

Blind/Visually impaired student

When I was at the West of England School for young people with little or no sight all the equipment was already available and all the staff had to have extra training to enable them to work with visually impaired students efficiently. The personal support I received at school was always useful and I took it for granted.

When I arrived at Bournemouth University the personal support in lectures and seminars was made available immediately and this was greatly appreciated. Without this initial personal support, to help me with note-taking and accessing lecture materials I would have had great difficulty studying.

My studying experience was greatly enhanced when I was given a minidisk recorder. This proved to be invaluable as it afforded me the opportunity to record lectures and review their content at my leisure. This ability meant that when it came to revising, my time was cut in half as it would normally take me at least twice as long as anyone else to read the notes from the lecture. I had not had a minidisk recorder before and had it not been recommended at my assessment by the Access Centre, I would not have known what a great help this technology would be. Again without the personal support in the first place I would not be able to operate the minidisk.

In my first year of study the economics unit required that I look at a large number of graphs in order to understand economic concepts. The Educational Access Assistant (EAA) who assisted me at the time (and still does) had an essential knowledge of the subject without which his descriptions of graphical content would have been meaningless. The EAA would also take notes in lectures, read extracts from required reading, essentially be 'my eyes' as and when I needed him. With this support I felt as though I could work at the same rate as my fellow students.

In addition to the invaluable support provided by the Additional Learning Needs Service the University agreed to house me in the Student Village for the duration of my course. The Student Village is an on campus accommodation facility that is normally only made available to a select number of students for their first year, after which they are responsible for finding their own accommodation. Staying in the student village means that I have only had to learn to navigate a finite number of routes in order to get to and from my lectures and social events.