)*. Universities and their equivalent institutions all share the traditional right to award the doctorate (*Doktorgrad*) and a post-doctoral lecturing qualification (*Habilitation*). These rights are termed *Promotionsrecht* and *Habilitationsrecht* respectively. Academic and scientific research – particularly basic research – and the training of the next generation of academic teaching and research staff are also distinctive features of universities and equivalent institutions of higher education.

Colleges of art and music offer courses of study in the creative and performing arts; in many cases they also teach related theoretical disciplines like history of art, musicology, and teaching of music.

Entry requirements

Admission to any course of study at universities and equivalent higher education institutions requires the *allgemeine Hochschulreife* or the *fachgebundene Hochschulreife.* For the majority of courses there are no nation-wide restrictions on the number of applicants who can be admitted. All applicants who meet the above-mentioned entrance requirements are registered at the higher education institution for the course of study of their choice without having to go through any special admission procedures. In some courses (*e.g.* medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry, architecture, business management and psychology), there are nation-wide quotas due to the large numbers of applicants and the insufficient number of places available. Places in these courses are awarded by the Central Office for the Allocation of Study Places *(Zentralstelle für die Vergabe von Studienplätzen, ZVS)* in Dortmund on the basis of a general selection procedure. Which courses are subject to the nation-wide selection procedure may vary from semester to semester. Moreover, it is quite possible that all applicants for a restricted course will be accepted when there are fewer applicants than places available. The criteria for the selection of applicants in subjects with nation-wide quotas are the applicant's average mark in the entrance qualification, the waiting period (between sitting for the entrance qualification and applying) and social criteria,

one of which can be a disability or chronic illness (see above). There are local restrictions on admission to a number of higher education institutions for courses that are not included in the national admission procedure. In these cases, the university then admits applicants based chiefly on the criteria of average marks and waiting period.

Colleges of art and music require the *allgemeine Hochschulreife* or *fachgebundene Hochschulreife* and proof of artistic aptitude. In most *Länder*, purely artistic courses, *i.e.* not those for prospective teachers, admit applicants without higher education entrance qualification if applicants display unusual artistic talent.

Courses and degrees

Universities usually offer a range of subjects including the humanities, law, economics and social sciences, natural sciences, medicine, agronomy, forestry, nutritional science and engineering sciences. These or similarly designated subject categories offer a total of about 330 subjects with over 6 800 different degree courses.

A distinction is drawn between academic, state and ecclesiastical examinations. Whereas academic examinations are carried out and administered by universities and colleges of art, state and ecclesiastical examinations are administered by state and church authorities. While courses of study leading to a *Magister* degree require a combination of several subjects (usually one major subject and two minor subjects, or two major subjects), courses leading to a *Diplom* concentrate on a single subject. Except for the state examinations in teaching professions, state and ecclesiastical examinations concentrate on a single subject like theology, dentistry, medicine or law.

All courses of study leading to a *Diplom*, *Magisterprüfung*, ecclesiastical or state examination are divided up into a basic studies section *(Grundstudium)*, which typically ends after four semesters with an intermediate examination, and an advanced studies section *(Hauptstudium)* which usually takes five semesters and ends with a final examination. For entry to intermediate and final examinations, students are required to submit certificates they have acquired on the basis of oral or written work. The successful completion of an intermediate examination is a prerequisite for proceeding to the advanced studies section. Neither state examinations nor ecclesiastical examinations or academic degrees are awarded on the basis of intermediate examinations in Germany.

Detailed structures and contents of the courses of study are laid down in the *Studienordnungen* (study regulations) and *Prüfungsordnungen* (examination

regulations). They list the individual classes and numbers of lessons required for completion of a course of study in each stage of higher education, and show which subjects are compulsory, elective and optional. The study regulations also indicate which form of certificates is to be gained in specific classes. The *Prüfungsordnungen* (examination regulations) specify the standard period of study (*Regelstudienzeit*), requirements for entry to examinations, crediting of specific courses and examinations taken, time allowed for completion of the final dissertation, examination standards, procedures and examination subjects. Eight to ten semesters are laid down as the standard period of study for most courses of study leading to the *Diplom*, *Magister* or *Staatsexamen*, and six years and three months for medicine. On average, however, many students take one or two years longer to finish.

Postgraduate studies and doctorate

In addition to the courses leading to a first degree, there are further study, supplementary and follow-up courses (*postgraduale Studiengänge*) that either build on the first degree, providing further vocational skills, increased specialisation and reinforcement, or are taken in parallel with a different course of study. They are usually taken immediately after or during the first degree course of study, take four semesters and lead to the awarding of a certificate stating the level achieved or to a further higher education degree *(Diplom, Magister, Master)*. At colleges of art and music, further study, supplementary and follow-up courses (*postgraduale Studiengänge*) culminate in the awarding of the title of *Meisterschüler* (member of a master class), the *künstlerische Reifeprüfung* (final arts examination)*,* the *Konzertexamen* (concert examination) or a further *Diplom* degree.

A handbook entitled *Weiterführende Studienangebote an den Hochschulen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* is published on a regular basis by the Association of Universities and other Higher Education Institutions *(Hochschulrektorenkonferenz)* and provides an overview of the range of postgraduate and continuing education courses on offer. It is also available on the Internet at *www.higher-education-compass.hrk.de*.

Particularly well-qualified students who have obtained a first degree may also choose to complete a doctorate in a process termed *Promotion*. A doctorate is conferred on the strength of a doctoral thesis, which must be based on independent research, and oral examinations called *Rigorosum*. Oral examinations may be replaced by a defence of the student's thesis *(Disputation)*. Generally, a doctoral thesis need not be written within any prescribed length of time. The doctorate entitles a graduate to bear the title of *Doktor* (*Doktorgrad*). Admittance to doctoral studies is regulated in the

Promotion regulations of the universities. In order to improve the training offered to future academics, over 300 *Graduiertenkollegs* have been set up since 1990 at institutions of higher education to provide students with the opportunity to prepare their dissertations within the framework of a systematic study programme.

Universities of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschulen)

Fachhochschulen (universities of applied sciences) are characterised by practice-orientation in their teaching. One or two semesters of work experience (*Praxissemester)* are integrated into the courses of study at *Fachhochschulen*. The *Fachhochschule* lays down the rules for and content of these training periods, supervises them and provides parallel classes. The semesters of work experience are spent in a company or in another place of work for a period of at least 20 weeks. In addition to their academic qualifications, professors at *Fachhochschulen* have gained at least three years of professional experience outside the field of higher education. In 1999, 48 out of 182 *Fachhochschulen* were not publicly maintained. 30 *Fachhochschulen* for public administration (*Verwaltungsfachhochschulen*) train civil servants for careers in the so-called higher level of the civil service. They are maintained by the Federation or by a *Land*, and their students normally have a revocable civil servant status.

Many *Fachhochschulen* offer courses that combine academic studies with on-the-job training or employment, along the lines of a dual system (*duales System*). These courses are called dual courses of study *(duale Studiengänge)*. In addition to their student status, the students have training or employment contracts. The periods of study and work experience are distributed according to various models (sandwich or consecutive model).

The private *Fachhochschule* in Heidelberg has been designed from the very beginning to suit the needs of persons with any type of disability. An extensive range of medical, psychological and care resources is offered directly on the campus. In terms of construction and technical features, this institution is mostly barrier-free and thus suitable for disabled persons. For students who can make corresponding legal claims, the tuition fees and costs of other services can be borne by the responsible institutions.

Entry requirements

Traditionally, the prerequisite for admission to a *Fachhochschule* is the *Fachhochschulreife* (entrance qualification to universities of applied sciences). Over half of the students entering *Fachhochschulen* have a higher education entrance qualification which would entitle them to study at a university. Previous practical experience is required for admission to certain courses of study.

Almost all *Fachhochschulen* restrict the number of students admitted to the various subjects due to capacity constraints. The study places in these subjects are awarded by the *Fachhochschule* itself, usually on the basis of average marks and waiting periods. Only in North Rhine-Westphalia is admission to some courses controlled by the *Zentralstelle für die Vergabe von Studienplätzen* (Central Office for the Allocation of Study Places).

Some of the publicly maintained universities of applied sciences carry out aptitude tests for prospective students in economics. The result of the test has some influence on the allocation of study places. The University of Applied Sciences in Pforzheim, Germany, has set up a coordination centre for this aptitude test (*www.fh.pforzheim.de/bewerber/studierfähigkeitstest.htm*).

In the case of dual courses of study or courses of study at universities of applied sciences for public administration *(Verwaltungsfachhochschulen)*, prospective students must successfully apply for a training or employment contract in order to be admitted to a course of study. The observations concerning SWD in dual courses of study also apply to these courses.

Courses and degrees

The information about the organisation of studies and examinations at universities essentially applies to *Fachhochschulen* as well. Eight semesters, including one or two semesters of work experience (*Praxissemester*), are laid down as a standard period of study for *Diplom* courses of study at *Fachhochschulen*. On average, however, students take one or two semesters longer to finish. For the introduction of *Bachelor*'s and *Master*'s study courses, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs passed structural requirements in March 1999 that apply to both *Fachhochschulen* and universities. Universities of applied sciences offer a high and continuously increasing number of international study courses. Most of these courses of study are based in the areas of law, economics and the social sciences, followed by engineering.

Traditionally, *Fachhochschulen* award a *Diplomgrad* upon completion of a course of study. The degree indicates the field of study and that it was awarded by a *Fachhochschule*: *e.g. Diplomingenieur (Fachhochschule) – i.e. Diplom* in engineering awarded by a *Fachhochschule* – abbreviated to *Dipl.-Ing. (FH)*. Some *Fachhochschulen* have agreements with a foreign university or other institution of higher education allowing them to confer a foreign degree on the level of the Bachelor's in addition to the German *Diplom*. The *Diplom* course of study is divided into a basic studies section *(Grundstudium*, up to four semesters), which ends with an intermediate *Diplom* examination *(Diplom-Vorprüfung)*, and an advanced studies section, which ends with a *Diplom* examination *(Diplomprüfung)*. The standard period of study is eight semesters including work experience. The intermediate examination in courses of study leading to a *Diplom* degree *(Diplom-Vorprüfung)* generally consists of oral examinations and/or written papers in the relevant subjects *(Fachprüfungen)*, whilst the final examination (*Diplomprüfung*) consists of papers in the relevant subjects and a dissertation. These papers are generally written as an accompaniment to studies, following a block of teaching in a particular subject. Admission to *Fachprüfungen* may depend on academic performance. The aim of the dissertation is for the students to deal with a detail of their subject independently and in an academic manner. Students must complete their dissertation within three months.

Bachelor's/*Bakkalaureus* study courses at universities of applied sciences concentrate on a scientific core subject, and admission to Master's study courses requires the completion of a first degree. Institutions add a supplement on the leaving certificate that describes the study course in English.

Further study, supplementary and follow-up courses (*postgraduale Studiengänge*) are also available at most *Fachhochschulen*. It is not possible to obtain a doctoral degree from a *Fachhochschule*. Nevertheless, there are several ways for particularly well qualified holders of a Bachelor degree or of a *Diplom* obtained at a *Fachhochschule* to be admitted to a doctoral course at a university. Typically, students who gained their first degree at a *Fachhochschule* are required to complete preparatory academic studies and/or a supplementary period of study at a university or have to sit an aptitude test *(Promotionseignungsprüfung)*.

Universities of Cooperative Education (Berufsakademien)

An alternative to the institutions of higher education is provided by the *Universities of Cooperative Education (Berufsakademien, BA). Berufsakademien* form part of the tertiary sector and combine academic training at a study institution with practical professional training with a company in

trade, industry, the public sector or liberal professions, thus constituting a *dual system* (*duales System*). During the training, periods of study at the study institution alternate with periods of on-the-job training in the training establishments. Employers bear the costs of on-the-job training and pay the students a wage, which is also received during the theoretical part of the training at the study institution. *Berufsakademien* are to be found in Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, Sachsen and Thüringen, where they are state-run, and in Schleswig-Holstein, Niedersachsen and Saarland, where they are privately maintained, state-recognised institutions. Training at *Berufsakademien* is governed by the *Berufsakademie* laws in force in the individual *Länder* and by the training and examination regulations of the relevant Ministry of Science.

The degrees awarded by *Berufsakademien* based on the Baden-Württemberg model are amongst the degrees in tertiary education which are covered by the EU directive on higher education degrees. The *Berufsakademie* Berlin and the *Berufsakademie* Sachsen also meet these criteria to award the *Diplom (BA).* The Standing Conference also recommended that a *Diplom* awarded by these *Berufsakademien* be regarded as equivalent to a *Diplom* awarded by a *Fachhochschule* with regard to the rules governing the right to practise certain professions.

Entry requirements

Applicants for courses at the *Berufsakademien* require a general or subject-restricted higher education entrance qualification (*Hochschulreife* or *Fachhochschulreife*), depending on the regulations in force in the particular *Land*, and a training contract with a suitable training establishment. Once the training contract has been concluded, applicants are registered at the study institution by the company responsible for their training. The observations concerning SWD in all dual courses of study also apply to courses at universities of cooperative education.

Courses and degrees

Courses offered at the *Berufsakademien* typically cover the fields of business, technology and social services. Since the 1990s, the final qualifications awarded by the *Berufsakademien* in Baden-Württemberg, Berlin and Sachsen have been recognised as tertiary sector qualifications that are covered by the EU directive on higher education degrees. The two kinds of training are given according to study plans and training plans, which are drawn up by the *Berufsakademien* together with participating companies and social services, and adopted by the ministries responsible in the form of ordinances.

Training at the *Berufsakademie* is generally divided into two years of basic studies followed by one year of advanced studies. Each semester is divided into two 12-week periods, one of which is spent with on-the-job training and one completing the theoretical part of the course at the study institution. No provision is made for semester holidays within the study plans, but students receive an annual holiday entitlement of approximately four weeks on account of their training contract. After the second year of studies, students are awarded vocational qualifications related to the respective field of studies. Students who successfully complete their *Diplom* examination are awarded a qualification for entry into a profession (*e.g.* a *Diplom* degree in engineering, *Diplom-Ingenieur*, in youth and community work, *Diplom-Sozialpädagoge*, or in business management, *Diplom-Betriebswirt*, to which the abbreviation *BA* is added), and, in the case of integrated international courses of study, an additional degree from a cooperating institution.

Distance studies

Distance learning can offer people with disabilities who are keen to study, but for whom travel or on-site learning is or seems to be associated with insurmountable obstacles, the opportunity to attain academic degrees. This is especially true for students with certain severe physical impairments or for students who are forced to live in care institutions. On the other hand, studying at an institution of distance learning implies a certain level of personal isolation and a lack of face-to-face contact with other students and teaching staff. Self-help groups in a distance studies institution are as "virtual" as the courses themselves.

The *Fernuniversität* (University for Distance Learning) in Hagen is the largest provider of distance learning courses at university level in Germany (*www.fernuni-hagen.de*). Over half of the approximately 60 000 students at the *Fernuniversität* are part-time students. The *Fernuniversität* offers a range of first degree courses leading to various academic degrees as well as further study, supplementary and follow-up courses (*postgraduale Studiengänge*). As a "virtualisation" of laboratory work has yet to be developed, courses in science subjects necessitating laboratory work are not on offer at the University for Distance Studies. The University for Distance Studies maintains a network of learning centres in various towns in the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as in Austria, Switzerland, and Central and Eastern European countries. Advice and supervision is provided for the students on-site at the study centres and sessions are run here in certain periods when the students are required to attend classes in person. Students who are unable to attend meetings, courses and examinations in the learning centres are offered in-house-visits and

examinations by so-called "mentors". Written papers can be replaced by oral examinations or essays.

Other distance study institutions which offered complete courses of study in 1998, besides the *Fernuniversität* Hagen, were the Technical University of Dresden, the *Hochschule für Musik* (College of Music) in Dresden, the *Fachhochschule* for Technology and Economy in Berlin, the *Fachhochschule* in Bochum, the *Fachhochschule* in Dresden, the *Fachhochschule* for Distance Studies in Hamburg, the *Fachhochschule* in Iserlohn, the *Süddeutsche Hochschule für Berufstätige* (College for working people of Southern Germany) in Lahr, the *Ostdeutsche Hochschule für Berufstätige* (College for working people of Eastern Germany) in Leipzig and the *Hochschule für Berufstätige* (College for working people) in Rendsburg (DSW, 1998, p. 24).

Institutions of higher education which students attend in person *(Präsenzhochschulen)* are also becoming increasingly involved in distance learning. The Federal Government and the *Länder* are supporting this development through the joint research promotion issue of distance learning established in 1993 by the Commission of the Federation and the *Länder* for Educational Planning and Research Promotion *(Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung)*. Since then, new distance learning opportunities providing first degree courses as well as vocational, academic continuing education, have been established at *Präsenzhochschulen*.

Means and institutions of support

Overview

There is not enough space here to describe all forms of support open to students in Germany. Extensive brochures with relevant information have been published. In Table 6.6, such forms of support and the responsible institutions are to be listed that aim at catering to the special needs of SWD before and during their entire course of study. In this context, "special need" is used in the sense of all potential requirements that SWD might be faced with.

Table 6.6.   **Potential special needs of SWD and institutions responsible
for providing services**

"Special need"	Proceedings	Responsible institution(s)
Issuing of a certificate of disability (*e.g.* for free use of public transport facilities in cases of sensory impairments and mobility restrictions, or for quick and simple proof of the disability status during application processes)	Application	Office for Public Assistance *(Versorgungsamt)*
Counselling on requirements for benefits and the identification of the appropriate institutions for "benefits for integration" according to Social Code IX, *e.g.*: – Personal technical aids – Personal assistance/study assistant/sign language translation services – Measures of special education – Care services – Direct financial support towards the cost of living – Equipment of workplaces to suit the needs of disabled persons – Transport services/vehicles suitable for disabled persons	Application for benefits for integration, possibly with a medical certificate	Joint "Rehabilitation Service-point", Office for Integration (for severely disabled persons) or one of the following: – Health insurance – Pension Insurance – Accident insurance – Federal Employment Agency – Social security (only if none of the other is responsible; other restrictions apply)
Basic training for the handling of technical aids	Basic technical training	Federal Employment Agency
Priority in the allocation of places of study in courses with enrolment restrictions	Application for the acknowledgement of a case of hardship/Application for a balance of disadvantages	– Issuing of medical certificates: medical specialists, upper secondary schools – Acknowledgement: central office for the allocation of study places or local admission office
Priority in the allocation of accommodation in halls of residence, extended times of residence	Application	Administration of halls of residence within associations for student affairs
Special benefits according to the Federal Education and Training Assistance Act (*BAföG*): – Special allowances – Longer periods of assistance – Reduced repayment of the education loan	Application	Counselling and granting: Office for Education and Training Assistance (*BAföG-Amt*)

Fixed financial benefits, independent of personal income, according to *Länder* legislation, *e.g*: – Blindness benefits *(Blindengeld)* – Care benefits *(Pflegegeld)*	Application	Social Welfare Office *(Sozialamt)*
Subsidiary benefits according to the Federal Social Security Act	Application	Social Welfare Office *(Sozialamt)*
Counselling and information on study options, job profiles, general circumstances of study, and application strategies	Career information and guidance	Career Services of the Federal Employment Agency: – "Rehabilitation counselling" (for *all* disabled persons) – Career counselling for upper secondary school-leavers – Psychological and medical services – National Office for the Placement of Severely Disabled Skilled or Executive Personnel (*Vermittlungsstelle für schwerbehinderte Fach- und Führungskräfte)* – Higher education teams (for *all* Students in higher education) – Central counselling and career services of higher education institutions – Local and national self-help associations – Advice Centre for Higher Education Applicants and Students with Disabilities of the National Association for Student Affairs
Independent legal counselling services for disabled persons, with the option of law suits initiated by the association in special cases		National self-help associations
Information on the circumstances of studying at a specific institution, of specific requirements and financing options	Counselling	– Social and legal counselling services of associations for student affairs – At large institutions, independent counselling services for disabled persons – Student advisory services of the departments and faculties – Peer Counselling: local and national self-help groups and associations – Student unions – Coordinator for disability affairs

Assistance/therapy in the case of psychological problems or learning difficulties		Psycho-social and psycho-therapeutical counselling services of the associations for student affairs
Modifications to teaching methods and the use of media in specific classes	Personal request with the teachers	Coordinator for disability affairs
Modification of examinations and other assessment procedures, such as: – Technical or personal aids – Extension of the examination time – Additional breaks – Replacement of oral examinations with written examinations or *vice versa* – Extension of examination deadlines	Application	– Advice and representation of interests: coordinator for disability affairs – Permission: Academic Examination Office (academic examinations), State Examination Office (state examinations)
Improvement of the accessibility of facilities	Initiation of structural modifications to buildings	Coordinator for disability affairs
Exemption from long-term study fees, according to *Länder* legislation	Application	– Counselling and representation: coordinator for disability affairs – Permission: office for student affairs
Use of technical equipment not included in the range of benefits supported by the responsible institutions listed above, *e.g.* – Loop systems – Braille generator – Braille printers/scanner – Speech synthesisers – CCTV systems		– Centralised or decentralised pools, maintained by local association for student affairs or higher education institution – Some devices may be lent out by the Advice Centre for Higher Education Applicants and Students with Disabilities of the National Association for Student Affairs
Sports activities		Sports facilities and associations of the education institution

Source: Bundesanstalt für Arbeit (2002), DSW (1998 and 2001), SGB IX, publications by local authorities.

Presentation of selected means and institutions of support

Joint Rehabilitation Service Point

The institution of "Joint Rehabilitation Service Point" (*Gemeinsame Reha-Servicestelle*) was created in 2001 as part of the integration and standardisation of rehabilitation laws in Social Code IX. These agencies are bound to provide all persons with disabilities or those "in danger of becoming disabled" quick

and reliable information on all benefits they are entitled to, including those set forth in Social Security legislation. Another duty of the agencies is the coordination of the institutions responsible for the allocation of benefits after they have been granted. Even if different institutions disagree on their responsibilities, Section 14 of Social Code IX decrees that the first or second institution to be contacted by the agency must pay an advance on the various benefits, meant to reduce the bureaucratic burden faced by claimants.

Until the passing of Social Code IX, the entitlement of SWD to benefits according to Social Security legislation used to play an exceptional role in everyday counselling practice (DSW, 1998, pp. 83 ff.). This was mainly due to the special status of Social Security benefits as a subsidiary and separated system of support for people with disabilities who are not entitled to insurance-based benefits. From the perspective of SWD, therefore, the inclusion of the Social Security institutions among the responsible institutions and the installation of joint agencies with a binding obligation to coordinate all responsibilities and all rights to benefits for integration is a definite improvement. However, Social Security benefits are still reserved for special cases: they are only granted if the increase in the cost of living which arises from a disability cannot be accounted for through self-help, benefits from other institutions or aid from relatives liable to provide support. Another unsolved problem is that SWD cannot apply for or be granted the means of support most important to them within institutions of higher education. It remains to be seen whether the new service points can prove their worth in practice.

Associations for Student Affairs

At all institutions of higher education, the Associations for Student Affairs, which are legally independent, publicly subsidised, non-profit corporations, offer social, psycho-therapeutical and legal counselling services, refectories and halls of residence. Only large universities or university towns have independent counselling services especially for SWD. In addition, some Associations for Student Affairs offer their own placement services and job pools for study assistants *(Studienhelfer)*.

Overall, the Associations for Student Affairs in Germany run approximately 1 600 halls of residence with about 215 000 residents. Other halls of residence are run by private or clerical foundations. Applicants with disabilities receive priority treatment in the allocation of places in almost all of them. The number of places in halls of residence which are suited to the special needs of SWD has been steadily increasing over the last decades, especially with respect to students who use wheelchairs. However, there is room for improvement. Especially older halls of residence do not usually comply in all

areas with modern standards of barrier-free construction, and the special needs of students with sensory impairments are hardly ever taken into consideration. Also, there are only very few halls of residence providing integrated care services, or which are ideally suited to the needs of persons with severe allergies. Recent publications list three halls of residence with integrated care services connected to public institutions of higher education (in Marburg, Bochum, and Regensburg), and that of the private *Fachhochschule* in Heidelberg (DSW, 1998 and 2001). In Hamburg there are halls of residence which are ideally suited to the needs of residents with hearing impairments and severe allergies.

On the national level, the National Association for Student Affairs runs the "Advice Centre for Higher Education Applicants and Students with Disabilities" *(Informations- und Beratungsstelle Studium und Behinderung des Deutschen Studentenwerkes*, *c.f.* www.studentenwerke.de). This centre offers:

- Organisation of further training courses, conferences and seminars for disabled persons, coordinators for disability affairs and study counsellors.

- Coordination of full-time or honorary counselling institutions.

- Individual counselling, especially on organisational and legal issues.

- Recording and documentation of the legal foundations and the results of research on disability in higher education.

- Editing and distribution of information material to support applicants and students before and during their studies, as well as for coordinators for disability affairs.

- Representation of the interests of students and university applicants with disabilities before the legislator, administrative bodies and the public.

This centre was founded in 1982 and has since become an important institution for counselling and the representation of SWD. It is financed with funds of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Its main publications (DSW, 1998 and 2001) are generally regarded as references in the field of counselling for students and university applicants with disabilities.

Self-help associations

The importance of self-help associations before and during the entire course of study is frequently underestimated. By way of "peer counselling", these associations offer opportunities for the unbureaucratic exchange of important information or advice for dealing with administrative bodies, for meaningful personal experiences and for the expression of group interests. Many self-help associations also offer discussion platforms, news services and individual counselling on the Internet.

SWD have the choice of joining self-help associations run exclusively by students, or others in which persons of all age groups and from all walks of life meet. Student-only groups are usually to be found only in towns with larger universities, while general groups exist practically everywhere. In numerous cases, these associations have developed into societies which act as employers in the field of care and assistance services and which are entitled to employ conscientious objectors. Even the Centres for Independent Living were once nothing more than informal self-help associations. Self-help associations were recently endowed with extensive rights to take legal action and are thus entitled to go before court on behalf of their members.

Education and training assistance

Benefits according to the Federal Education and Training Assistance Act (BAföG) are the most widely used means of financial support for SWD or chronic diseases. However, the Assistance Act does not provide for additional benefits to make up for the increase in the cost of living which arises from a disability or disease. The only way the *BAföG* takes disabilities into account is by acknowledging applications for higher allowances when calculating the parents' income, for an extended period of assistance or for the acknowledgement of individual reasons for a change of the course of study.

The maximum period of assistance can be appropriately extended on grounds of disability. However, students must provide evidence of how long their studies were protracted because of their disability, and that this delay could not possibly or reasonably have been avoided. Accepted reasons are not only health or disability issues, but also, for example, architectural barriers at the university, non-functioning technical aids or a lack thereof. Proof of achievements, which is usually due after the fourth semester, may be delivered later by SWD. If, for whatever reason, it is absolutely unavoidable for students with a disability to change their course of study, they will receive *BAföG* for the entire maximum period of assistance for their new course. If the request for changing the course of studies is granted merely because of a "serious reason",

the maximum period of assistance is reduced by the number of semesters spent in the first, interrupted course of study.

Like all other students, SWD can apply for numerous grants or scholarships offered by foundations with ideological, religious, regional, subject-specific or other backgrounds. Detailed lists of these foundations are available at all institutions of higher education. Several self-help organisations offer scholarships especially for SWD, *e.g.* the *Deutsche Rheuma-Liga* (German Rheumatism League) or the *Stiftung zur Förderung körperbehinderter Hochbegabter* (Foundation for the Promotion of Highly Gifted Students with Physical Disabilities) (Jäger and Jussen, 2002). In general, scholarships are granted after a highly competitive selection procedure and are thus only attainable for a small elite, which usually excludes students with dyslexia or mental disabilities.

Career guidance

Federal Employment Agency

Students in upper secondary education studying for higher education entrance qualifications are advised by specialist career counsellors for *Abitur* students *(Berufsberater für Abiturienten)*. These counsellors periodically visit the schools, give lectures, attend parent-teacher meetings and offer individual interviews. On request, they are also available for individual interviews in the local Employment Agency. Many schools, particularly special schools and comprehensive schools, have appointed careers teachers who organise a cooperation with the local Employment Agency and assist the students, whom they usually know personally, on their way into working life. Some *Länder* have introduced programmes with titles such as "Career Orientation in Upper Secondary Education". The practical work experiences which are gained and analysed in these programmes can offer decisive input for career guidance.

An important address for university applicants are the career information centres *(Berufsinformationszentrum, BIZ)* of the Employment Agencies. The BIZ offer a wide range of print media (*i.e.* magazines and newspapers), audio-visual media, databases and career selection programmes delivering thorough advice on all kinds of professions, required qualifications and current tendencies on the job market. These media are adapted to target groups, freely accessible, and open to the public user in search of information. Some of these media are also suitable for teaching. A comprehensive overview of courses of study is provided in publications such as *Studien- und Berufswahl* (Choice of Studies and Profession, published annually by the Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion of the Federation and the *Länder* and the

Federal Employment Agency). In addition, the *Länder* and the Employment Agencies of the *Länder* offer brochures and Internet resources with detailed information according to *Länder* legislation (*e.g.* *www.studieninformation.de* and *www.kursbuch-bw.de*). Specially adapted media packages are compiled for university applicants with sensory impairments. In addition, leaflets containing short descriptions of different types of disabilities and recommendations on suitable professions are provided.

Special career guidance for SWD preparing for a higher education entry qualification, carried out by specially trained career counsellors, has been discontinued since the reform "*Arbeitsamt* 2000". Instead, all issues concerning disabilities are now the domain of the Employment Agencies' "Rehabilitation Teams". Consequences of this development on the quality of career guidance remain yet to be seen. An unofficial network of career counsellors for prospective university students who feel responsible for disability issues does still exist, but its future is uncertain.

Of course, concrete recommendations of specific professions always bear the risk of a biographic schematisation which may not take into account the actual potential of the persons concerned or their social environment. For example, it was only when the Federal Law for the Promotion of Equal Treatment of the Disabled (BGG) was passed in 2002 that many clauses in professional admission regulations were abolished which constituted massive discriminations of disabled persons. This demonstrates how rapidly simple legislative measures can fundamentally change the range of possible professions for disabled persons, an aspect which should be taken into consideration in career counselling for disabled persons. Even professions which are not attainable for disabled persons today on account of technical or legal issues, might open up to them in the not too distant future. Another point to be considered in counselling is that profiles of professions can change and diversify, and that individuals can develop specialised niches which are quite different from the typical aspect of the profession they learned. Not everyone who has studied law necessarily has to talk much, as is often claimed, nor do all doctors need excellent hearing.

The personal experiences of persons with disabilities who successfully completed their studies in fields which they had been explicitly advised against – also, and in particular, by the career services of the Federal Employment Agency – and who are now working in their professions, demonstrate clearly that very often, career counselling does not sufficiently take into account the

points mentioned above.[3] Meister's empirical analysis (1998) showed that a full two-thirds of participating SWD stated that they "had merely been recommended the usual, conventional options and methods of gaining professional qualifications, according to the type of their disability," lacking any innovation (*ibid.*, p. 57).

Specialised higher education teams are based in cities with a student population of over 10 000 people. Their focus lies on vocational guidance and placement services. Cooperating with and complementing the counselling services of higher education institutions, they offer individual interviews as well as seminars and workshops on career prospects, job seeking skills and strategies.

When students have reached their degree, different specialised placement services are responsible for supporting them in finding a job, depending on their specific professional fields. Graduates with disabilities may use both the guidance and placement services of the rehabilitation services and those of the field-related placement services. Only graduates with a degree of disability over 80 may, in addition, turn to the National Office for the Placement of Severely Disabled Skilled or Executive Personnel (*Vermittlungsstelle für schwerbehinderte Fach- und Führungskräfte)*. This office is part of the Central Placement Agency *(Zentralstelle für Arbeitsvermittlung)* in Frankfurt /Main.

Institutions of higher education

According to Section 14 of the Framework Act for Higher Education, the counselling services of institutions of higher education, *i.e.* the central counselling services as well as those maintained by faculties, have to "inform students and applicants on the opportunities and conditions of study and on the content, structure and requirements of a course of study". They also have to support students throughout the course of study by providing subject-related advice. After the first year of study, institutions have to "gather information about the students' progress" and offer special counselling if necessary. The counselling has to be carried out in cooperation with the competent examination offices and the career services of the Federal Employment Agency. The counselling services of the higher education institutions are also increasingly launching individual, independent job placement schemes.

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3.   Cf. the recently published reports of personal experiences by Bailer (2002) and Bolte (2002).

While the counselling services of the higher education institutions play only a very minor role for students in upper secondary schools when choosing a course of study, they have a large variety of responsibilities during their courses of study, which could be correctly termed "educational guidance". The central and faculty-based counselling services are also an important contact point for SWD, who consult them particularly often in the case of problems or an extension of their studies. The coordinator for disability affairs and the social counselling services of the associations for student affairs can only complement the counselling services within the educational institutions. They are neither appointed nor able to inform students on subject-related details. However, an important task of the coordinators for disability affairs is the improvement of educational guidance. In view of the high percentage of SWD, it also seems called for to designate one member of the central counselling services, at least in larger institutions, who will not only be responsible for the legal and social concerns of SWD, but who will also receive specialised training in this field.

Coordinators for disability affairs

The actual function of the coordinators for disability affairs *(Beauftragte für Behindertenfragen)* can be regarded as being mainly advisory and representative. Unlike, for example, the "equal rights coordinators" *(Beauftragte für Gleichstellungsfragen)*, they have no seat in the senate, the highest decision-making body of the higher education institutions. Usually, this post is filled on a voluntary basis by members of the academic staff. The scant regard for the coordinators for disability affairs on the formal level which this illustrates is also mirrored by the fact that in the Framework Act for Higher Education (HRG), the promotion of the concerns of SWD is considered a measure of social assistance according to section 2, but is not treated in a separate section like the equality of men and women (section 3). The coordinators for disability affairs are not even mentioned in the Framework Act for Higher Education.

Ideally, the coordinators for disability affairs are well informed on legal issues and able to reliably refer those seeking advice to the responsible institutions, remain in close contact with these institutions and strive to influence them as much as possible according to their experience of the needs of SWD. This may concern any point from the modification of examination regulations to architectural improvements or the provision of technical equipment. Coordinators for disability affairs *can* make a difference, but they are neither obliged nor especially encouraged to do so.

Library services

Access to academic literature is still a challenge for students with visual impairments. Some institutions of higher education (*e.g.* in Dortmund, Marburg, Leipzig, Dresden, Karlsruhe, and the University for Distance Learning in Hagen) provide exemplary possibilities, some of which have developed over a long period of time, while others are quite recent. These opportunities are usually to be found in those institutions which have generally achieved a rather high degree of barrier removal for students with visual impairments. This centralisation of literature directly available for visually impaired students and of optimised services (*e.g.* audio recording services for immediately required specialised literature or the conversion of graphics into tactile surfaces) often lead, in practice, to a restriction in the choice of location for studies of students with visual impairments. Some centralised amenities such as catalogues or digitised texts are available throughout Germany over the Internet, which is, in general, extensively used by students with visual impairments. The relevant web sites are sufficiently barrier-free, and students with visual impairments usually have private periphery systems at their disposal, most often paid for by their health insurance. The service for visually impaired students at the University Library in Dortmund includes nation-wide, free research functions for literature edited for visually impaired persons.

In 2001, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK) published extensive recommendations for standardised procedures and decentralised funding for the procurement of academic literature for the visually impaired (KMK, 2001b). The practical results of these recommendations remain to be seen. Especially the recommendation that the libraries of all institutions of higher education should set aside 1.7% of their budget for the provision of literature to people with visual impairments has not been adopted thus far.

Propositions

In conclusion, the following list of propositions should be considered as a starting point for further developments in this field:

- General acknowledgement of studies at an institution of higher education as a measure for professional rehabilitation according to Social Code IX.

- Professionalisation of counselling services for university applicants and SWD on all levels and for all relevant institutions (if possible with

full-time employees having received specialised training in the fields of social and educational legislation and counselling practice).

- Creation of a legal basis for the position of coordinator for disability affairs and a precise definition of their responsibilities within the Framework Act for Higher Education and the Higher Education acts of all Länder.

- Legal acknowledgement of the necessity of regarding the concerns of SWD on the same level as the equality of men and women by specifically amending the Framework Act for Higher Education.

- Medium-term: introduction of local "Higher Education Service Agencies" which are concerned with all claims to benefits and equality of SWD, which can refer the students precisely to the correct institutions and which centrally coordinate all pools of technical aids and assistance services at the institution of education.

- Special training of all teachers with regard to the needs of SWD within higher education, possibly in the context of a general, compulsory additional qualification for higher education pedagogy.

- Improvement and decentralisation of the provision of academic literature for students with visual impairments.

- Periodical evaluation and publication of "rankings" or performance checks of all institutions of higher education in Germany, focussing on the requirements for the participation of SWD, carried out by independent institutions.

- Improvement of benefits for students according to the Federal Social Security Act; partially through restricted income assessments and support required to be provided by relatives.

- Promotion of qualitative and quantitative research projects on career management, on the subjective perception of their studies and on the subsequent biographies of SWD.

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ANNEX

Table A. **Degrees of disability according to social legislation and some assigned phenomena**

GdB	Examples
20	Slight psycho-vegetative disorders Slight stutter Reduced visual acuity of one eye (enhanced by means of lenses) 0.1-0.4 Loss of hearing of 40% on both sides Chronic otitis media with permanent secretion on either side Mild haemophilia Deranging facial disfigurement
30	Visual acuity below 0.1 on one eye Eye-muscle paralyses, strabism Chronic bronchitis, severe Vocal disturbances with permanent hoarseness Labial defect with sialism Acne vulgaris, severe, with considerable cosmetic impairment Loss of all toes on both feet Slight residual paralysis due to brain dysfunction and tonus disturbances (see cataplexy = Tonusverlustsyndrom) of the limbs Falling's disease without any apparent consequences (except diet) Extensive defect of the palate with well-adjusted prosthesis
40	Extremely rare cases of severe epilepsy (intervals of more than one year) Slight attention and memorising deficiency, impediments in the psychological ability to cope with stress, in the capacity of social insertion; speech, language and further cognitive impairments arising during school attendance Migraine, taking a course of medium degree Functional and organic vocal disturbances (whispering) Speech impairments due to paralysis or anomalies within the oral cavity or the pharynx Severe stutter with parakinesis Resident aphasia Phobic, hypochondrical, asthenical, depressive or somatogenic disturbances with considerable restriction on the capacity of experiencing reality Difficulties in swallowing with considerable impediment on the ingestion of food Quadrant hemianopsia or homonym hemianopsia Heart diseases with performing impairment at average exertion Diabetes mellitus, easily controllable by a diet and treatment with insulin Neurodermatitis constitutionalis with general skin manifestations, mainly facial affection Muscular weakness with premature fatigue Loss of both thumbs

50	Heavy cognitive impediments
	Aphasia with remarkable manifestation of communicational disturbances
	Psoriasis vulgaris with a permanent severe affection or severely restricting local affection
	Growing deficiency with 120 to 130 cm height
	Loss of four fingers including one thumb
	Drug addiction, alcoholism
60	Severe Migraine
	Mucoviscidosis
70	Bronchial asthma, medium degree
	Schizophrenic vulnerability with minor difficulties in social adaptation
	Inability to put weight on one entire leg (*e.g.* sustaining the ischium)
80	Aphasia with extremely strong manifestation of communicative disturbances
	Mild autism (*e.g.* Asperger syndrome)
	Behavioural disorders with long-lasting considerable difficulties in orientation
	Medium haemophilia with several manifestations of bleeding
	Inability to use one's leg
100	Autistic syndromes
	Frequently occurring complex-focal epilepsy
	Congenital or acquired deafness causing considerable hearing difficulties
	Heart disease with restricted performance in resting position
	Loss of one arm or leg
	Acute leukaemia until the end of the therapy

Source: BMA (1996).

CHAPTER 7. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SWITZERLAND

Introduction

Switzerland is a confederation of 26 states invested with considerable autonomy. While the federal government is solely responsible for foreign policy and defence, other areas of responsibilities are shared with the cantons or in particular cases with the municipalities. The responsibility for compulsory education, for example is shared between the canton and municipality while higher education is controlled by the federal government and the cantons.

The country has a population of over 7 million. It is densely populated, especially in the proximity of the larger cities located in the Central Plain between the Lakes of Constance and Geneva. The four national languages are German, French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romanic, which are also the medium of instruction in the respective school regions. The Swiss-German speaking group is the largest, comprising about 64% of the population. French is the first language of 19%, Italian 8% and Rhaeto-Romanic 1% of the rest of the country. The multicultural character of Switzerland is emphasised by the high percentage of resident aliens (19.3%).

Higher education in Switzerland is provided by the traditional universities, the Federal Institutes of Technology as well as at the more recently founded Universities of Applied Sciences (*Fachhochschulen / Hautes Ecoles Specialisées*; FH/HES). The latter institutions offer more vocationally oriented academic studies. Currently, they form a coherent system of higher education serving the needs of the scientific community, economy and a modern society oriented towards life-long learning.

In the past, Switzerland placed more emphasis on securing the social well-being of people with disabilities rather than ensuring their social rights. The Federal Insurance Scheme designed to reduce the financial consequences of becoming disabled (Federal Disability Insurance, *Invalidenversicherung*, IV) has a long tradition of financially supporting all reasonable measures necessary that enable people to return to work. On the other hand, disability has only recently been included in the federal constitution as a potential reason for discrimination. In the summer of 2002, the federal parliament displayed

considerable reluctance to discuss the first draft of a new anti-discrimination legislation.

As a consequence of an insurance-approach rather than rights-based one, higher education institutions have no clear mandate to offer special support to SWD. There is nevertheless an implicit obligation to provide adequately for this group of students. Up to the present time, the Federal Disability Insurance Agency is mandated to support all children born with a disability throughout their education, in order to enable them to enter the workforce. This has led to the development of a segregated system of education for SWD. This system is currently being criticised for not ensuring the equalisation of opportunities for SWD to access higher education.

Higher education in Switzerland

Basic information on enrolment and graduation rates

In 2000, about 18% (15 024 students) of all Secondary Level II Students successfully completed the University Entrance Examination (Federal Maturity Certificate, Matura), which grants immediate access to the traditional universities. For this group to be admitted to the Universities of Applied Sciences (FH/HES), a twelve-month practical experience is required. 66% of the secondary II students graduate from a vocational or an apprenticeship training, with an additional 8% of students receiving the Federal Vocational Maturity Certificate (*Berufsmatur*). This certificate grants them entry to the Universities of Applied Sciences in the field of their initial vocational training (technical, commercial, artistic, agricultural, as well as trades, services and crafts related types of certificates). For the FH/HES in other fields of study (health, teacher-training, social work, fine arts, music, etc.), entry requirements are more diverse but nevertheless very stringent (usually a Federal Maturity Certificate in combination with a special aptitude test and practical experience). About 2.5% students graduate from an apprenticeship requiring only very basic skills (*Anlehre*). The remaining percentages of diplomas at secondary II level are granted by schools which are likely to disappear with the completion of current educational reforms in Switzerland (*i.e.* teacher training offered at secondary II level in a few cantons).[1]

While reliable information is available on general enrolment and graduation rates at secondary II level, participation rates of SWD are unknown. The Federal Office of Statistics is unable to provide information on all children

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1. Source for all statistical information: Federal Office of Statistics.

with disabilities even at primary or secondary level I (ISCED1 and ISCED2) because several cantons are still unable to provide data on individual students. Thus, whilst data on SWD in special classes and special schools is available students integrated in regular classes are "statistically lost".[2] Presently the number of students in special schools and special classes (ISCED1 and ISCED2) amount to 48 594 students[3] for the school year of 2000/2001. With a total number of 807 347 students enrolled, the number of students following a special curriculum[4] amounts to 6%. According to the statistics of the Federal Disability Insurance (see Table 7.1), 27 986 children (or approximately 3.5% of the school population) between the ages of 5 and 14 received support by the IV for their education, mainly in special schools. Additional special educational services are provided by the cantons and municipalities and are not easily aggregated at the federal level. As for ISCED3 or secondary level II, data for SWD or special needs is unavailable.

In 2001, the total enrolment for traditional universities and Universities of Applied Sciences was 99 569 and 29 405 students respectively. The latter number is expected to increase considerably over the next few years with the newly founded schools becoming established. The graduation rate in Switzerland is 8% (calculated as the percentages of the 27-year-old population graduating with a master's degree or a diploma from a university).

There is no statistical data available regarding the number of SWD attending Swiss Universities. Informed estimates suggest a percentage of 0.3 which is a substantial under-representation (Hollenweger, 1996). The University of Zurich has given substantial consideration and support including specialised services and counselling as well as an Internet guide (*http://www.behinderung.unizh.ch*) to meet the needs of SWD.

Swiss participation in life-long learning is high in comparison with other countries (about 40%, Gretler, 1995). Further education courses are offered by 19% of public educational institutes, 31% by employers and 50% by commercial institutions. Programmes of further education and retraining are also available to unemployed people and those with an acquired disability. It is in the economic interest of the country to reintegrate them into the labour market rather than provide long-term unemployment support. Rohrer and Sgier

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2.   Compare Chart C5.3, page 177 in OECD (2001).

3.   This number includes primary and secondary I; detailed information on secondary I only is not available.

4.   This percentage includes newly immigrated students learning the language of instruction in special classes.

(1996) give a fuller and more detailed account of adult education in Switzerland. However, no information is available as to the participation rate of persons with disabilities.

Organisation and funding

Switzerland has twelve state-run traditional universities, with ten cantonal universities (Basel, Bern, Geneva, Fribourg, Lausanne, Lucerne, Lugano, Neuchâtel, St. Gall and Zurich) and two Federal Institutes of Technology (Lausanne and Zurich). Additionally, there are a few smaller institutions with a limited curriculum which award equivalent university diplomas, such as the *Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internationales* (Geneva), the *Institut de Universitaire de Hautes Etudes en Administration Publique* (Lausanne), and various institutes for European studies. Unlike the Anglo-Saxon tradition, private institutions cover an extremely limited sector of higher education (mainly in management and economics).

As a result of the modernisation of Switzerland's system of higher education, Universities of Applied Sciences (FH/HES) have been created since the mid-1990s. They constitute an integral part of higher education in Switzerland, concentrating on applied sciences and vocational education, *i.e.* its curricula and research work are oriented towards a field of application or professional training. These institutions have developed from past colleges of higher education. Some fall under the aegis of the Federal system (agriculture and sports), others under cantonal/federal (engineering and business administration) or under Cantonal responsibility (health care, social work, teacher training, fine arts, design or music). Currently, most of them are organised in seven regional centres: the FH/HES of Western, Central, Southern, Eastern, and North-western Switzerland as well as of Berne and Zurich. Each centre is made up of a network of universities and covers different areas of study and research (*e.g.* architecture, engineering, computer science, managerial science, business administration, agriculture, design). As these centres are partially federally controlled and financed, the integration of the private and cantonal organisations (*i.e.* colleges of health, teacher training, social work, interpretation/translation, music, theatre and fine arts) has not been completed as yet.

Because of its decentralised structure, Switzerland does not have a single agency or government office responsible for higher education. The responsibility to organise and finance institutions of higher education lies with the federal government and the cantons. Each canton has its own ministry or department of education, responsible for compulsory education, further

education institutions as well as for its university and its *Fachhochschule/Haute Ecole Specialisée* (FH/HES).

As for the traditional universities, federal government subsidises the cantonal universities (Act on Financial Aid to the Cantonal Universities, revised in 1999) and co-ordinates its support with the cantons, which is expressed in a national university policy. One of the visible expressions of the typically Swiss cooperative federalism in higher education is the University Conference based on the Federal Act of 1999, and the Inter-cantonal Agreement on University Coordination. Through these legislative mechanisms the cantons and the confederation delegate certain controls to the University Conference.

Based on a revision of the Federal Constitution (clause 63), the federal parliament enacted the Federal Act on the Universities of Applied Sciences in 1995 and revised it in 1999. It aims to facilitate the establishment of FH/HES and to provide appropriate financial assistance to the cantons in charge of these institutions. It presently also recognises the diplomas in areas that traditionally have been federally controlled (engineering, architecture, business and economics, agriculture, design and applied arts, sports, hotel management and tourism). At a later stage these activities will also extend to areas traditionally under cantonal control, such as health, social work, pedagogics (teacher training), translation, fine arts, drama and music. Modelled on the above mentioned inter-cantonal university agreement, the cantons have in 1999 concluded a similar Inter-cantonal Agreement concerning the financial contributions to the Cantonal Universities of Applied Sciences.

In 1998 the federal government submitted to parliament a white paper on the promotion of higher education, research, and technology during the period of 2000 until 2003. The federal parliament endorsed the vision to develop a transparent and coherent policy; it also seconded this initiative by tabling a motion to charge the federal government with the preparation of a new constitutional article. The latter is to deal with higher education as a unity – with a view to the implementation of a single law for both the promotion of the traditional universities and the FH/HES by 2008 at the latest. This proposal for a new constitutional basis also meets the expectations of the Federal Treasury (the Federal Department of Finances) which is about to redefine the allocation of revenue and subsidies between the federal and the cantonal authorities, in order to set a fair equalisation of the financial obligations.

The revised Federal Act of 1999 introduced a performance-related grant mechanism replacing the previous principle of blanket coverage. Henceforth, the federal subsidies are related to the universities' performance in teaching and research. (A similar incentive system is currently being introduced in the grant

mechanism for the FH/HES.) The federal aid to the cantons in charge of a traditional university consists of three types of subsidies: "basic grants" for the operating costs (the confederation covers on average 20% of the total operating costs of universities borne by the cantons), "investment grants" to help with major projects concerning construction, furnishing (*e.g.* laboratories), equipment (*e.g.* computers), libraries etc., and "grants for national projects" (formerly "special grants"). The share of the investment expenditure covered by the confederation according to the act ranges at present from 30% to 55%, while the grants for national projects should help boost extraordinary projects of general importance for Swiss higher education. Such projects include establishing university networks, the setting up a virtual university campus, the promotion of women, the creation of jobs for junior staff, as well as various nationwide co-operative projects.

Despite the financial assistance of the confederation, the increasing financial restraint has created a burden for the eight (respective) university cantons. Consequently the cantons, whether responsible for a university or not, as well as Liechtenstein, agreed to share the proportional costs for their own students in the cantonal universities. To this effect the cantons signed an Inter-cantonal Agreement in 1981 related to their financial contributions to the cantonal universities (*Interkantonale Universitätsvereinbarung*). It was revised and subsequently implemented in 1999. The new agreement requires the cantonal per capita contributions to be raised and graded according to the three major branches of study (arts: CHF 9 500, sciences: CHF 17 700, medicine: CHF 22 700). In return for this inter-cantonal equalisation of the financial burdens, the cantonal universities grant equal access to students from all contributing cantons. The agreement furthermore stipulates a coordinated university policy will be adopted by all the cantons. Thus, the financing of the cantonal universities is now being founded on three pillars: namely the canton in charge of the university, the fellow cantons, and last but not least the confederation.

Increasingly the pressing question asked is who should meet the costs for education? A change-over to private or to student-borne financing would, however, pose serious problems of acceptability in Switzerland. Nevertheless student fees have recently been increased at all Swiss universities, but still remain low in comparison with other European countries. For example, semester fees vary between CHF 500 and CHF 900 for Swiss students, approximately twice as much for foreigners, yet they contribute a mere 5% towards the university budget.

Over the past 30 years, the amount of public expenditure on education in Switzerland has fluctuated between 15% and 20% of the total public

expenditure and around 5% of the GDP. Thus, education is the most important expenditure in Switzerland. In terms of other public expenditure, its relative importance has increased by almost 10% since 1960. About 1% of the GDP benefits the traditional universities; and approximately the same percentage goes to the FH/HES.

Higher education and students with disabilities

To date, Swiss institutions of higher education have not been encouraged or supported in responding to the needs of SWD. Unlike development in the US or in the countries of the European Union, there has not been a public initiative – federal or local – to make higher education more accessible and welcoming for SWD. There is no legislation which grants students such rights or gives institutions incentives to remove barriers which may be present in the current higher education system. As mentioned earlier, there is no accurate data available as to the percentage of SWD in Swiss universities or non-university tertiary education. As in most other countries, SWD do not have to identify themselves to the university administrators to seek special support. Since special services are not provided by the universities themselves, they are unaware of the percentage of students in need of them. Like other individuals with a disability undertaking initial training, students in higher education are also eligible for financial support and special services which fall under the legislation of the Federal Disability Insurance (*Invalidenversicherung*, IV; see next section). While these services are viewed as welcome support in some instances, many students claim that the institutions and individuals in charge of managing the funds and services lack university-specific knowledge and have a poor appreciation of the demands a university course makes upon them.

A recent study conducted as part of a larger research programme into the status and situation of people with disabilities in Switzerland[5] carried out a survey of all traditional universities and Universities of Applied Sciences requesting information on accessibility and available services suited to the needs of SWD (Master's degree paper, Heinz Bättig, 2001). Four questionnaires were administered to appropriate informants within the university, which addressed the following topics: (1) Regulations and practice related to admission and examinations, (2) Counselling services and contacts, (3) Accessibility of buildings, and (4) Information and communication technologies. About half of all Swiss Institutions of Higher Education responded to the questionnaires. 85% of the respondents reported no restrictions

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5.   Nationales Forschungsprogramm "Sozialstaat Schweiz" des Schweizerischen Nationalfonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung.

in admission and indicated that cases were judged individually rather than on legislation. Restrictions were mainly related to a student's inability to fulfil professional demands because of physical or/and psychological difficulties – such as for dancing or playing an instrument. When further questioned as to which disabilities may interfere with studying at their school, a less optimistic picture emerges. While only 8% considered a slight physical disability may cause a problem in completing studies, this percentage increased for language difficulties (13%), dyslexia (15%), wheelchair users or chronic illness (19%). Problems were anticipated by a third of the institutions for students with a visual or hearing impairment. Over half thought it impossible to undertake study if an individual had a brain injury. About two thirds of the schools could not conceive a deaf or blind student or a student with a psychiatric problem completing their studies at their institution. While some of these judgements may be justified (*i.e.* visual arts/blindness or music/deafness) others are most likely based on a lack of experience with SWD and knowledge related to alternative systems of communicating and information processing.

When asked about special counselling services or contacts, over 90% of the responding higher education institutions indicated that no special provision or information was available for SWD. SWD were expected to use generic services available for all students. Most universities responding considered their disability-relevant knowledge as sufficient (53%) whilst 44% regarded their knowledge as insufficient. They felt their competence to offer high quality counselling for SWD adequate (69%) or even good (16%). On the other hand, the responding institutions were less secure in their ability to offer adequate support services. Approximately 47% judged them sufficient and 35% insufficient. In addition, less then 1% were aware that information relevant to SWD was available electronically or through the Internet.

A further set of questions addressed the accessibility of the institutions and their buildings. The rate of accessibility was thought high for main libraries (85%), auditoriums (81%) and student cafeterias (80%) or study rooms (76%) and somewhat lower for sanitary installations (66%) and elevators (66%). Accessibility was generally judged as good by about three quarters to two thirds of the universities (see percentages above). Around 85% of responding universities provide wheelchair accessible toilets and elevators, while 43% make special parking spaces available. Only 17% provide a loop system in large auditoriums and 3% had marked their stairs to ease their use to students with visual impairments. None of the universities provide signs or information in Braille.

Swiss institutions of higher education are well equipped with computers, printers and scanners available to students. But practically none are able to

provide communication aids or other equipment for visually impaired or blind students. Additionally, almost 90% of the responding schools indicated that they did not take into consideration disabled users when constructing their Internet pages while about 80% of the universities expressed interest in relevant information and potential improvement of their Internet sites. About 38% indicated that they provided text versions of their internet pages, yet a third make frequent use of graphic elements or image maps and hot spots which make pages difficult to access by visually impaired or blind users.

These results suggest that there is a wide-spread lack of awareness and expertise related to the special needs of students in Swiss institutions of higher education. It may be that because of the small student number ranging between 500 (Lucerne) and 21 000 (Zurich), Swiss traditional universities are less well prepared to keep up with change. The regional umbrella organisations of the Universities of Applied Sciences (with student numbers ranging between 5 400 and 1 000) are in the process of being established. They bring together even smaller institutions with a few hundred students, rarely reaching a thousand. In the past, these institutions were administered individually with no co-ordinating body other than the university conference. With such small numbers of students, many of these institutions have had little exposure to or experience of the needs of SWD. The present development towards more central governance and co-operation between the present schools making up the new Universities of Applied Sciences offer hope to a more co-ordinated approach and effective implementation of support services for SWD.

For over twenty years, the University of Zurich is the only Swiss university providing specialised services for students with a disability. In other universities, SWD depend on generic services. These services are often in high demand and fail to adequately meet the needs of SWD. There is also a lack of knowledge about disability itself on the part of the authorities and how best to meet the challenge.

Services for students with disabilities

Federal Disability Insurance

The Federal Old Age and Survivors and the Disability Insurance is the Swiss Federal Social Security Pension Scheme (AHV/IV). All Swiss citizens over the age of 18 contribute to this social security system regardless of whether they are employed, unemployed or a student. The disability insurance covers the costs in case of disability but aims to return the person with a disability to the workforce. This aim is not always achieved in practice. In the event of an accident – either at work or during leisure time – the mandatory accident

insurance scheme of the employer meets the costs for hospitalisation and provides disability pensions of 80% of the annual salary in the event of a permanent disability suffered by individuals. The Disability Insurance also pays for special education and therapy of children with disabilities. It contributes not only towards the individual's additional expenses, but also subsidises organisations and institutions serving clients with disabilities. Thus, private or public organisations and institutions may apply for federal support through the Federal Disability Insurance if their services are recognised. This applies to training institutions or homes, as well as to canton- or community-run services for youth with disabilities. The social security scheme aims to provide every child, teenager and adult with a disability with high-quality education, training or employment.

Recently though, much criticism has been levied against the operations of the Federal Disability Insurance scheme. It is claimed that subsidising individual institutions and schools, in many instances, has led to a segregated system of education, training and employment which today is regarded as a barrier to full inclusion into society. As the education system is the responsibility of the cantons, the Federal Disability Insurance does not support the general school system. Instead it supports individual schools which meet the criteria of the Disability Insurance and exclusively serve students with a disability.

All traditional universities and Universities of Applied Sciences are state-run institutions and therefore the Federal Disability Insurance does not subsidise any special services the schools may offer to SWD. With no official mandate by the state, higher education institutions have not developed a comprehensive and systematic policy towards SWD. The Federal Disability Insurance does offer support to eligible students in his or her initial training. As Federal Disability Insurance statistics are organised around their services, it is difficult to establish how many students attending higher education institutions received benefits (see Table 7.1).

An average of about 460 students in any given age group between the ages of 20 and 24 receive financial support offered by the IV for their professional training. Some of these students are enrolled in a higher education institution, but many of them are in vocational training courses, both in initial training and re-training in another profession following an accident or illness. If one considered all the eligible beneficiaries between the ages of 20 to 34 (5 438 persons) and assumed a similar representation in higher education as in the general population (about 15%), a maximum of 0.6% of all students enrolled in

higher education (almost 130 000 in 2001[6]) in Switzerland may receive financial support covered by the Federal Disability Insurance. With an estimated disability rate of around 6% for the total Swiss population under 45,[7] many SWD will need to rely on other financial support if they sought entry to higher education. It can be assumed that this has not worked in favour of many young people with disabilities seeking to complete a university degree.

Table 7.1. **Number of persons supported by the IV and type of services**

Age	Medical interventions	Special education	Professional training	Aids	Evaluation interventions	Total
0-4	19 269	2 590	–	561	12 603	35 026
5-9	21 086	14 774	–	1 677	13 087	50 633
10-14	28 471	13 212	–	1 981	10 660	54 328
15-19	21 591	5 119	2 795	1 708	4 800	35 997
20-24	3 496	157	2 303	1 508	3 654	11 107
25-29	121	–	1 525	1 836	5 060	8 543
30-34	125	–	1 610	2 470	7 929	12 136
35-39	194	–	1 502	3 419	11 050	16 166
40-44	307	–	1 066	3 937	12 919	18 230
45-49	530	–	685	5 197	15 172	21 584
50-54	1 062	–	376	7 270	18 978	27 688
55-59	1 750	–	174	9 431	21 879	33 235
60-64	1 955	–	24	10 641	16 791	29 414
Total	99 957	35 852	12 060	51 636	154 582	354 087

Source: Federal Office of Social Security, IV-Statistik 2001, p. 37.

Usually, SWD who are entitled to the benefits of the Federal Disability Insurance (IV) do not encounter financial difficulties if they are in their initial training. Yet, Federal Disability Insurance (IV) only pays any additional costs for studies which are directly related to the disability. Therefore, it does not contribute to the costs that a student may entail (living, semester fees or books). Students who work while studying run the risk of losing these benefits as under the IV the definition of "invalidity" is the inability to work. Therefore, if a student works, he or she is deemed ineligible for benefits of the IV. Students who are not entitled to benefits, such as foreign students and students pursuing a second degree or qualification may encounter difficulties, as the Federal Disability Insurance will only meet the costs of persons insured under their legislation. Re-training is only supported if it is directly related to re-integration into the workforce following an accident or illness and if the training is comparable (in length and status) to the initial training. Thus, the IV will not

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6.   Federal Office of Statistics, 2002 (see *http://www.statistik.admin.ch*).

7.   Schweizerische Gesundheitsbefragung 1997, Bundesamt für Statistik 2000.

subsidise a university study for a young person who first trained as an electrician and is now unable to pursue his/her career.

Additionally, the counselling offices of the Disability Insurance tend to be rather conservative and often advise young persons with disabilities to train for a profession traditionally associated with their particular disability rather than choose an uncertain career after graduating from a university. Although there is no reliable data available on this matter, anecdotal accounts indicate that young persons with disabilities wishing to study at a university are often discouraged to pursue a university degree. The lack of information about study conditions at universities and general misconceptions as to the value for persons with disabilities in gaining university qualifications, often discourage talented students from applying to such institutions.

Support systems and private services

As a result of the Federal Disability Insurance scheme (IV), services offered by regular schools are not covered, as financial aid is only available to special schools accredited by the IV. Children with disabilities in regular education usually receive educational services provided by itinerant support teachers based in an accredited special school, and who advise regular classroom teachers and parents. This may account for the lack of expertise in the regular school system to support children with disabilities throughout their school career. In the past it was up to the school board or the individual teacher to assume the task of educating a child with a disability, knowing that it would not receive the same financial support offered to a special school. It is argued that the very system designed to support children with disabilities may have contributed to their difficulties in accessing higher education. As a result, many pupils attending special schools find a smooth transition from special education to the main stream university system not an easy one. A survey (see next section) conducted amongst SWD attending higher education courses showed that only 25% of this SWD population attended a special school at ISCED level 1. This quota dropped to 13% on ISCED level 2 and to a mere 2% for ISCED level 3. These percentages are very low for Switzerland where most SWD attend special schools or classes (5.9%, see OECD, 2001, p. 179). Most likely, this fact can be partially explained by the higher ability of these students which enables them to follow the regular curriculum. But it may also indicate that students able to participate in the regular school system have better chances to qualify later for a university education.

In many institutions of higher education, as indicated above, the needs of SWD are not perceived as an issue which needs to be tackled by the organisation. It is seen instead as a problem of an individual student which can

be attended to when the student takes up his or her studies. The University of Zurich is an exception in so far as it provides specialised counselling service for SWD. The counselling service offers information and assistance related to studies for students. This agency also created an Internet guide for university SWD. The Internet pages were developed with the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich and later the University of Basel. The Internet site seeks to provide relevant information for SWD, such as on accessibility of buildings, contact points and news or requests by other students. The site can be found on the Internet at *http://www.uniability.ch* but is only available in German.

Thus, most institutions of higher education appear to perceive SWD as regular students. Decisions regarding their admission, potential modification to their examination or the need to attend lectures are made by staff often unaware of the specific needs, abilities or disabilities of the student. Students have reported spending months identifying an individual who could change the location of a lecture to a more accessible auditorium or seek help in following the lectures (*e.g.* notes taken by a colleague or taping the lecture). Other students have had very positive experiences of receiving support and services they need. The fact that in most institutions of higher education, treatment and support offered to SWD may differ largely depending on circumstances and study area indicates a basic problem with equity and equal availability of such support for all students.

SWD can benefit from private support services, as for example a specialised foundation which supports SWD in higher education. A special foundation (*Stiftung zur Förderung körperbehinderter Hochbegabter*) based in Liechtenstein, supports students in Switzerland, Germany and Austria alike with a physical or sensory impairment. Private financial support may be granted to students if they meet criteria set by the foundation or association. Unfortunately, students are often unaware of this facility or lack the knowledge as to how to access these private sources or secure official support by the University to authorise their claims.

Other services, which provide auxiliary aids or technology relevant for study-specific activities (*e.g.* scanners, Braille enabled computers, etc.) are plentiful in Switzerland but dependent on financial provisions of the IV. The purchase of a new computer or scanning of textbooks has to be approved by the IV before the service can be obtained. This often leads to long waiting periods and a lengthening of studies.

Disabled university students are neither nationally nor locally organised. A few informal disability-specific support groups exist, mainly among the hearing and visually impaired. Occasional contacts are fostered by local or federal

associations. But there appears to be little awareness and knowledge of SWD and their needs within the university or the organisations for the disabled. Even the SWD themselves are mostly uninformed about facilities and avenues for support. In 1996, the social commission of the Federal Association of Swiss Students' Organisations launched an initiative to raise public awareness of the problems SWD face. They set up a small exhibition which visited universities throughout Switzerland and drew up a petition demanding the implementation of specialised services for SWD in all Swiss universities. The event attracted some attention in the media but other pressing issues facing universities, such as the Bologna process or financial problems, caused the difficulties faced by SWD, to be put on the back burner. Recently, a group of students with visual impairments took up the issue of problems in higher education. With little support by the large disability organisations, they are struggling to build up networks of self-help, exchange of study texts, information on auxiliary aids and other services available to them.

Students with disabilities in higher education

Available information on students' characteristics

In Switzerland, as indicated in previous chapters, no reliable statistical information is available on SWD in higher education. Based on the experiences of the counselling services for SWD of the University of Zurich, it can be assumed that the percentage of SWD in higher education does not exceed 0.3% (Hollenweger, 1996). This excludes those experiencing mental health problems and minor impairments which it is claimed do not cause study problems.

As part of the study mentioned previously, a questionnaire was developed to learn more about young people with disabilities who have completed their studies, are presently studying or who plan to study at a higher education institution in the nearer future. The study will be completed in March 2004. However, some initial results are available. The questionnaire addressed three main topics: (1) the school career of the students as well as other characteristics, (2) services used and their effect on the students, (3) barriers and facilitators as perceived by the students (see below).

To better understand the influence of a disability on schooling, the questionnaire contained questions regarding the disability (type, severity, age when students acquired the disability) and its consequence on activities related to studying. It found that 41% of the respondents were already disabled at birth and 10% became disabled before entering primary school whilst 17% acquired their disability during the compulsory school years. An additional 17% became disabled before and 13% after their 25th birthday. Furthermore 45% of all

students indicated that their disability was sensory, 41% physical, 9% mental and 4.5% cerebral (multiple responses). For 61% of the respondents the disability status was stable, for 24% it was progressive.

As mentioned earlier, almost 70% of the students already disabled at age six attended a regular primary school (with 25% in special schools) which is atypical for the general population of disabled children. At secondary level 2, only 2% of all students were still placed in a special educational setting while the percentage of students attending private schools rises to over 10% in this age group, again an atypical high percentage for Switzerland. Of all students 75% are studying at a traditional university while 22% attend a University of Applied Sciences and 2% another institution of higher education. Due to the current reforms, the percentage of students in Universities of Applied Science will most likely rise in the coming years. Of the respondents 55% were female, which was surprising as women with disabilities are thought to be given less opportunities to complete a high quality education. Of all respondents 95% were Swiss[8] and approximately 70% lived in their own apartment, whilst 20% lived with their parents; none lived in an institution.

Based on the five domains of the ICF,[9] students were asked which activities were affected by their disability. The domains were: (1) Mobility, (2) Communication, (3) Learning and Applying Knowledge, (4) Interpersonal Interactions and Relationships, and (5) Self Care. In the domain *Mobility*, for example, 83% of the students indicated that they encountered no difficulties in using their hands (*i.e.* ability to write), whereas only 45% were able to move around buildings without difficulties and use public transport. In *Communication*, around two thirds of students indicated that they had no difficulties with communication (*i.e.* understanding spoken language). Understanding written language presented no difficulties to 80% of respondents. However, these high percentages indicate also, that a difficulty in this area (*i.e.* due to blindness) may be a considerable barrier to studying. For activities in the domain of *Learning and Applying Knowledge*, two thirds of all students reported little or no problems, with the exception of the item "Handling stress and other psychological demands", which presented difficulties to 57% of students. The severest difficulties were encountered in the domain *Interpersonal Interactions and Relationships* where only half of all students found encounters

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8.   Percentage of foreigners in the non-disabled higher education population in 2001: approximately 30% in traditional universities and 14% in Universities of Applied Sciences (Federal Office of Statistics).

9.   International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (WHO, 2001).

with teaching staff and fellow students unproblematic. Difficulties in this domain related to participation in informal relationships outside the school setting proved even more severe, except for the interactions with friends. In the domain *Self Care*, 80% of students experienced no difficulties getting dressed or eating and drinking. However, 23% encountered difficulties using the toilet and over 50% had problems with household tasks (*e.g.* preparing meals, cleaning, etc.).

These results indicate that activities directly linked to studying (writing, getting to school, moving around, understanding written language, etc.) cause some problems. In most instances these can be overcome by using services (someone taking notes, sign interpreter) or assistance devices (wheel chair, adapted car, tape recorder), thus ensuring full participation in higher education. The fact that relationships to university lecturers and other students can be a barrier points to the need of raising public awareness. Negative attitudes of others can present barriers to SWD. Alternatively, these results could also be viewed as a lack of social skills of SWD which may inhibit the development of good relationships with relevant partners in the higher education environment.

Students were also asked to indicate which services they used most frequently to ensure access and participation in higher education. Only one-third used the career counselling services freely available to all students. Most of the students using this service indicated that it did not help them much. A private career counsellor was used by 21% of students and most of them regarded this service as very helpful. The career counselling services of the Federal Disability Insurance (IV), a compulsory service in order to receive financial aid by the IV, were used by 50% of students. While many thought the services offered by the IV as a considerable support and facilitator, just as many thought they did not fully work in their favour or experienced them as a barrier to studying. This may be due to the lack of experiences of these IV-based services. Other services used by the SWD were social counselling and counselling services related to the use of assistive devices (each by 25% of students), personal assistance translation services, domestic and self care services (20%), and transport services (17%). Services offered by special education institutions were not used although they are widely available. The following courses and therapies were used: mobility training (16%), training in using technical aids (17%), and communication training (17%). 35% of all students were in receipt of psychotherapy and 40% physiotherapy services.

Students' perceptions on barriers and facilitators in higher education

The students were also asked to give their view on which factors in the environment worked as facilitators and which as barriers to their ability to

study. The ICF's list of environmental factors served as a framework for enquiring about the subjective views of students on facilitating factors in the environment. The following areas of environment were included: (1) Products, Technology and human-made changes to environment, (2) Support and Relationships, (3) Attitudes, and (4) Services, systems and policies. Questions in this part of the questionnaire related to their life in general and to their studies separately.

Related to their general life situation, the following barriers were mentioned: financial means (13%), means of transport (9%), design and construction of public places (33%). 16% considered the services of the IV as a barrier. Attitudes of professionals working for the Federal Disability Insurance were experienced as a barrier by 30% and 60% of all students thought general societal attitudes and norms as an obstacle. As for the services, students indicated, that the private career counsellors, the university services for SWD (where available) as well as services with a clear mandate (*i.e.* mobility services, counselling related to technical aids) and a personal assistance (where available) were the most beneficial services for them. As for the systems and policies, 45% considered the Federal Disability Insurance and 33% the policies relating to health insurance as a barrier. Over 50% thought the public administrative processes as hindering.

Related to their studies, the following barriers were identified: accessibility (17%), lack of support by lecturers and students (each 10%), attitudes of other students (14%), of professors (13%) and of service providers (14%). Social norms (48%), admission regulations (21%) and regulations related to examinations (33%) as well as the legislation related to scholarships (22%) were seen as the major obstacles to their pursuing studies in higher education. The greatest assistance experienced was support by the family, personal assistance, technical aids and assistive devices as well as adequate financial means. Where available, support by other students was seen as a major facilitator. None of the present societal or legislative factors were viewed as a facilitator.

These results confirm the fact that to this day, specific support for SWD is largely a private affair. Agencies offering services to all people with disabilities usually lack the specific knowledge needed to ease access to and participation in institutions of higher education. On the other hand, universities do not have an official mandate to cater to this small group of students. It is noteworthy that students express some suspicion or even hostility towards the Federal Disability Insurance (IV). This particular federal legislation is part of a larger social security scheme and should ensure the employability of persons with

disabilities. The fact that it is perceived as a barrier to studying by so many students needs further investigation.

Conclusions

Switzerland does not have a well-developed and standardised approach towards SWD. Institutions of higher education do not have a clear mandate to provide special support or services for SWD. Nonetheless, SWD are participating in higher education. It is highly likely many more students might seek access to higher education if better services were provided for them.

SWD in higher education run the risk of being caught between two separate systems, neither able to cater to their specific needs. Institutions of higher education usually lack the experience, expertise and specific support systems relating to disability issues. Disability-related services across the country are unaware of university life conditions and specific requirements for personal assistance, technical aids or other support systems. As indicated by the universities themselves (Bättig, 2001), there is little contact between these systems and little or no exchange of information or experience occurs.

The Federal Disability Insurance legislation attempts to meet the needs of some of the students in higher education. Others are less sanguine and perceive the system as failing them. This conclusion drawn from the student survey has led to a further study as part of the larger research project described above. It investigates which aspects of the current legislation may work as a barrier to young people with disabilities. Questions relating to these issues were put to a group of "double specialists", that is to say, specialists regarding present legislation and the planned reforms as well as specialist having studied themselves with a disability. Preliminary results of this enquiry reveal that it is not as much a problem of the disability insurance *per se*, but rather on how it is implemented.

Until recently, the Swiss legislation was strongly based on the principle of political rights and less influenced by social, economic or cultural considerations. Social rights and anti-discrimination elements are not sufficiently emphasised in the present Swiss legislation and the country's laws. Additionally, Switzerland by tradition respects the right of the different regions to maintain their own cultural and social customs. This is reflected in the fact that federal legislative changes are implemented only after considerable consulting with the Cantons and its representatives. For example as a result of such dynamics, women were only recently (1971) given the right to vote. A recent report by several Swiss non-governmental organisations (Akademie für Menschenrechte *et al*., 1998) drew attention to some of the critical issues

surrounding the social, economic and cultural rights in response to the official Swiss Report for the United Nations on the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (BIGA, 1996). The report pointed to several short-comings in Switzerland in failing to provide specific rights to various groups, including people with disabilities. It is argued that the disadvantage of such a stable political system is the requirement to negotiate with all political parties and stake holders throughout any process of change. This results in a slow response to difficult, but necessary social changes.

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