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Providing for Disabled
Students: University of
Grenoble, France

OECD

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PROVIDING FOR DISABLED STUDENTS: UNIVERSITY OF GRENOBLE, FRANCE

Students with physical disabilities at the University of Grenoble are offered a range of services provided by various specialised and complementary structures to meet the needs of student life. A number of associations and government sectors have joined forces in quite a unique way to build a university residence designed with the disabled in mind; others are co-ordinating initiatives to provide seamless infrastructure that makes it easier for students with disabilities to participate in education and leisure activities.

Prelude

This university residence, with accommodation for 220 students, includes 20 rooms specially designed for the disabled. Prelude was opened in 1993 by the *Fondation santé des étudiants de France* (French student health foundation), with funding provided by the *Fondation de France* (a French charity), the *Association française contre la myopathie* (French myopathy association), the *Association de gestion des fonds pour l'insertion des personnes handicapées* (AGEFIPH, an association managing an inclusion fund for the disabled) and other partners including the national and regional authorities and the *Isère département* (one of the 95 administrative divisions of France). The service is run by the university medical centre (*Centre médico-universitaire Daniel Douady*, or CMUDD) and its running costs are covered by the General Council for the department of Isère and by social services in the students' *départements* of origin.

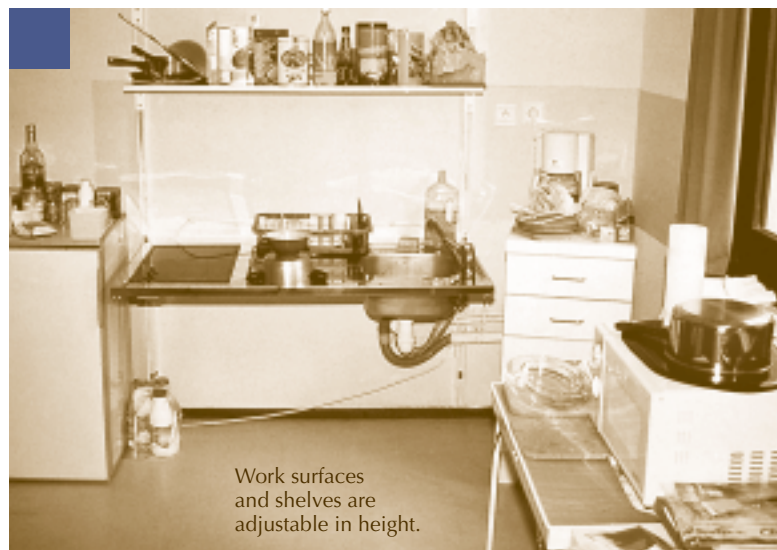
This accommodation is for dependent, physically-disabled students who have enrolled at the University of Grenoble and require a specially adapted home environment, and/or the help of a carer and/or light institutional support. The 20 rooms have an interphone link to the care-assistance service and technical equipment allowing the occupants, however dependent, to be as self-sufficient as possible. This includes an automatic door and entry code, an infrared controlled environment, adjustable furniture (work surfaces, desk and kitchen) and a shower wheelchair. There is also a ceiling hoist to help move the student around, thus making life easier for the carer. All rooms will have been cabled up to the University's Internet link by the end of 2000.

Experienced, non-medical staff provide round-the-clock assistance with the physical and environment-related problems that arise in daily life. They provide students with their own care services, tailored to meet their individual needs and ensure their safety at all times. Students are subtenants of their flats and organise their own lives, materially, administratively and socially.

When Jan Karlsson, an OECD consultant, visited the studio apartments during the seminar on "Higher Education and Disability" in March last year, he was particularly impressed by the equipment in a flat for a tetraplegic student: "A hammock sling is suspended from a ceiling track running from bedroom to bathroom. The student is helped into it and then requires very little assistance with washing and getting into bed."



A ceiling hoist makes it easier to move students from bed to shower wheelchair.



Work surfaces and shelves are adjustable in height.

The residence also has its own physiotherapy room, available for use by private physiotherapists.

A tram stops in front of the Prelude residence, serving the campus but also the city centre, five minutes away. It provides optimal mobility throughout the urban area.



The same building houses SCAPH 38 (*Service conseil en autonomie pour personnes handicapées*), an advisory service for all people with disabilities in the department of Isère, as well as the University's own service for disabled students (SAUH); full service provision is thus available on the spot.

SAUH

The University's service for disabled students (*Service d'accueil universitaire des étudiants handicapés*) is there to give all students the information and assistance they require to organise and complete their studies. The focus is on information to raise disability awareness among teaching and technical staff, to guide and advise the students on course selection and to inform them of their rights (e.g. specially adapted timetables). The SAUH also provides material and technical assistance, as well as academic support where necessary; one initiative, in liaison with the university and employers, helps students find jobs and a place in society.

The SAUH has an Accessibility Unit that monitors all new building and renovation work for the University of Grenoble (residences, refectories, lecture halls, etc.) to check that students with disabilities have access. It also monitors current and future infrastructure work – car parks, paths, roads and cycle-paths – to ensure free movement. The Unit intervenes as far upstream as possible, from the planning stage to implementation, to ensure that access is:

- invisible, as it is built into the project from the outset;
- integrated, because it serves everyone;
- included in the cost, being factored in from the beginning.

Since 1994, the *ex ante* control of building permits for accessibility has been highly beneficial in ensuring

better access to public buildings for the physically disabled. But the SAUH Accessibility Unit acknowledges that legislation will not solve all the functional problems in this field. Until those in the construction industry are trained to put the legislation into practice, numerous errors will still be made. So the Accessibility Unit also offers support and training, providing explanations on user handicaps and recommendations that go beyond the actual provisions of the law so as to cover the most serious disabilities.

CMUDD

The *Centre médico-universitaire Daniel Douady* is one of the few institutions to house both a university and a leading-edge hospital centre. It is a place in which any disabled person or patient wanting to receive care and physiotherapy while attending school or university, and eventually to enter or return to the world of work, will find the competencies and infrastructure they need. The CMUDD, run by the *Fondation santé des étudiants de France*, also offers a wide range of sport and leisure facilities.

Fondation santé des étudiants de France

The medical and teaching teams working for France's student health foundation try to ensure that illness and disability in no way prevent students from completing their school and university courses. The aim is to provide maximum comfort and safety, but also very wide access to sport and culture. To help disabled students fit more easily into society and the world of work, it has set up medical and social structures linked to its institutions, one achievement being ergonomic work-stations.

Contacts :

- Kathryn Lequette, *Prélude, Résidence universitaire Les Taillées, 291, rue de la Houille Blanche, 38406 St-Martin d'Hères Cedex, tel.: 33 (0)4 76 59 55 50, fax: 33 (0)4 76 59 55 70.*
- Claude Charlon, SAUH, *Résidence les Taillées, B 91, Domaine Universitaire, 38406 St-Martin d'Hères, tel.: 33 (0)4 76 59 55 76, fax: 33 (0)4 76 59 55 69.*
- Dominique Ferté, "*Cellule accessibilité*", SAUH, *Résidence les Taillées – B 91, Domaine Universitaire, 38406 Saint-Martin d'Hères Cedex, tel.: 33 (0)4 76 59 55 40, fax: 33 (0)4 76 59 55 69.*
- *Fondation santé des étudiants de France, B.P. 147, 75664 Paris Cedex 14, tel.: 33 (0)1 45 89 43 39, fax: 33 (0)1 45 89 17 62.*
- CMUDD, *38660 Saint-Hilaire du Touvet, tel.: 33 (0)4 76 45 49 50, fax: 33 (0)4 76 45 49 00.*