

SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN UNIVERSITIES:

IMRAN

Imran has been deaf since birth. He is a British Sign Language (BSL) user. He lives with his very supportive family in North London. He has been educated in a mainstream school with excellent support organised by the partially-hearing units attached to both his primary and his secondary school.

Currently he is studying the subjects of Computing, Maths, and Physics at school-leaving certificate level. He would like to enter university although currently his teachers express some doubt about his suitability for undergraduate work. At university he would like to study Physics. Having obtained a degree Imran says that he would like to work “with people” but his career aspirations are no clearer than this at this stage.

JENNY

Jenny has been totally blind since birth. Having had experience of both segregated and mainstream schools, she decided to take her school-leaving examination in a local further education college near to her home in the Midlands. She obtained passes in English Literature, French, and History, all with high grades.

She chose to spend a year out of education before trying to enter university. She failed to find a satisfying steady job. However, she did acquire a guide dog to aid her mobility.

She has decided that now she would like to try to obtain a place at university, taking French and History as her main subjects in a joint Honours programme. Ultimately she would like to work as a translator.

KAREN

Following a serious accident when she was a young child, Karen has very limited use of her upper limbs and fingers but this is sufficient to allow her to operate an electric wheelchair.

Her education after her accident was spent in a residential special school some distance from her home. Her disability means that she needs considerable assistance with activities of daily living. At the moment she is studying subjects related to social studies for the school-leaving examinations. She is expected to gain high grades in all subjects.

Karen would like to obtain a place on a Combined Honours programme taking History and some social science subjects. She has investigated a range of courses and found that some involve substantial periods of fieldwork/work placement, some of which might take place at a distance from the university base. She is undecided about a possible career although she has mentioned school-teaching.

LEN

Len is thirty years old. He has had a variety of jobs since leaving full-time education when he was sixteen years old, and his family circumstances necessitated finding paid employment

He has an interest in the area of engineering. One aspect of the course which appeals to him is the sandwich placement in industry. His choice is being influenced by some of the problems he encountered whilst still at school. Whilst having a wide range of practical skills, he had great difficulties with written work; his schoolteachers were particularly critical of his spelling. Len is anxious to choose a course which might minimise or avoid difficulties.