

Trinity Disability Service Student Meeting Guidelines Academic Year 2020/21

# Introduction:

In response to the on-going COVID-19 restrictions in place, but also in recognition of the changing ways in which we connect with students, the Disability Service and the Ability Co-oP have devised the following guidance to clearly outline the formats and procedures related to Disability Service student meetings for the academic year 2020/21.

Where possible for the upcoming academic year, we will endeavour to meet with students in person. However, in recognition of the blended learning environment that will be in place for the upcoming academic year, and nature of the on-going restrictions in place nationally, we are available to meet online via MS Teams, phone, email or text. In addition, students who are not regularly on campus for disability-related reasons or for other reasons such as off-campus location or placement / internship, we will also be using the alternative meeting formats outlined below.

# Alternative Meeting Formats:

In addition to face-to-face meetings, there are three main alternative formats that the Disability Service will be using in the academic year 2020/21 outlined below:

## Online Meetings using MS Teams

Online Student Meetings within the Disability Service will take place using MS Teams. This is due to data protection requirements within Trinity in storing sensitive data.

IT Services have provided a ‘Getting Started Guide’ on [Meetings and Calls with Microsoft Teams](https://www.tcd.ie/itservices/assets/doc/working-remotely/teams-meetings-calls.pdf), as well as, installation instructions and an FAQ on [Microsoft 365 Apps for Students](https://www.tcd.ie/itservices/internet/office-proplus.php).

## Phone Meetings

All staff within the Disability Service have mobile phones for work purposes. Personal Mobile phones will not be used in communication with students and all phones are password protected.

## Student Information Desk / Email Contact

Students can contact us with any queries / questions by emailing [askds@tcd.ie](mailto:askds@tcd.ie). Once you are connected with a Disability Staff member, some contact may also be via the staff members email address.

# Data Protection:

[Please follow this link for the Disability Service guidelines on confidentiality and GDPR responsibilities.](https://www.tcd.ie/disability/policies/#data)

# Guide to Engaging in Alternative Meeting Formats:

The Ability Co\_Op have developed the following tips / advice or engaging in online or phone meetings with DS staff

Our expectations of students during a meeting

1. We ask that you provide us with your current address and next of kin details for each meeting.
2. During your meeting we ask that you are in a safe and secure area. If you are using a phone or portable device it may be dangerous to move around, for example in areas with traffic, so we ask you complete the call in a secure environment.
3. Due to the confidential nature of the meetings, it would be useful to complete your call in a private and quiet area where you can speak comfortably with the Disability Service staff member.
4. The staff member will not be recording the meeting or taking photos/screenshots during the meeting. We ask that you do the same.
5. We ask that you do not involve parents or others in the meeting as it is confidential, and the Disability Service is designed for supporting students. The Disability Service is required to have due regard for its legal obligations to protect the confidentiality of its relationship with the student. Should you wish Parents / Guardians to be in a meeting a ‘[Consent to Confidentiality Waiver’](https://www.tcd.ie/disability/assets/doc/Word%20Docs/Confidentiality-Waiver.docx) must be discussed with your Disability Service Contact and then completed in advance of any meeting taking place.

# Prior to a Remote Meeting:

A member of the Disability Service will contact you to request a term-time emergency contact name and contact details for this person prior to the meeting. Please see Appendix A for more details.

# Within the Meeting / Contact:

We will always ask you to confirm where you are at the outset of a remote meeting. We will also ask to confirm your emergency contact details if you have not done so prior to the meeting. If your emergency contact does not reside in Ireland, we will ask that you provide one in Ireland if possible.

# Student Safety:

Please note that while our conversation is confidential, if you intimate that you are a risk to yourself or others, we will be required to break confidentiality to ensure your safety and the safety of others.

Guidelines on how this is managed are given below in Appendix B for more details.

# Appendix A – Prior to a Remote Meeting:

1. Send Meeting request including the section below:

Please note that while our conversation is confidential if you intimate that you are a risk to yourself or others, we will be required to break confidentiality to ensure your safety and the safety of others.

As part of Disability Service procedure for remote contact / appointments, please provide a term-time emergency contact name and contact details for this person prior to the meeting.

2. If the student does not provide details, check that emergency contact details are on the student’s SITS record under ‘View Student Record’ and ‘Contacts’.

3. Please add any updated details to SID.

# Appendix B – Within the Meeting/Contact:

Always ask the student to confirm where there are at present. If this is not a listed address, please ask for this address & note it.

Please confirm the Students Emergency contact details. If the contact’s address is not in Ireland & the Student is currently, please ask the student if they have additional contact in Ireland.

The Disability Service (DS) is not an emergency service, however if during a remote meeting, a student indicates that he or she is having suicidal thoughts or is very distressed indicating that they no longer wish to live, or that they wish to harm themselves, the priority is for the student to feel safe and staff to refer on. Guidelines on what to do and who to contact are given below.

1. Ask the student if there is anyone else there with them. If an appropriate adult is present, then ask the student if you can speak with them.
2. Sign-post student to contact College Health Service (01 896 1556) or Student Counselling Service (01 896 1407), or their GP or external health service team. Where possible contact the CHS or SCS yourself to inform staff of your concern. Inform the student that they will be contacted by CHS / SCS and that they must answer the call, and if they do not answer that their next of kin will be contacted.
3. If the student does not agree to make an appointment to speak to someone in the College Health Service or Student Counselling Service, or external service team, or if there is no-one present that you can speak to, explain to him / her gently that you have concerns for their welfare and ask them if you may contact their identified individual (emergency contact provided prior to the meeting).
4. If the student does not agree to the DS staff member contacting any of the above individuals, or if these individuals are unavailable, explain gently to the student that you have concerns for their welfare, and ask the student if he /she will attend the local Accident and Emergency department (catchment areas information - https://www.tcd.ie/disability/services/case-coordinator.php.)
5. A student has a right to refuse support. It is a matter for the student to choose whether to accept a referral, and to avail of supports offered. However, if you have any doubts about the person's safety, that you must break confidence and contact emergency contact provided prior to the meeting.
6. If unable contact the emergency contact provided prior to the meeting, then contact the student’s health service provider or the Gardaí/Police.

Additionally, if a student sends a message / email to a DS Staff member and indicates that they are having suicidal thoughts or are very distressed indicating that they no longer wish to live, or that they wish to harm themselves, the priority is for the student to feel safe and staff to refer on. Guidelines on what to do and who to contact are given below.

1. The DS staff member should attempt to call the student on their mobile phone on receiving their text message.
2. Once they can contact the student, the DS Staff Member, should follow the procedure and guidelines presented above.

If the student does not answer the phone call made by the DS Staff Member on receiving the text, the DS Staff Member should send a text message / email to the student, gently explaining that they are trying to contact them via phone call and that in order to safeguard the student they would like them to answer the phone call, or ask them to call the DS Staff Member.

If the student does not respond to the text message then the DS staff member should send another text message explaining to them gently that you have concerns for their welfare, and ask them if you may contact their identified individual (emergency contact provided prior to the meeting). Refer to above guidelines.