

DIVISION OF STUDENT AND STAFF SERVICES

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS TO TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY POLICY



Authorised by:	Executive Director, Division of Student and Staff Services
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1. OVERVIEW

Any person who requires further information on any aspect of this document should contact the Student Services Policy Branch on 8303 3341.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the University's Disability Action Plan available through the University website at http://www.adelaide.edu.au/EO/dis_intro.htm.

The University is subject to the provisions of State and Commonwealth Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination legislation. The Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 (DDA, 1992) deems that people with a disability have a right to equal participation in all aspects of life enjoyed by the broader community. It is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds that he or she has a disability.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to students who identify as having a disability and who provide the University with a verification statement from a health professional, and to academic and general staff who deal with students with disabilities over teaching and assessment.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 Special Circumstances Examinations (medical) refers to examinations arranged for students on an individual basis where a variation to standard times and/or conditions is necessary to accommodate functional limitations resulting from a disability.

This Policy uses the following definitions from the DDA, 1992:

3.2 Disability in relation to a person, means:

- (a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- (b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- (c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- (d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- (e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- (f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- (g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects the person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that;

- (h) presently exists; or
- (i) previously existed but no longer exists; or
- (j) may exist in the future; or
- (k) is imputed to a person.

3.3 Direct discrimination is where people with a disability are treated less favourably because of their disability.

3.4 Indirect discrimination is where a policy or practice that appears neutral has an unequal or disproportionate effect on people with disabilities.

3.5 Special measures permit the implementation of affirmative action programs or measures on the basis that treatment of students with disabilities identical to those students without a disability does not ensure equity.

3.6 Reasonable adjustments to teaching are variations in course delivery including audio or video recording of lectures, provision of personal notes or copies of overheads to students, provision of sign language interpreters, and using accessible venues.

3.7 Reasonable adjustments to assessment are variations to assessment tasks including additional time in examinations, providing examination questions in alternative formats, (e.g. audio-tape, Braille), extending due dates for assignments, double loan periods for library items, provision of specialised equipment, substitution of one assessment task for another of equivalent academic merit, and provision of support personnel (e.g. readers for blind students).

3.8 Unjustifiable Hardship: If a person with a disability can satisfy the inherent requirements of a course, reasonable adjustments must be made unless they impose unjustifiable hardship on the University. An assessment of unjustifiable hardship must consider (a) the nature of the benefit or detriment likely to accrue to or be suffered by any persons concerned; (b) the effect of the disability on the person concerned; (c) the financial circumstances and the estimated expenditure required by the University to make the required reasonable adjustments.

4. POLICY

4.1 Students with disabilities should have the opportunity to realise their individual capabilities and gain access to and participate fully in university life;

4.2 Students are not required to disclose the name of their disability;

4.3 Reasonable adjustments are made to accommodate students with disabilities without compromising the academic standard or essential nature of the course;

- (a) Students with disabilities are subject to standard rules and procedures regarding assessment and teaching. Variations are only available where the student can demonstrate disadvantage as a result of disability;

(b) Adjustments are intended to minimise any competitive disadvantage that a person experiences as a result of their disability, rather than provide a competitive advantage;

4.4 All agreed adjustments are to be recorded in a Learning and Assessment Agreement;

4.5 Where a student with a disability fails to meet the course objectives (with appropriate reasonable adjustments in place), a Fail grade will be recorded;

4.6 If a staff member believes a student cannot meet the inherent requirements of a course due to a disability, he or she must inform the relevant Head of Department/School for referral to the appropriate Executive Dean and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education).

5. RESPONSIBILITIES and PROCEDURES

5.1 It is the responsibility of the STUDENT WITH A DISABILITY to:

(a) identify as a student with a disability and request information on services and support;

(b) provide a verification statement of disability from an authorised assessing professional (e.g. medical specialist, GP, physiotherapist, psychologist or audiologist). Students are advised to consult the disability liaison officer (DLO) before having an alternative practitioner complete a verification statement;

(c) specify to the DLO who may have reasonable access to the information provided in his or her verification statement;

(d) contact relevant academics, directly or through the DLO, to negotiate Learning and Assessment Agreements;

(e) advise relevant academic staff personally or through an impact statement completed by a health professional or the DLO of the functional limitations resulting from his or her disability;

(f) lodge copies of Learning and Assessment Agreements with the DLO;

(g) fulfil the personal responsibilities agreed to in the Learning and Assessment Agreements;

(h) where appropriate, lodge with the DLO no later than 4 weeks before the beginning of the examination period the Special Arrangements For Examinations notice of the Learning and Assessment Agreement;

(i) where appropriate, confirm attendance and requirements with the Examinations Office upon receipt of Examinations Office notification;

(j) consult the University's Policy and Procedures for the Prevention, Handling and Resolution of Student Complaints through the University's Centralised Library of Online Documents at <http://online.adelaide.edu.au/doclib.nsf/> if dissatisfied with any aspect of the process.

5.2 It is the responsibility of the ACADEMIC STAFF MEMBER to:

- (a) ensure that reasonable adjustments are consistent with the functional impact of the disability;
- (b) ensure that the agreed reasonable adjustments do not compromise academic integrity;
- (c) determine what print materials are required in alternative formats;
- (d) document agreed reasonable adjustments on the Learning and Assessment Agreement;
- (e) fulfil the personal responsibilities agreed to in the Learning and Assessment Agreement;
- (f) request the DLO participate in negotiations if required;
- (g) provide to the DLO examination papers that need to be produced in alternative formats a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the scheduled examination;
- (h) ensure reasonable adjustments are made for in-department examinations;
- (i) consult the DLO, the Language and Learning Advisers in the ACUE, or the Counselling Service if further advice is required.

5.3 It is the responsibility of the DISABILITY LIAISON OFFICER to:

- (a) provide all departments with copies of the Learning and Assessment Agreement, including guidelines for use, a verification statement, an impact statement, a confidentiality agreement and an advice form to the Examinations Office;
- (b) distribute Information Kits for Students with Disabilities to students who request them at enrolment, and make them available on request throughout the year;
- (c) request, file and manage documentation verifying a student's disability;
- (d) discuss support measures and reasonable adjustments at the request of a student or academic;
- (e) coordinate the provision of all specialised equipment (e.g. print in alternative formats, ergonomic furniture, arm chairs and participation assistants);
- (f) provide the Examinations Office with alternative format versions of examinations at least 1 week before the scheduled examination;
- (g) inform the Examinations Office of the variations required for central examinations at least 2 weeks before the scheduled examination;
- (h) where appropriate, coordinate additional expert advice;
- (i) where appropriate, ensure Special Arrangements for Examinations are consistent with Learning and Assessment Agreements, then forward notice of Special Arrangements to the Examinations Office;

(j) evaluate services and procedures through questionnaires, focus groups and telephone surveys of students with disabilities and relevant academics and to report the outcomes to the Executive Director, Student and Staff Services (ED/SSS).

5.4 It is the responsibility of the HEAD OF DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL to:

- (a) develop a process for storing departmental copies of Learning and Assessment Agreements;
- (b) act as a point of contact for students who are dissatisfied with any aspect of the process;
- (c) ensure that course handbooks detail the process for negotiating Learning and Assessment Agreements;
- (d) contact the DLO if departmental resources cannot support a student's needs.

5.5 It is the responsibility of the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, STUDENT AND STAFF SERVICES to:

- (a) apply to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission for exemption from the provisions of the DDA, 1992 where reasonable adjustments for a student's disability would impose unjustifiable hardship on the University;
- (b) monitor and evaluate outcomes in accordance with the Disability Action Plan.

5.6 It is the responsibility of the EXAMINATIONS OFFICER to:

- (a) provide required accommodation and supervision in alternative examination venues;
- (b) inform supervisors of the student's procedural variations within the examination;
- (c) inform the student in writing of the arrangements and venue for examinations;
- (d) ensure that where a significant amount of extra time is allocated, the examination begins at 9.20am and includes a compulsory supervised lunch break between 12pm and 12.30pm;
- (e) ensure that after an examination where a computer is used, the examination paper is printed and signed by the student and both the hard copy and disc are collected by the supervisor and returned to the Examinations Office for return to the relevant department.

5.7 It is the responsibility of ALL STAFF AND STUDENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY to:

- (a) ensure that interactions with students with disabilities respect their right to dignity, privacy, confidentiality and equality.