Disability Advisory Service
2020-21 Annual Report

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1   2020-21 saw Disability Advisory Service (DAS) records rise again to 6,273, up 18.8% from 5,280 in the previous year. This figure represents 24.3% of the total Oxford student population and is higher than the 3,823 who choose to formally record a disability on their University student record.

1.2   Disability advisor caseloads are higher than ever, with roughly 747 students per full-time equivalent disability advisor.

1.3   Ongoing uncertainty around teaching and assessment formats, with new ways of working and much still subject to change at short notice throughout 2020-21, added further complication to the process of advisors ascertaining and recommending reasonable adjustments.

1.4   These issues present clear challenges to the timely production of highly individualised Student Support Plans (SSP). It is pertinent to consider where there might be scope to mainstream the most commonly recommended reasonable adjustments that fall within the realm of flexible and inclusive teaching and assessment practices. Oxford's higher than sector-average disability disclosure rates (which HESA reports as being 14.5%[1]) suggest we should continue pursuing every opportunity to embed the important work that has already begun in this area[2]. Ultimately the goal should be to reduce the need to register a disability to access course adjustments, enabling DAS to prioritise its resources for those with the most complex support requirements.

2. Student Engagement and Outreach

2.1   All students that register with DAS are offered contact with a designated disability advisor who can assess study support requirements and make recommendations for reasonable adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment. Since the onset of the pandemic, the majority of appointments have been conducted online and student engagement has been high. It has not yet been necessary to reinstate the DAS 'drop-in' service of former years because advisors have been able to offer online appointments in a more timely, efficient and flexible manner than was possible when student meetings predominantly took place in-person.

2.2   Beyond the Service's core student work, DAS endeavours to undertake a range of outreach activities with prospective applicants, offer holders and matriculated students (and the wider collegiate institution) to proactively encourage early engagement so they can gain full benefit from any relevant support and resources. This work remains at risk in the context of ever rising numbers of student registrations and daily casework pressures.

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[1] https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he

[2] Flexible and inclusive teaching (FIT) | Centre for Teaching and Learning (ox.ac.uk)

2.3   However, DAS continued to have an active presence at all undergraduate Open Days in 2020-21. We supplied detailed written information addressing the most commonly asked questions, and responded to more than 40 individual questions from prospective students during the live virtual open days in July 2021.

2.4   The Service also collaborated with both the Undergraduate and Graduate Admissions Teams to manage and develop content in prospectuses, application materials and webpages. Staff and student guidance were subject to considerable review to reflect the move to online activity.

2.5   Close work with the University's Development Office led to a new bursary to enhance the experience of visually impairment students at Oxford, and was formally launched in December 2020[3].

2.6   The Coronavirus pandemic prevented DAS hosting its pre-term transition event for new students in the usual in-person format. Instead, in September 2020 a series of recorded presentations and accompanying resources were made available to undergraduate and postgraduate offer holders through a dedicated Canvas course. The intended purpose was to equip students with the information, knowledge and confidence they may need to help facilitate a smoother transition to university.

The topics covered included: an introduction to DAS; an overview of disability study support arrangements and examination adjustments at Oxford; an explanation of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) funding and application processes; perspectives from a college disability coordinator/senior tutor and from on-course disabled students themselves; a description of the dedicated support available to disabled students in the Bodleian Libraries and Careers Service; advice on how to manage transitions from a psychological-wellbeing perspective.

An invitation was sent to 1,729 students and 1,332 (77%) enrolled on the course. Only 35 completed the evaluation survey but 97% of respondents reported the course to be extremely useful or useful and agreed they would recommend it to others.

2.7   Additionally, DAS made proactive efforts to engage with matriculated students through a programme of regular communications. This included termly e-bulletins sent to the mailing list of more than 5,000 students known to the Service. Since it was not possible for DAS to review and amend all of the 2,000+ individual SSPs in circulation during the height of the pandemic, we instead encouraged students to contact us if adjustments were needed to account for changes to the format of their teaching, learning or assessment.

Students with non-standard examination adjustments (i.e. >25% extra time) were contacted individually to determine how their arrangements should translate to a new assessment format, and recommendations were subsequently made directly to the Examinations and Assessments Team.

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[3] [New bursary to enhance the experience of visually impaired students at Oxford | University of Oxford](#)

3. Service Developments and Institutional Work

3.1   Despite ongoing operational challenges and pressures from high student demand, a number of important areas of service development and institutional work were successfully progressed in 2020-21.

3.2   The termly meeting for college and department disability coordinators and leads, the Disability Professionals' Forum, was moved to a successful online format that enabled more than 80 people to attend each meeting. The Forum has been a useful mechanism for DAS to deliver information, service updates, training, and generate discussion and feedback from its members about common issues and concerns.

3.3   Relatedly, written communications to our staff mailing list were used to promote newly developed DAS guidance on teaching disabled students remotely and advice from the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) on adopting a flexible and inclusive approach to remote teaching more generally.

3.4   DAS also worked with the Conference of Colleges Disability Subgroup to produce two comprehensive staff papers which were circulated prior to the start of the academic year. These outlined key areas for careful consideration in relation to those disabled students who were exempt from COVID-19 guidance, or who found that the measures designed to minimise health risks posed particular challenges for them during their time at university.

- Implications and mitigations of covid-19 measures on disabled students in 2020/21

- College advisory and guidance - students and staff with disabilities – a departmental version of this paper was also produced.

3.5   Michaelmas term 2020 saw the official launch of DAS's online Staff Guide[4] (which had been completed and made available earlier in the summer) with an event for college and department disability coordinators and leads, alongside a series of accompanying communications. The guide comprises a comprehensive and essential set of resources that underpin the implementation of the principles within the University's Common Framework for Supporting Disabled Students[5].

3.6   In October 2020 we completed a major development with Student Systems that enables the upload of Student Support Plans (SSP) to individual student records. Disability coordinators can now access a copy of all the existing SSPs for students in their college or department from eVision[6].

Coordinators are sent an automated email every time a new SSP is uploaded, prompting them to review the recommendations and disseminate as appropriate to other staff who need to be aware in order to implement any support arrangements. Disability Coordinators are able to give and remove access to specific staff members in a 'devolved information custodian' role, providing a more efficient and secure means of communicating institutional

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[4] https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/supporting-disabled-students

[5] https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/common-framework-for-supporting-disabled-students-0

[6] Disability Advisory Service (DAS) Student Support Plans (SSPs) now on eVision | Academic Support (ox.ac.uk)

reasonable adjustment support requirements in relation to the collegiate University's Equality Act duties towards disabled students.

3.7   Additionally, DAS set up a lecture caption editing service in early Hilary term 2021 as a direct response to the University's educational planning requirements, driven by the constraints of the covid pandemic, with particular reference the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations.

The service supports individual students in the organisation of manual editing of captions, as a reasonable adjustment for disability, ensuring the University meets its legal obligations in providing accessible recorded materials. As a short-term measure, this centrally supported service also assisted departments to reduce the workload of staff in subjects where the automated machine captioning proved to be ineffective because of the specialist nature of their content. Approximately 1200 lectures were edited by the end of Trinity term 2021.

4. Registrations and demographic data

4.1   DAS holds records for all the students who have declared a disability in Student Self Service, and for any who approach the Service separately. The number of DAS student records continues to rise and reached 6,273 in 2020-21, an 18.8% increase on the previous year. Increasing demand for examination adjustments may be driving this increase.
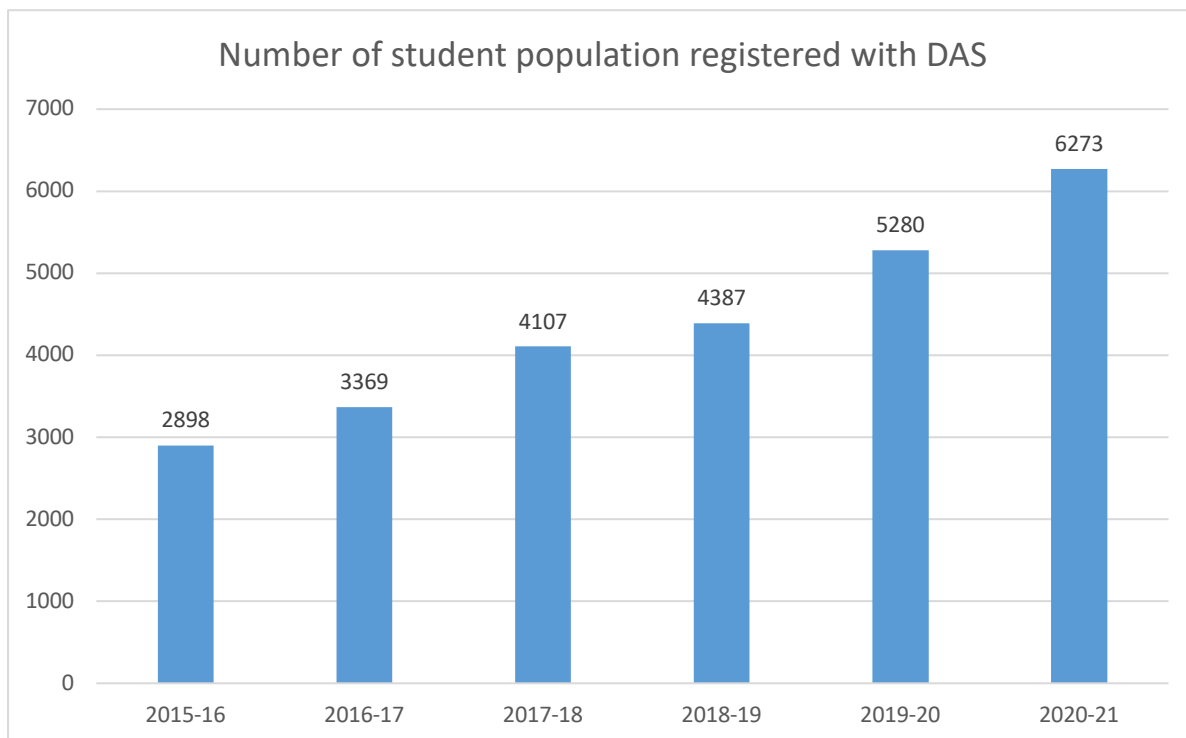
4.2   Demand for DAS provision remains above student population growth, and well above the HESA national average[7]. Further increases in demand and/or student growth (as per the University's Strategic Plan[8]) will place additional strain on the ability of the DAS to respond and deliver timely services.
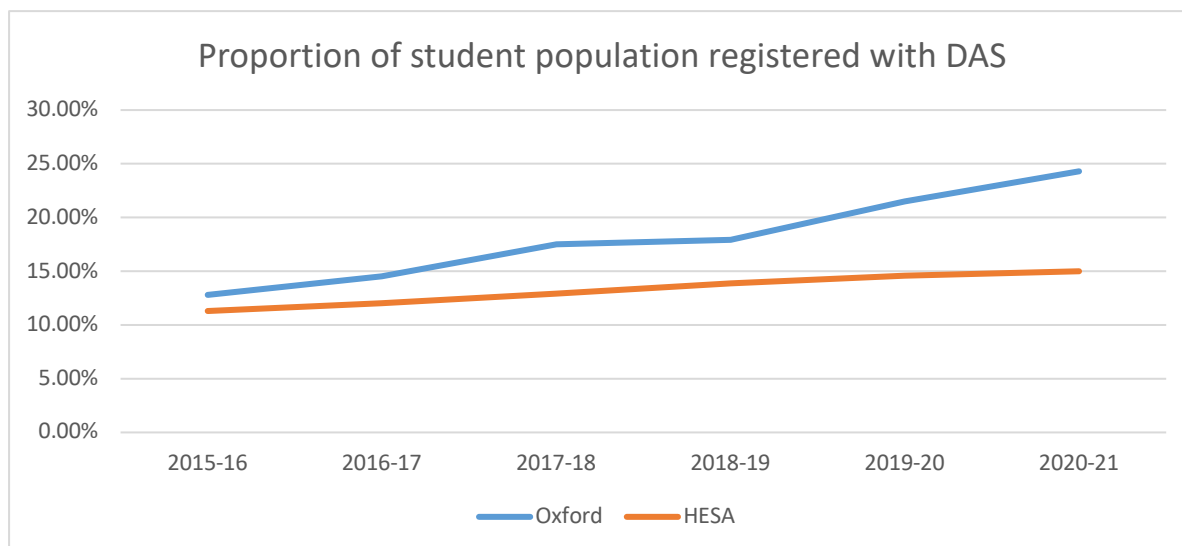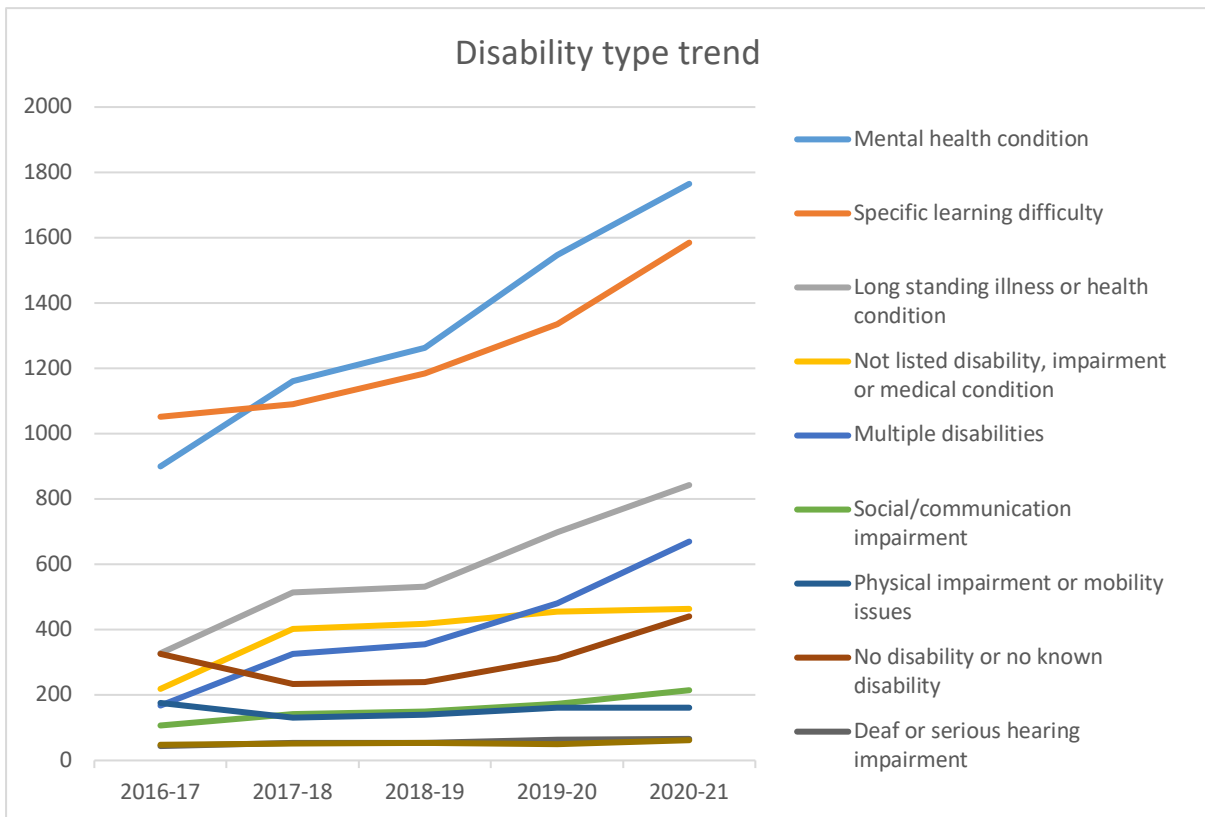

Disability type

4.3   There have been increases in student declarations across all disability types. However, students with long-term mental health conditions remain the highest proportion of DAS users, closely followed by those with specific learning difficulties (SpLD).

Disability: 2020-21	DAS Students	DAS %	All Students	All Students %
Mental health condition	1,765	28%	1,114	4%
Blind or serious visual impairment	62	1%	45	0%
Deaf or serious hearing impairment	66	1%	51	0%
Long standing illness or health condition	843	13%	640	2%
Multiple disabilities	670	11%	402	2%
No disability or no known disability (or pending)	441	7%	21,997	85%
Not listed disability, impairment or medical condition	464	7%	316	1%
Physical impairment or mobility issues	162	3%	95	0%
Social/communication impairment	215	3%	173	1%
Specific learning difficulty	1,585	25%	987	4%
Grand Total	**6,273**	**100%**	**25,820**	**100%**

[7] Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2020/21 - Student numbers and characteristics | HESA
[8] https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation/strategic-plan-2018-24
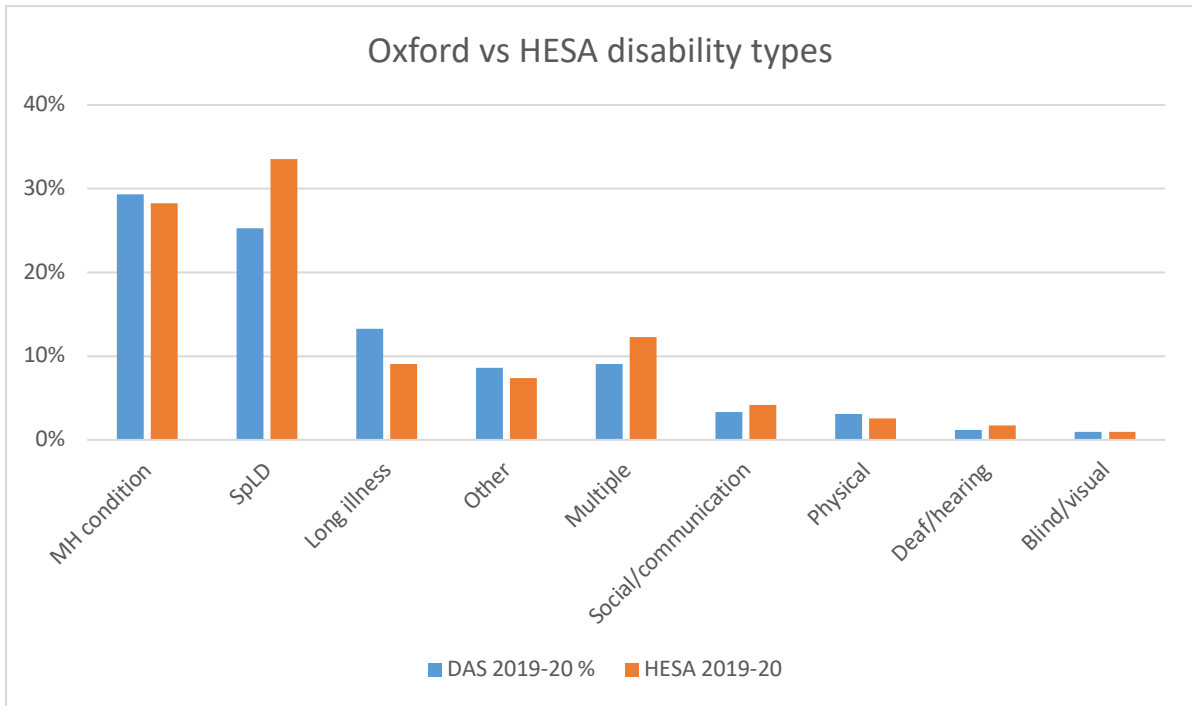
Disability type trend

4.4   It should be noted that DAS supports students with a broad range of often complex needs; many do not fit neatly into categories for reporting purposes, for example those students who declare multiple conditions. The 'no disability' category can indicate a partial registration or that the student is in the process of obtaining disability evidence, and they are therefore not yet reflected in the official student statistics.

4.5   Oxford has a smaller proportion of SpLD declarations (25% of all disabled students and 4% of the total student population) relative to the national average for HE institutions (reported by HESA as 33.6% of disabled students and 5.8% of the total student population). It is therefore possible that Oxford will see further growth in this category in future.[9]

4.6   It should also be noted that SpLD is an umbrella term that includes dyslexia and dyspraxia, as well as attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorder. There has been a marked increase in requests for and receipt of ADHD diagnoses (see also 8.8).

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[9] Table 15 - UK domiciled student enrolments by disability and sex 2014/15 to 2019/20 | HESA

Oxford vs HESA disability types

NB. The Open Data tables for 2020-21 will be published in February 2022[10]. HESA disability type benchmarking data is for UK domiciled.

Student status

4.6   The number of students declaring a disability has been rising across all statuses. Undergraduate students continue to represent the majority of students with a DAS record, and account for most growth in year. This might be attributable to the nature of teaching and assessment, and increased likelihood for reasonable adjustments to be required.
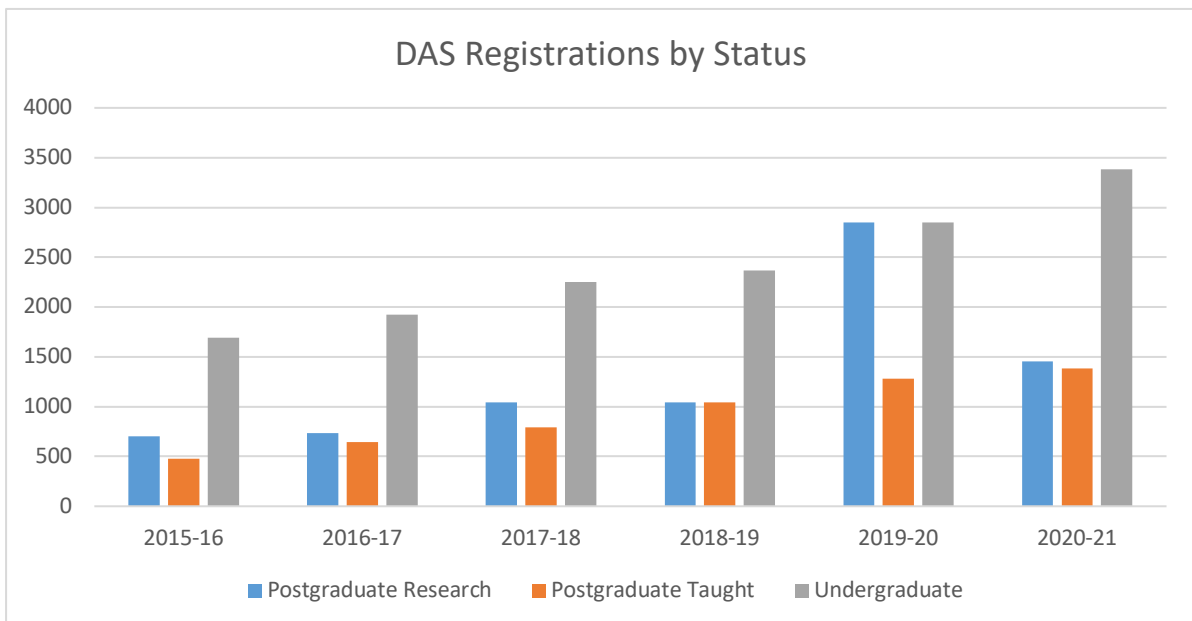
DAS Registrations by Status

[10] Table 15 - UK domiciled student enrolments by disability and sex 2014/15 to 2019/20 | HESA

Programme type

Chart: Programme type — horizontal bar chart showing DAS %, All Students %, and DAS % of all students for Undergraduate, Postgraduate Taught, and Postgraduate Research.
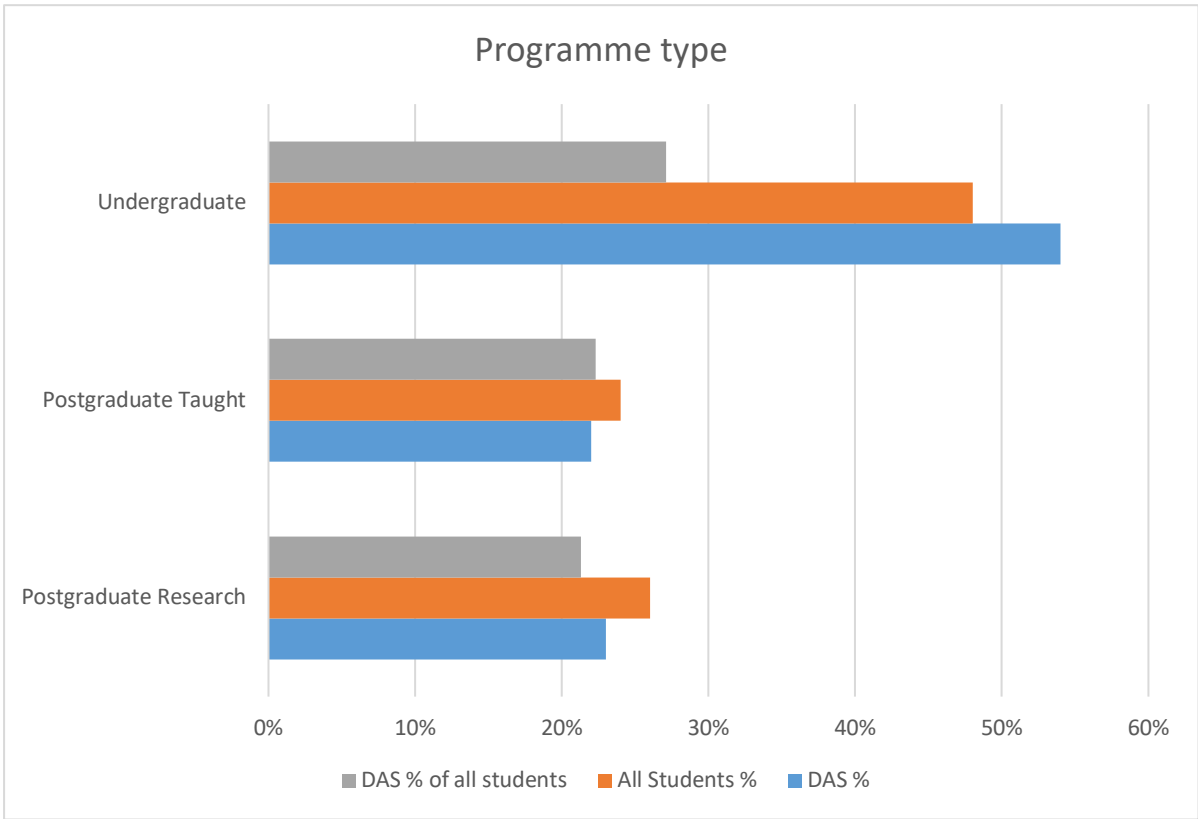
Students registered by division

4.7   Humanities and Social Sciences remain the Divisions with the largest number of students with a DAS record. However, numbers across all Divisions rose in 2020-21.

Chart: DAS registrations by division — bar chart for ContEd, Humanities, MPLS, MSD, and Social Sciences across years 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21.
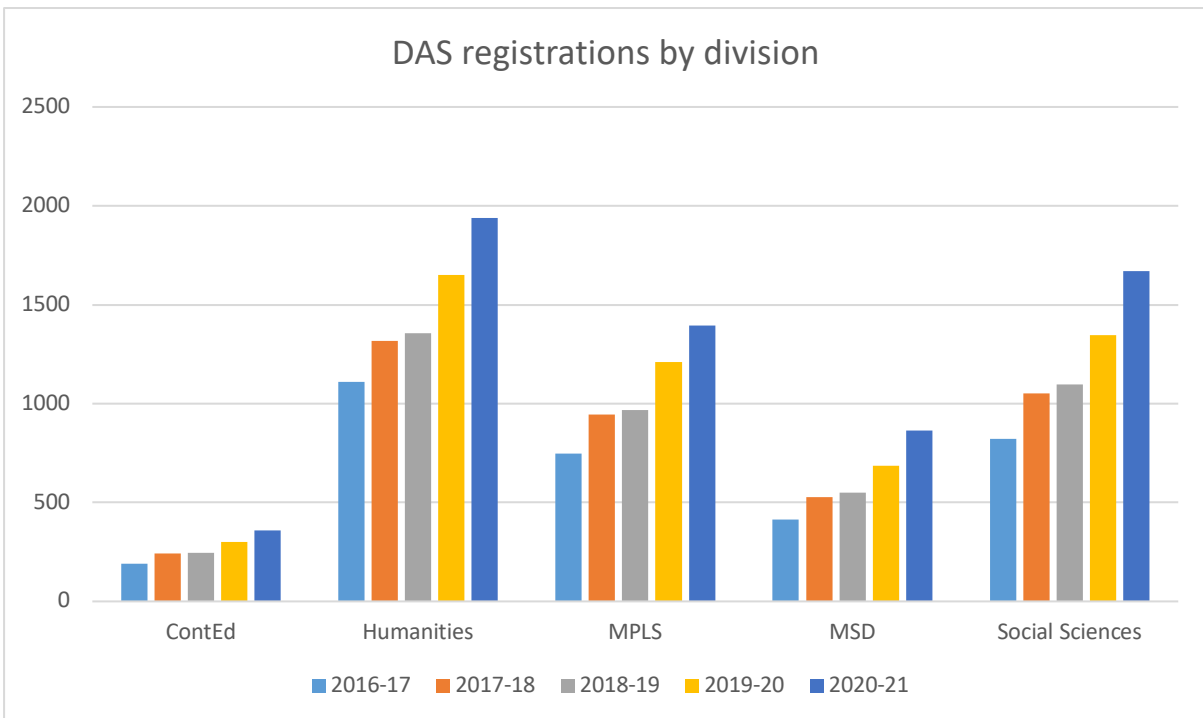
4.8   Except in the Humanities, PGT users are less likely than other cohorts to declare a disability.

Proportion of students registered with DAS by division

Medical Sciences — Postgraduate Research ~16.5%, Postgraduate Taught ~25.7%, Undergraduate ~27%
Social Sciences — Postgraduate Research ~25.4%, Postgraduate Taught ~21.2%, Undergraduate ~29%
MPLS — Postgraduate Research ~17.5%, Postgraduate Taught ~11%, Undergraduate ~21.4%
Humanities — Postgraduate Research ~31.8%, Postgraduate Taught ~35.2%, Undergraduate ~31%
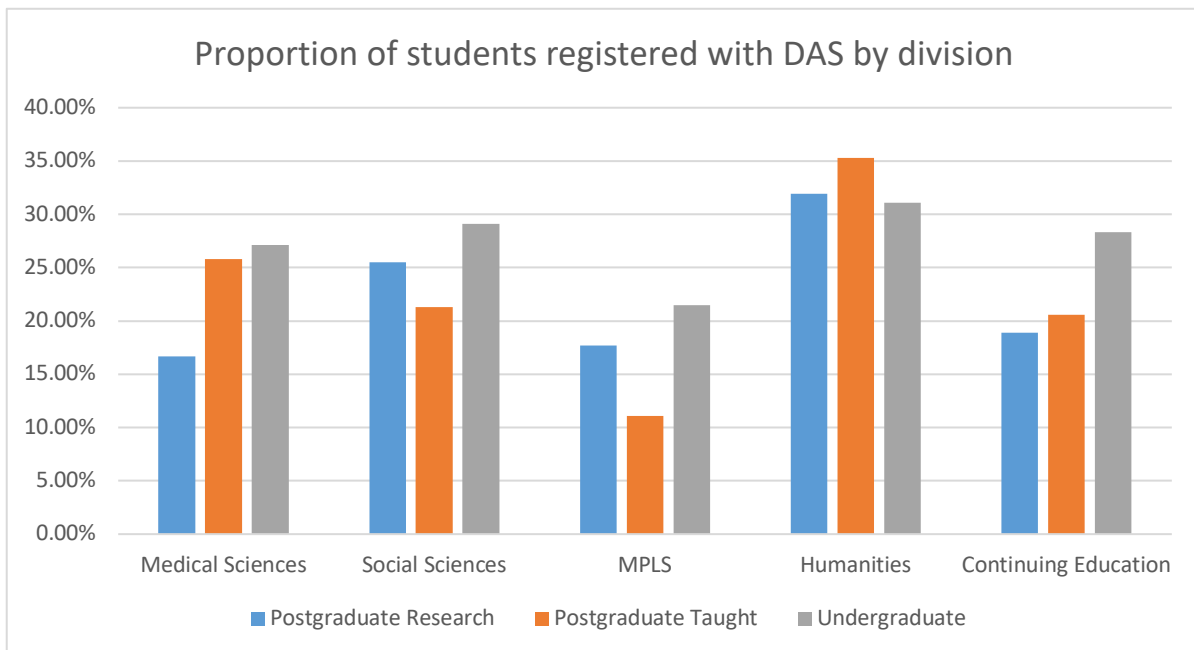Continuing Education — Postgraduate Research ~18.8%, Postgraduate Taught ~20.5%, Undergraduate ~28.2%

■ Postgraduate Research ■ Postgraduate Taught ■ Undergraduate

Ethnicity

4.9   White students are over-represented amongst DAS users. Students who choose the label 'Asian' at registration includes those from China, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan (amongst others), and they remain relatively under-represented.

DAS users by ethnicity

Asian — DAS % 11%, All Students % 20%
Black — DAS % 4%, All Students % 3%
Mixed — DAS % 8%, All Students % 6%
Other — DAS % 3%, All Students % 3%
Unknown — DAS % 5%, All Students % 4%
White — DAS % 70%, All Students % 64%

■ DAS % ■ All Students %
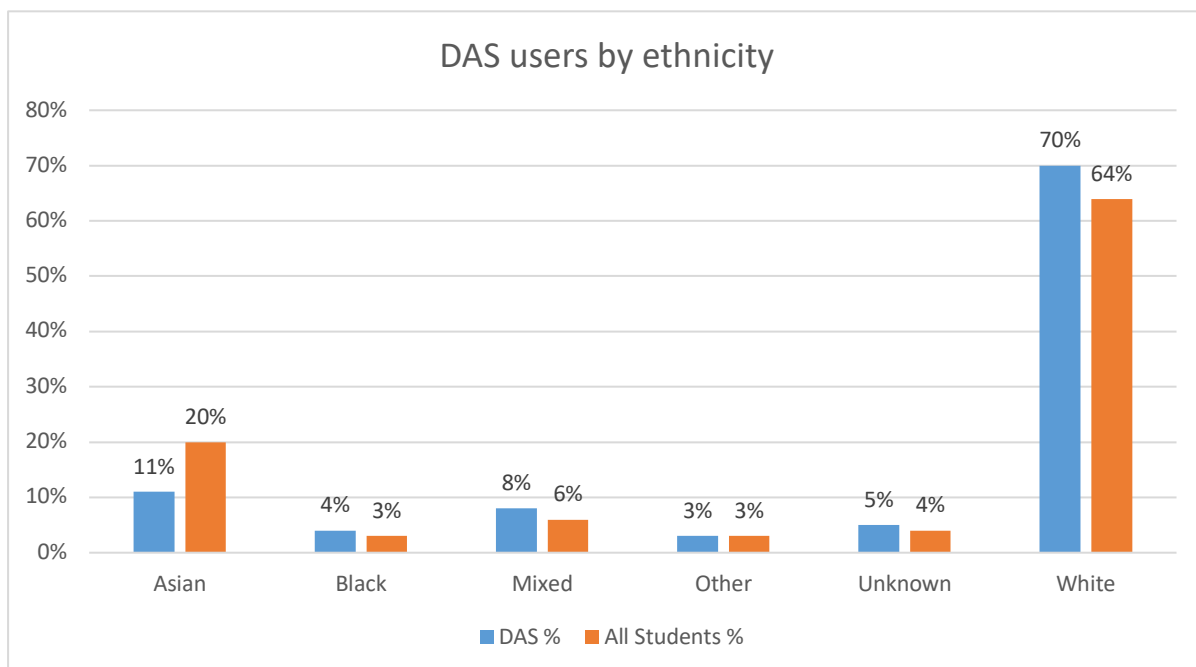
Gender

4.10   Female students are over-represented in DAS records, although compared to the national picture the difference is less pronounced (HESA 2020-21: 57% Female, 43% Male[11]).

DAS users by legal sex
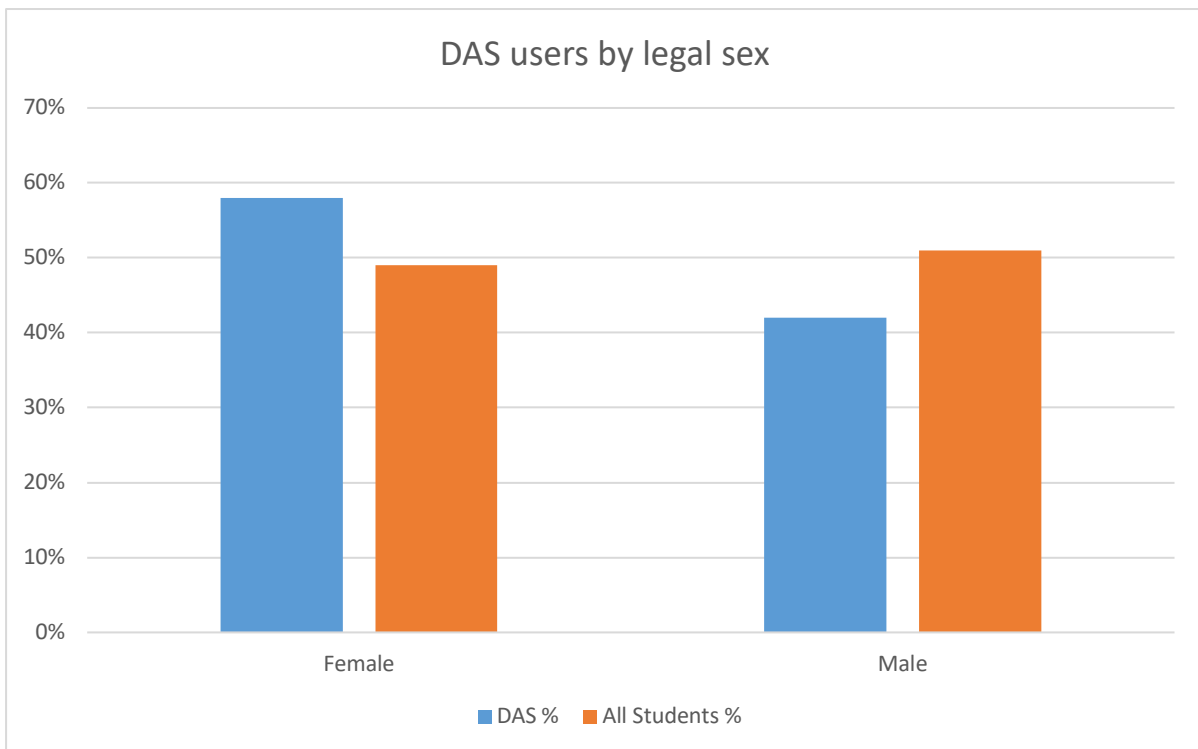
5. Student Support Plans

5.1   2,673 students had a Student Support Plan (SSP) in place in 2020-21 and DAS were awaiting approval from a further 272 students to finalise a draft. This constitutes around 43% of DAS users, up from 35% in the previous academic year.

5.2   SSPs are a formal mechanism for communicating to the wider institution that the student has provided evidence of a disability, a brief summary of the impact on studies, and recommendations for institutional reasonable adjustments. The remaining students without an SSP generally do not want or need one, or do not complete the registration process or sign off the draft document for wider circulation.

5.3   DAS works proactively with disabled offer holders to implement SSPs as early as possible before they enrol or during their first term. However, various factors make this difficult to achieve, including growing pressures on staff resources and difficulties some students have themselves with timely engagement (e.g. due to study, work or personal pressures, or the very nature of their disability).

5.4   Of the 1,491 disabled students starting a course in 2020-21, less than half of those who would ultimately require an SSP had one in place before the end of their first term.

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[11] Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2020/21 - Student numbers and characteristics | HESA

However, it should be noted that there can be some value in waiting until a student has arrived and had some on-course experience before assessing what reasonable adjustments will be required in the Oxford context.

5.4   It is also important to highlight that aside from adjustments to assessments, the majority of recommendations in SSPs pertain to teaching practices that are considered to be a core feature of a flexible and inclusive approach (e.g. access to lecture recordings and course materials made available in advance in Canvas) which have the potential to benefit all students, not just those with disabilities.

6. Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

6.1   Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) are government funds that can be used to contribute to the costs of disability-related study aids and support strategies. The proportion of students in receipt of DSA from their UK funding body increased in 2020-21:

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Students claiming DSA to fund support	1,029	1,096	1,266	1,548	1,972
International students with non-DSA funded support	223	304	332	594	1,544

6.2   International (matriculated) students are ineligible for DSAs so the University provides equivalent support through an internal funding mechanism. This includes non-medical help (see below) and access to assistive technology and ergonomic furniture. The absence of externally imposed regulatory frameworks allows DAS greater flexibility in how it delivers this funded support and significantly accelerates the speed with which support can be delivered.

'Non-DSA funded support' was up significantly in 2020-21, but this is likely to reflect a change in how the data is collected, and includes students who are eligible but might not have actively received support since 2019-20.

While it is positive that we can implement support more quickly for international students, it does increasingly mean additional work for advisors who undertake the work that would otherwise be outsourced to assessment centres for UK students. This involves longer appointments, more in-depth assessment work, report writing, generation of equipment quotes, etc, and impacts on wider response times.

7. Non-medical helper (NMH) provision

7.1   The term NMH refers to human support workers. These services are sensitive to individual student need, and therefore subject to unpredictable demand and supply variation.

Non-specialist NMH support

7.2   Non-specialist NMH roles include notetakers, library support workers, laboratory assistants, autism study support workers, and examination scribes. The government withdrew DSA funding for these roles in September 2016. Universities are expected to provide and fund non-specialist NMH services, or make appropriate alternative provision, for example, lecture recordings in place of notetakers, or access to assistive technology in examinations instead of a scribe.

Specialist NMH support

7.3   Specialist NMH includes mentoring support for students with mental health disabilities or autism spectrum conditions, and one-to-one study skills tuition for students with SpLDs (specific learning difficulties). At Oxford both provisions are usually delivered in-house, although some universities fully outsource this support.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Students receiving non-specialist NMH	101	59	53	61	67
Students receiving in-house mentoring	359	414	434	439	416
Students receiving in-house SpLD tuition	-	259	260	261	362

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Hours of non-specialist NMH	2,663.9	2,628.23	1701.27 plus 3,659.79 caption editing hours
Hours of mentoring	4,445.2	5,070.75	5,220.25
Hours of SpLD tuition	1,307.5	1,659.58	2,712.75

7.4   In Hilary term 2021 DAS set up a caption editing service which falls under 'non-specialist NMH'. The 3,659.79 hours of captioning editing includes work undertaken for individual disabled students, as well as at a cohort level for departments who requested assistance due to issues with the accuracy and utility of the automated captions. The reduction in other non-specialist support hours delivered (from 2,628.23 in 2019-20 to 1,701.27 in 2020-21) can be explained by the increase in remote/online study and greater availability of digital study materials.

7.5   The numbers of students receiving specialist mentoring in-house dipped slightly in 2020-21 due to overall staffing, recruitment and capacity issues. A decision was taken half-way through the year to partially outsource some specialist mentoring to a third party supplier to address a growing waiting list and ensure students could access timely provision.

Oxford University Assessment Centre (OUAC) also temporarily recommended alternative mentoring providers in DSA study needs assessment reports instead of the in-house service. The true number of students who accessed mentoring in 2020-21 is therefore likely to be higher than the 416 reported here. On average each student accessed 12 hours of mentoring support over the course of the year.

7.6   In parallel, there was a significant increase in the number of students accessing SpLD study skills tuition compared to previous years, and a slight increase in the number of sessions each individual student used (7.5 hours in 2020-21 compared with 6.5 hours in 2019-20). This can be explained in part by an increase in uptake during the pandemic when more students reported to feel their existing study strategies were challenged by the constraints of lockdowns and move to online teaching and assessment.

8. Assessments

DSA Study Needs Assessments

8.1   DAS established the Oxford University Assessment Centre (OUAC) in 2014. OUAC is accredited by the Department for Education (DfE) to provide the study needs assessments required to access Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) funding. OUAC is open to any UK student who is eligible for DSA funding, and so can be accessed by Oxford University as well as from other universities.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
UK Oxford students	248	248	317	249	338
Oxford-funded (international) students	33	11	9	3	3
Other HEI students	298	297	174	212	217
Total	**579**	**556**	**500**	**464**	**558**

8.2   Study needs assessment numbers had been steadily going down, but shot up again in 2020-21. The number of Oxford-funded (international) students assessed by OUAC remains low following a change in process in 2017; in most instances Disability Advisors can recommend packages of study aids which expedites the provision of support for this group of students. However, the number of DSA-funded students from both Oxford and other UK universities has grown. The move to online assessing during the pandemic has made it easier for students to access the service who would have otherwise needed to attend a centre more local to their home residence during the vacation periods.

8.3   Nevertheless, OUAC continues to operate in a climate of uncertainty as the Department for Education (DfE) considers a new model for the delivery of assessments. This could ultimately mean the closure of many centres across the country with significant implications for SWSS; OUAC generated £139k surplus income for the Department in 2020-21.

Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) Diagnostic Assessments

8.4   The University requires students with SpLDs such as dyslexia and dyspraxia to provide evidence that that aligns with criteria agreed by the Department for Education (DfE) and the SpLD Assessment Standards Committee (SASC)[12]. Since there is no NHS pathway to obtaining an SpLD diagnosis in adulthood, the University contributes up to £400 for an assessment where it has established evidence of sufficient indicators and clear benefit to the student in facilitating reasonable adjustments to teaching and assessment.

8.5   Following a preliminary screening process, disability advisors may refer the student for an assessment which can be organised in-house. Alternatively, students may arrange a private assessment independently and subsequently claim reimbursement. If the student has an existing diagnostic report that only partially meets the University's assessment criteria[13], wherever possible DAS will undertake relevant top-up tests rather than organising a new full assessment.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Full assessment	192	224	236	156	375
Top-up tests	36	39	32	4	12
Total	228	263	268	160	387
SpLD confirmed	98%	97%	95%	92%	99%

8.6   In Michaelmas term 2019 the University altered its SpLD diagnostic report criteria in line with new DfE regulations, removing the requirement for assessments to be undertaken post-16 years of age. This policy shift significantly accelerated the examination adjustment application process for affected students and accounts for the substantial reduction in the number of top-up tests undertaken in the last two years.

8.7   The increase in overall numbers of SpLD assessments conducted in 2020-21 is in part due to a backlog created by disruption during the pandemic. There was a six-month period when no assessments could take place nationally, leaving a large number of students requiring an assessment from August 2020 once this work resumed.

8.8   There has also been an increase in the number of students seeking an educational assessment due to attentional deficits. In 2020-21 128 students received an SpLD diagnosis with an indication of likely Attentional Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), compared with 28 students in 2018-19. However, it should be noted that ADHD is a neurodevelopmental difference that can only be formally diagnosed by a suitably qualified medical practitioner or clinical psychologist. DAS does not fund medical assessments and NHS pathways for adult ADHD assessments are limited. An educational assessment may enable a student to access DSA funding and institutional reasonable adjustments, but a medical diagnosis is necessary to access ADHD treatment such as prescription medication. Current disability data

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[12] https://www.practitioners.slc.co.uk/media/1863/spld-diagnostic-assessment_march-2021-ssin.pdf

[13] SpLD diagnostic assessment criteria:
https://www.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/oxford/field/field_document/Guidance%20on%20SpLD%20Diagnostic%20assessments%20May%202016.pdf

categories do not allow us to accurately report on the true number of ADHD diagnoses that might fall under the SpLD or mental health umbrellas.

9. Examination Adjustments

9.1   Applications for examination adjustments on SpLD grounds are initiated by DAS, with a qualified assessor confirming the recommended arrangements. For students with other disabilities, the college starts the application with the Student Support Plan (SSP) used as supporting evidence. A new application is generated each time a student has a new diagnosis, and new set of requirements, or if they transfer colleges or change course.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
New exam adjustment application for SpLD student	332	334	344	361	495

9.2   More broadly, applications for examination adjustments are also increasing significantly. In 2020-21 14% (7716) of the total exam sittings had adjustments in place.

Year	Total applications for examination adjustments	% increase	% known to DAS
2018-19	1245	6%	74%
2019-20	968	-22%	84%
2020-21	1569	26%	TBC

9.3   The dip in 2019-20 reflects the impact of the pandemic on assessment and the cancellation/deferral of many invigilated papers.

9.4   The % increase in students with examination adjustments known to the DAS reflects the signposting of students with chronic illnesses and long-term mental health conditions to the Service, for example to explore other disability study support, and/or where DAS is considered the most appropriate body to determine what assessment adjustments would be reasonable.

10. Service Evaluation

10.1   DAS conducts its own **annual student survey** and in 2020-21 circa 5,000 students were invited to respond. Response rates were low, with only 30 completing the survey compared to 144 students in 2019-20, possibly reflecting general screen/survey fatigue after an increase in online study. It is difficult to make generalisations from the feedback of such a small group. However, 100% of the respondents reported that they have and Student Support Plan (SSP) in place and that the arrangements made by DAS were helpful.

10.2   Oxford uses the **Student Barometer**[14] in late November each year to survey full and part time students (with some exclusions). In 2020 the overall response rate was 16%.

- Satisfaction with the DAS: 87.5% SpLD and 84.4% other disability (compared with 91.8% SpLD and 83.1% other disability in 2019).

- Disability support satisfaction: 93.3% SpLD and 92.6% other disability.

- Learning experience: 61.65% SpLD, which is markedly lower than the percentage of satisfied students with other disabilities (73.9%) or with no disability (77.5%).

- Overall satisfaction: 64.9% SpLD and 69.6% other disability in 2020 (compared with 85.2% SpLD and 85.7% other disability in 2019). 'No known disability' was also down from 91% in 2019 to 77% in 2020, possibly reflecting the impact of the pandemic on all students.
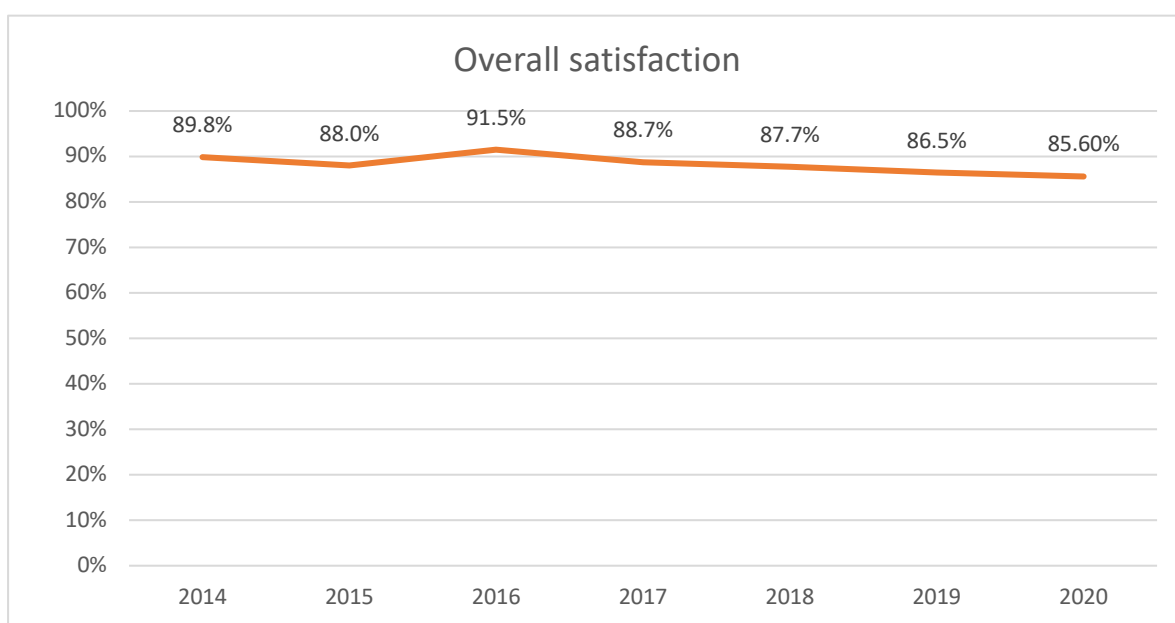
10.3   It should be noted that the Student Barometer is limited as a measure of evaluation because some support provisions funded by Disabled Students' Allowances (DSA) are delivered by third party agencies external to the University. Furthermore, the data may be skewed by students with no-declared disability responding to DAS-related questions, despite having potentially never accessed the service[15].

11. Staffing and Caseloads

11.1   DAS is staffed by ten disability advisors (8.4FTE carrying casework), administrative support staff (including a Service Coordinator), a Head of Service, and a Deputy Head of Service who is also Head of the Oxford University Assessment Centre (OUAC).

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[14] https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/life/student-surveys

[15] 54 responses to this question.

Year	Students	Advisor FTE (carrying casework)	Caseload per 1.0 FTE Advisor
2020-21	6,273	8.4	747
2019-20	5,280	8.0	660
2018-19	4,387	8.0	548
2017-18	4,107	6.4	641
2016-17	3,369	5.2	648

12. Forward View

12.1   Since its inception over twenty years ago, DAS has strived to offer a relatively bespoke, individualised service. However, the ever increasing volume of students at the University who identify as disabled, University strategy to increase student numbers overall, and the time-sensitive nature of the academic calendar, now makes this an unsustainable model. A change in practice is urgently required.

12.2   In 2021-22 DAS will continue work to review and streamline its internal workflows. We will also collaborate with colleagues within SWSS and other key University departments to establish how to operationalise an alternative, tiered service for the benefit of disabled students and staff working across the collegiate institution to support them.

12.3   Relatedly, work will begin on a review of the Student Support Plan (SSP). We will be seeking to better understand some of the barriers to implementing reasonable adjustments, and where there might be opportunities to improve the format, content and processes underpinning this document.

12.4   The University has made exceptionally positive progress during the pandemic in progressing inclusive and flexible teaching and assessment practices. We are now well positioned as an institution to take this work forward and further address areas where disabled students still face disadvantage.

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