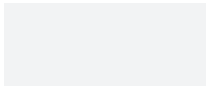
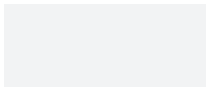
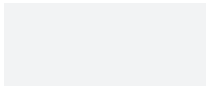


Ljubljana, 2007



Transnational Development
Partnership

Equal chances for students
and graduates with disabilities

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EQUAL

Equal Opportunities
in Higher Education
for Students with Disabilities:

Examples of Good Practice

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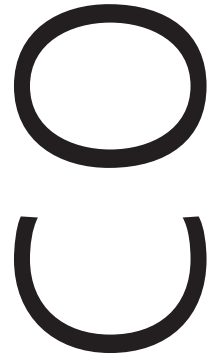
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Introduction



In the past, Europe was the scene of many wars and international disagreements. Often an underlying cause was ignorance about the lives of people in other countries; national stereotypes were formed. One way to avoid this happening again in the future is to provide opportunities for people from different countries to get to know each other better and to develop a deeper understanding of life in other countries. This can be facilitated by giving people the chance to meet and to engage jointly in the routine activities of daily living.

The process has developed successfully in education through international student exchanges at school and at university levels, which have been supported in different ways, for example through the ERASMUS and LEONARDO programmes in the European Community.

With the growth in international student mobility since the 1980's there has been action to ensure that students with disabilities are able to participate should they wish. For example, excellent work was done by the FEDORA group under the leadership of the late Myriam Van Acker based at the Catholic University of Leuven in Flanders, Belgium - activities paralleled in the USA by Gayle Gagliano, Naomi Moore and colleagues at the University of New Orleans.

Since those early days, the European Community has expanded to include more member states. Within the enlarged community the institutions pro-

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viding third level education are at different stages of development. Also, in many of these countries there are specialist organisations which have been created to ensure that the interests of disabled students are not forgotten. These too are at different stages of development ranging from the well-established to the relatively inexperienced.

A key to successful development and the firm embedding of policies and provision is the availability of accurate, up-to-date and relevant information. This is what this publication provides. Its compilation involving colleagues working in Germany, Poland, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom is to be welcomed warmly and enthusiastically. The efforts made by many to ensure its appearance deserve to be recognised fully and they deserve the heartfelt thanks of all of us.

It forms an important contribution to eliminating the barriers and meeting the challenges involved in safeguarding opportunities for disabled students to enjoy the chance of living, studying and working in other countries. It is a splendid example of the beneficial effects of international co-operation and of the more experienced assisting the less experienced. I am most honoured to have been invited to contribute this short introduction. I hope that the guide is helpful and useful and will set the pattern for future co-operation between countries to the benefit of students with disabilities who wish to acquire and enhance their knowledge and skills stemming from overseas placements of all kinds - knowledge and skills which will be of personal value to the students themselves in both securing a satisfying career and enjoying their leisure activities and which will be of benefit to society and to all of us in breaking down barriers between countries which have been based on ignorance and prejudice.

What is common in all countries is the low status of work with disabled students relative to other activities of universities and colleges. In all countries, we are still a long way from finding a university which can claim quite justifiably to be a genuinely inclusive place which meets the diverse range of students' needs in all of its routine policies, procedures and practices including international exchanges and work placements/study overseas. We cannot rest until disability services are seen as value-added provision rather than a source of additional institutional expense.

*Professor Alan Hurst
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London, England*

August 2007

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This best practice guide is designed to cover two important aspects relating to higher education and disability. These are accessibility of higher education and possibilities to lead an independent life by students with disabilities. Within each aspect, we have chosen topics that we believe to be important and in which we can share examples of good practice and propose further improvements.

Each topic contains examples of good practice from each partner country, namely Germany, Poland and Slovenia. Examples of good practice are followed by proposals for further development and improvement.

We are fully aware that the topics covered are not complete, and that there is more good practice than we are aware of or the scope this publication would allow us to describe.

We are likewise aware that the list of proposals could be even more comprehensive. However, we have tried not to make them too specific but to make them applicable to different situations and different stages of ensuring equal opportunities in higher education for students with disabilities in different partner countries.

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A. Germany

The situation of disabled people preparing to undertake higher education courses of study, during their actual course of study, on graduating and during periods of vocational integration and rehabilitation are structured by:

- the rate of social and financial support
- the physical environment and technical provision and opportunities
- the specific educational situation and opportunities within education
- any special requirements that they have in relation to teaching and learning processes.

The accessibility of buildings and technical provision has been greatly improved in the last few years. The reason for this development was the defining of the principle of accessibility (“Barrierefreiheit”) and its inclusion in the building regulations of the German states (“Landesbauordnungen”) in the late 1990s, as well as later on in the laws on the equal treatment of disabled people at both federal and states’ level (“Bundes- und Landesgleichstellungsgesetze”) in 2002.

Apart from this positive development, however, German universities are far from being barrier free in the full sense of the word.

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The regulations concerning social and financial support for disabled students can be distinguished between support for everyday living and support for the special requirements caused by the disability of the individual.

Support for everyday living is not confined to students with a disability, but it is restricted according to their age, their parents' financial position and their own income and property (Federal law on individual support for education - "BAföG").

Support for the special requirements of disabled students and volunteers is guaranteed in the German Social Code ("Sozialgesetzbuch"). This legal claim is restricted to undergraduate and certain graduate courses. For graduate studies not based upon certain undergraduate courses¹ support is not always given. In most cases, PhD students and students who had already worked in an academic job do not receive any support for their needs in relation to their disability. Disabled students from abroad have no legal right to individual social and financial support.

Although there are many ways in which providing support for disabled students is covered by law, in practice it is much harder to actually obtain this support. Other difficulties arise from the German federal system and the German social systems. Often different institutions are responsible for funding different aspects of technical or personal support.

At this point in time, the German university system is faced with enormous challenges caused by a system change. Within the Bologna process German universities are establishing Bachelor/ Master Courses of study. From now onwards, most universities will be required by state law to introduce student fees. It is not clear at the moment what impact this will have on the structure of financial and social support.

Educational provision for disabled children in Germany is still characterised by segregation. Many pupils with disabilities - particularly if they are severe - attend special schools for disabled children and are therefore not well integrated in the mainstream educational system. While integration at kindergarten and primary school level is improving, it deteriorates at secondary school level, with low numbers of disabled pupils achieving A-levels. This is why there is serious under-representation of disabled students at university level.

If disabled students are successful in the mainstream educational system, there are many opportunities for them to compensate for any disadvantages caused by their disability. This situation has improved in the last few years due to the passing of integration and rehabilitation laws for disabled people.

¹ In Germany there are three types of graduate studies. One is requiring a certain undergraduate, another requiring any undergraduate course and a third one requiring any undergraduate course and some years of work experience.

With reference to teaching and learning processes, one should distinguish between the situation at universities and their duties on the one hand, and legal requirements on the other.

Legal requirements to compensate for any disadvantages in learning - such as providing simultaneous translation in sign language for deaf students, or a budget to finance assistive needs - can be found once again in the German Social Code.

With regard to the situation at universities, good practice can be found at only a few. This is extremely surprising, because university constitutions are required by German state law to give proper consideration to the needs of disabled students. The problem is that very little is known about the needs of disabled students by university teaching staff.

Universities have to admit every applicant for undergraduate studies who has passed the "Abitur" (high school diploma). Exceptions to this rule can be made, if the number of applicants by far exceeds the capacity of the relevant department. Exceptions are also made in Music, Art and Design. No such rule exists for postgraduate studies.

Beside university (including universities of applied science and other academic schools) there are two other important institutions in student life. The Student Unions are run by professionals and offer accommodation, food, social and psychological counselling, financial support and other services. The Student Councils in most states are the representative bodies of the students themselves, where all students are members in. Run almost completely by volunteers their business is lobbying, counselling and offering some other services.

To summarise: there is a lot of work still to be done in Germany to improve the situation for all disabled students so that they can have the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers.

B. Poland

The situation of disabled students in Poland has been improving since last few years but it still seems to be difficult. It is not easy to make up for the many years when persons with disabilities did not receive proper care and were absent in society. The period of the People's Republic of Poland was a time when isolation of persons with disabilities was an element of intentional state policy. This resulted in a lack of interest in providing such persons with proper support and proper infrastructure (especially in transport and architecture) that would enable them to participate in the life of society. It was also a period when various stereotypes and prejudices relating to persons with disabilities arose and became prevalent.

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There is still no common state support system in Poland which could make universities use the same standards concerning services for disabled students. However, many of the higher education organizations try to work out their own systems. The amount of universities which establish offices of the Rector's Plenipotentiary for Students with Disabilities is rising. That makes Polish universities more and more open for disabled persons.

The only governmental initiative is The National Fund for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled People (PFRON) which was established in 1991. PFRON has launched some programs ('Student program', 'Computer for Home program', 'Pegaz program'). The aim of the initiative is to financially support higher education institutions to cover their expenses for services for disabled students as well as giving support for particular disabled students who apply for it.

There is also no national disabled students' organization in Poland which would attend to the problems of this group of people and undertake measures to provide help or even try to change the legal situation of young persons with disabilities in higher education institutions. Disabled students organize themselves into some groups at particular universities but these have very local character.

C. Slovenia

In Slovenia, there is no legislation covering higher education and disability, whereby disabled students would be defined and the methods of and responsibility for their support regulated. Some higher education institutions regulate these themselves through internal rules and procedures.

The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students has been promoting the rights and interests of students with disabilities for the past eleven years. In recent years, higher education institutions have been taking responsibility and making improvements relating to the needs and rights of students with disabilities. By means of joint efforts, changes and improvements are taking place with regard to the accessibility and individualization of the educational process as well as in the legislative field. The development partnership 'Equal study' has sent proposals to the National programme for higher education, the Development strategy of the University of Ljubljana and legislation relating to higher education.

The challenge that staff working in the field of secondary education and disability are faced with is a lack of information and awareness about the provision and support already available for those deciding to enter third level education. There is too little emphasis on transition counselling and students with disabilities are left on their own to decide on the appropriate course of action to take.

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Once at university, the challenges faced by students and staff supporting them are numerous. The accessibility of the built environment of higher education institutions and student accommodation is improving, albeit slowly. Improvements for students with sensory impairments are almost non-existent to date so a much greater effort needs to be made in this sphere.

The second obstacle is access to information that includes information on the Internet, notice boards or in publications. The greatest difficulties are experienced by students with sensory impairments and those with learning difficulties. People had high hopes for the Equal Opportunities Act which has been in preparation for the last four years, yet it looks as if it will be a general document without ensuring any specific provisions to ensure equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

The third obstacle concerns how to ensure full access to the educational process. Due to the inaccessibility of lecture rooms, the lack of study materials in appropriate formats, students with disabilities need to put much more energy and effort into their studies in order to be successful. The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students has within the Equal Study development partnership prepared draft guidelines on how to improve and encourage access and participation in higher education by students with disabilities. The project partners are holding discussions with Slovenian universities to encourage them to adopt these guidelines.

University academic and administrative staff are generally very understand about the needs of disabled students, but they are often unsure how to cater for these needs. Disability awareness training and workshops should be a priority for higher education institutions. The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students is looking into ways of achieving good results, and many higher education institutions have responded positively to the proposals for such training. However, any expectation that such training could be made compulsory is far from realistic at the moment.

The provision of technical and personal support during study is also one of the problem areas. Students have no right to financial support in order to purchase technical aids that they need for their studies and to pay for personal and study assistance. The Slovenian higher education system has not yet recognized the need for note takers, readers, tutors or other personal support workers. Efforts are being made to include this in the new Long-Term Care and Support Act but no definite decisions have yet been made.

The above-mentioned services (adapted means of transportation, personal assistance, adapted formats for study materials, etc.) are partially provided by non-governmental organizations but these are very limited in scope and vary according to the financial means obtained for a limited period.

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It is not surprising then that on average, students with disabilities take longer than other students to complete their studies, with many of them dropping out before they have finished.

There is also a lack of good career and employment counselling centres for people with disabilities. There are, however, some pilot projects in this area that will come up for review in the coming years.

Despite having a quota system for the employment of people with disabilities, most disabled graduates remain unemployed for several years. Some of them even retire after some years of unemployment. One reason for this is also the very rigid legislation concerning disability benefits, which does not encourage short-term limited employment.

From the examples in the guide, it can be seen that many improvements have been made. However, the road to the full social inclusion and equal opportunities of people with disabilities is still a long way off, with many twists, turns and bumps along the way.

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Physical Environment

02

1. Best Practices

A. Germany

In Germany, there are several laws at federal and state level that require public buildings to be barrier-free. Depending on the state, a wider or narrower range of institutions is covered by the different anti-discrimination laws ("Gleichstellungsgesetze") and building regulations. Anti-discrimination laws that are binding for the public sector use a wide definition of the term "barrier-free". Most of them state that buildings and other elements of the environment are barrier-free if everyone - i.e. especially people with disabilities - can access and use them in the ordinary way, without any particular difficulties and in general without help from a third party. This rules out institutions offering access via a back door or a goods lift, providing carrying services for wheelchair drivers or personal guides for people who are visual impaired (§4 Bundesbehindertengleichstellungsgesetz - Law on equal treatment of the disabled, <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bgg/index.html>).

Most states adopted this definition with the exception of the state of Rheinland - Pfalz, which chose an even wider definition after the intervention of some disability associations. This law adds the detectability to the conditions of accessibility and usability and clarifies the definition (§2, III Gesetz zur

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Herstellung gleichwertiger Lebensbedingungen für behinderte Menschen - Rheinland-Pfalz: Law on equal treatment of disabled people. "Detectability" in this case means that everyone must be able to find the referred buildings and other elements without difficulties, http://rlp.juris.de/rlp/gesamt/BehGleichG_RP.htm#BehGleichG_RP_rahmen).

These laws place the duty on either federal or state and local government, authorities and independent institutions supervised by them, to make buildings, other sites, public transport etc, barrier-free if they are newly built or substantially renovated. Universities are institutions within this definition (§§ 3, 9 Landesgesetz zur Gleichstellung behinderter Menschen - Rheinland-Pfalz: Law on equal treatment of disabled people, http://rlp.juris.de/rlp/gesamt/BehGleichG_RP.htm#BehGleichG_RP_rahmen).

Most state building laws require that anyone who is constructing public buildings like cinemas, educational institutions, shops, sports facilities, etc, to consider the needs of particular groups including disabled people. These laws apply to everyone involved in construction whether public or private. They also require anyone building flats to make a certain percentage of their flats barrier-free (§51 Landesbauordnung - Rheinland-Pfalz: regulations on construction, http://rlp.juris.de/rlp/BauO_RP_rahmen.htm). Other laws governing the creation and running of shops, pubs and restaurants, workplaces or public transport also require them to be barrier-free.

Several technical rules of the "Deutsche Institut für Normung" set detailed guidelines to achieve barrier-free solutions. Before these rules were passed in the present edition, two architects published a book dealing with barrier-free access at universities and student accommodation (Loeschke, Pourat)¹. The Hamburg University Law (http://hh.juris.de/hh/HSchulG_HA_rahmen.htm) and the Constitution of the Ludwig-Maximilian-University in Munich (http://www.uni-muenchen.de/ueber_die_lmu/hochschulr/lmu/satzungen/grundo/fassung_2002/GrO-2002-gxx-01.pdf) require disabled students' officers or other experts to be involved in all projects that involve disabled students, especially buildings. Some - but far from all - universities do this in practice.

In the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen there was a state law that offered additional funds for the creation of barrier-free access at universities. At the same time, no funds were given if the project did not consider the needs of disabled people. In the state of Rheinland-Pfalz a similar fund existed.

¹ Loeschke, G: and D. Pourat: Integrativ und barrierefrei - Behindertengerechte Architektur für Hochschulen und Wohnheime [engl. Integrative and barrier-free - accessible architecture for universities and student accommodation]; Verlag Das Beispiel; 1994.

At some universities, there are projects that demonstrate good practice. The following are some examples:

- In 2002, the Freie Universität Berlin (Free University of Berlin) installed two bench places in a chemistry laboratory that were adapted to the needs of wheelchair users (<http://www.fu-berlin.de/service/behinderung/aktuell/chemie.html>).
- At the University of Dortmund, a guidance system for blind people was installed on the northern campus, connecting the most important buildings. However, this is in need of some improvement.²
- The University of Mainz designed a tactile map of the campus that is available at the disabled students' office and at the student council. In the bigger lecture theatres, induction loops have been installed (<http://www.students.uni-mainz.de/behindi/dokumente/Unifuehr2004a.rtf>).
- Several universities make it possible to change rooms if a lecture theatre is not accessible.

B. Poland

Polish legislation ensures that all new buildings built after 1994 must be fully accessible for people with mobility impairments.

Warsaw University:

The university recognized its responsibility for removing any barriers that limit access to its services.

In 2004, the head of university administration in cooperation with the Office for People with Disabilities (OPT) produced an instruction according to which all reconstruction and renovations of university facilities must obtain the approval of OPT.

Other examples of good practice based on services offered by the Office for People with Disabilities at Warsaw University:

(Note: most of the services are not based on the state law, but appeared as the result of the university's equal opportunities policy).

Change of venue

In order to enable students with mobility impairments to participate in lectures and classes originally held in buildings not suited to their needs, OPD undertakes to find new venues for such lectures and classes in buildings adapted to the requirements of people with disabilities. In some buildings, it is sufficient to move the classes to another floor. In other cases, the classes have to be moved to another building. This solution does not involve any supplementary personnel or extra measures, requiring only certain flexibility

² For further information, email Birgit Rothenberg at: birgit.rothenberg@uni-dortmund.de, University of Dortmund, DoBuS.

on the part of the faculty or departmental administration responsible for preparing the timetables. In some cases, the administrative staff will need to change their established routines of assigning particular rooms to the same teachers, and also be more cooperative with the representatives of OPD and other University departments.

Computer Workstations

There are several computer workstations at the University adapted to the needs of students with mobility impairments, and especially those who have dexterity impairments. Such workstations are available at Warsaw University Library, at the Computer Centre for Students with Disabilities, and at the Faculty of Mathematics, Computer Science and Mechanics.

Accessibility for deaf students

In five lecture rooms in the Auditorium Maximum building, the university has installed FM radio technology-based transmitters using separate radio band frequencies ranging from 72 to 76 MHz. Additionally, the university has a number of portable transmitter-receiver sets. In the case of portable devices, the lecturer has to speak into the microphone connected to the transmitter, while with the fixed devices the system is activated automatically whenever the general sound-amplification system is turned on. A student using a portable FM radio-based set may ask the lecturer to plug the microphone into the device's transmitter. Teachers should regard this as standard procedure, allowing students with hearing impairments full participation in the lectures and classes.

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C. Slovenia

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Slovenia has adopted the *Construction Act*³ (Zakon o graditvi objektov (ZGO-1 -UPB1, Ur. l. RS, št. 102/04, (14/05-popr.), 120/06. Odl. US: U-I-286/04-46), which states that all public buildings have to be free of architectural and communicational barriers, to ensure equal access for people with functional disabilities. Based on the Act, the government adopted *Rules on the requirements for free access, entry and use of public buildings and facilities, and multi-apartment buildings*⁴ (Pravilnik o zahtevah za zagotavljanje neoviranega dostopa, vstopa in uporabe objektov v javni rabi ter večstanovanjskih stavb, Ur. l. RS, št. 97/03), which provides standards that need to be met to ensure equal access to public buildings.

Of the 25 faculties and colleges of the University of Ljubljana, 6 are fully accessible for wheelchair users and 5 are partially accessible. A few others are

³ http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r02/predpis_ZAKO4182.html (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

⁴ *Rules on the requirements for free access, entry and use of public buildings and facilities, and multi-apartment buildings* (Pravilnik o zahtevah za zagotavljanje neoviranega dostopa, vstopa in uporabe objektov v javni rabi ter večstanovanjskih stavb, Ur. l. RS, št. 97/03), <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=200397&stevilka=4330> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

accessible only on the ground floor. The situation at the University of Maribor is similar. Of the 15 faculties and colleges of the University of Maribor, 6 are completely accessible and 5 partially.

As can be seen from the above, many higher education institutions are inaccessible. That is why the Slovenian Association of Disabled Students started the project *Student Friendly University*⁵ (Prijazna Univerza). This is a long-term project, the goal of which is to make all Slovenian universities and faculties fully accessible for students with various types of disabilities. We need to focus our efforts to ensure equal access for people with sensory impairments, since no provisions have yet been made with regard to access to the built environment.

As far as Student campuses are concerned, the situation is improving because old buildings are being renovated and new buildings are being built in compliance with the Construction Act. Of the five campus locations of the University of Ljubljana, four have a certain number of flats and rooms adapted for wheelchair users. The student campuses of the University of Maribor have two out of three student campus locations with flats for wheelchair users.

Every year the Federation of Disabled Workers of Slovenia gives an award for *Barrier Free Municipality*⁶ (Občina po meri invalidov) to the municipality that enables disabled people to be fully integrated into their local environment and removes barriers in the provision of services.

Construction Act (Zakon o graditvi objektov (ZGO-1-UPB1, Ur. l. RS, št. 102/04, (14/05-popr.), 120/06. Odl. US: U-I-286/04-46).

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⁵ *Student Friendly University* (Prijazna Univerza), <http://www.dsis-drustvo.si/prijazna.htm> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

⁶ *Barrier Free Municipality* (Občina po meri invalidov), <http://www.zveza-zdis.si/index.php?module=ContentExpress&func=display&ceid=19> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

2. Proposals

- All university facilities (e.g. libraries, classrooms, laboratories, offices, cafeteria, etc.) have to be accessible.
- State law - if a university wants funds in order to carry out renovations, there has to be an agreement that the building project must include suitable adaptations for people with disabilities.
- All aspects of a project must be approved by disability specialists before any building or renovation works commence.
- There should be a list of such specialists who can be contracted.
- Everything related to architecture must pass inspection by the disability expert.
- Additional funds are needed for the renovation of older buildings in order to make them accessible.
- No state funds should be granted if the university does not include disability issues in their projects.
- Special funding is required from the Ministry of Science in order to promote accessibility.
- Buildings must be designed in such a way that the acoustics facilitate hearing.
- Mobility and orientation marks for visually impaired built into pavements and recognizable by the cane users.
- Mobility training should be provided for blind and partially sighted students and an accompanying service for exceptional cases.
- There should be a unified system of visual information - where and how it is presented - signs, labels etc.
- Classroom exchange should be automatic - if there is a wheelchair user attending a class in a room which is not accessible, this must be changed to one which is accessible (easily and without cost).

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Admissions



1. Best Practice

A. Germany

In Germany, there are two main ways of applying for university: some courses of studies are allocated centrally by the ZVS (central study allocation institution) but most student places are allocated by the universities themselves.

The ZVS set a maximum hardship quota of 2%, which offers applicants with severe disabilities (and other cases of hardship) the chance of obtaining immediately a specific place in the desired subject and at the preferred university (http://www.zvs.de/Neue_Regeln/Auswahl/H%C3%A4rte001.htm).

The crucial criterion related to the quota of hardship is that earlier admission to university is necessary

- due to the fact that the waiting time could not be bridged reasonably because of a very severe disability or because an applicant's level of disability is expected to increase or
- restricted opportunities regarding vocational choices due to disability.

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The idea behind this is that it is reasonable for young people applying for university to bridge a certain waiting period by jobbing.

In addition to the hardship quota, the ZVS worked out different measures of compensation for disadvantages relating to a disability. The universities are obliged to follow these admission regulations.

If a specific grade is required, the final high school grade of a disabled applicant can be raised on the grounds of the effects of a disability (e.g. a long hospital stay shortly before the exam).

If there are qualifying examinations for admission, compensation for disadvantages can be derived from different German legal requirements, e.g. regulations in § 15 Hochschulrahmengesetz - Framework Law for universities, § 26 Landeshochschulgesetz - Rheinland-Pfalz: University Law of the state of Rheinland-Pfalz and regulations in University laws of other German states (see: <http://www.studentenwerke.de/main/default.asp?id=06401>, <http://www.bildungserver.de/zeigen.html?seite=30>, <http://www.bildungserver.de/zeigen.html?seite=1257>).

Due to the ongoing European Bologna-Process at German universities and the transformation of Bachelor and Master's degrees, however, recent regulations have to be reformulated and determined. That is why the German DP "Tandem in Science" held an expert meeting in September 2006, publishing a recommendation on how to ensure equal opportunities for students with disabilities in the spheres of admissions, student workloads and examinations (<http://www.tandem-in-science.de/news/Bologna-prozess.html>).

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B. Poland

There is no general (State) regulation in Poland concerning the admission of people with disabilities to higher education. For that reason, best practice can be located at only a few universities.

In September 2004, an agreement called "Universities for all" was made by ten of the largest Polish universities. One of the points accepted by the signatories to that treaty concerns admissions. The universities agreed that they would all take into consideration the fact that certain disabilities significantly influence applicants' ability to take entrance exams in a standard format. There is no agreement on the types of alternatives to the standard format, because much depends on the types of assistive technology that the different universities have.

Warsaw University offers exams in alternative formats - Braille, large print, or oral - depending on the disability. In addition, people who use alternative formats are eligible for an extension of time up to 150 per cent of the standard time.

The above solutions are introduced to provide equal opportunities and are meant to avoid the advantages traditionally given to people with disabilities by allowing them to be admitted without sitting any entrance exams.

Every year, the Rector of Warsaw University publishes a directive entitled: Detailed regulations concerning candidates with disabilities" (http://www.bon.uw.edu.pl/documents/zarzadzenie_19-2006.doc, <http://www.uw.edu.pl/en>)

C. Slovenia

Each academic programme sets general entry requirements (baccalaureate or vocational baccalaureate) and in some cases, there are also specific entry requirements (tests of physical, musical or artistic abilities). Students with special needs are successful in the application process if they meet the general entry requirements for a given course and achieve at least 85% of the points required for a chosen academic course. *Rules on pre-registration announcement and enrolment in higher education*¹ (Pravilnik o razpisu za vpis in izvedbi vpisa v visokem šolstvu, Ur.l. RS, št. 117/02, 1/04, 2/05, 34/05, 4/06, 76/06)

To gain the status of an applicant with special needs, the applicant submits a standard application form to the 'Applications and admissions office' with which he/she includes a document proving his/her special needs. This can be either an expert opinion of the placement commission, a placement statement, a medical statement or a disability commission statement. With this, the applicant includes his personal statement describing his reasons for applying for a particular course, his disability and special needs resulting from it, any barriers that he anticipates and proposals for overcoming these barriers. The status is granted only for the period of the selection and admissions process and is terminated when the student actually enrolls in the first semester.

There are three selection deadlines. The applicant with special needs can be allocated a place for a chosen academic course in the first selection process, when due to his disability he can meet the entry requirements only in the second or third selection process. *Rules on gaining the status of an applicant with special needs for enrolment in the first year of an undergraduate course at the University of Ljubljana*² (Pravila za dodelitev statusa kandidata s posebnimi potrebami za vpis v prvi letnik dodiplomskega študija Univerze v Ljubljani), *Procedures of the applications and complaints commissions in the ap-*

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¹ *Rules on pre-registration announcement and enrolment in higher education* (Pravilnik o razpisu za vpis in izvedbi vpisa v visokem šolstvu, Ur.l. RS, št. 117/02, 1/04, 2/05, 34/05, 4/06, 76/06), http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r02/predpis_PRAV4632.html (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

² *Rules on gaining the status of an applicant with special needs for enrolment in the first year of an undergraduate course at the University of Ljubljana* (Pravila za dodelitev statusa kandidata s posebnimi potrebami za vpis v prvi letnik dodiplomskega študija Univerze v Ljubljani), <http://www.vpis.uni-lj.si/komisija/pravila%20za%20status%20pp.pdf> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

*plications and admissions procedure at the University of Maribor*³ (Poslovnik Komisije za prošnje in pritožbe v prijavnem postopku Univerze v Mariboru))

2. Proposals

Since each country has a very different system, they have each prepared their own proposals.

A. Germany

- Provision of compensations for disadvantages due to a disability (e.g. related to the final grade, international experience, age, practical experiences, etc.).
- Provision of regulations in cases of hardship.
- Compensation of disadvantages in qualifying examinations as a legal requirement.
- Counsellors for disabled students should participate in the interviews of disabled students attending university.
- Disabled applicants for a place at university should get their first local choice of university.
- If certain exams have to be sat at a certain time, there must be exceptions for students who are not able to do this because of their disability.
- If there are admissions exams or interviews, applicants with special needs must have equal opportunities. This includes, for example, the provision of sign language interpreters for those who are deaf, the adaptation of written material in the required format for those who are visually impaired or the physical accessibility of rooms for wheelchair users.

³ *Procedures of the applications and complaints commissions in the applications and admissions procedure at the University of Maribor* (Poslovnik Komisije za prošnje in pritožbe v prijavnem postopku Univerze v Mariboru), <http://vpis.uni-mb.si/> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

B. Slovenia

- Definition of students with disabilities in the Higher Education Act.
- Clear distinction among students with disabilities and other students with special needs such as athletes, parents, artists, etc. who have same status.
- Consider that special needs which result from a disability may have an effect on the students' examination results and in achieving the 85% grade mark required.

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1. Best Practice

A. Germany

At German universities and colleges students have to manage their special learning needs almost on their own. In general, universities offer little technical assistance or rarely provide support staff for students with disabilities. However, there are open-ended regulations to compensate for any disadvantages. Both regulations on examinations and on study conditions allow for various solutions. For tests and other examinations different assistive devices can be used (for example special laptop computers). Students can make use of a sign language interpreter or carry out certain tasks in a different way. Students also have the right to obtain extra time for written examinations (<http://www.studentenwerke.de/main/default.asp?id=06401>). Field trips, practical training and exercises also have to be open to disabled and chronically ill students.

The support system for disabled students in Germany focuses on individual assessment based on individual needs. Hence there is a legal requirement for disabled students to be given an individual budget to finance both their personal assistive needs (e.g. having someone to take lecture notes for students with hearing impairments or to read to students with visual impairments) and special technical aids to meet their special needs

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(<http://www.studentenwerk-marburg.de/informationen-fuer/behinderte-studierende/finanzierung-von-assistenzen-und-technischer-hilfsmittel.html>).

At German universities students with special needs can negotiate special arrangements such as obtaining photocopies of transparencies or print-outs of PowerPoint presentations for those who cannot follow the projection on the screen. Photocopies of study materials used for lectures or seminars are handed out to those who cannot make their own notes during the session. Visually impaired students and those who have great difficulty with writing have the opportunity of recording lectures or seminars on tape. It is possible to use simultaneous translation of courses in sign language, but this has to be organized and financed by the students themselves based on their individual legal entitlement (§54 Sozialgesetzbuch (SGB) XII - Social Code XII, <http://www.studentenwerke.de/main/default.asp?id=06202>). Exceptionally, the University of Applied Sciences in Potsdam is experimenting with a special project for deaf students (<http://forge.fh-potsdam.de/~potsmods/welcome.html>).

Furthermore, a few universities do make some effort to provide technical assistance, support staff for students with disabilities and additional learning support such as the service for the adaptation of study materials at the University of Dortmund (<http://www.dobus.uni-dortmund.de/ud/>). The Adaptation Service prepares study materials requested by students with visual impairments or by university teachers having such students in their courses. The materials can be converted to digital media, Braille or large print.

Some universities provide special technical equipment during the courses if necessary, e.g. Braille displays, alternative keyboards, or large monitors so that a visually impaired student is able to attend a computer course. Such resources are provided for example at the University of Dortmund (<http://www.dobus.uni-dortmund.de/afb/>) and at Studentenwerk Berlin (<http://www.studentenwerk-berlin.de/bub/behinderte/hilfsmittelpool/index.html>).

In addition, some student advice centres are tuned to the needs of students with disabilities and work together with the academic staff. At these universities students with special needs are supported in achieving inclusive learning and teaching conditions.

Recommendations for academic staff were published by the University of Dortmund and the Deutsches Studentenwerk (DSW) (<http://www.dobus.uni-dortmund.de/bbstips/index.htm>; <http://www.studentenwerke.de/main/default.asp?id=06406>).

These recommendations are suitable as introductory guidelines only and details that are more specific have to be worked out on a case-by-case basis.

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There is still no compulsory special training for staff anywhere in Germany. Only the University of Dortmund has provided any special training¹. It is therefore necessary for staff to have students with disabilities on their courses in order to gain any personal experience.

For some years, disabled students and academics have been encouraging their peers to carry out research work on issues related to disability. Since 2002 the working group "ArbeitsGemeinschaft Disability Studies Germany - Wir forschen selbst" has been working to establish disability as an interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary field of research and study based on a social model of disability (<http://www.disabilitystudies.de/index.html>; <http://www.zedis.uni-hamburg.de/>).

B. Poland

On the basis of the following regulations, Warsaw University undertakes all possible activities to guarantee full participation in teaching and learning processes to everyone who has a disability or chronic illnesses:

**Resolution No.156 of Warsaw University Senate from December 17 2003
Directive No.5 of the Rector from March 6 2005 followed by Detailed regulations from June 30 2005.**

The state law does not require the higher schools to offer such guarantees.

Examples of best practice form Warsaw University services:

Services for blind and visually impaired students

Adaptation of learning materials for students with visual impairments:

1. Recordings of books and other printed texts

The audio recording of printed texts is one of the responsibilities of the Digital Library - a unit within OPD. The Digital Library is located within Warsaw University Library.

The requested texts are recorded by volunteers in digital technology, which allows the users to select specific chapters, pages or footnotes. The recordings can be played on computers equipped with sound cards. Requests for recordings should be made at the Digital Library. If a requested text is not available at Warsaw University Library, a copy of it has to be delivered to the Digital Library. The recording is usually available within two to four weeks after the order has been placed, depending on the amount of printed text. Since the Digital Library is located within Warsaw University Library, anyone - not only students and staff of the university - can use its collections. However,

¹ For further information: birgit.rothenberg@uni-dortmund.de, University Dortmund, DoBuS.

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only those students and university staff who are registered at OPD can place orders for recordings of texts that are not available in the existing collections of the Digital Library.

2. Materials in an electronic format

Materials in an electronic format allow a blind student to:

- print the material in Braille
- use a speech synthesizer to listen to the material and
- use a Braille display to read the material.

To use the service, an order has to be placed with the Digital Library. If a requested text is not available at Warsaw University Library, a copy of it has to be delivered to the Digital Library. The waiting time for the conversion of a printed text into electronic format depends on the amount of printed text and the quality of the print.

The service is particularly recommended for those academics who have a blind student in their groups. The teacher should place an order for selected materials with the Office at least three days before the date when they are planning to use the materials

3. Materials in Braille

OPD has at its disposal adequate equipment to produce high-quality copies in Braille. Braille printouts are made from computer text files. Anyone requesting a Braille printout should either deliver a computer text file on a floppy disc to the Office or send it via e-mail to: wydruki@cnin.uw.edu.pl.

Converting a printed text into Braille requires more time and effort as the text has to be first scanned or retyped. The service can be used not only by blind students but also by academics who have students in their groups using Braille.

4. Magnified reading materials

OPD prepares magnified materials at the request of students with visual impairments and university teachers who have such students in their groups. In the Computer Centre for Students with Disabilities both the students and the teaching staff can use magnifying photocopiers and TV screen magnifiers.

Services for deaf students

Sign language interpreters

If a deaf student or a student with a hearing impairment needs sign language interpreting services to be able to participate fully in classes or lectures, such services can be provided by the university.

This service is offered in accordance with the programme financed by the State Fund of Rehabilitation for People with Disabilities and is available to all higher schools.

Available online [http://: www.pfron.org.pl](http://www.pfron.org.pl) (Accessed 28 May 2007).

Lecture notes for students with hearing impairments

Some students with hearing impairments are not able to take notes during lectures. OPD offers the following help for obtaining lecture notes:

- free photocopying of lecture notes made by other students;
- finding volunteers who would be willing either to make notes for students with hearing impairments or to share their own lecture notes.

Services for students with mental health difficulties and/or chronic illnesses

These services are adapted to the needs of such students and focus on their problems with participating in classes and examinations. Individual aspects of the type and stage of illness are always taken into account when providing assistance by the OPD's.

Adjustments relating to class attendance

Students with mental health difficulties and chronic illnesses frequently have relapses of their illness, which often affect their ability to attend classes. However, irregular attendance should not lead to some students dropping out. To prevent them having to leave university, the following measures ought to be considered:

(a) Extension of permissible class absences without the need to present medical certificates (up to 50 percent of all classes in extreme cases)

This measure requires the approval of a Dean and is applicable only with respect to those subjects which can be at least partially studied individually at home.

(b) Off-campus studies

In some cases, a student is not able to participate in classes for a prolonged period. In this instance, it is recommended that the student should be allowed to switch to an off-campus mode of studies, provided that the course syllabus allows such modifications. Experience has shown that off-campus studies often enable students to continue their studies even when their condition deteriorates.

(c) Adjustments to the method of evaluating a student's performance

With some mental health difficulties, a student's performance may be seriously affected by the presence of other people. Therefore, in some cases it is recommended that oral tests should be changed to written ones or that a written test should be conducted in a separate room.

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Changes in exam periods

For students with mental health difficulties and chronic illnesses the exam period - a time of intense effort - may become a significant source of additional stress and anxiety. After a detailed analysis of a student's medical condition as well as consultations with a doctor, OPD may recommend re-scheduling the dates of tests and examinations. Thus, the end-of-term exam session may be extended to several months. At the same time, the student is allowed to participate in courses of the next semester without any financial consequences, provided he meets all the set deadlines. If the rescheduled deadlines are not met, the student is required to repeat the previous semester or academic year.

University leave of absence

More and more students with chronic illnesses decide to take periodic leave on the recommendation of OPD. In such cases, students can request the possibility of earning course credits during the time that they are on leave. Thus, they can cover course programmes gradually even when they are undergoing intensive treatment or therapy.

Other services

Equipment hire facilities

Students and university staff with visual, hearing and dexterity impairments can hire portable equipment such as:

- notebooks / laptop computers
- screen reading software (Window-Eyes, Jaws)
- Braille note-takers
- 'speaking' note-takers
- Braille displays
- magnifying software
- alternative keyboards
- eBeam digital device transferring information from dry-wipe boards to personal computers
- hearing improvement systems (based on FM radio technology).

The equipment hire forms are available at OPD or can be downloaded at: www.bon.uw.edu.pl.

Adjustments to examination procedures

Reliable assessment of the performance of students with disabilities often requires adapting examination procedures to the needs arising from a student's disability. It must be stressed that failing to do so actually decreases the chances of a person with a disability as compared with other students. Adjustments to examination procedures have to be seen as providing equal opportunities rather than preferential or privileged treatment. The decision about adjustments to examination procedures are taken by the Faculty Dean or the Head of Department at a student's request approved by OPD (Regulation No.5 of the Rector - cf. Annex).

Examples of adjustments to examination procedures:

- During written examinations blind students should be allowed to use Braille, personal computers with speech synthesizers or a reading assistant's help.
- Students with visual impairments should be given magnified copies of the written examination paper. The size of the font should be agreed on with the student before the examination.
- Written examinations should be replaced with oral ones in the case of students with dexterity impairments. Alternatively such students should be allowed to use a personal computer. Written examination tests can be taken with the assistance of a reading assistant or on a personal computer.
- In the case of deaf students and students with severe speech impairments, an oral exam should be replaced with a written one. The oral answers to examination questions should preferably be replaced with short essays.
- The duration of alternative exams taken by students with disabilities should be extended up to fifty percent of the time of the standard examination. This applies also to students with dexterity impairments who take a written exam on their own.

Extension of allowable absences

When the medical condition of a student seriously affects his/her attendance, the number of allowed absences in relation to the standard number of allowed absences should be increased. The extent of the increase should be decided individually after a careful analysis of the student's medical condition. Extensions of allowed absences are regulated in detail by Rector's Directive No. 5 on the studying conditions of disabled students.

C. Slovenia

Slovenian legislation relating to higher education does not include disability issues. As a result, no higher education institution is legally bound to offer equal opportunities and reasonable adjustments for disabled students. The only documents that focus on the accessibility of higher education for disabled students are the university Statutes.

The statutes give students with functional impairments the right to special provisions for attending lectures and seminars and for examination arrangements and assessment procedures. Special provisions and reasonable adjustments are decided for each individual student by the Commission for Student Affairs of each faculty.

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Statutes define how the status of a student with special needs can be gained. They also state that faculty rules regulate special provisions and exceptions in meeting certain criteria. In the event of a student not meeting the requirements to be able to progress to the following semester, or not obtaining his Bachelor or Master's degree in the period of twelve months following the last semester, his student status is terminated. Among the reasons for the exceptional extension to student status, statutes list "other legitimate reasons" such as illness or rehabilitation, on the grounds of which the status can be granted for an additional period of twelve months. There is other more detailed wording about when a student can progress to the following semester when he has not met all the requirements. His application will be processed by the Commission for student affairs and will be granted if the student has met at least half of the requirements, if the other requirements have not been met for justifiable reasons and if the Commission can reasonably expect that the student will meet these requirements in the period determined by the Commission.

Students with special needs can take exams on different examination dates as agreed with the lecturer. This means that they can take the exam on a different date to other students, but they are not given any advantages over other students in order to be able to pass the exam.

Even though not all Slovenian universities and faculties have written rules on how to gain the status of a student with special needs, the practice is very similar everywhere. A student with a disability needs to submit a written request for such status, describe his disability or illness, his special needs and some suggestions for overcoming the barriers with which he and the academic staff are faced, enclosing also some proof of his disability or illness which can be either a medical statement or a disability committee statement.

The student receives a written statement of his special status that he can use when negotiating for special arrangements for lectures, tutorials or exams. All these arrangements are negotiated individually for each student, either by the student himself with individual lecturers or by the student and the Office for Student Affairs, which then makes the necessary arrangements with the lecturer. These arrangements are not stated in any law, which is why each student needs to explain in detail why these arrangements are necessary and reasonable. Since staff does not receive any disability awareness training, the students must manage most of their learning needs on their own.

These are the possible adaptations and special arrangements for attending lectures, seminars, etc:

- photocopies of transparencies or PowerPoint presentations
- lecture notes or other study materials in electronic form for those who cannot work with printed materials
- a collection of compulsory reading or materials which is available in the library or elsewhere so that it can be transferred to audio or electronic form or large print

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- the possibility of recording lectures, seminars, etc.
- the possibility of using different assistive equipment (magnifiers, sound amplifiers, laptop computers, electronic magnifiers, etc.)
- sign language interpretation
- submission of work and assignments in electronic form
- passing certain study requirements or assignments in pairs or teamed with non disabled students
- when a student cannot follow lectures or seminars, he can do the work at his own time and pace at home and in consultation with the lecturer (a form of e-learning).

Special arrangements in the library:

- the possibility of borrowing materials from the library for a longer period so that it can be adapted into accessible forms (Braille or large print, audio or electronic form)
- the possibility of borrowing materials which are for in-library use only when they need to be adapted into accessible formats
- help and assistance in finding material in the library
- the possibility of ordering books by e-mail, telephone or via the Internet
- the possibility of having material taken out of the library by an assistant on behalf of the student when the library is not accessible for him/her.

Special arrangements for examinations or other assignments:

- the possibility of using different assistive devices
- examination questions in large print
- examination questions in electronic form and the possibility of using a computer to take the exam
- an oral instead of a written examination or vice versa, depending on students' needs
- Longer time to take the exam
- a scribe to write the examination answers as dictated by the student
- a reader to read the exam questions to the student
- sign language interpretation
- the possibility of arranging alternative examination dates
- an accessible and appropriate room in which to sit the exam
- longer deadlines for the submission of work (reports, seminar papers, etc.), as some students have to have the materials they need to go through in accessible formats and the adaptation of these can take quite some time
- the possibility of dividing long exams into smaller units.

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Some of the special arrangements cannot be provided by the faculty or academic department. That is why the cooperation of the Slovenian Association of Disabled Students and other disability organizations is necessary.

Photocopies, print-outs and in some cases electronic materials are provided by the faculty. Students can obtain audio materials from the Audio Library of the Union of the Blind and Partially Sighted of Slovenia, where materials are recorded to meet the needs of individual students.

The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students has a network of volunteers who carry out the digitalisation of material, receiving a nominal reward for their work.

Students can also use photocopying facilities free of charge in order to copy or enlarge study material. The facilities are available in two of our offices and at one student campus.

- *Statute of the University of Ljubljana* (Statut Univerze v Ljubljani, Ur.l. RS, no. 8/05, 8/05, 118/05, 72/05 (76/06-popr.), Articles 141, 153 and 238),
- http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r08/predpis_STAT98.html (Accessed on 28th May 2007)
- *Statute of the University of Maribor* (Statut Univerze v Mariboru, Ur. l. RS, no. 22/07, Articles 85, 212 and 216), <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/online.jsp?urlid=200722&dhid=88134> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)
- *Statute of the University of Primorska* (Statut Univerze na Primorskem, Ur. l. no. 73/03, 100/03, 50/05, 53/06, 83/06, 21/07, Articles 118 a, 168 and 170)
- http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r02/predpis_STAT82.html (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

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2. Proposals

- Guidelines for academic staff.
- Very open ended regulations so that they allow various solutions.
- Place the obligation for suitable adaptations on the university itself.
- Establish a network of universities to exchange adapted material.
- Provide opportunities for disabled students to help other students to have a better understanding of their special needs.
- To teach deaf students, videos with sign language interpretation can be used - Provide information on a CD.

- Disabled students and academics should encourage their peers to carry out research on issues related to disability.
- The content of all curricula must be checked to make sure they incorporate the interests of disabled people.
- Compulsory special training for staff - students with disabilities have to be present to provide their own personal experience.
- Simultaneous translation of courses in sign language must be provided.
- A budget is required for disabled students to be able to fund their personal support needs.
- Field trips, practical training and exercises also have to be open to disabled and chronically ill students.
- Special technical equipment must be provided during the courses if this is necessary (e.g. a large monitor so that a visually impaired student is able to attend a computer course).

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Assistive Technology

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1. Best Practice

A. Germany

Everyday living

Common technical aids are financed by the statutory health insurance or - in those rare cases where a disabled student is insured by a substitutive private insurance - by private health insurance¹. The health insurance makes a list available that represent all accessible aids. This list is updated monthly (§§ 33, 139 SGB V - Social Code V, http://www.bundesrecht.juris.de/sgb_5/index.html).

University

In Germany, home students, but not international students, have the possibility to obtain funding for all aids necessary for study. Students who want to do a second degree or their PhD, however, are not supported in most cases. If universities do not provide a service to address the special needs of a student, the student himself is legally entitled to receive money to buy individual aids in order to solve the situation according to §53ff SGB - Social Code XII. The law created this entitlement for cases of necessity (see: <http://db03.bmgs.de/Gesetze/sgb12x053.htm>, <http://www.studentenwerke.de/main/default.asp?id=06103>).

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¹ More than 85% of the population is insured by the statutory health insurance.

The examples of the University of Dortmund and the University of Applied Sciences of Giessen in Germany show that it is possible to establish accessible working environments. In addition, both universities offer a special service for blind and partially sighted students in their libraries (<http://www.ub.uni-dortmund.de/sfbs/index.html> and <http://www.dobus.uni-dortmund.de/afbl>).

It is even possible that a university will provide accessible laboratory technology, as was the case at Freie Universität Berlin (<http://www.fu-berlin.de/service/behinderung/aktuell/chemie.html>).

B. Poland

Students in Poland can make use of the following ways in which to obtain assistive technology equipment:

National Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People (PFRON) support programme

The state Fund PFRON launched programmes whose goal is to offer financial support for the purchase of computer equipment:

- the programme for blind people is called:
 “Computer for Homer”
- (<http://www.pfron.org.pl/zwi/zwi.nsf/WWW/A83D6BCABA4319A5C1256BE800769661?OpenDocument>)
- and the programme for persons with mobility impairments is called
 “Pegaz”
- (<http://www.pfron.org.pl/zwi/zwi.nsf/WWW/AD9A8D01D87ED97DC1256FDC00246C5B?OpenDocument>)
- students may also apply to the programme called **“Student”** which can be also used to fund the necessary computer equipment
- (<http://www.pfron.org.pl/zwi/zwi.nsf/WWW/6AE9797014C3412EC1256E6F00483AA3?OpenDocument>).

Use of university facilities

Universities try more and more to offer some assistive equipment for their disabled students (www.uniwersytetydlawszystkich.pl).

Warsaw University offers:

- Computer center for students with disabilities
(<http://www.cnin.uw.edu.pl>, http://www.bon.uw.edu.pl/centrum_komputerowe.html)

- Equipment hire facilities
Students and university staff with visual, hearing and physical disabilities can hire portable equipment such as:
 - notebooks / laptop computers
 - screen reading software (Window-Eyes, Jaws)
 - Braille note-takers
 - 'speaking' note-takers
 - Braille displays
 - magnifying software
 - alternative keyboards
 - eBeam digital device transferring information from dry-wipe boards to personal computers
 - hearing improvement systems (based on FM radio technology).

The equipment hire forms are available at OPD or can be downloaded at <http://www.bon.uw.edu.pl/>.

C. Slovenia

The list of medical and technical assistive devices² covered by the Health Insurance Scheme is very limited and includes only very basic aids. Most disabled people therefore still rely on support received from donations. The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students provides disabled students with the opportunity to circulate requests for donations, writes a support letter for the applicant and allows them to use the bank account number of the Association to collect the funds.

The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students offers free use of computer technology with some assistive devices such as Braille displays, large screens, screen enlargement and speech support systems, and high-speed scanners. They also lend some computers and a Braille display to students. Some faculties and libraries also have screen enlargement programmes on some computers used by students.

A computer course to gain the European Computer Driving Licence has been translated into Slovenian sign language and subtitled. Video recordings for viewing recordings on demand are also available and used. The first state web products for the blind are also available (e.g. e-administration).

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Examples of Good Practice

Assistive Technology

² *List of medical and technical assistive devices* (seznam medicinsko-tehničnih pripomočkov s šifrantom, medicinskimi kriteriji, pooblastili, postopki in cenovnimi standardi), <http://www.zzzs.si/zzzs/info/egradiva.nsf/0/24a0ffc3d3e5126fc1257186004d8a98?OpenDocument&ExpandSection=-1%2C-2> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

The 'Accessible Slovenia'³ strategy also states that:

- blind and partially sighted people must be able to use enlargement effects for characters, electronic magnifiers, Braille displays, audio descriptions for films and the use of other audio communication devices
- deaf and hard of hearing people must be able to use subtitles or sign language interpretation or the use of induction loops in public places
- adapted ICT must be offered to all disabled people
- people with mental health difficulties must receive additional technical support in understanding specific information.

2. Proposals

- Universities should provide accessible library and laboratory technology.
- Disabled students should be entitled to take legal action if this right is denied.
- Funds should be provided for universities to buy adapted equipment when they have disabled students.
- If a university does not provide the service, students should have the right to receive money to buy the service themselves.
- Technical aids financed by health insurance: the list has to be updated and new developed aids have to be added so that it includes more modern devices without means testing.
- The State should pay for all study aids necessary for an individual, even for PhD students, without means testing.

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Examples of
Good Practice

Assistive
Technology

³ *Accessible Slovenia Strategy* (Strategija o dostopnosti Slovenije) http://www.mddsz.gov.si/fileadmin/mddsz.gov.si/pageuploads/dokumenti_pdf/dostopna_slovenija.pdf (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

Extra Source: *Compulsory health insurance rules - consolidated text* (Pravila obveznega zdravstvenega zavarovanja (prečiščeno besedilo, Ur.l. RS, št. 30/2003 (35/2003 - popr.), 78/2003, 84/2004, 44/2005, 86/2006 (90/2006 - popr.)), http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r08/predpis_DRUG_1658.html. (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

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**Examples of
Good Practice**

Assistive
Technology





Information



1. Best Practice

A. Germany

Studying involves a great deal of reading. In the case of visually impaired students in particular, the adaptation of written material in audio, large print, Braille or digital format is essential for them to have full access to all necessary study material.

In Germany there are different services for adapting materials. At the University of Dortmund, for example, there are two adaptation services for those who are visually impaired. At the library (Service for the blind and visually impaired, <http://www.ub.uni-dortmund.de/sfbs/index.html>), students can commission the adaptation of monographs, while study materials needed during classes can be adapted at the local centre for disability and study (Service on adaptation of studies materials for visually impaired, <http://www.dobus.uni-dortmund.de/ud/>).

In addition to the individual adaptation services, the University of Dortmund is continuously building up a special online catalogue for adapted literature (Sehkon, <http://www.ub.uni-dortmund.de/sfbs/sehkon.html>) where scientific works that have already been adapted can be found. Some libraries have already joined this network, but many more should do so. Libraries should also add an extra category of “Adapted Material” to their online catalogues.

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An important requirement for full access to information for disabled students is the accessible design of the library online catalogue. In Germany the OPAC of the library of the University of Mainz (<http://www.ub.uni-mainz.de/Online-Kataloge/>) can be cited as a good example for this purpose. It was redesigned in spring 2006.

In Germany, the federal law establishes a legal right to accessible information (Bundesbehindertengleichstellungsgesetz - Federal law on the equal treatment of the disabled, <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bgg/index.html>) State laws also legislate on the equality under public law of disabled people. (E.g. *Landesgesetz zur Gleichstellung behinderter Menschen - Rheinland-Pfalz: law on equal treatment of disabled people*, http://rlp.juris.de/rlp/gesamt/BehGleichG_RP.htm#BehGleichG_RP_rahmen). These laws also have an impact upon university laws. This includes the requirement for public institutions, in the widest sense of the word, to have accessible web design.

At the University of Dortmund local principles for accessible web design were passed in 2003 (<http://www.hrz.uni-dortmund.de/docs/Webrichtlinien.html>). In general, it is important for disabled students with special needs that all university information is also published online; this is increasingly the case at most German universities.

In addition, important university information also has to be provided as sign language videos for deaf students. Such a service can be found at the University of Hamburg (<http://www.uni-hamburg.de/Behinderung/gebaerd.htm>). Another useful means of providing accessible information, particularly for visually or physically impaired students, is the establishment of an E-Mail or text message/short message service (sms) for current study information which is usually just placed on notice boards. For example, at the University of Mainz the Chairs of Economics and Business Administration offer such a mailing service to all students including course information, any change to the location or timing of lectures etc. (<http://majordomo.uni-mainz.de/archiv/fb03-wiwi/maillist.html>). At the University of Dortmund, there is an email newsletter for disabled students relating to various topics related to disability and study.¹

B. Poland

Access to information is based on the accessibility of web sites. There is no state regulation concerning this issue, but in 2005 Warsaw University's Office for People with Disabilities created the instruction concerning the accessibility of web pages, which is distributed to all Internet administrators at Polish universities.

Page 54 ¹ For further information: birgit.rothenberg@uni-dortmund.de, University Dortmund, DoBuS.

C. Slovenia

To ensure that disabled students can take an active part in the educational process, they need to have access to information and educational materials. In Slovenia there are no specific regulations requiring public bodies, including higher education institutions, to provide information in accessible formats.

Faculty staff are aware that students have different access needs to information and thus offer different information communication methods. Most faculties have up-to-date information on their web sites. However most of them are not designed according to barrier-free Internet standards. This is why some students need to rely on the help of someone else to access the information on the web site. Other methods of information communication depend on the faculty and the agreement among the students and staff; they include e-mailing lists, telephone calls or personal visits to the Office for Student Affairs. The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students has asked all universities and faculties to design their web sites to be fully compliant with accessible web design recommendations: <http://www.drustvo-informatika.si/dogodki/dsi2002/prispeliReferati/tabaj.doc> (Accessed on 28th May 2007) and to offer accurate and up to date information not only on notice boards but also on the Internet and Intranet as well. To date, the response has not been very satisfactory.. The Faculty of Economics of the University of Ljubljana is the only one, which has redesigned their web site to ensure full access to all students.

The *Act on the Use of Slovenian Sign Language*² (Zakon o uporabi slovenskega znakovnega jezika, Ur.l. RS, št. 96/2002) gives deaf people the right to receive information in Slovenian Sign Language and defines the extent and method of exercising the right to a sign language interpreter. A deaf person is entitled to 30 hours of sign language interpretation a year. . Deaf secondary and university students are entitled, due to their additional educational needs, to up to 100 hours of sign language interpretation. The expense of a sign language interpreter is covered by the government, local authorities, and public services by means of a voucher issued to a deaf person by the social care centre. The provision of sign language interpretation for the educational process itself, such as lectures, seminars, is the responsibility of the higher education institution.

Funding for sign language interpretation for institutional use is allocated to individual faculties by the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. However, there are not enough sign language interpreters to cover all needs and the government has not allocated sufficient funding especially for sign language interpretation in educational settings.

² *Act on the Use of Slovene Sign Language* (Zakon o uporabi slovenskega znakovnega jezika, Ur.l. RS, št. 96/2002), <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=200296&stevilka=4810> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

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Examples of Good Practice

Information

Students who have the status of a student with special needs can ask for the following special arrangements in the library:

- A longer period for borrowing materials to be adapted in accessible formats (audio, electronic or Braille or large print).
- The possibility of borrowing materials which are only for in-library use when they need to be adapted in accessible formats (audio, electronic or Braille or large print).
- Help in searching for materials in the library.
- The possibility of ordering materials via the Internet or by telephone.
- The possibility of materials being given to the student's assistant when the library is inaccessible for that student.

There are no regulations or law defining these points as rights; however, there have been no problems in achieving this through personal contacts with heads of library departments.

The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students runs an e-mail information service through which different information is disseminated: services offered by the Association, invitations to take part in projects and events, information on scholarships, study opportunities in Slovenia or abroad, informal educational opportunities, etc. In some cases, information is distributed via text messaging.

2. Proposals

- A legal right to barrier-free information.
- All information on the Internet/Intranet must be accessible - a barrier-Free Net.
- Informative literature of universities has to be provided as sign language videos.
- Text messaging/SMS or e-mail information service must be provided for current information which is usually placed on boards or notices.
- There should be a newsletter with course information, scholarships, etc.

- There must be a unified system of visual information - including where and how it is presented - signs, labels, etc.
- A library-wide search system should be created where adapted scientific books can be found - all other universities could join the network or could add an additional category to their search category for ordinary books called 'Adapted Material'.
- Library catalogues must be accessible.
- Libraries should provide adapted materials.

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**Examples of
Good Practice**

Information

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1. Best Practice

A. Germany

a) For universities

Apart from the two examples from the states of Nordrhein-Westfalen and Rheinland-Pfalz mentioned in the section on physical accessibility, there have been no standard funds earmarked for projects creating barrier-free study conditions. All such activities have to be financed out of the regular budget. As an exception to this rule, the Labour Market Authority (Arbeitsagentur) sometimes pays for adaptations necessary to employ a disabled person.

b) For students

To cover the living costs of students in need who are studying for the first time, a monthly lump sum allowance is available. This allowance is paid regularly during the standard period of study, if the income of the student, his or her parents and - if there is one - his or her spouse, as well as their financial wealth, does not exceed certain thresholds. At least one half is paid as a grant, with the rest up to a maximum of 10,000 € as an interest-free loan. The loan has to be refunded if the post-study income exceeds a certain threshold.

Although disabled students do not receive extra money to cover extraordinary living costs, there are some regulations to meet their special needs. If they cannot finish their course of study within the normal timescale for reasons

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relating to their impairment, the allowance is prolonged for a “reasonable” time as a full grant (§15, III Bundesgesetz über die individuelle Förderung der Ausbildung (BAföG) - Federal Law on individual financial support of education). Higher thresholds are applied to the income of the parents in the means-testing process for eligibility (§25 VI BAföG). There are also higher thresholds when the loan has to be refunded (§18a I BaföG, http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/baf_g/index.html; www.studentenwerke.de/behinderung).

In rare instances disabled students can obtain the living cost allowance from the social assistance (§7, V SGB - Social Code II and §22 SGB - Social Code XII). People with extraordinary living costs caused by their disability can obtain extra funding (§21 SGB - Social Code II and 30 SGB - Social Code XII).

Social assistance also provides financial support in order to obtain technical and personal assistance for study, care and activities of daily life including leisure (§53ff SGB - Social Code XII - SGB - Social Code II, http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb_2/index.html and SGB - Social Code XII, http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/sgb_12/index.html or www.studentenwerke.de/behinderung).

At Dortmund University disabled postgraduates can obtain funding to cover their special requirements from the university’s postgraduate programme (<http://www.zib.uni-dortmund.de/content/Vergaberichtlinien.pdf>). However there is not yet any regulation stating that postgraduate disabled students’ needs must be funded. Since the beginning of 2007, however, the German Research Foundation (DFG) has emphasised that all its’ funding programmes are also open to disabled scientists and that any special needs will be taken into consideration (<http://www.dfg.de/diversity>).

In Germany, there are two kinds of student fees. One has to be paid by all students normally and is accompanied by some kind of loan. The other is designed as a type of penalty that has to be paid by students whose period of studies exceeds a certain threshold. Some states apply both types of fees, some apply only the second but there are now very few states that do not apply one or the other.

All penalty systems contain some exceptions for students who are not responsible for any delays to their studies and this includes disabled students if the delay is caused by the effects of their impairment or due to their condition of health. The exact details differ across the different states. For an example refer to the „Studienkontenmodell“ Rheinland-Pfalz (<http://www.mbwjk.rlp.de/> → [Wissenschaft](#) → [Studienkonten](#)).

The systems of general student fees are designed very differently. Some contain exceptions for disabled students because they study for longer periods or are not able to earn enough money to pay the fees. A good example is that demonstrated by §6 of the study fee law of Baden-Württemberg (http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bw_studiengebuehr_gesetz/index.html).

www.mwk.baden-wuerttemberg.de/fileadmin/pdf/studium/studiengebuehren/Gesetz_z_LHsgG.pdf, http://www.mwk.baden-wuerttemberg.de/fileadmin/pdf/studium/studiengebuehren/studiengeb_modell.pdf).

B. Poland

The Polish Ministry of Education launched a special scholarship available to all students who can provide proof that they have a disability. The scholarship is available to those who have received a statement of disability from the state commissions - in accordance with Polish legislation (http://www.idn.org.pl/sonnszz/rehab_ustawa2003.htm). The scholarship is guaranteed by the law on higher education (http://ks.sejm.gov.pl/proc4/ustawy/2720_u.htm).

Each higher school has the right to define the detailed regulations concerning the amount of money paid according to the individual's level of disability (<http://www.mimuw.edu.pl/dokumenty/monitor-uw/monitor-2006-5.html#poz58>).

In Poland there is no system to support higher schools with any expenses relating to providing services for students with disabilities, the purchase of assistive equipment or in order to remove architectural barriers.

Educational institutions can apply to the National Fund for the Rehabilitation of Disabled People to receive some financial support towards the removal of barriers in the physical environment, but this regulation applies only to all public institutions and does not work well (www.pfron.org.pl).

One exception is the PFRON programme called 'Pitagoras', which supports higher education institutions with their expenditure for services for deaf students. In particular funding can be obtained to cover the cost of sign language interpreters, as well as for the purchase of equipment.

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Financial Support

C. Slovenia

Tertiary level students can apply for three types of scholarships. State scholarships depend on family income. Zois scholarships are awarded to exceptional students. Scholarships provided by institutions or companies depend on student's achievements and are granted if the student agrees to work for the company for one or two years after gaining his degree. Tertiary level students are entitled to Child Allowance. Students with disabilities can apply for Child Care Allowance and blind students are entitled to Allowance for Care and assistance.

Scholarships

Tertiary level students applying for a State scholarship should be no older than 26. The selection process looks at the social and economic status of the student's parents or carers and his/her academic record. A student with special needs can receive a 20% higher scholarship due to the extra expenses that he will incur because of his disability (Article 16 of *Rules on awarding of scholarships*¹, Pravilnik o štipendiranju Ur. l. RS, no. 48/99, 43/00, 62/01, 85/02, 15/03 Odl. US: U-I-201/99-29, 40/03, 64/04, 28/06, 50/06, 80/06). Another special arrangement is that if the student or any other family member within the same household is disabled, it is considered that this family has extra expenses, which count as an additional family member. This is important when calculating family income per family member (Article 12 of Rules on awarding of scholarships). Students, whose family income per member exceeds a certain amount, are denied the right to a State scholarship.

Students can also apply for scholarships for gifted or talented students, or for scholarships offered by organizations or companies. These scholarships are not means tested and are awarded for having an excellent academic record or for other achievements.

Child allowance

Child allowance² is State provided income for raising, supporting and educating a child. It is given to all parents (in exceptional cases to the child itself) except in cases where the family income is exceptionally high. It is given to parents until their child turns 18. When children continue their education, the allowance can be received until the child reaches the age of 26. In cases of long-term illness or if the child's studies last longer than 8 semesters, the parents can ask for a reasonable extension of the funding. The amount of the allowance is determined on the basis of family income.

Child care allowance

The Child Care Allowance³ is the financial support for families with children with special needs, to cover additional expenses due to having to provide extra care and assistance for the child. Parents whose children are in institutional care do not have the right to the Child Care Allowance, except for the periods when their child is being cared for at home by the family.. Parents are entitled to this allowance until their child turns 18. After the age of 18,

¹ *Rules on awarding of scholarships* (Pravilnik o štipendiranju, Ur. l. RS, št. 48/99, 43/00, 62/01, 85/02, 15/03 Odl.US: U-I-201/99-29, 40/03, 64/04, 28/06, 50/06, 80/06) *Articles 12 and 16*, <http://www.ess.gov.si/slo/Dejavnost/Stipendije/ZOIS/pravilnik2003.htm> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

² *Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act* (Zakon o starševskem varstvu in družinskih prejemkih, Ur.l. RS, no. 97/01, 76/03, 56/05 Odl.US: U-I-137/03-23, 111/05 Odl.US: U-I-31/04-14, 21/06 Odl.US: U-I-116/03-22, 47/06, 114/06), Articles 65-75, <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=2003110&stevilka=4835> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

³ *Parental Protection and Family Benefit Act* (Zakon o starševskem varstvu in družinskih prejemkih -, Ur.l. RS, Ur.l. RS, no. 97/01, 76/03, 56/05 Odl. US: U-I-137/03-23, 111/05 Odl.US: U-I-31/04-14, 21/06 Odl.US: U-I-116/03-22, 47/06, 114/06), Articles 80-83, <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=2003110&stevilka=4835> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

the same rules apply as for the Child Allowance. The amount depends on the type and degree of disability of the child.

Allowance for care and assistance

The Allowance for Care and Assistance⁴ is financial support granted to people who are already employed or retired and are blind or have a 70% mobility impairment, thus depending on other people for help with daily living tasks. In the case of blind people, young people who are insured through another person (their parent for example) also have the right to the Allowance for Care and Assistance. The amount depends on the degree and type of disability.

2. Proposals

- Use the mainstream university funds but regulate that they must also cover adapted equipment.
- Disabled students should be exempt from paying student fees, because it is more difficult for them to get the money to pay the fees, and because they already need more time because of their special needs regarding everyday life and study.
- Students who study longer because of a disability do not have to pay for any years that they have to repeat.
- The state should provide funding for the fees.
- Universities should receive additional disability funding, because students' needs and the related expenses are greater than is reasonable for the university to cope with.
- Financial support should also be available for disabled postgraduate students to cover the expenses of meeting their special needs.
- Students eligible for a grant or state funding to meet their everyday living should receive this for a longer period of time than is normally permitted, in cases where their studies take more time due to their disability.

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⁴ *Pension and Disability Insurance Act* (Zakon o pokojninskem in invalidskem zavarovanju, Ur.l. RS, no. 106/99, 72/00, 81/00, 124/00, 109/01, 83/02 Odl.US: U-I-178/02-14, 108/02, 110/02-ZISDU-1, 112/02 Skl.US: U-I-307/98-38, 40/03 Odl.US: U-I-273/00-13, 63/03, 63/03 Odl.US: U-I-57/00-51, 133/03 Odl.US: U-I-36/00-52, 135/03, 2/04-ZDSS-1 (10/04 - popr.), 54/04-ZDoh-1 (56/04, 62/04, 63/04 - popr.), 63/04-ZZRZI, 136/04 Odl.US: U-I-273/01-21, 68/05 Odl.US: U-I-29/04-19, 72/05, 69/06, 112/06 Odl.US: U-I-358/04-13, 114/06-ZUTPG), Articles 137-142 and 169, http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r01/predpis_ZAKO1431.html (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

- Disability has to be considered in (means-tested) living cost allowances by the provision of a higher allowance, with higher limits to eligibility (e.g. in considering parental or a student's own income or wealth); if the allowance received has to be refunded later.

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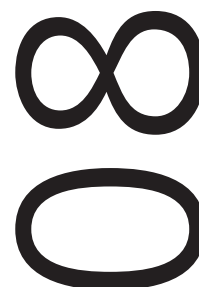
Financial Support

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Financial Support

Access to Academic Services



1. Best Practices

A. Germany

In recent times, German universities have increased their efforts to support their graduates into professional life. The aim of academic career services is to plan students' studies more effectively with early career planning in mind. In the case of disabled students, career services have to take special account of the particular needs and individual situation of an academic job-seeker with a disability.

In Germany, there are dedicated opportunities for disabled and chronically ill students regarding their transition into the labour market, such as a specific application training (<http://www.studentenwerke.de/main/default.asp?id=06701>), ongoing working groups for graduates with a disability (e.g. Freie Universität Berlin, <http://www.fu-berlin.de/service/behinderung/termine.html>) or roadshows providing important information concerning academic job-seeking for those who are disabled (e.g. University of Dortmund, <http://www.dobus.uni-dortmund.de>). There is also an opportunity for academics with disabilities who are interested in becoming entrepreneurs to set up their own business (see <http://www.go-unlimited.de/>).

In addition, the different counselling services for disabled university students try to support their clients in organizing their degree studies reasonably and

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to plan their own individual professional career. Some universities start these efforts with extracurricular activities for beginners (e.g. University of Karlsruhe and University of Dortmund). Due to the European study exchange programme ERASMUS, which also covers the special needs of disabled students studying abroad, these students have better opportunities to gain international experience and this can be very helpful for their future employment.

However, one should point out that more integrated support services for disabled and chronically ill students are currently missing.

C. Slovenia

In recent years, Slovenian universities have developed career counselling and non-formal educational activities. Through them, they encourage students to gain new knowledge and skills in the labour market and to secure a job. The first career counselling centre was established by the Faculty of Economics of the University of Ljubljana (Centre for Student and Career Services - CERS; <http://www.ef.uni-lj.si/en/units/pcdc/home1.asp> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)). Following its example, other higher educational institutions are establishing similar centres.

The core goals pursued by the CERS are to improve the personal, professional and academic development of students, to advise students in planning their careers, to offer recruitment services to the business community, thereby involving the business community in student development, stimulating co-operation between students and professors, and increasing the affiliation of students to the Faculty of Economics. The CERS is gradually developing activities to assist students to find appropriate careers, and facilitate business and institutional access to a suitably qualified workforce.

Recruitment requires encouraging student co-operation with the Faculty of Economics after graduation, as well as gathering information on graduates' employment, with the aim of designing an employment network. In co-operation with the EU Leonardo da Vinci programme, CERS provides student internships lasting several months in various European countries. Students can take part in various counselling services and tutorship. CERS also provides support and additional services for students with disabilities and chronic illnesses. CERS also makes sure that other services of the Faculty of Economics are available to students with disabilities.

2. Proposals

- All university academic services (e.g. course guidance, job exchanges, career centres, offices for international relations) have to be equally accessible for disabled students.

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Good Practice**

Access to
Academic Services



Accommodation



1. Best Practice

A. Germany

Student accommodation in the form of accessible or wheelchair-friendly apartments is provided in more than ninety universities or centres of applied sciences. Such apartments are either based on the campus, near individual faculties or easily accessible by public transport. "If I hadn't had the possibility of living in an accessible and affordable flat, I wouldn't have passed my studies", Frank Fischer points out. Other students had similar experiences, especially those with mobility impairments or who are wheelchair users. This underlines the importance of having appropriately accessible accommodation if one is to achieve the aim of offering equal opportunities to disabled students within academic education.

Although in a few cities there had already been some accessible student accommodation, the topic of accessible design was first recognized in 1982 on an official level with the suggestions made by the conference of the Education Ministers from all German states ("Kultusministerkonferenz") on '*The improvement of university education for disabled students*' ("*Verbesserung der Ausbildung für Behinderte im Hochschulbereich*" (http://www.studnetwerke.de/pdf/KMK_Empfehlung.pdf).

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Accommodation

Within these suggestions the special needs of disabled students were accepted for the first time and had a direct influence on the planning and construction of students' accommodation. Some individual apartments were designed and are taking account of the special needs of disabled students. At the start of disabled students being included into the universities there were very few opportunities for personal assistance. It was decided to develop specially adapted students' accommodation for severely disabled students in four cities (Bochum, Heidelberg, Marburg and Regensburg), providing also some personal services. These are still in existence. These institutions offer a special transportation service, support for the organization of personal assistance and even support for everyday activities.

Since the end of the 1990s, barrier-free construction has become part of the German states' regulations on construction ("Landesbauordnungen"). For example in §45 of Brandenburg regulation (http://www.landesrecht.brandenburg.de/sixcms/detail.php?gsid=land_bb_bravors_01.c.16037.de).

It has been required that residential buildings containing five or more flats have to offer barrier-free units on one floor. Hence, it is easier for disabled students to find an accessible flat even on the open housing market.

In addition to these building regulations, it is important that students - especially those with a disability - are able to find affordable housing. The apartments in student homes are mostly cheaper than those available on the open housing market. Students have also the right to live in other housing sponsored by public authorities if their earnings are not above a certain level (Gesetz über die soziale Wohnraumförderung - Federal law on social support of housing, <http://bundesrecht.juris.de/wofg/index.html>). If a disabled student is in need of personal assistance and has to rent a larger apartment, it is possible to receive some local or state funding for this (§54 SGB - Social Code XII, <http://db03.bmgs.de/Gesetze/sgb12x054.htm>).

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**Examples of
Good Practice**

Accommodation

B. Poland

Warsaw University has twenty-one places at its disposal in two halls of residence, in rooms adapted to the needs of students with mobility disabilities. Fifteen of these places are in the fully adapted building of Hall of Residence No. 6 at ul. Radomska. The other six places are in rooms on the ground floor in the Hall of Residence No 4 at ul. Zamenhofa. Measures are currently being taken to increase the number of places available to students with mobility disabilities in two other university halls of residence, where adapted rooms will be available on every higher floor.

C. Slovenia

When students live away from home during their studies, they can live on student campuses, in subsidised private rented flats and rooms or in commercially rented flats and rooms. The number of rooms on student campuses (the cheapest type of accommodation) is very limited so there is fierce competition for them.

The Admissions Commission of the Student Housing Service prepares a list of students who have a right to a room on the student campus, based on a score which takes into account their academic achievements, social and economical status, the distance between their permanent address and their place of study, and any other special considerations. Students with special needs can get 100 points for their disability if they can prove they have 80% disability or a long term illness (*Rules on terms, criteria and procedure for admission or renewal of accommodation in student housing*¹ (Pravilnik o pogojih, merilih in postopku za sprejem in podaljšanje bivanja v študentskih domovih, Ur. L. RS, št. 54/2000)).

Students with special needs can also ask for their personal assistant to share a room with them on the campus (*Rules on subsidizing student accommodation*² (Pravilnik o subvencioniranju bivanja študentov (Ur.l. RS, št. 22/2001, 35/2006))). They need to prove that they have the right to a personal assistant. The assistant must be a student who submits his/her own admissions application and states that he/she will act as a personal assistant to the disabled person. Based on this, he/she can get the room together with the person he/she is assisting regardless of his/her own score for admission.

If the assistant is not a student, the full price instead of a subsidized price must be paid. Students with special needs can also ask to have a room to them but they must then pay the full price for two people.

As far as the accessibility of student campuses is concerned, the situation is improving as old buildings are being renovated and new buildings are being built in compliance with the Construction Act³. Of the five campus locations of the University of Ljubljana, four have a number of flats and rooms adapted for wheelchair users. The student campuses of the University of Maribor have two out of the three student campus locations with flats for wheelchair users.

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¹ *Rules on terms, criteria and procedure for admission or renewal of accommodation in student housing* (Pravilnik o pogojih, merilih in postopku za sprejem in podaljšanje bivanja v študentskih domovih, Ur. L. RS, št. 54/2000), http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r00/predpis_PRAV2990.html (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

² *Rules on subsidizing student accommodation* (Pravilnik o subvencioniranju bivanja študentov, Ur.l. RS, št. 22/2001, 35/2006), http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r04/predpis_PRAV3854.html (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

³ *Construction Act* (Zakon o graditvi objektov (ZGO-1-UPB1, Ur. I. RS, št. 102/04, (14/05-popr.), 120/06. Odl. US: U-I-286/04-46), http://zakonodaja.gov.si/rpsi/r02/predpis_ZAKO4182.html (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

A small number of flats are also adapted for students with sensory impairments.

The Slovenian government has committed itself to providing 2% of the 5.000 newly planned student housing facilities for students with special needs, as part of the four year National Programme on Student Housing.

2. Proposals

- Each disabled student should be able to use appropriately accessible accommodation.
- All extra costs related to disability should be covered by the state/ municipality (accommodation for assistant etc.).
- Special adaptations should be provided not only for wheelchair users but also for other types of disabilities or illnesses (e.g. chronic illness, allergies).
- All renovated student accommodation buildings have to be accessible.

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**Examples of
Good Practice**

Accommodation

Food Service

10

1. Best Practice

A. Germany

There are three important points to be kept in mind concerning best practice in connection with meals:

- Disabled students should have access to all student food outlets
- Disabled students have to be able to adapt the food to their special needs and
- Any additional expenses for special needs and food have to be compensated.

Access to all facilities

In all cafeterias and restaurants there should be a system to help mobility-impaired students to get their food. In Germany such systems exist in universities such as Marburg and Berlin. In Marburg, this was financed for several years by the "Studentenwerk Marburg" (student union) and in 2005 by the "AStA Marburg" (student council). The menus for students should be available in Braille, large print or via the Internet. In Berlin, the "Studentenwerk" (student union) provides accessible menus on the Internet.

Costs

Some disabled students have higher costs because they have to follow a special diet. They should be compensated for these extra costs. The situation

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Good Practice

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must be avoided whereby disabled students on a low income have poor quality diets in order to save money. This would cause additional health problems. The solution would be extra funding or coupons for disabled students. Under some circumstances disabled students can get some extra money from social assistance to cover the additional costs caused by expensive diets.

B. Poland

There are students' cafeterias on the main campus of Warsaw University, which are accessible for wheelchair users. Disabled students are not supplied with any additional coupons or extra money to buy meals. They can receive a food allowance the same as other students if the scholarship commission finds that they are eligible to receive such help.

C. Slovenia

According to the Subsidized Student Meals Act¹ (Zakon o subvencioniranju študentske prehrane (ZSŠP), Ur. l. RS, št. 85/02) all students can buy 'student meal tickets' which can be used in numerous restaurants or food outlets which have a special contract with the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. Students can buy up to twenty three tickets per month, depending on the number of working day in a month. Students can buy five tickets for food outlets, the rest they have to use in restaurants.

Students with disabilities can buy five additional student meal tickets, because they are considered to have more difficulty with buying or preparing their own food. Students with disabilities can also buy more tickets for take-away food deliveries since many of the restaurants are inaccessible.

The Subsidized Student Meals Act is currently under public debate. One of the changes to the Act is that students with special needs will have a right to 10 additional meal tickets per month. Some restaurants offering student meals have made their menus accessible via the Internet. A group of visually impaired and fully sighted volunteers started an initiative of converting menus into Braille print. Some student restaurants in Ljubljana have joined the initiative.

¹ Subsidized Student Meals Act (Zakon o subvencioniranju študentske prehrane (ZSŠP), Ur. l. RS, št. 85/02), <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/ulonline.jsp?urlid=200285&dhid=44328> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

2. Proposals

- Coupons or money for student meals should be provided.
- Coupons or money for special diets should be provided.
- Food outlets should declare the ingredients in student meals so that people with allergies or other diseases know what to avoid.
- Menus should be made available in Braille, large print, or on the Internet.
- Assistance should be provided in cafeterias for disabled students.
- Student restaurants should all be made accessible.

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**Examples of
Good Practice**

Food Service



Mobility

1. Best Practice

A. GERMANY

There are three means of transportation for mobility impaired students to get to and from the university: private car, special transportation services and public transport.

Private car

There is a means tested legal entitlement by means of which physically impaired students can obtain financial support to buy a car and have it adapted to their needs. In order to obtain this, the student has to provide proof that it is not possible for him/her to get to university by public transport and that a special transportation service either cannot meet his/her requirements or that its use would be more expensive. Apart from some exceptions, the student must be able to use the car on his own. It is also possible to get a lump sum allowance for petrol and maintenance of the car (§§ 53ff SGB - Social Code XII, <http://db03.bmgs.de/Gesetze/sgb12x053.htm>, Eingliederungshilfe-Verordnung - Regulation on support of integration and rehabilitation, http://bundesrecht.juris.de/bshg_47v/_8.html and Kraftfahrzeughilfe-Verordnung - Regulation on support of individual transport, http://db03.bmgs.de/Gesetze/kfzhv_inhalt.htm).

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Car taxes do not have to be paid, if the disability meets certain criteria (§3a Kraftfahrzeugsteuergesetz, http://bundesrecht.juris.de/kraftstg/_3a.html).

Special Transportation Services

The same legal entitlement that offers financial support for buying a car offers financial support for the use of a special transportation service or a taxi. Special transportation services for people who cannot leave their wheelchair are usually offered by not-for-profit organizations like the Red Cross or, less frequently, by private companies.

Public Transport

Disabled people in Germany who have severe level of impairment can use city buses, trams and subway trains in every town free of charge. This is also the case with regional and local trains integrated into the tariff of a local or regional transportation authority or run by companies other than the Deutsche Bahn AG. Some less severely impaired people can pay 60 € per year to get the right to use public transport free of charge.

Assistance persons or guide dogs can travel free of charge in almost all regional trains, buses, trams and subway trains (§§145-154 SGB - Social Code IX, <http://db03.bmgs.de/Gesetze/sgb09x145.htm> and Booklet "Mobil trotz handicap" of the Deutsche Bahn AG, http://www.bahn.de/p/view_nav4/mdb/pv/pdf/diverse/handicap/MDB21051-mobil_handicap_tags.pdf or [Audio] http://www.bahn.de/p/view/mobilitaet/handicap/mobil_trotz_handicap_mp3.shtml).

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Mobility

Public transport generally is becoming more accessible and user-friendly for disabled people. All newly purchased and many older buses can be lowered and have ramps or lifts for wheelchair users. Trams in some towns are also becoming increasingly barrier-free, either by means of ramps or lifts or by having heightened platforms. Depending on the city, varying numbers of subway stations have elevators for barrier-free use. In Berlin each subway station is equipped with ramps to bridge the step into the train. Outside Berlin there are no ramps, but the platforms are or will be rebuilt high enough to guarantee a step-free entry into the train. Suburban train (S-Bahn) stations are becoming increasingly barrier-free and in most cities new trains are equipped with ramps.

Many railway and subway stations and public transport vehicles are equipped with visual and acoustic devices to announce the next train or stop. However, very few bus or tram stations have such devices. New or modernized stops have guidelines for visually impaired people.

Barrier-free areas at the universities

The universities are becoming more and more barrier-free. The FU Berlin, for example, is building new barrier-free areas and is selling old buildings that cannot be modified properly.

This obligation is written down in the Berliner Hochschulgesetz - Berlin University Law (<http://www.kulturbuch-verlag.de/online/brv/D0012/F00580.pdf>). The university is obliged to make all necessary arrangements to achieve full inclusion wherever the Statutory Health Insurance is not responsible.

At other universities the situation is mixed. Some are situated on one or two campuses, while others are scattered all over the town.

Mobility training for blind students in Germany is financed by the health insurances (§ 32, I SGB - Social Code — V, <http://db03.bmgs.de/Gesetze/sg-b05x033.htm>). Some universities provide extra assistance.

B. Poland

In order to become acquainted with the landscape and layout of university premises and with the routes between their place of abode and the university buildings, blind students and those with visual impairments can request the services of a spatial mobility trainer. The services do not include teaching independent mobility skills; the instructor provides only temporary support in learning the landscape and layout of the university campuses. The university does not provide any permanent assistance to blind students and those with visual impairments in getting around the campus.

Students with mobility disabilities have two transportation opportunities: they can use university or public transport.

University transportation

University transportation facilities cater for the needs of students with mobility disabilities, those who use wheelchairs or have other difficulties with independent mobility. Two minibuses have been adapted for the transportation of people in wheelchairs. The minibuses also have standard seats suitable for students using crutches. The transportation facilities can only be used by those students with disabilities who are travelling for academic-related purposes between their place of residence and the university buildings. All the costs of such transportation are covered by the university.

Public transportation

Accessibility

Public inner city transport in Warsaw is becoming more accessible. The number of new buses and trams adapted to the needs of people with mobility impairments is rising. All the subway stations are equipped with elevators. Specially adapted trains provide step-free entrance. Warsaw has also an inner city train which is barrier-free. However, the railway stations and regional trains are not accessible for wheelchair users.

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Mobility

Warsaw University runs training sessions for bus drivers to teach them how to operate wheelchair ramps on buses and how to deal with people with mobility impairments using public transport. 3500 drivers will be trained by the end of June 2007.

Discounts

Students who are under 26 and have a statement of disability (severe, moderate or mild degree of disability), and their assistants, can travel for free on city transport vehicles.

Students who are under 26 and have a statement of disability, and their personal assistants, have the right to a discount of 78% in country trains on their way from their place of abode to the city where they are studying.

C. Slovenia

Adapted transport for people with mobility impairments is provided by disability organizations. Some organizations offer the service free of charge whilst others charge their members for the service.

The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students currently has three vans and four drivers employed to ensure high quality service delivery offered free of charge. The programme is supported by the Foundation for Disability and Humanitarian Organization, the Municipality of Ljubljana and the Student Organization of University of Maribor through public tenders.

The public inner city transportation system in Ljubljana has equipped most buses with audio announcements of bus stops and continuous text for announcing stops and information about changes in inner city transport. All bus stops have labels in Braille so that blind people know which bus stop they are at and which buses stop there. The company also provides a text messaging/SMS service for giving information about the exact arrival time of the next three buses at bus stops. Most buses are also accessible for people with wheelchairs; however, not many drivers know how to operate the system.

Visually impaired people with less than 5% of residual vision have a right to free inner city transport for them and their guides. Those with less than 10% residual sight have the right to a 75% reduction and a 100% reduction for an accompanying person for 12 rides on any means of public transport within the country, whether train or bus. The same applies for wheelchair users.

2. Proposals

The examples of best practice provided here are not seen as the best solutions; there is general agreement that the best solution is accessible, easy to use public transport (where public transport exists):

- Travel should be free because mobility opportunities for disabled people are not equal to those available for other citizens.
- Funding should be made available to cover any extra travel costs incurred by students with disabilities.
- Covered disabled parking places should be made available near the university.
- All transportation should have proper audio and visual signing for those who are visually impaired.
- Free accompanying services should be provided for blind or other severely disabled people by both public and private companies.

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**Examples of
Good Practice**

Mobility



Personal Assistance and Care

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1. Best Practice

A. Germany

“I would have never passed my studies if I had not been provided with personal assistance”, pointed out a former student, Christopher Fiedler. Other students with severe disabilities such as poliomyelitis, muscular dystrophy, tetraplegia or blindness have had similar experiences. The right to receive personal assistance is enshrined in German law. Every disabled person has the right to receive a personal budget for the assistance he or she needs (§17 SGB - Social Code IX, <http://db03.bmgs.de/Gesetze/sgb09x017.htm> and §63ff SGB - Social Code XII, <http://db03.bmgs.de/Gesetze/sgb12x063.htm>).

However, it can sometimes be difficult to lay claim to this right. This is particularly the case when disabled students need assistance in order to be able to study abroad or to carry out an internship. In such a situation, individual students have to be very engaged and willing to fight for their rights. It is only easier to obtain the funding to which one is entitled, either when the course that one is studying requires some time to be spent abroad or one is carrying out an internship. Despite this complication, the German social system nevertheless makes it possible to live an independent and integrated life within all aspects of society. This is also the case within higher education.

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Personal Assistance
and Care

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From these varied experiences, even those that are not so good, it is possible to put forward a suggestion. Every disabled person should receive any necessary assistance and this should be calculated financially. The individual should then be able to choose between receiving the money directly in order to be able to employ his/ her own assistants as an employer or being provided externally with the necessary assistance. Both options are possible under German law.

It is also important, however, for the individual not just to know about his rights but also how to handle the two alternative models of assistance and care. Not everyone is willing to act as an employer with his/her own employees. Sometimes important information may be missing. In order to help people to set up the best form of assistance for them personally, some disabled people have devised a training course to help disabled people to become employers of their own personal assistants. The course also empowers disabled people who do not want to become employers to play a more active role in decisions concerning the types of external assistance provided to them.¹

B. Poland

When lectures or classes are held in a building which has not been adapted to the needs of students with disabilities, and if there is no possibility of changing the venue, a student with a mobility disability is helped to move around the building by a transportation assistant. Likewise, if lectures or classes are held in several buildings, and a student with a disability cannot independently move between those buildings, he/she may be helped by an assistant. To use the services of a transportation assistant, a student has to be first ruled to be eligible by the transportation commission.

The Warsaw authorities run a project called "Assistance for Disabled People" which is a part of the project called "Warsaw without Barriers". The aim of this initiative is to help people with impairments to play an active role in society.

Everyone who has been certified as having a moderate or severe degree of disability can receive help with:

- shopping, going to the doctor and to public places
- getting to work, to school or to a rehabilitation centre
- communication
- cultural and sporting activities.

¹ MOBILE (Hg.[ed.]): Selbstbestimmt Leben mit Peers. Assistenz. Band A. Ein Schulungskonzept für AssistenznehmerInnen. [engl. Independent living with personal assistance. Vol. A. A Guideline for Employers within personal assistance.] AG Spak Bücher. Neu-Ulm 2001.

An assistant does not provide help with daily activities such as cleaning, feeding, personal hygiene, dressing, etc.

The disabled person has to pay 4 PLN (Polish Zloty) (= 1€uro) for the first three and a half hours of assistance and 1 PLN for every further hour. Services are available seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. www.asystem-nowolipie.waw.pl/osrodeknowolipie.php

According to the *Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities* of 27th August 1997, an employer can be reimbursed for any expenses related to employing someone to assist a disabled employee with any activities which he/she finds difficult or impossible to do independently in the workplace (including communication) because of a disability. The number of hours of assistance provided cannot exceed 20% of the total number of hours worked each month. <http://www.idn.org.pl/sonnszz/ustawa27.htm>

C. Slovenia

In Slovenia, personal assistance is not an automatic right that disabled people have. It is provided by some disability organizations, some social care centres and some municipalities as project work.

The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students employs ten personal assistants for 24-hour care and assistance for students with severe disabilities. In addition to employed assistants, a large number of volunteers also provide occasional assistance.

Other disability organizations also offer some forms of personal care and assistants, so many students use a combination of services provided by various disability organizations.

The type of assistance provided includes:

- Feeding and assistance with drinking
- Getting in or out of a wheelchair
- Dressing and assistance with personal hygiene
- Placing oxygen masks, assistance with taking medication, help with going to bed at night
- Help with using or setting up assistive devices
- Accompanying blind people
- Arranging study materials
- Help with communication for deaf people
- Help with shopping, other errands
- Reading to blind people
- Cooking, cleaning, laundry.

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Examples of Good Practice

Personal Assistance and Care

People with a severe disability who are older than 18 and cannot perform daily living tasks, are entitled to a family assistant. A family assistant can be a relative of the person with disabilities and must reside at the same address. A family assistant has the right to part payment for loss of income at the rate of the minimum monthly salary. However, this right can only be exercised by students living at home during their studies and not by those living on the student campus.

Assistance at home can be provided by the social care centres. People who have difficulties with daily living tasks can ask for assistance at home. This includes elderly and disabled people if such assistance can replace institutional care. The service is paid for by the user. An exception may be made where someone is on a very low income.

Both forms of assistance are regulated by the Social Security Act².

2. Proposals

- Each disabled person who needs assistance should receive any necessary assistance and this should be financially evaluated so that he/she can choose between two options. Option 1 - The individual person receives the money directly and pays his/her assistants. Option 2 - External assistance is provided.
- Widespread use should be made of a training course devised by disabled people to train others to act as employers of their own personal assistants.

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² *Social Security Act* (Zakon o socialnem varstvu/ZSV/ Ur.l. RS, št. 54/1992 (56/1992 - popr.), 42/1994 Odl.US: U-I-137/93-24, 1/1999-ZNIDC, 41/1999, 60/1999 Odl.US: U-I-273/98, 36/2000-ZPDZC, 54/2000-ZUOPP, 26/2001, 110/2002-ZIRD, 2/2004 (7/2004 - popr.), 21/2006 Odl.US: U-I-116/03-22, 105/2006, 114/2006-ZUTPG), <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/ulonline.jsp?urlid=20073&dhid=87024> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

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**Examples of
Good Practice**

Personal Assistance
and Care



- Personal Counselling
- and Self Help Groups,
- Empowerment and Self-advocacy



1. Best Practice

A. Germany

During the last thirty years, the dramatic change in the position of disabled students at German universities could not have taken place without the lobbying action of groups of disabled students.

Although the Student Councils¹ of many German universities have set up their own Disabled Students' Officers or counsellors, there can be no doubt that most changes were achieved by disabled students' own initiatives, especially at the beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Even today, these initiatives and the organizations concerned have had a huge influence on the barrier-free design of universities and their facilities, courses and other services. This was shown by their lobbying action with regard to the implementation of tuition fees. At some universities - such as Dortmund and Rheinisch-Westfälische Technische Hochschule (RWTH) Aachen (Aachen University of Technics), they collaborated with the Services for Disabled Students or the Disabled Students' Officer of the university to obtain exemptions from tuition fees for disabled and chronically ill students if their studies are likely to last longer because of the effects of their disability (<http://www.uni-dortmund>).

¹ The Student Council in most German states is the lobby organization of all students of a certain university.

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Examples of Good Practice

Personal Counselling and Self Help Groups, Empowerment and Self-advocacy

[de/web/de/content/uni_ueberblick/ordnungenstatistiken/pdf/Studienbeitragssatzung.pdf](http://www.zentral.abt11.amtl-bekannt_pdfs_1093.pdf) and http://www-zhv.rwth-aachen.de/zentral/abt11_amtl-bekannt_pdfs_1093.pdf).

Although there is no obligation to support the lobby groups of disabled and chronically ill students, many universities allow them to use their facilities for free and provide information about their work and services on the main university website. At some universities, (e.g. University of Dortmund) the lobby groups have been able to convince the university administration to establish professional counselling services for disabled and chronically ill students. These professional counsellors currently support these lobbying initiatives in their everyday work (<http://www.dobus.uni-dortmund.de/bbs/>). Some Student Councils have regulations that allow disabled and chronically ill students at the relevant university to vote on the Disabled Students' Officers of the Student Council on their own (e.g. University of Mainz).

At the federal level, there are three organizations which specialise in issues relating to disabled students. These are:

- 'Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Behinderung und Studium' - the Federal Association for Disability and Studies (BAG, <http://www.behinderung-und-studium.de/>)
- 'Deutscher Verein der Blinden und Sehbehinderten in Studium und Beruf' - the German Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Studies and Work" (DVBS, <http://www.dvbs-online.de/>) and
- 'Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Hörbehinderter Studenten und Absolventen' - the Federal Association of Hearing Impaired Students and Graduates" (BHSA, <http://www.bhsa.de/>).

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Examples of
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Personal
Counselling
and Self Help
Groups,
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and Self-advocacy

The BAG has members with different kinds of physical, sensory and other impairments. It sees itself as a lobby organization for all disabled and chronically ill students. DVBS and BHSA concentrate more on particular types of sensory impairments. These three organizations do lobbying, provide counselling as well as information on all issues relating to study and disability. Apart from fundraising, these organizations obtain financial support for their work from public authorities such as the Federal Ministry for Education and Research.

As a scrutiny of the activities of the lobbying and self-advocacy student initiatives will reveal, they are crucial in helping to develop and even implement regulations for the barrier-free structure of higher education. It should therefore be proposed that disabled student groups or professional counsellors should be given the opportunity to apply for funding to organize workshops for self-help groups, empowerment and self advocacy.

B. Poland

Warsaw University employs professional counselors who help disabled students to achieve their full academic potential. There are two counsellors for student affairs in OPD who are university teachers. Students with physical, learning or other disabilities are encouraged to contact them for advice if they need any reasonable adjustments to be made or for general assistance.

Professional individual counselling by a psychiatrist is organized one day a week. Any student interested in having counselling may call OPD and make an appointment. People who have psychiatric problems can get a diagnosis and if extended treatment is needed, a student may be referred to other specialists (psychologists, therapists, etc) or in order to be hospitalized.

Warsaw University offers professional help for applicants, undergraduates and graduates. Careers counsellors for disabled people support people who have impairments at two transition points: when students are finishing high school and entering University, and when they are finishing their university studies and entering the labour market.

Measures are currently being taken to employ psychologists to provide help for all students even those who do not have a psychiatric condition. All these services are free of charge.

C. Slovenia

As part of the information and counselling service for students with disabilities, the Slovenian Association of Disabled Students offers all students' individual counselling sessions led by psychotherapists. This service is free of charge, as part of a project is supported by the FIHO- Foundation for Disability and Humanitarian Organizations.

Within the scope of the Equal Study project, the Faculty of Economics of the University of Ljubljana is developing and testing tutor support, telephone, e-mail and text messaging/MSN counselling for all students; this includes special provision for students with disabilities.

Equal Opportunities in Higher Education for Students with Disabilities

Examples of Good Practice

Personal Counselling and Self Help Groups, Empowerment and Self-advocacy

2. Proposals

- All universities should employ professional counsellors (psychologists, therapists, etc.) who should be available for personal and professional counselling and empowerment. These experts should assist self- initiated groups of disabled students for self help groups. They also monitor any barriers and report them to the university authorities, so the university can have them removed.

- A collection of encouraging case studies of people who were successful in taking up studying in spite of their disability should be published, so that others feel empowered to do the same.
- Representative groups of disabled students or professionals, who work for them, should be able to apply for funding to organize workshops for self help groups, empowerment and self advocacy.
- Funding should be made available for disabled student groups to organize their own activities.
- Disabled students should have a representative on the Student Council.
- Disabled students should have the right to send a candidate to the Students' Parliament.
- Promote the candidature of student parliament member.

**Equal
Opportunities in
Higher Education
for Students with
Disabilities**

**Examples of
Good Practice**

Personal
Counselling
and Self Help
Groups,
Empowerment
and Self-advocacy

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Student Events, Activities and Informal Education



1. Best Practice

A. Germany

The Student Councils of some universities, e.g. Dortmund and Mainz, have stated in their statutes or in declarations that all of their events have to be barrier-free. Some Student Councils also only support activities and other student initiatives if they are barrier-free. The extent to which these rules are complied with depends on the people doing the work for the Student Councils.

At some universities, initiatives of disabled students or the disabled students' representatives in the Student Councils organize cultural events, lectures or discussions on various topics. They sometimes organize courses, often in collaboration with other organizations.

Some local initiatives and the three Federal Associations of Disabled Students (BAG Behinderung und Studium, <http://www.behinderung-und-studium.de/>, DVBS, <http://www.dvbs-online.de/> and BHSA, <http://www.bhsa.de/>) organize workshops and seminars on various topics for disabled students from all over Germany. The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) finances part of the expenses related to these events according to a programme to support the activities of student organizations. The rules of this programme permit special expenses related to the participation of disabled students.

Equal Opportunities in Higher Education for Students with Disabilities

Examples of Good Practice

Student Events, Activities and Informal Education

Depending on state law, newly built or modernized theatres, cinemas, event sites, libraries, restaurants, pubs etc. have to be barrier-free (see Chapter 'Physical Accessibility').

B. Poland

Students with disabilities participate in events and activities with other students and do not create a separate group.

C. Slovenia

The Slovenian Association of Disabled Students organizes and participates in international youth exchanges and youth initiatives; it is involved in exchanges of disabled volunteers, and organizes and takes part in youth seminars through the support of the EU Youth in Action Programme.

The Slovenian association of Disabled Students organizes language and computer courses, arts workshops, etc. for its members. Participation is free of charge. Regular sporting activities such as swimming, fitness and skiing are organized. All these activities are provided with funding obtained from various public tenders.

Some youth and student organizations sometimes offer activities for disabled students or also guarantee access to their events for disabled students. However, this depends mostly on the people who are organizing the event and on personal contacts and an understanding of students' individual needs rather than on any regulation.

**Equal
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**Examples of
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Student Events,
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Informal Education

2. Proposals

- To encourage students with disabilities and other students to organize their leisure time and to make leisure venues (cinema, pubs etc.) accessible. All public procurements and calls (EU or local) should make sure that people with disabilities receive the relevant information about this.
- Organizers of informal education should take steps to ensure that it is fully accessible.
- Different information formats (electronic book, talking books) should be made available.
- All events and activities have to be accessible - organizers need to publicize how their events are barrier-free and inclusive.

**Equal
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Student Events,
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— Vocational Rehabilitation and — Determining the Employability — of Disabled People



1. Best Practice

A. Germany

Book Nine of the Social Code, which came into force on 1 July 2001, has brought about a fundamental improvement in the situation of people with disabilities in Germany. It helps disabled people and those at risk of becoming disabled to determine their own interests for themselves and to act on their own responsibility, in so far as this is possible for them. The new Act replaced 'welfare' with the idea of 'participation'. Participation means that people with disabilities are to receive the necessary social benefits to provide the assistance which they need to be able to participate in the life of society and in particular to participate in work.

At the same time, the idea of participation aims to achieve the committed participation and understanding of many people. People must bring to life the text of the new Statute. People with disabilities rely on rehabilitation providers to seek the best solutions and to coordinate their assistance properly. They need employers and work councils that co-ordinate jobs for people with disabilities, nursery schools and schools which facilitate integration, as well as authorities and means of transport which are easily accessible. Summed up, society as a whole must play its part.

**Equal
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for Students with
Disabilities**

**Examples of
Good Practice**

Vocational
Rehabilitation
and Determining
the Employability
of Disabled People

Goals

Participation-related benefits

Anyone who is physically, mentally or psychologically disabled, or is at risk of such a disability, has a right to receive the appropriate assistance. They will receive the benefits which are needed to avert, remedy or alleviate the disability, to prevent its worsening or to reduce its consequences. This also includes assistance that ensures a place in society for people with disabilities in line with their personal preferences and their skills, with particular reference to their working life. The special needs of women and children with disabilities and at risk of becoming disabled are considered here.

Benefit categories

- Medical rehabilitation assistance
- Occupational integration assistance
- Maintenance-ensuring and other supplementary benefits
- Benefits to be able to participate in the life of society.

The primacy of prevention

In accordance with section 3 of Book Nine of the Social Code, rehabilitation providers must strive to avoid the occurrence of a disability or of a chronic disease by providing suitable strategies. This principle is not of itself compulsory to provide individual social benefits, but serves the rehabilitation providers as an all-embracing call to action. This is both about prevention in the medical sense and about prevention at work, including measures to safeguard jobs.

Occupational integration

Having work opens up many opportunities to be able to live an independent life. It offers contact and the opportunity to interact with others. It helps people to recognise and to improve their own abilities. Work makes people economically independent, at the same time as enhancing their self-confidence. Book Nine of the Social Code therefore gives special attention to occupational integration (<http://www.bmas.bund.de/BMAS/Navigation/Teilhabe-behinderter-Menschen/sgb-9,did=89342.html>).

Promotion of training and employment

Online links to the main parts of the Act to Promote Training and Employment of People with Serious Disabilities (*Gesetz zur Förderung der Ausbildung und Beschäftigung schwerbehinderter Menschen*) of 23 April 2004 (Federal Law Gazette Part I [BGBL I], p. 606):

- Strengthening the willingness of employers to train and improving the training available to young people with disabilities
- Improved advice, information and support for employers to remedy obstacles to employment and to safeguard employment
- Company prevention through in-house integration management
- Strengthening the rights of seriously-disabled employees' spokespersons
- Further expansion of the specialist integration services

- Promotion of the transition from sheltered workshops to the general labour market
- Charitability of integration projects
- Simplified procedure to determine the characteristic of seriously disabled

(Text taken from: <http://www.bmas.bund.de/Englisch/Navigation/Participation-of-disabled-persons/vocational-training-and-employment-promotion,did=144532>).

B. Poland

Warsaw University offers the professional help of career counsellors for disabled students which includes:

- assessing a student's personal attributes such as abilities, interests, values
- reviewing a student's career and life goals
- providing information about job offers
- teaching job searching skills
- preparing applying forms and other documents for certain job applications
- preparing for job interviews and the recruitment process
- providing information about the labour market and information about ways to improve one's qualifications.

On 27th August 1997, the Polish government approved the '*Act on Vocational and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities*'. The new law promotes and improves the employment of workers with disabilities, and reduces barriers in the workplace in terms of interaction with public authorities.

In Poland the government encourages the employment of people with disabilities through the quota system. Employers who employ people with impairments receive a series of tax benefits and subsidies from the State, and more precisely from the Fund for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities (PFRON). Employers with at least twenty five employees that do not fulfill their quota of employing at least 6% of people with disabilities are obliged to pay a fine to the PFRON. All regulations contribute to raising awareness of the problems of the vocational rehabilitation of disabled people among employers and motivate them to hire workers with impairments. www.idn.org.pl/sonnszz/ustawa27.htm www.pfron.org.pl

Equal Opportunities in Higher Education for Students with Disabilities

Examples of Good Practice

Vocational Rehabilitation and Determining the Employability of Disabled People

There are also many non-governmental initiatives such as foundations and associations which aim to support disabled people looking for a job. These organisations are co-financed by the European Social Fund. Their services include:

- professional counselling (psychologists, lawyers, work counsellors)
- training and workshops
- providing information about job offers.

- www.tus.org.pl
- www.far.org.pl/punkty_aktywizacji_zawodowej.php
- www.cud.idn.org.pl

C. Slovenia

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act¹ (Zakon o zaposlitveni rehabilitaciji in zaposlovanju invalidov (ZZRZI-UPB2), Ur.l. RS, št. 16/07 gives the disabled person the right to vocational rehabilitation and thus enables him/her to receive education and training, to find and to retain a job and to be promoted at work.

An assessment of the employability of disabled people after vocational rehabilitation determines whether a disabled person can be employed independently in a mainstream working environment, within a disability enterprise, needs support to be able to work in the mainstream working environment, can work in sheltered employment or cannot be employed at all.

The new Act on the employment of people with disabilities also put into effect the quota system for the employment of disabled people, supported employment, sheltered employment and employment in disability enterprises.

Those who, despite workplace and environmental adaptations, do not obtain a reasonable performance at work are referred to the programmes for social inclusion. These programmes enable them to be integrated into the social environment and retain their working potential.

Companies with twenty or more employees need to comply with the quota for employing people with disabilities. All employers who employ people with disabilities are entitled to workplace adaptations or subsidies for salaries, and to annual awards for good practice in the employment of people with disabilities. A person with a disability also has the right to salary subsidies if his performance at work is below that of non-disabled employees and is due to his disability.

¹ Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons Act (Zakon o zaposlitveni rehabilitaciji in zaposlovanju invalidov (ZZRZI-UPB2), Ur.l. RS, št. 16/07, Articles 68, 72, 73, 74,75, 76), <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/ulonline.jsp?urlid=200716&dhid=87655>, http://www.svzi.gov.si/index.php?dep_id=4 (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

For employers who employ more disabled people than regulated by the quota system, the Fund for the promotion of employment of people with disabilities decides on rewards and exemptions from pension and disability insurance payments, and on the payment of support services based on the individualized support plan for the person with disabilities and the employer.

Employers employing disabled people can have, based on the *Corporate Income Tax Act*², certain tax relief. Employers can be granted a reduction of tax based on 50% of the salary of the disabled person, and if he employs someone with a 100% disability, he can be granted a reduction of tax based on 70% of that person's salary.

2. Proposals

- Career counselling centres should also include students with disabilities.
- There must be equal opportunities for disabled students during work placements and other types of work experience during their studies.
- There must be equal opportunities for disabled students on international work placements programmes.
- There must be equal opportunities for disabled students in relation to part-time and occasional work.

Equal Opportunities in Higher Education for Students with Disabilities

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Vocational Rehabilitation and Determining the Employability of Disabled People

² *Corporate Income Tax Act* (Zakon o davku od dohodkov pravnih oseb (ZDDPO-2) Ur. l. RS, no. 117/06, Article 56), <http://www.uradni-list.si/1/objava.jsp?urlid=2006117&stevilka=5014> (Accessed on 28th May 2007)

