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### **Aids offered to students with disabilities or health problems (during study progress)**

The Act of 11 February 2005 on “the equality of rights and opportunities, the participation and citizenship of disabled people” has changed fundamentally the obligations of universities in terms of reception of disabled people.

Over the last few years, the measures taken by the Ministry of Higher Education and Research demonstrate its commitment to facilitate the integration of disabled people in higher education.

This effort resulted on 5 September 2007 in the signature of a university/handicap Charter that aims at:

- improving the coherence and visibility of the reception arrangements for disabled students and of the financial, technical and political responsibilities of every party;
- making sure university political authorities are involved in the reception arrangements for disabled students, in particular by disseminating the information, creating services for this purpose and designating a person in charge of the reception of disabled people, centrepiece of the reception arrangements;
- facilitating the provision of individual and collective resources in order to implement the objectives of the Act of 11 February 2005;
- offering disabled students the same opportunities as able-bodied students by strengthening disabled students' autonomy.

Finally, this Act aims at making sure disabled students can study in the best conditions thanks to suitable aids and adaptations and can access higher education facilities.

### **Reception**

Every higher education institution has a person in charge of the reception of disabled students. This person is in charge of the coordination of the different actions needed and works closely with them so as to resolve their problems.

### **Accessibility**

The accessibility to newly built university premises is ensured, this requirement is now a compulsory part of every architecture project. Institutions with more ancient premises have a legal obligation to make accessible their premises within the time limits set in the Act of 11 February 2005.

### **Aids for studies and student life**

In accordance with the Act of 11 February 2005, disabled students must contact the local office for disabled students (*maison départementale des personnes handicapées*) of their department. This office, together with the higher education institution, will evaluate disabled students' needs according to their studies project. Universities make sure they can study in the best conditions thanks to the aids and adaptation needed. These measures are implemented together with student associations and/or associations of service providers for disabled people.

### **Studies**

Students with disabilities or health problems attend the same courses as all students and have the same exams.

Universities offer the appropriate academic assistance within their premises: handouts, copies of courses and tutorials, recording and transcription of magnetic tapes, Braille documents, loan of specialized material, tutorials...

Moreover, the boards of directors of higher education institutions can, as for other categories of students, set an arrangement in terms of duration of courses. University services for physical activities and sports (*SUAPS*) welcome disabled students who want to practice physical activities and sports.

### **Examinations and National selective entrance examinations**

Specific measures exist to organise examinations and public selective entrance examinations for students with disabilities or health problems in order for them to benefit from arrangements that preserve their chances of success (increase in the duration of the examination, secretary, interpreter in sign languages...).

### **Housing and catering**

The National French Student Support Agency (*CNOUS: Centre National des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires*) and the Regional French Student Support Agencies (*CROUS: Centres Régionaux des Oeuvres Universitaires et Scolaires*) offer accommodation specially designed for people with disabilities. Student accommodation can host disabled people who need assistance for some everyday life actions.

Besides housing facilities, the access to university restaurants was also converted to make it easier for disabled students to enter. Furthermore, in many university restaurants, adapted menus can be offered to disabled students.

### **Higher education grants based on social criteria**

Disabled students may enjoy income-based grants such as any other students.

The 28-year-old age limit is not effective for disabled students who submit an application for a higher education grant.

Students can ask for higher education grants based on social criteria seven times during their whole higher education studies. Students with a handicap recognized by the Commission for the rights and the autonomy of disabled persons can have three additional annual grant rights.

### **Employability**

Universities develop more and more partnerships with companies in order to facilitate the transition to work for disabled students, in particular through work placements.

An interactive website for work placements and jobs available for disabled people is available:

<http://www.handi-up.org>

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For more information please visit <http://www.handi-u.fr/>

