



# SUPPORTING TERTIARY STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT



**SEN  
SUPPORT**

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## What is PI?

Physical Impairment (PI) refers to bodily impairment that is caused by permanent, temporary, or intermittent physical conditions at muscles, bones, or nervous system, leading to restriction in one or more aspects in daily activities such as motor coordination, speech, handwriting, and mobility. Different types of PI can be developed before birth, at a later stage of life due to genetic problems, or acquired through accidents, infections, or diseases.

Depending on students' physical conditions, their abilities to take notes, type assignments, write tests/exams as well as to participate in class activities may be affected. Students may also require wheelchair or crutches for ambulation.



# **What support do students with PI need in university life?**

Reasonable accommodations and support may enhance their learning and adaptation in different aspects of university life, examples of which include:

## **LEARNING**

- ▶ Classroom and examination venues accessible by lifts and preferably with a disabled toilet nearby
- ▶ Provide course materials and notes to the student in electronic format in advance (e.g. e-book)
- ▶ Allow recording of lectures for later review
- ▶ Allow note-takers to jot notes during classes
- ▶ A seat where the student can see the projector screen and board clearly, with convenient access to the entrance and more space to move around

## **ASSESSMENT**

- ▶ Allow extra time to complete assignments
- ▶ Extended time for assessments
- ▶ Rest breaks for classes and exams of long duration
- ▶ Allow the use of assistive devices in assessments (e.g. computer, speech-to-text software, scribe assistance) for typing answers in case of constraints in writing
- ▶ Provide a desk with adjustable height to allow sufficient space for the student's ease of movement
- ▶ Special consideration for student's attendance and class participation if the student needs regular medical appointments

## **SELF-MANAGEMENT**

- ▶ Allow sufficient time to navigate around campus
- ▶ Allow time to take care of essential routines
- ▶ Set realistic goals and learning pace
- ▶ Contact CEDARS to arrange a fire evacuation plan if there are foreseeable difficulties in using stairs to escape in an emergency



# How can I interact with students with PI?

## TIPS FOR TEACHERS / TUTORS



Early announcement of changes in class (e.g. lecture/tutorial schedule, class venue)



Plan field trips to locations with accessible transportation and facilities



## TIPS FOR PEERS



Talk to the student face to face to minimize student's need of moving or orientating oneself



Talk with the student on wheelchair at the same eye level (e.g. by sitting down)



Adjust your pace when walking with the student



Meet at places with accessible ramps, toilets, and entrances



Offer help to take or share notes in classes





## Your Support Makes a Difference

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*I'm nearly paralysed. I use only two fingers to control my computer. Thank you to teachers and classmates for their patience, understanding and acceptance of my delays in coursework submission.*

**Josy,  
Year 3 student**

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## Volunteer with Us

All HKU students can contribute to building an inclusive campus. Volunteer opportunities include:

- ▶ Offering academic support (e.g. note-taking, study skills coaching)
- ▶ Providing social skills coaching
- ▶ Organizing activities to promote inclusion and diversity
- ▶ Working with people in recovery of mental illness
- ▶ and many more!

Get in touch with us to find out more.



## Available Support for Students with PI

**CEDARS Counselling and  
Person Enrichment (CoPE)  
Special Educational Needs (SEN) Support**

We are committed to supporting students with disabilities or Special Educational Needs (SEN) in overcoming barriers and achieving successful university education. The support provided is meant to "level the playing field" without undermining academic core requirements of a course.

The listed suggestions are not exhaustive and the support needed by students varies individually. Students with special needs are encouraged to meet with us for needs assessment and advice.

For enquiries, please contact us at:

- 📍 Room 301-323, 3/F, Main Building
- 📞 (852) 3917 8388
- ✉️ [cedars-SEN@hku.hk](mailto:cedars-SEN@hku.hk)
- 🌐 <https://www.cedars.hku.hk/cope/sen-support/>

For community resources available for students with SEN, please visit <http://wp2.cedars.hku.hk/sen-resources/>  
To learn more about other types of SEN, please visit [www.cedars.hku.hk/cope/sen-leaflets](http://www.cedars.hku.hk/cope/sen-leaflets)