### Disability Service protocol for requests for student with disabilities participation in research.

The Disability Service and Unilink encourage and support additional research projects related directly to the needs of students with disabilities in Trinity College Dublin. In order to ensure that additional research projects are well founded, ethical and have a clear benefit to the students who participate in them, the following conditions must be adhered to before approval can be given:

### In line with objectives:

Researchers seeking access to students registered with the Disability Service must submit their proposal to the Director of the Disability Service before seeking ethical approval from a Trinity College Dublin Ethics Committee. This is to allow for the Disability Service to consider the merits of the proposal and to allow for discussion on the feasibility of the research.

The proposal must clearly align itself to issues relevant to students with disabilities in 1 or more of the phases along the [student journey](http://www.tcd.ie/disability/strategic-plan/):

* **Phase 1:** Pre-entry, admission and the first year experience
* **Phase 2:** Building and maintaining a college career
* **Phase 3:** Progressing through College to employment

### Of practical concern:

Regardless of the theoretical background to the research or the approach; quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods, proposals must address matters of a practical or occupational concern to students with disabilities and seek to provide recommendations or identify possible solutions to these concerns.

### Accessible to all:

Researchers must agree to provide the Disability Service with an electronic copy of their research upon completion and provide an executive summary of the research which adheres to the [College Accessible Information Policy](http://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/accessible-info-policy.php#print)  for publication on the Disability Service website.

### Also, please note the following points:

Decisions on granting approval for research will be made with respect to the above criteria. The Disability Service will discuss all applications at their staff meeting and a final decision will be communicated within 2 weeks of receipt of ethical approval.

The Disability Service will give higher priority to areas not previously researched and areas that have the greatest potential to benefit students with disabilities in Trinity College. The number of additional research projects approved in any one year must be limited.

Proposals which seek to explore issues entirely outside of the College environment, such as, family or personal circumstances, medical history, relationships, social background etc. will not be approved as these areas are entirely outside the remit of the Disability Service and have increased potential to cause upset.

Regrettably, the Disability Service will not be able to circulate **all r**esearch requests to students registered with the service. The following three points explain our rationale:

1. The primary purpose and function of the Disability Service is to assist students with disabilities achieve their academic goals. Any task that does not directly or indirectly support this objective cannot be justified.
2. Students registered with the Disability Service are entitled to confidentiality. A student who participated in such research could potentially be disclosing their disability to a fellow student or other person that they may not wish to disclose to. Even if students choose not to participate in research, regular requests to participate via the disability service would be likely to cause unnecessary annoyance and possibly suspicion.
3. In mainstream college life students are offered, and are free to refuse, opportunities to participate in research. Students register with the Disability Service for specific and often vital supports. If students were targeted by the Disability Service to participate in third party research as a result of their specific disability type, this would create a risk that future correspondence from the Disability Service would be ignored or overlooked.

### Responses/Recommendations:

Researchers can contact the [Students Union](http://www.tcdsu.org/) or [Graduate Students Union](http://tcdgsu.ie/) to ask if their research requests can be circulated to all students.

Staff of the Disability Service can provide readily available data that does not have the potential to identify individual students. Statistics, KPIs and Annual reports and other data is available on our website at: [Disability Service Annual Reports & KPIs](http://www.tcd.ie/disability/policies/annual-reports.php)