Trinity College Dublin

Disability Service

Student Survey 2009-2010

(April 2009)
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Annual feedback surveys are conducted by the College Disability Service (DS) in order to monitor quality of provision of supports and services in College. A survey of students registered with the DS was undertaken in March / April 2010 for the academic year 2009-2010. Students were asked to provide feedback regarding the efficiency of Disability Services & College supports, access to academic resources such as the Library and IT, accessibility and effectiveness of teaching and learning methods and provision of reasonable adjustments. Of the 685 actively registered students, 246 participated in the survey - a response rate of 36% of the total number of registered students. Of those 246 students who began the survey, there was a survey completion rate of 89.4%.

2. Findings

2.1 Student profile

Over half of the students who responded to the survey were registered in their first 2 years of college (54.4%) with the majority in JF year (Table 1).

Q1. Please tell us a little about yourself. You may select more than one answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Junior Freshman</td>
<td>34.15%</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Freshman</td>
<td>20.33%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Sophister</td>
<td>20.33%</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Sophister</td>
<td>12.60%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>11.38%</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAP</td>
<td>2.44%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature</td>
<td>7.72%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

Almost half of students were registered with a specific learning difficulty (44.7%), the remaining disability categories being evenly spread (Table 2).

Q2. Please indicate one or more category of disability that applies to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyperactivity Disorder</td>
<td>0.81%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asperger's Syndrome</td>
<td>7.72%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Specific Learning Difficulty e.g. dyslexia 44.72% 110
Blind / Visual Impairment 6.10% 15
Mental Health 16.67% 41
Deaf / Hard of hearing 9.35% 23
Significant Ongoing Illness 12.60% 31
Other (please specify) 9.35% 23

Comments 26
answered question 246
skipped question 0

Table 2

The majority of respondents are registered in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, with an even number of students registered in maths, Science and Engineering, and the Health Sciences.

Q3. In which area are you studying?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Humanities</td>
<td>55.28%</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths, Science and Engineering</td>
<td>23.58%</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>21.95%</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.2 Disability resources and services

Students were asked to comment on the importance of DS supports offered (Table 4a), and the quality and availability of academic resources and services in College (Table 4b). Students identified two ‘non-human’ supports as those that were essential to academic progress: special borrowing privileges (32.1%) and photocopying cards (43.9%). The composite results for access to assistive technology and ATIC rooms (39%), also identifies these as essential to student progress. Unsurprisingly exam accommodations were deemed to be most essential (64.6%), indicating that assessment of academic performance is a primary concern for students. With respect to dyslexia / learning support, 110 respondents were students with a specific learning difficulty, and 97 of those students rated this service as essential (35), very helpful (36) and helpful (26).
‘I find the Disability Service very user friendly. The help I get from Unilink, the subject specific recapping and the ease with which my exam accommodations have been met have been invaluable.’

‘Unilink – I found Unilink to be an amazing service which helped my time management, completing goals, realizing the importance of my course subject outside of the academic realm.’

4. We provide a number of services to students, please rate these in order of importance to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Borrowing Rights</td>
<td>32.1% (79)</td>
<td>28.0% (69)</td>
<td>14.2% (35)</td>
<td>4.5% (11)</td>
<td>21.1% (52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopy cards</td>
<td>43.9% (108)</td>
<td>36.2% (89)</td>
<td>8.9% (22)</td>
<td>1.6% (4)</td>
<td>9.3% (23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Assistant/Lab assistant</td>
<td>5.3% (13)</td>
<td>9.3% (23)</td>
<td>9.3% (23)</td>
<td>3.7% (9)</td>
<td>72.4% (178)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
<td>4.9% (12)</td>
<td>12.2% (30)</td>
<td>12.6% (31)</td>
<td>5.3% (13)</td>
<td>65.0% (160)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject specific recapping text</td>
<td>11.4% (28)</td>
<td>15.4% (38)</td>
<td>9.3% (23)</td>
<td>6.9% (17)</td>
<td>56.9% (140)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative formatting of text</td>
<td>6.5% (16)</td>
<td>11.0% (27)</td>
<td>9.8% (24)</td>
<td>6.5% (16)</td>
<td>66.3% (163)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note taker</td>
<td>11.8% (29)</td>
<td>9.3% (23)</td>
<td>3.7% (9)</td>
<td>4.1% (10)</td>
<td>71.1% (175)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unilink</td>
<td>12.6% (31)</td>
<td>12.2% (30)</td>
<td>13.0% (32)</td>
<td>4.9% (12)</td>
<td>57.3% (141)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia / learning support</td>
<td>14.2% (35)</td>
<td>14.6% (36)</td>
<td>10.6% (26)</td>
<td>4.9% (12)</td>
<td>55.7% (137)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATIC room</td>
<td>20.7% (51)</td>
<td>15.0% (37)</td>
<td>10.2% (25)</td>
<td>4.1% (10)</td>
<td>50.0% (123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistive Technology</td>
<td>18.3% (45)</td>
<td>13.0% (32)</td>
<td>13.4% (33)</td>
<td>5.3% (13)</td>
<td>50.0% (123)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam accommodations</td>
<td>64.6% (159)</td>
<td>17.1% (42)</td>
<td>6.5% (16)</td>
<td>1.2% (3)</td>
<td>10.6% (26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

answered question  246
skipped question  9

Table 4a

2.3 Academic resources and services

Students were asked to comment on the quality and availability of academic resources and services in College (Table 4). Generally students reported that provision of physical resources such as the Library, IT facilities, equipment and meeting rooms were excellent to good.
5. How would you rate the quality and availability of resources and services in College?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Needs improvement</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library resources and services</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing and IT resources</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed and online materials for courses/modules</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to equipment, facilities or meeting rooms</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Service</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any comment? 36 answered question 237 skipped question 9

Table 4b

‘The quality and availability of Resources in TCD are excellent. Especially the Disability Service and the Writing Resource Center which I find extremely brilliant and have made my first year in Trinity a really manageable and enjoyable experience, because from day one I have continuously had the support there’.

‘Everything in the college is smoothly run and when a service is needed it is provided promptly and efficiently’.
However 33.7% of responses described availability of central resources (library, computing and IT resources, printed and online materials, access to equipment or meeting rooms) as poor, and 40.5% categorized these items as needing improvement, specifically access to meeting / discussion rooms and quality of IT and printing facilities. This feedback is in line with that received in programme and module surveys conducted as part of the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum (TIC) pilot, where printing and computing facilities were described as in need of improvement. Students reported difficulties with the College wireless system and a lack of group work facilities. The majority of comments focused on the Hamilton Building and Library.

‘There needs to be more space for academic room meetings. There is so much hassle to book rooms for student group meetings. There should be rooms set aside for these, even a big room where a number of groups could meet at one time.’

‘The printer in the Hamilton Library is constantly broken down and is the main place to print lecture notes for sciences students……’

‘IT and computer services and materials are really bad. It is very difficult to get materials online and printing in particular is terrible, with two different systems and very few printers’.

‘…. The wireless and LAN internet access should be made less complicated it took me 3 days to figure out how to access the internet and some people have only gained access recently’.

With respect to online materials (lecture notes, WebCT), whilst over 70% of students felt that availability was excellent to good, 24% felt that they were poor and needed improvement.

‘The online material needs to be uploaded to one place and one only. It should be easy to access and shouldn’t use the initials of a lecturer to mark folders.’

‘Was told I would receive the lectures by email before every lecture and with the year nearly over I never received one.’

‘…there is no consistent delivery method, WebCT / Moodle / get folders – use one method for each course…..’
This lack of consistency in resource circulation methods was also raised within the TIC module and programme surveys.

Students also reported issues with the ATIC (Assistive Technology) rooms:

‘...the ATIC room in the Hamilton isn’t big enough and also is subjected to a lot of noise from outside the Library often making it impossible to concentrate.

‘...computer room not available sometimes because students log on their friends who are not registered to use ATIC.’

Provision of space for access to assistive technology is problematic: as the number of students registered with DS increases, ATIC space becomes a premium. The way in which such a space is managed needs to be addressed:

‘....two people in the Hamilton Library were in the room and another student came in to have a grind there ...... I think we need to come up with a solution to this ...... Effectively it’s impossible to study beside someone having grinds because they need to talk out loud....’

With the numbers of Health Services students increasing, there is a growing need for AT and learning support resources off campus in St James. Equally the demand for similar facilities is growing within the Faculty of Maths, Science and Engineering as the number of students registered with a disability increases.

Students were invited to comment on the efficacy of human support provided to them during the course of their studies (Table 5).

### 6. During the year, how useful have the following people been in supporting your studies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Not very useful</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department / school office staff</td>
<td>19.0% (45)</td>
<td>33.3% (79)</td>
<td>30.8% (73)</td>
<td>12.2% (29)</td>
<td>4.6% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other admin staff</td>
<td>9.7% (23)</td>
<td>20.3% (48)</td>
<td>32.9% (78)</td>
<td>21.1% (50)</td>
<td>16.0% (38)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Teaching assistants  8.4% (20)  25.7% (61)  17.7% (42)  8.9% (21)  39.2% (93)
Lecturers  16.0% (38)  39.7% (94)  27.0% (64)  12.7% (30)  4.6% (11)
College tutor  19.8% (47)  18.6% (44)  19.0% (45)  23.6% (56)  19.0% (45)
Disability Service  35.9% (85)  38.8% (92)  15.2% (36)  6.3% (15)  3.8% (9)
Other services  7.6% (18)  14.3% (34)  25.3% (60)  10.1% (24)  42.6% (101)
Fellow students  24.5% (58)  36.7% (87)  17.3% (41)  10.1% (24)  11.4% (27)
Any comment? 29
answered question 237
skipped question 9

Table 5

Students rated the following groups as ‘very useful’ lecturers (39.7%), Disability Service (38.8%), school / department staff (33.3%), and peers (36.7%).

‘The difficulty a disabled person has to face on a day to day basis is alleviated inside the gate of Trinity. Everyone is helpful and yet they don’t take over, they allow you to reach your goals by being a coach on the sidelines, there with bucket and sponge when needed! In Trinity your independence is not taken away from you but the support is there when you want’.

However it should be noted that the majority of the 29 comments made in this section were negative. A significant number of students (23.6%) felt that their college tutor was not very useful, although no specific comments were included to explain why this might be the case. Administrative Staff were also identified as being unhelpful (21.2%), although comments suggest that this is confined to central administrative areas rather than staff within departments / schools.

‘College admin make it harder to be in college, rather than easier. No one takes responsibility for anything; everyone refers you to everyone else; and people don’t answer their emails.’

‘It is an uphill battle in Secretary Offices (within a school) here sometimes attitude of secretaries often seems close to indifferent to student queries/needs.’

Students also identified issues with awareness of academic staff with regard to difficulties for students with a disability.
‘Some Lecturers are excellent, others have little if any understanding of a learning disability, and one confessed that he can’t be bothered looking at LENS reports or recommendations’.

2.4 Access to teaching and learning

Students were asked about their experiences of teaching and learning methods employed in college, and any difficulties that had arisen as a result of such techniques. These included electronic resources, lecture handouts, small group assignments, problem-based learning and presentations (Table 6). They were also invited to state how any difficulties they faced with teaching and learning had been overcome (Table 7).

Most students did not identify any specific difficulty with accessing course content, ‘No’ responses ranging between 52.2% for placements and fieldwork to 81.9% for lecture handouts. Main difficulties expressed were the speed at which material was covered in lectures (56.2%), independent research projects (37.6%), use of text books and written material (35.8%) and giving presentations (32.7%).

7. Have you faced difficulties because of your disability with any of these teaching techniques?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having to attend lectures</td>
<td>37.2% (84)</td>
<td>59.3% (134)</td>
<td>3.5% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of overheads /diagrams/visual aids</td>
<td>24.3% (55)</td>
<td>69.9% (158)</td>
<td>5.8% (13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of handouts</td>
<td>14.6% (33)</td>
<td>81.9% (185)</td>
<td>3.5% (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of video or audio-taped material</td>
<td>8.0% (18)</td>
<td>74.3% (168)</td>
<td>17.7% (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in small-group work</td>
<td>25.7% (58)</td>
<td>68.1% (154)</td>
<td>6.2% (14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placements/practical/fieldwork</td>
<td>19.9% (45)</td>
<td>52.2% (118)</td>
<td>27.9% (63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing independent research projects</td>
<td>37.6% (85)</td>
<td>54.4% (123)</td>
<td>8.0% (18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of textbooks &amp; written material</td>
<td>35.8% (81)</td>
<td>59.3% (134)</td>
<td>4.9% (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving presentations</td>
<td>32.7% (74)</td>
<td>58.4% (132)</td>
<td>8.8% (20)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Problem based learning 21.7% (49) 64.2% (145) 14.2% (32)
Insensitive teaching 25.2% (57) 64.2% (145) 10.6% (24)
Speed at which material is covered 56.2% (127) 40.7% (92) 3.1% (7)
answered question 226
skipped question 20

Table 6

The speed at which material is covered causes problems with capturing adequate notes:

‘Lecturers often rush through things and I’d find it difficult to keep up, I would often miss the most important thing, and then couldn’t remember what they had said.’

‘One lecturer was for the first half of the course very fast with slides so that even able body students had a problem...’

‘Speed of note taking required is beyond me, this slows everything down.’

This is exacerbated where lecture notes are unavailable both prior to and after the lecture:

‘I find it difficult to take down notes quickly and therefore miss out when the lecturer refuses to put the notes up on the internet after the lecture.’

‘...with a lot of writing would feel the need to rest and in some of the science subjects handouts are not available.’

‘My course uses a lot of visiting lecturers so obtaining overheads/handouts etc in alternative formats was a frequent problem.’

Other comments highlighted the absence of adjustments to course delivery that would make lectures more accessible:
‘Lecturers can have a tendency not to use the microphone which makes them very difficult to hear, even when sitting at the front of the theatre.’

‘A lot of lecturers seem unaware of how they can help. I find it useful to record lectures as I have trouble taking notes but most of my lecturers will not allow this.’

With respect to assistance in overcoming difficulties, 39.8% of students stated that peers had been most useful to them, followed by help from lecturers (27.9%) and one-to-one tuition (24.8%). Only 13.7% of students were offered material in an alternative format.

8. How were these difficulties overcome?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Received course material in different format</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received help from lecturer</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received one-on-one tutoring/assistance</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referred to another service</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received extra equipment/resources</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided with assistive technology</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (give details below)</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any other comment? 96  
answered question 226  
Skipped 20

Table 7

This question also generated the largest number of comments, with 96 students posting an additional response. Reviewing these comments it appears that students rely on classmates where help from lecturing staff is inadequate:
‘I’m getting help off one of my classmates I have asked the lecturer but the response I got was "Hmm that’s unfortunate" and she carried on.’

‘I asked classmates to read visual material that I could not see.’

‘Occasionally I approach lecturer. Several unfortunate experiences make me wary.’

‘Supports directly from DS were excellent; supports provided directly by my course were sporadic and inadequate, e.g. lecture notes, prior notice of assignments.’

However 34 students stated that they were left to their own devices and many struggled to find a way through their difficulties.

‘Dedicated more time to studies and learned to take better control of my illness.’

‘Problems were not overcome however, I made up my own little ways to get the work done.’

‘I just worked harder than other people.’

‘They weren’t overcome I’ve had to deal with them all year.’

2.5 Assessment and examination

Students were asked to identify difficulties encountered with a range of assessment procedures (Table 8) including examinations (including orals, multiple choice papers and computer assessment), essays, theses and project work. They were also asked to indicate how such difficulties had been addressed by reasonable accommodations (Table 9).

9. Have you faced any difficulties with particular forms of assessment because of your disability?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percent count</th>
<th>Response count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written exams</td>
<td>57.10%</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Essays 55.80% 126
Practical reports 15.00% 34
Small-group projects 15.50% 35
Theses/dissertations 11.90% 27
Oral exams/vivas 16.80% 38
Seminar presentations 15.50% 35
Computer-based assessment 6.20% 14
Multiple choice tests/exams 15.90% 36

Any other comment... 41
answered question 226
skipped question 20

Table 8

The greatest area of difficulty by a wide margin was expressed with written exams (57.1%) and essays (55.8%). However of the 41 comments posted most students acknowledged the importance of reasonable accommodations, although some still referred to problems with timed assessments and use of MCQ formats.

‘Still quite rushed in exams, it makes my handwriting worse.’

‘The time allocation for the written exams does not suit me and is not suitable for my specific disability. It was awarded on the bases of precedent set by other disabilities and was not open to discussion or academic assessment of its suitability. For a university I feel that is a major short coming.’

‘The wording in MCQs can be very vague and it can be hard for me to fully understand the question and/or figure out what the question in asking.....’

‘MCQs are just awful, they can be so wordy that it is incredibly difficult to read the question at all let alone understand it.’

44 students posted comment responses to provision of reasonable accommodations.

10. How were these difficulties overcome?
Table 9

Of these 10 students (22.7%) stated that their difficulties had not been overcome, and one comment referred to a failure to provide accommodations in departmental assessments.

‘Had an experience with a social research exam in a Lecture Hall with 300 approx other students/no disability accommodations put in place, even after speaking with lecturer beforehand and reassured there would be. I feel some lecturers chance their arm and try get away with stuff hoping students won’t complain.’

Students were asked to indicate any individuals / services that they had approached for assistance with assessment difficulties (Table 10).

11. Did you seek help from anyone of the following people for difficulties with course material or assessment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No-one</td>
<td>11.10%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another student on my course</td>
<td>59.30%</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer / teaching assistant</td>
<td>43.80%</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College tutor</td>
<td>26.50%</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability service</td>
<td>41.20%</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A personal assistant or note taker</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A friend or family member</td>
<td>29.60%</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Counselor or therapist</td>
<td>19.90%</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (give details below)</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other comment.....</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10

Responses were reflective of experiences with accessing course material with 59.3% of students approaching peers / classmates, 43.8% seeking help from lecturers / teaching assistants, and 41.2% contacting DS. Again only 26.5% approach their college tutor, and no explanation was provided in the comments.

‘I have spoken to lecturers several times about having trouble seeing presentations but most say they cannot make font bigger and so I ask classmates to read things that I cannot see.’

‘I requested feedback on one of my seen exams, and the lecturer was extremely helpful and gave advice that translates to assignments. Family members read over my work which is helpful and other students’ concerns highlighted problems I hadn’t considered.’

2.6 Online supports

In March 2010 a survey of 100 students using the AST service was conducted. With respect to future provision, 55% of students expressed an interest in online web tutorials, 26% in group sessions for academic skills, and 25% in formation of study buddy groups. Therefore a question was included in the annual survey requesting students to identify content for online web tutorials (Table 11).

The most popular items indicated were exam revision strategies (69.5%), essay planning and writing (65.2%), time management and organisation (57.6%), and referencing (50.5%). Podcasts are currently available for these items from the DS website, but have not been accessed for more than 8 months. The AST section of the website has been re-designed and advice provided in mp3 and video format. However students also felt that whilst web tutorials would be useful, fundamentally they should be embedded in their course.

12. In a recent survey students indicated an interest in participating in online web tutorials from the Disability Service. Please indicate the subject / topic areas that would be of interest.
### Table 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning and writing essays / assignments</th>
<th>Response %</th>
<th>Response count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Referencing</td>
<td>50.50%</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving reading and spelling</td>
<td>31.00%</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations</td>
<td>34.30%</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam revision / study skills</td>
<td>69.50%</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing a thesis / dissertation</td>
<td>43.30%</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management and organisation</td>
<td>57.60%</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any comment........? 20
answered question 210
skipped question 36

3. **Issues arising from the survey**

**Satisfaction with DS** - Overall students were happy with the services offered by the DS with 95% of those surveyed rated the services ‘Excellent’ to ‘Good’. In particular, students found DS staff to be knowledgeable, competent and approachable. Areas identified for improvement were the printing facilities in the ATIC rooms and better AT provision in the Hamilton and James.

**DS response:** Discussions are ongoing with the Faculty of EMS to source suitable small group work room so AT and learning support can be developed in the East End of Campus. In addition, computers in the ATIC spaces in College will be upgraded this year to allow a greater response time when machines are not working or performing slow. Due to high demand for use of these spaces, social networking sites such as facebook will be removed to ensure machines...
are used for their primary function, that being use of assistive technology. Increased monitoring of usage and time spent on computers along with improved signage will hopefully improve usage of AT spaces.

**Satisfaction with other College Services** – Students reported that provision of physical resources such as the Library, IT facilities, equipment and meeting rooms were excellent to good. But a significant minority (30.8%) felt these services needed improvement, particularly the need for small group working spaces, printing facilities and online materials such as WebCT in College. There was also concerns raised about engaging with central administrative services and receiving sufficient time or support in dealing with queries.

**DS response:** Students should be encouraged to report faults with printing facilities to Library staff, as an immediate response service is available. Systems for reporting computing faults need will be agreed and publicised. College will be moving to a new VLE which should resolve issues with accessibility of eLearning material. Availability of space for group meetings for the purposes of study / project work will continue to raise concerns as student numbers grow.

Administrative staff need to become aware of the requirement for giving sufficient time in dealing with students with disabilities who may require additional support and time. Some students were also reporting difficulties in meeting and gaining support with their personal Tutors.

**Teaching, Learning and Assessment** – Most students did not have major difficulties with any of the teaching methods used in College, but a significant minority had difficulty keeping up with the pace of lecturers and not having materials such as lecture notes in advance. Some students were concerned that academic staff is unaware of the inaccessibility of classes such as not wearing microphones in large lecture theatres. When asked how students overcome difficulties in teaching and learning, interestingly the majority rely on peers to assist them.

In relation to assessment methods used in College, students indicated they had greatest difficulties in written examinations (57%) and essay writing (56%) but most overcame these difficulties with reasonable accommodations such as extra time in examinations. Concerns were raised about the lack of accommodations in departmental examinations.

**DS response:** New academic staff who pursue the Introduction to Teaching course via CAPSL, and postgraduate teaching assistants who undertake the CAPSL Teaching and Supporting Learning module, are provided with disability
awareness training. These workshops include an introduction to accessible information and teaching diverse student groups. This information now needs to be disseminated to all academic staff.

Responses regarding assessment methods highlight the validity of the rationale for reasonable accommodations. However with increasing numbers of students requesting accommodations this is likely to have a significant impact on examination arrangements. Schools and departments need to take on board the request for reasonable accommodations in all assessment situations. The Senior Lecturer has written to all Schools alerting them to the need to ensure all exam accommodations are implemented at departmental level.

**Satisfaction with Academic staff** – Student responses indicated that there was a willingness to engage with academic staff for assistance, and most felt comfortable doing so (43.8%). However only 26% of students sought assistance for academic difficulties from their College tutor; instead the majority requested help from a classmate or friend. Comments identified instances where staff were either not aware of the impact of a disability, or were not sufficiently interested in ensuring that materials were accessible.

**DS response:** Academic staff are notified of the requirement for providing in-course accommodations via the LENS. This is an important document the contents of which should be acted upon. The Accessible Information Policy has now come into force and all staff should be familiar with their responsibilities under this policy. There is a need for an examination of the reasons why students are seeking support from peers when they encounter difficulties, as opposed to discussing issues with their Tutor.

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**4. Appendix – TCD Disability Service Survey 2009-10**

**Section 1. Your opinion is important to us!**
TCD Disability Service is interested in hearing your views on the services we provide, and your experiences of teaching, learning and assessment in college. We would greatly appreciate your frank and honest feedback in answering the following questions. Please be assured that your response is fully confidential and is solely for the purpose of improving our overall service to our users.

Once complete, you can enter your survey in the €100 PRIZE DRAW, for a voucher redeemable at any of the following outlets: Tower Records, HMV, Stephen’s Green Shopping Centre, Dundrum Town Centre, Easons, Hodges-Figgis, Marks & Spencer, etc. To enter this draw simply include a contact phone number or email address at the end of the survey (only completed surveys will be entered).

Thanks for your help!

Section 2. Student information

1. Please tell us a little about yourself. You may select more than one answer.

- Junior Freshman
- Senior Freshman
- Junior Sophister
- Senior Sophister
- Postgraduate
- TAP
- Mature

2. Please indicate one or more category of disability that applies to you.

- Attention Deficit Disorder or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Asperger's Syndrome
- Physical disability
- Specific Learning Difficulty e.g. dyslexia
- Blind / Visual Impairment
- Mental Health
- Deaf / Hard of hearing
- Significant Ongoing Illness
- Other (please specify)
- Other (please specify)
3. In which area are you studying?

- Arts and Humanities
- Maths, Science and Engineering
- Health Sciences

4. We provide a number of services to students, please rate these in order of importance to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Very helpful</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Not helpful</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Special Borrowing Rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopy cards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photocopy cards essential</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Assistant/Lab assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Assistant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject specific recapping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative formatting of text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note taker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unilink</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia / learning support</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATIC room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistive Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam accommodations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Section 3. Provision of services and supports

5. How would you rate the quality and availability of resources and services in college?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Needs improvement</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library resources and services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computing and IT resources</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printed and online materials for courses/modules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to equipment, facilities or meeting rooms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Any comment?
6. During the year, how useful have the following people been in supporting your studies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Very useful</th>
<th>Useful</th>
<th>Not very useful</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Department / school office staff  
• Other admin staff (e.g. student records / examinations)  
• Teaching assistants  
• Lecturers  
• College tutor  
• Disability Service  
• Other services  
• Fellow students  
• Any comment? |

Section 4. Teaching, learning and assessment

7. Have you faced difficulties because of your disability with any of these teaching techniques?

- Having to attend lectures
- Use of overheads/diagrams/visual aids
- Use of handouts
- Use of video or audio-taped material
- Participating in small-group work
- Placements/practical/fieldwork
- Doing independent research projects
- Use of textbooks & written material
- Giving presentations
- Problem based learning
- Insensitive teaching
- Speed at which material is covered
- Speed at which material is covered Yes
- Any comment?

8. How were these difficulties overcome?

- Received course material in different format
• Received help from lecturer
• Received one-on-one tutoring/assistance
• Referred to another service
• Received extra equipment/resources
• Provided with assistive technology
• Other (give details below)
• Any other comment?

9. Have you faced any difficulties with particular forms of assessment because of your disability?

• Written exams
• Essays
• Practical reports
• Small-group projects
• Theses/dissertations
• Oral exams/vivas
• Seminar presentations
• Computer-based assessment
• Multiple choice tests/exams
• Any other comment...

10. How were these difficulties overcome?

• Given additional time extension
• Form of assessment was modified
• Provided with assistive technology
• Provided with human support
• Other (give details below)
• Any other comment....

11. Did you seek help from anyone of the following people for difficulties with course material or assessment?

• No-one
• Another student on my course
• Lecturer / teaching assistant
• College tutor
• Disability service
• A personal assistant or note-taker
• A friend or family member
• A counsellor or therapist
• Other (give details below)
• Any other comment.....