

# Guidance note: Use of the Upgraded User Group in Alma for disabled students

Version 4 last updated October 6<sup>th</sup> 2022

## About the Upgraded User Group

There are two upgraded user groups in Alma (the Library Management System used by most libraries in the Collegiate University):

- Undergraduate-Upgraded
- Postgraduate-Upgraded

Libraries can differentiate loan policies for these groups as follows:

### Increased number of items on loan

Libraries may choose to allow upgraded users to have an increased number of items on loan. The number can be determined by each library, according to local collections and resources.

### Longer loan periods

In Model B libraries, users in the Upgraded groups have a longer loan period. The loan period is standardised for most types of items across the Model B libraries. For short loan items, the loan period can be set by individual libraries to between 1 day or 4 days.

Autorenewals have largely removed the need for differentiated loan periods in Model A libraries.

### Information in Alma

A user's status – including whether or not the user has been upgraded - can be seen by all library staff with the relevant permissions in Alma across the library network.

V4 last updated October 6<sup>th</sup> 2022

No disability information should be held in Alma or in the CLiPS user management system. Local records or notes may only be kept securely by libraries outside of the Alma system and are subject to Data Protection law.

## About disabled students at Cambridge

Well over 5000 students have declared a disability to the University by registering with the Accessibility and Disability Resource Centre (ADRC) (figure for academic year 2022-23).

Students who declare to the ADRC may give full or restricted disclosure, and at any point have the right to change that level of disclosure. These choices are their legal right under the protections given within the Equality Act (2010).

Many more students choose not to declare to the ADRC at all but may still benefit from a differentiated library loan policy.

It is important to understand the different disclosure levels as they determine the process to follow to upgrade students in Alma.

## Upgrading students: process

### Full disclosure

Most students who register with the ADRC give full disclosure, which means that information about their disability can be shared with anyone within the University when necessary and on a need-to-know basis. Included in the list of staff in the [Confidentiality notice](#) with a legitimate need-to-know are Library staff in the University Library, Colleges and Department Libraries.

The upgrading in Alma of students who give full disclosure is centralised at the UL as follows:

- Once per week, UL Reader Services will generate a list of students who have Student Support Documents, and have given full disclosure, from CamSIS. They will amend the user records of these students to the relevant (undergraduate or postgraduate) upgraded user group in Alma.
- No communication is sent to the student to confirm this change.
- It may occasionally be necessary to upgrade a student more urgently than can be done through the routine process described above. Students can be upgraded via the CLiPS user management system by any member of library staff with the relevant permissions, **provided that the staff member is confident that the student has given full disclosure**. If in any doubt, do not upgrade the student's record and contact the Libraries Accessibility Service for advice.

#### Restricted disclosure

A minority of students registering with the ADRC restrict disclosure of information to their college, department or the ADRC. The Alma accounts of these students will not be upgraded through the central process described under [Full disclosure](#).

The library in the college/department to which the student has disclosed should ask the student for consent to change their user group in Alma to the upgraded user group, **knowing that this change will be visible and apply in other libraries that the student may use in the Collegiate University who are using the Alma Library Management system**. (A template consent form is included at the end of this guidance note).

If/Once consent is gained, individual library staff with the relevant permissions in CLiPS can upgrade the user status as appropriate (Undergraduate-Upgraded or Postgraduate-Upgraded).

The consent form should be kept securely in the library where the consent was given, and a note indicating the library where consent was given should be entered in the user's record.

It should be noted however, that once a student has disclosed a disability to one part of the University, the whole institution is deemed to know, and therefore it is recommended that the student is advised to contact the ADRC to discuss any support they may require and that this advice is recorded (i.e. a simple email containing that advice).

[Manual overrides](#) may be used as an alternative to upgrading in cases where students do not consent.

#### Students who do not disclose to the ADRC

- Not all students choose to consult the ADRC or register their disability.
- These students may approach and disclose information about a disability, impairment or long-term health condition to a library. In this case, the library should ask the student for consent to change their user group in Alma to the upgraded user group, **knowing that this change will be visible and apply in other libraries that the student may use in the Collegiate University who are using the Alma Library Management system.** (A template consent form is included at the end of this guidance note).
- Once consent is gained, individual library staff with the relevant permissions in CLiPS can upgrade the user status as appropriate (Undergraduate-Upgraded or Postgraduate-Upgraded).
- The consent form should be kept securely in the library where the consent was given, and a note indicating the library where consent was given should be entered in the user's record.
- It should be noted however, that once a student has disclosed a disability to one part of the University, the whole institution is deemed to know, and therefore it is recommended that the student is advised to contact the ADRC to discuss any support they may require and that this advice is recorded (i.e. a simple email containing that advice).

## Alternative to upgrading: manual overrides

As an alternative to applying the upgraded status, libraries can use the manual override facilities within Alma to accommodate changes to the standard loan policies.

### Advantages

- Can be used if a student has not given consent to be upgraded on Alma
- Can be used if a student who has given full disclosure has not yet been upgraded through the central process
- Allows for individual adjustments on a case-by-case basis should the defined upgraded user policies not be appropriate

### Disadvantages

- Using manual overrides precludes use of self-issue terminals and online library account functionality
- Student needs to communicate their requirement for an adjusted loan policy every time they transact with a library, and in every library they use
- Any records or prompts kept outside Alma to remind staff who is eligible for manual overrides must be kept and disposed of in accordance with GDPR. This is the responsibility of the individual libraries concerned.

## Other recommended adjustments

Other recommended adjustments (beyond loan policies) for disabled students will be communicated to libraries via Student Support Documents (SSDs).

Since not all disabled students have upgraded status on Alma, the SSD should be the definitive source of information on those students who need adjustments.

A list of possible library adjustments and equipment for disabled students is available from the Libraries Accessibility Service.

More broadly though, libraries should aim to operate according to the principle of inclusive practice encoded in the [Code of Practice: Access and Inclusion for Disabled Students](#). An example of inclusive library practice is operating autorenewals for all library users.

As far as possible, students should be supported without requiring evidence of disability. Proof of eligibility is required however when students need access to copies of material still in copyright, above that which is allowed through fair dealing or the CLA licence (see [Libraries Accessibility Service Copyright Policy](#)).

Anything not covered by this guidance note

Please contact [disability@lib.cam.ac.uk](mailto:disability@lib.cam.ac.uk).

Patrick Dowson and Lindsay Jones

Libraries Accessibility Service

And

John Harding

Head of the Accessibility & Disability Resource Centre

6 October 2022

**Consent form: Change of user group in the Alma library management system**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Library barcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Undergraduate/Postgraduate

I hereby give consent for my user group in Alma (the library management system used across much of the Collegiate University) to be amended ('upgraded') following disclosure of information regarding disability, impairment or long-term health condition to the \_\_\_\_\_ Library. [Please note: the detail of the information that you disclose itself will not be shared and the amendment to your user group itself does not indicate that the change is related to disability.]

I understand that my new 'upgraded' user group will be seen by staff in all libraries who use the Alma system, and may change my library loan permissions in other libraries that I use in the Collegiate University.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Library signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**For library use only**

Alma user group changed on \_\_\_\_\_

Note added to Alma user record on \_\_\_\_\_