# FAQs for Students:

Q: Who will be using this information?

**A:** You have options in terms of who you share this information with. You can choose to keep it private and simply access the self help and guidance information provided by the tool or you can choose to email relevant sections of the report to your course tutor or student services team in confidence to inform any discussions about your support needs. The platform also provides anonymised data to help your place of study make improvements and investments to meet the needs of the entire student body.

Q: Will answering these questions be used against me?

**A:** My Study My Way is primarily a tool for your own use to help you understand what you will need at University and to signpost the support services and resources available. It is adopted by Universities who want their Students to perform at their best and have an enjoyable time at University. If you choose to send any of the report information to your course tutor or student services it will be treated in confidence and used only to identify and provide support if you need it.

Q: Do I get any information back at the end of the process?

**A:** Absolutely – you get a useful action plan that summarises the points you have raised and provides guidance on what to do to get support in place if relevant. People have found new sources of information and learnt handy tips or identified new equipment options that help at University but also at work and at home.

Q: I am not disabled, is this relevant for me?

Absolutely - My Study My Way isn’t only meant for disabled people.  It will ask you questions about you and your circumstances that that a place of study could reasonably be expected to provide support for. This includes caring or parenting responsibilities, commitments around your faith or culture, pregnancy or maternity for example. The best way to find out whether it’s for you is by creating a profile. In the more info section at the end of the questionnaire you will have the option to tick to find out what support is available for each of these areas and more.

Q: How long will it take me to complete the questionnaire?

**A:**It depends on the individual. For most people it takes less than fifteen minutes. If a lot of the questions apply to your situation or you want to have a look around the resources it may take you a little longer. You can stop at any time and finish off later and can return to your profile to review information and guidance whenever you like.

Q: I cannot use a computer – is it possible to get a copy in a different format?

**A:** Ideally you would be able to complete your profile online as this is secure. We can provide an alternative format or arrange for you to answer questions over the phone if you can’t do it online either yourself or with assistance. Contact 0800 269 545 to discuss this or email mystudymyway@abilitynet.org.uk

Q: Do I have to fill it in all at once or can I do it a bit at a time?

**A:** You can fill it in a bit at a time if you want to. Just make sure you look at all the sections as you might find something really useful that you were not expecting. Tip: Ticking items on the first page of each section will just give you more questions underneath those areas so if in doubt then tick those top-level items as it won’t add anything to your profile until you tick further items within those areas.

Q: I don’t want everyone talking about me and things that are personal to me.

**A:** That is not going to happen. You control communication of any information shared and agree together with any staff members you talk to, who is going to be told about anything you have raised. We hope My Study My Way makes you feel comfortable and empowered to have conversations that will mean you get more support and understanding at University.

Q: I have a specific disability. Rather than go through this process could I not just call someone and tell them about it?

**A:** You could and that’s absolutely fine to do so. Contact your Student Services team about whom the best person might be to talk to. You will still find it helpful to complete the questionnaire as it is about much more than just disability and you will almost certainly have other things to consider.

**For University Staff:**

Q:  Will using My Study My Way make a University fully compliant with the Equality Act?

**A:**  Using the My Study My Way process properly will ensure that every student is proactively encouraged to disclose need across all areas of protected characteristic as required by the Equality Act (2010). With the student being provided with all the necessary information to access relevant services and adjustments and a powerful overview of the aggregated data provided to university teams to inform their inclusivity strategy and policies, My Study My Way will help to ensure that you go further than a position of compliance to one of a best practice approach to diversity.

Q:  As well as providing Reasonable Adjustments Advice, will My Study My Way provide any other benefits?

**A:** Yes. My Study My Way also covers areas of mental health and health and safety as well as a range of advice about social clubs, accommodation, financial support services, study skills support and more.

Q: Will Students be prepared to complete this profile. They have a lot of forms to complete already

**A:** We can provide information that explains the benefits of completing a My Study My Way profile to the student. It serves as a way for them to better understand their own unique learning needs and style and provides them with a personalised action plan to ensure they get the best out of their University experience.

Q:  Will My Study My Way work with our existing systems and processes?

**A:**Absolutely, My Study My Way is designed to sit alongside your admissions and student services processes depending on your needs.

Q: Does My Study My Way offer any support to organisations to establish the service?

**A:** Yes. We will help set up the system and ensure that it is established and running smoothly with relevant localised signposting and information included for your institution.  If you would like some help on an on-going basis we can provide additional support from our Managed Service team. This will be at a very low level (as little management of the process is needed) and can assist with any updates or student questions and provide regular executive reporting so that the impact of the service is clearly conveyed to your senior management team. My Study My Way can also offer a needs assessment service that can be utilised for disabled students that are not eligible for DSAs such as international students.

Q:  We already have a Student Support team in place what does this do that they do not already cover?

**A:** A major challenge faced by Student Support teams is encouraging students to disclose any needs they have and then implementing reasonable adjustments in a timely fashion. My Study My Way puts the student in the driving seat of identifying any barriers they may face during the course of their studies and then signposts what they need to do next to remove these barriers whilst highlighting levels of need across the student cohort. Having a method whereby all students complete a profile (with questions spanning all the different areas of impairment and all 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010) and instantly receive tailored advice and next steps to remove barriers absorbs a lot of the hard work for the Student Support team and the data provided about the needs of the student body puts them on the front foot in creating an Inclusive Learning Environment for everyone.  Where research has shown that as many as 56% of people could benefit from some sort of adjustment (Forrester research 2005) a much needed automated approach that automatically applies expert recommendations is key in resourcing teams appropriately to address this.

Q: How long are the reports, Student Support and Wellbeing teams really don’t have much time to read big pieces of information?

**A:** My Study My Way gives information in short powerful nuggets to the relevant person. Acting a bit like a Satnav system, it provides the information you want at the point you need it. The report is modular so the student can share relevant bits via email with headline facts and actions. It’s also worth noting that, unlike other approaches to diversity, the process is student led with many adjustment requirements already being addressed by Universities but the student unaware of the services already available for their specific needs. If the student's needs change they can return to the profile to get advice for additional needs.

Q: Will we get lots of reasonable adjustment requests and not be able to manage them?

**A:** No, that’s really the key point to My Study My Way. At the moment, you are likely to be getting fewer requests for your new intakes compared with the actual level of needs you would expect from your Students and then finding that requests are coming through at key pressure points in the Academic year which would suggest that students are not choosing to give you the information until they reach a crisis point. Sadly some may never come forward and may simply decide to abandon their course. My Study My Way encourages students to think about potential barriers, collates the information and empowers them to act early to access any support that is needed before they encounter difficulties. The student can email information from the report to relevant teams to support discussions and the overall anonymised data gives a good understanding of what Universal adjustments can be implemented to improve the learning environment for everybody. So it will not feel overwhelming or daunting, just sensible and appropriate.

Q: I am concerned that this will result in loads of claims from people who have completed a profile and that it sets unrealistic expectations for them about the support a University can reasonably provide.

**A:** Quite the opposite is the case in fact. My Study My Way makes it very clear to the student that whilst the University wants to be as supportive as possible reasonableness is at the heart of the solutions you are able to provide. An additional benefit is that throughout the report the student is encouraged to take control for themselves as well and work proactively with Student Services and teaching staff to implement sensible solutions and is pointed to lots of self help information and funded support such as DSAs. The result is a distributed approach with very little escalation or central management (or budget) required.

Q: We are a really small University is this going to create lots of extra work for us?

**A:** Not at all, My Study My Way  is meeting a need that you have an obligation to provide for all students. By creating a report that gives the student all the information they need to put the adjustment in place themselves or links them to the person that can help them with it, the time and money you save not having to start from scratch is extensive.

**For University Staff:**

Q:  Will using ‘My Study My Way’ make a University fully compliant with the Equality Act?

**A:**  Using the My Study My Way process will ensure that every Student is proactively encouraged to disclose need across all areas of protected characteristic as required by the Equality Act (2010). With the Student being provided with all the necessary information to access relevant services and adjustments and a powerful overview of all cases provided to Wellbeing and student services teams to inform their inclusivity strategy and policies, My Study My Way will help to ensure that you go further than a position of compliance to one of a best practice approach to diversity.

Q:  As well as providing Reasonable Adjustments Advice, will ‘My Study My Way’ provide any other benefits?

**A:** Yes. My Study My Way also covers areas of mental health and health and safety. It also includes an optional bullying and harassment component. The result is a comprehensive approach to wellbeing in one managed process and a clear audit trail of best endeavours to support students should any legal challenges or complaint escalations occur.

Q: Will Students be prepared to complete this profile. They have a lot of forms to complete already

**A:** We can provide information that explains the benefits of completing a My Study My Way profile to the Student. It serves as a way for them to better understand their own unique learning needs and style and provides them with a personalised action plan to ensure they get the best out of their University experience.

Q:  Will My ‘Study My Way’ work with our existing systems and processes?

**A:** Absolutely, My Study My Way is designed to fit anywhere and everywhere within your admissions and wellbeing processes depending on your needs. You can integrate it fully or have it as a standalone tool – it’s up to you. In our experience, reasonable adjustments need to be at point of need so we highly recommend an approach that takes the information to the relevant person and does not rely on them having to reach out for it.

Q: Does My ‘Study My Way’ offer any support to organisations to establish the service?

**A:** Yes. We will help set up the system and ensure that it is established and running smoothly with relevant localised signposting and information included for your institution.  If you would like some help on an on-going basis we can provide additional support from our Managed Service team. This will be at a very low level (as little management of the process is needed) and can assist in closing the more complex cases and providing regular executive reporting so that the impact of the service is clearly conveyed to your senior management team. My Study My Way also offers a needs assessment service that can be utilised for disabled Students that are not eligible for DSAs such as international students.

Q:  We already have a Wellbeing team in place what does this do that they do not already cover?

**A:** A major challenge faced by Student Wellbeing teams is encouraging Students to disclose any needs they have and then implementing reasonable adjustments in a timely fashion. My Study My Way puts the Student in the driving seat of identifying any barriers they may face during the course of their studies and then signposts what they need to do next to remove these barriers whilst highlighting students with needs to the Wellbeing team to progress as needed. Having a method whereby all Students complete a profile (with questions spanning all the different areas of impairment and all 'protected characteristics' as defined by the Equality Act 2010) and instantly receive tailored advice and next steps to remove barriers absorbs a lot of the hard work for the Wellbeing team and the data provided about the needs of the student body puts them on the front foot in creating an Inclusive Learning Environment for everyone.  Where research has shown that as many as 56% of people could benefit from some sort of adjustment (Forrester research 2005) a much needed automated approach that automatically applies expert recommendations is key in resourcing teams appropriately to address this.

Q: How long are the reports, Wellbeing teams and teaching staff really don’t have much time to read big pieces of information?

**A:**. My Study My Way is designed to save time for your staff. It gives information in short powerful nuggets to the relevant person providing required information at the point you need it. The report is modular so you can dip in and out of the relevant bits - with more information for those that require it always available, whilst headline facts and actions are right there in front of you. It’s also worth noting that, unlike other approaches to diversity, the process is student led with many adjustment requirements already being addressed by Universities but the Student unaware of the Services already available for their specific needs. Where the profile suggests a discussion with the Wellbeing team, there is space to enter information about what has been discussed and agreed and to mark the profile as 'all adjustments implemented'. If the Student's needs change they can return to the profile to highlight additional needs and this update will also be confirmed to the Wellbeing team if relevant for their action.

Q: Will we get lots of reasonable adjustment requests and not be able to manage them?

**A:** No, that’s really the key point to My Study My Way. At the moment, you are likely to be getting fewer requests for your new intakes compared with the actual level of needs you would expect from your Students and then finding that requests are coming through at key pressure points in the Academic year which would suggest that Students are not choosing to give you the information until they reach a crisis point. Sadly some may never come forward and may simply decide to abandon their course. My Study My Way encourages Students to think about potential barriers, collates the information they share and empowers them to act early to access any support that is needed before they encounter difficulties. The Wellbeing team are notified of needs if the Student is happy for them to be informed and the overall anonymized data gives a good understanding of what Universal adjustments can be implemented to improve the learning environment for everybody. So it will not feel overwhelming or daunting, just sensible and appropriate.

Q: I am concerned that this will result in loads of claims from people who have completed a profile and that it sets unrealistic expectations for them about the support a University can reasonably provide.

**A:** Quite the opposite is the case in fact. My Study My Way makes it very clear to the Student that whilst the University wants to be as supportive as possible reasonableness is at the heart of the solutions you are able to provide. An additional benefit is that throughout the report the Student is encouraged to take control for themselves as well and work proactively with Wellbeing and teaching staff to implement sensible solutions and is pointed to lots of self-help information and funded support such as DSAs. The result is a distributed approach with very little escalation or central management (or budget) required.

Support staff and teaching staff are provided with best practice advice and My Study My Way provides Universities with a comprehensive audit trail of your reasonable adjustment practice which protects you within the law.

Q: We are a large University with many different and varied stakeholders, how do we ensure that the right people get the right level of information?

**A:** That’s easy to achieve because you control it. As part of your set up process you set the reporting levels and decide on who gets what and when. My Study My Way can advise you on that.

Q: We are a really small University is this going to create lots of extra work for us?

**A:** Not at all, My Study My Way is meeting a need that you have an obligation to provide for all Students. By creating a report that gives the Student all the information they need to put the adjustment in place themselves or links them to the person that can help them with it, the time and money you save not having to start from scratch is extensive.

Q: What if a Student really needs to have someone work with them to understand their needs – maybe it’s a complex mental health issue or something?

**A:** My Study My Way is designed to supplement and compliment other service provision within the University. For some individuals the personal involvement of an expert is going to be appropriate. In these cases My Study My Way will report the need to involve an expert, confirm the expert requirement and direct them to the right person or team (either internally or externally and defined at setup) who can provide that expertise.