



Reasonable Adjustments Policy to Learning, Teaching & Assessment for Disabled Students

2022 - 202

Introduction

The School values the diversity of its student population and is strongly committed to creating and sustaining a first-rate and positive learning experience for all. The adoption of inclusive teaching, learning and assessment methods does not negate the need to make Reasonable Adjustments for individual students.

This document provides both students and staff with information about the School's Reasonable Adjustments to Learning, Teaching and Assessment for disabled students, confirming the School will consider all requests as appropriate.

Reasonable adjustments are when the School makes an alteration to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the person at a substantial disadvantage to other students in relation to:

For the purpose of this policy the definition of disability is that which is stated in the Equality Act 2010 namely that 'a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

That effect must be substantial (more than minor or trivial), adverse, and long term (has lasted or is likely to last for at least a year)". This includes conditions which are controlled by medication which might be variable in effect, or which might recur. For example, a student who has cancer, HIV, multiple sclerosis, or mental health difficulties, should be treated as disabled under the Act.

This policy and School practice is compliant with the following legislation and guidance:

- The Disability Discrimination Acts 1995/2005,
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 Part 4 Code of Practice (revised) for providers of post-16 education,
- The Equality Act 2010,
- The Disability Amendment Act 2012.

Statement of Principles

Equality and diversity underpin the School's core values. The ESL Equality and Diversity Policy confirms that these principles are embedded in everything that the School does. Students, will not be unreasonably prevented from applying for, registering upon, or successfully completing a programme of study. Agreed adjustments, however, must not undermine confidence in the academic standards of programme or modules as demonstrated in the learning outcomes.

Determination of what is reasonable may vary between programmes of study as a result of their differing requirements particularly in relation to students on programmes that are regulated by a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory body (PSRB) and lead to a licence to practice or registration with a professional body. Placement providers may be involved in agreeing reasonable adjustments.

Reasonable Adjustments

The duty to make Reasonable Adjustments arises where disabled persons are placed at a substantial disadvantage, compared with people who are not disabled, in relation to:

- a provision, criterion or practice applied by (or on behalf of) the education provider;
- any physical feature of premises occupied by the education provider.

A reasonable adjustment helps to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places the person at a substantial disadvantage in their learning, teaching or assessment situation, however, this must not affect the validity or reliability of assessment outcomes, but may involve, for example:

- changing usual assessment arrangements;
- adapting assessment materials;
- providing assistance during assessment;
- re-organising the assessment physical environment and using assistive technology.

Determining Reasonable Adjustments – legal context

There are three main factors to address when considering Reasonable Adjustments:

- whether the student is disadvantaged by the method of teaching or assessment;
- whether the suggested adjustments would help overcome the disadvantage;
- whether the adjustments are reasonable.

In considering individual cases, the School will consider how the student's impairment interacts with the method of teaching or assessment to ensure that the adjustment requested is in fact due to disability-related reasons, and is not just an expression of preference.

There is no clear indication in law about exactly what a reasonable adjustment is. Factors to consider include:

- effectiveness,
- practicality of the changes,
- health and safety,
- confidentiality,
- potential benefit to other staff, students and visitors.

It is noted that, when considering whether the cost of an adjustment is reasonable, the resources of the School are considered.

It is not acceptable to consider the student's potential to gain eventual employment when making Reasonable Adjustments (ie. to refuse a reasonable adjustment because of customary industry practice) unless these are clearly prescribed competence standards (such as fitness to practice standards).

The Student Engagement team, in conjunction with the Programme Leader, will assess a student's request for Reasonable Adjustments and will consult with other academic staff as appropriate, in order to ensure that appropriate 'adjustments' are made in line with individual programme requirements. These 'adjustments' may vary from relatively standard actions, which can be automatically arranged, to non-standard actions which need consideration in relation to individual programme requirements.

Many students require teaching materials in advance as a reasonable adjustment. School policy encourages the early placing of materials on the VLE, as an inclusive practice.

Communication about the student's adjustments

Only those staff responsible for making the adjustment will be informed, and will include the Registry and Examinations teams, the student's Programme leader and other staff teaching the student as appropriate.

Review of adjustments

A review of adjustments can take place on request or in some cases a review meeting will be agreed when a requirement for reasonable adjustments is first specified.

Placements, Professional practice, field visits, external engagements

Placements and visits might require different adjustments to those made for academic study. Students should talk to the person arranging the placement about their needs and/or make an appointment to discuss these with a member of the Student Engagement team.

Students on programmes which have to meet specific requirements of the profession or skill sector to demonstrate certain knowledge, skills and competencies required, will have 'reasonable adjustments' taken into account when agreeing what requirements are possible.

Disclosure

Applicants and students are strongly encouraged to disclose any disability or support needs they may have at the earliest opportunity to enable the School to work in partnership with them to enable academic success and career goals.

If the Student Engagement team is fully aware of a students' needs they will be better equipped to ensure students are supported. Late notification might mean that a request cannot be met in full immediately.

The School invites students to disclose at every opportunity from point of initial enquiry, at application and registration and at regular points through the student journey.

All information provided is confidential and is shared only with those directly involved in making reasonable adjustments where consent has been given. In most circumstances, only members of staff responsible for agreeing or implementing appropriate Reasonable Adjustments will be informed and this will be only with the student's prior consent.

However, where serious and valid concerns for the health and wellbeing of a student arise in consideration of their request for reasonable adjustments then others may be informed.

Evidence of Need

Any request for Reasonable Adjustments must be supported by clear evidence or diagnosis – for example, an educational psychologist's report; study needs assessment or a letter from a GP or psychiatrist. The Student Engagement team is responsible for determining appropriate evidence.

Student support

There may be implications for a student's financial arrangements depending on adjustments agreed, both in terms of fees payable and student support available. Where this is the case these will be discussed with the student, involving professional services as necessary to enable student to make an informed decision before putting adjustments in place.