

Reasonable Adjustments Policy

Reasonable adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment for students with a disability

Policy purpose and scope

1. This policy is designed to support students who have a physical disability, additional learning need, long-term health condition, or mental health condition that is believed or evidenced to impact their learning.
2. This policy uses the term 'student' or 'students' throughout. This refers to all learners at the university, including undergraduate and postgraduate students and apprentices.
3. HSU is committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of gender, age, disability, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, socio-economic group, sexual orientation, marital status, family responsibilities, religious or political beliefs. Where a student or staff member working with this policy has specific protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, all endeavours will be made to ensure that information is available in appropriate formats and reasonable adjustments are made to the proceedings and facilities to accommodate their needs. If you would like this document in a different format, please contact Registry.
4. Universities are legally required to make anticipatory adjustments to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The University is mindful of its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and is committed to ensuring compliance through proactive and inclusive practices.
5. The definition of a disability is 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 that person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities', as defined in the Equality Act, 2010.
6. In determining reasonable adjustments in assessments, we will take account of what constitutes a Competence Standard (Ref: Equality Act 2010: Technical Guidance Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)), as reasonable adjustments cannot be applied to such standards (only to the assessment of them). For further information please refer to Appendix 1.
7. The University expects academic teams to design teaching, learning, and assessment practices to be inclusive from the outset, benefiting all students and reducing the need for individual reasonable adjustments. However, it is recognised that in some cases, specific adjustments will still be necessary to ensure that disabled students are not disadvantaged.
8. All information collected under the requirements of this policy/procedure will be processed in accordance with the Student Privacy Notice. Unless students tell us otherwise, information will be shared with others within the University for the purpose of ensuring the agreed adjustments are in place.

9. Additional Learning Support (ALS) requirements necessitating adjustments to examinations (additional time, readers, scribes, etc.) should be defined and agreed **at least 6 weeks ahead of any formal assessment period** so that the necessary support can be put in place. Where reports are received after this deadline every effort will be made to accommodate the required adjustments. but this may not always be possible. If students come forward after this deadline, and where adjustments cannot be accommodated, this should be taken forward as Exceptional Personal Circumstances for consideration at the Exceptional Personal Circumstance Boards.

Roles and responsibilities

10. Students are encouraged to declare disabilities and additional needs on their application form so the University can ensure all reasonable adjustments are in place. Students who develop a disability whilst at University are responsible for letting Student Services know as soon as possible so necessary adjustments can be put in place and they are not disadvantaged.
11. Admissions are responsible for ensuring data on all students who have declared a disability within the admissions process is passed to the Student Services team ahead of enrolment so contact can be made and support offered as the student starts their studies.
12. Student Services are responsible for advising on reasonable adjustments required. Where needs are complex or a less common adjustment is needed, they will consult with Registry and the academic team.
13. Student Services will be responsible for producing a Student Learning Plan detailing reasonable adjustments required. This will be documented, shared with the course team where consent is given, and adjustments added to the central student records system. Student Learning Plans will be reviewed upon request or in response to a changed requirement.
14. Some professional programmes of study require Occupational Clearance. Occupational Health providers may recommend reasonable adjustments. These will form part of the discussion with the Disability and Inclusion Advisor and may form part of the Student Learning Plan. It should be noted consultation with the course team may be needed in some instances and that the decision on whether adjustments can be practically implemented lies with the University.
15. Registry is responsible for coordinating arrangements for students with additional requirements, in consultation with Course Leaders, Student Services, Academic Tutors, and other relevant staff. For example, Estates should be involved where room requirements need to be considered, and IT should be consulted if specific computer equipment or technical setups are required.
16. Unit Leaders are responsible for liaising with Registry where assessment takes place by means of in-class tests outside the main exam periods to ensure all necessary arrangements are in place.
17. Academic teams are responsible for considering alternative assessment methods to ensure that students are not disadvantaged due to a disability. In doing so, they must ensure that the core competencies or learning outcomes are still assessed. They should also evaluate whether the proposed alternative assessment methods affect the validity or reliability of the assessment, and whether they could compromise any competence standards within the course of study, for example, the ability to demonstrate a specific clinical skill or meet a PSRB requirement.
18. Academic teams are responsible for applying the HSU SpLD/Dyslexia Marking Guidelines when assessing work submitted by students who have disclosed a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD), in

accordance with the marking procedures outlined in the accompanying procedure document.

19. Where there is a complex adjustment needed on a placement, the Disability and Inclusion Advisor will liaise with the Course Team in the first instance, and if necessary, meet with the course team and Practice Educator to discuss.
20. The University has a duty to put reasonable adjustments in place **however a disability is disclosed and whoever it is disclosed to**. All staff therefore have a responsibility, if informed, to ensure that necessary adjustments are implemented, with support from the Student Services team. Where there is knowledge of a disability, but the student does not wish to engage with the Student Services team, the staff member should still seek advice from the Disability and Inclusion Advisor to ensure adjustments are in place.

Reasonable adjustments in assessment

21. Reasonable adjustments in assessments should allow the student to demonstrate the learning outcome. These do not alter the mode of assessment, but through adjustments allow students to undertake that assessment. For example:
 - 25% extra time in an exam, stop the clock rest breaks (ten minutes in every hour) or access to a computer
 - Providing a scribe or a reader
 - In an assessed presentation, delivering online, to a smaller group or using prompt cards
22. Alternative assessments change the mode to accommodate the needs of a student with a disability. This should be put in place where the original form would disadvantage the student. For example:
 - A student with a speech and language impairment may benefit from writing answers to questions rather than answering these verbally
 - A student with severely impaired short-term memory may benefit from writing an essay rather than a timed examination

Practical assessments

23. Where assessments include practical or performance-based elements (e.g. clinical skills, laboratory tasks, OSCEs), ALS requirements must be considered as part of the design and delivery process. Adjustments could include the use of assistive technology, alternative scheduling, support personnel (e.g. sign language interpreters or readers), or adapted physical environments, provided these do not compromise competence standards. Course teams must liaise with Registry and Student Services to ensure arrangements are feasible and lawful.

Link with exceptional personal circumstances

24. Students with declared disabilities who have had additional learning support arrangements put in place may not submit applications for Exceptional Personal Circumstances (EPC) in relation to the disability for which adjustments have already been made, unless they can provide evidence of one or more of the following:
 - Circumstances that have affected them beyond the scope of the adjustments already in place;
 - That the adjustments provided did not fully mitigate the impact of their condition;
 - A sudden or unexpected deterioration in their known condition, for which the existing adjustments were insufficient;

- A late diagnosis of a disability or the emergence of a new requirement for additional learning support.

Alternative Assessments

- 25 Where existing assessment options, even with adjustments, continue to present a barrier for the student, the need for an alternative mode of assessment should be considered
- 26 Proposed alternative assessments must be reasonable and take into account equity for all students. Academic teams should consult with their Unit and/or Course Leader before implementing any changes. Examples of alternative assessments may include a written submission instead of an oral presentation, or a poster or video in place of a written report.

Temporary adjustments

- 27 If, as a result of unforeseen circumstances, students have a temporary injury necessitating an assessment adjustment they should notify Registry as soon as possible, and normally at least three working days before the first affected assessment, using the Temporary Assessment ALS Request Form. All requests must be accompanied by appropriate medical evidence, submitted in English (officially translated, where applicable – please see the definition included on the Temporary Assessment ALS Request Form).
- 28 Staff shall do their best to accommodate requests made at short notice but it is not possible to guarantee that they will be met, and if a temporary injury is very last minute it may be more appropriate for the situation to be addressed by means of an assessment postponement or through an application for Exceptional Personal Circumstances, as applicable.
- 29 Where practical assessments are affected by temporary injuries (e.g., a broken limb), Course Leaders must liaise with Registry to determine whether the task can be reasonably adjusted (e.g., tool adaptations, additional time). If reasonable adjustments are not feasible due to the nature of the competence being assessed, the student should be advised to submit an Exceptional Personal Circumstances application or consider postponement of the assessment.

Link with exceptional personal circumstances

- 30 Students for whom temporary examination adjustments have been put into place may not submit applications for Exceptional Personal Circumstances in relation to the same temporary injury for which the adjustments have been made unless the student has evidence that:
 - (i) any circumstances affected them over and above the special arrangements already made during Assessments;
 - (ii) the arrangements put in place did not fully compensate for their injury, *or*
 - (iii) there was a sudden or unexpected deterioration of the injury, for which the adjustments already put into place were not sufficient to compensate.

Pregnancy

- 31 Students who are pregnant and who wish to request assessment adjustments should contact Registry and provide relevant evidence.
- 32 Students are normally expected to take pregnancy into account when planning coursework and preparing for assessments. Therefore, an application for Exceptional Personal Circumstances (EPC) would not typically be considered appropriate on this basis alone. However, if

complications arise during pregnancy or the student's health deteriorates in a way that affects academic performance, an EPC application may be considered in line with the Exceptional Personal Circumstances Policy. Please refer to the EPC Policy for further guidance.

- 33 For coursework assessments it will normally be appropriate to address issues by means of an extension to coursework deadlines.

Related documents

- Exceptional Personal Circumstances policy
- Student Privacy Notice
- Assessment Regulations

Version:	3.0
Approved by:	Academic Board
Originator/Author	Head of Student Services and Wellbeing
Policy Owner	Academic Registrar
Reference/ source	Internal. Equivalent policies at other HEIs
Date approved	13 August 2025
Effective from	September 2025
Review date	2028/29
Target	All students and apprentices, all academic staff, Registry staff
Policy location	Public website. Internal
Equality analysis	The policy is specifically intended to formalise arrangements for students requiring additional learning support/reasonable adjustments due to a declared disability, as such it has a direct positive impact.

Appendix 1: Extract from the Equality and Human Rights Commission: **GUIDANCE**

Equality Act 2010

Technical Guidance on Further and Higher Education

This Technical Guidance applies to the provisions in the Equality Act 2010 that were commenced on 1 October 2010.

www.equalityhumanrights.com

Competence standards

What is a competence standard?

7.33 The Act defines a 'competence standard' as an academic, medical, or other standard applied for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability. [Sch13, para 4\(3\)](#)

7.34 Education providers are likely to impose various requirements and conditions in respect of courses. However, any such requirement or condition only amounts to a competence standard if its purpose is to demonstrate a particular level of a relevant competence or ability such as a requirement that a person has a particular level of relevant knowledge of a subject.

Example: The admissions criteria for a course in choreography include a requirement to demonstrate 'a high level of physical fitness'. The course itself, however, is predominately theory-based and does not involve any strenuous physical activity. This is unlikely to be a competence standard

Example: The requirement for students studying for a law degree to demonstrate a particular standard of knowledge of certain areas of law in order to obtain the degree is a competence standard

7.35 On the other hand, a condition that a person can, for example, do something within a certain period of time will not be a competence standard if it does not determine a particular level of competence or ability.

Example: A requirement that a person completes a test in a certain time period is not a competence standard unless the competence being tested is the ability to do something within a limited time period.

Competence standards and assessment process

- 7.36 Sometimes the process of assessing whether a competence standard has been achieved is inextricably linked to the standard itself. The passing of an assessment may be conditional upon having a practical skill or ability which must be demonstrated by completing a practical test. Therefore, in relatively rare circumstances, the ability to take the test may itself amount to a competence standard.

Example: An assessment for a practical course in car maintenance cannot be done solely as a written test, because the purpose of the test is to ascertain whether someone can complete car repairs.

What is the significance of this distinction?

- 7.37 A provision, criterion or practice does not include the application of a competence standard. Therefore the duty to make reasonable adjustments does not include a duty to make reasonable adjustments to the application of a competence standard.

Example: When assessing the competence standard of a person's ability to read French it would be a reasonable adjustment to provide a visually impaired student with text in large font (if that was the adjustment the student required).

Example: A law student has severe arthritis in her hands. When assessing her level of knowledge, it might be a reasonable adjustment to provide an oral exam or viva instead of a timed handwritten exam. However, there may be an overlap between a competence standard and any process by which an individual is assessed against that standard

Example: A woman taking a written test for a qualification in office administration asks the education provider for extra time for the test because she has dyslexia. This is likely to be a reasonable adjustment for the education provider to make. She also asks if she can leave out the questions asking her to write a business letter and to précis a document, because she feels that these questions would substantially disadvantage her because of her dyslexia. The education provider would not have to make this adjustment because these questions are there to determine her competence at writing and précising, so are part of the competence standard being tested

- 7.38 Although there is no duty to make reasonable adjustments to the application of a competence standard, such a duty does apply to the process by which competence is assessed. So although an education provider has no duty to alter a competence standard, it needs to consider whether or not a reasonable adjustment could be made to some aspect of the process by which it assesses a competence standard.