

# Policy on reasonable adjustments for teaching, learning and assessment

Summary	
The policy sets out how the university makes reasonable adjustments for disabled students in relation to teaching, learning and assessment. It is intended for use by university staff in assessing the need for and implementing reasonable adjustments and to inform students about what reasonable adjustments are available.	
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<b>Approved by</b>	University Education Committee
<b>Responsible Area</b>	Disability Services, schools and faculties
<b>Version</b>	1.0
<b>Date of Approval</b>	10 January 2025
<b>Effective Date</b>	14 January 2025
<b>Review Period</b>	Annually
<b>Date of Next Review</b>	January 2026
<b>Applicable Statutory, Legal or Best Practice Requirements</b>	Equality Act 2010
<b>Keywords</b>	Reasonable adjustment, disability, study support plan
<b>Related Information</b>	Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes; Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes

## **Policy on reasonable adjustments for teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Introduction**

1. This policy sets out how the university makes reasonable adjustments for disabled students in relation to teaching, learning and assessment.
2. It is intended to be used by university staff in assessing the need for and implementing reasonable adjustments, and applies to all taught and research students. It is also intended for students to inform them about the reasonable adjustments available.

### **Legal context**

3. The Equality Act 2010 requires all universities to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students.
4. A student is disabled if they have an impairment which is 'substantial' and 'long-term':
  - 'Substantial' means the impairment impacts the person's ability to carry out day-to-day activities.
  - 'Long-term' generally means the impairment has lasted (or can be predicted to last) 12 months or more, with some exceptions (for example, a person is considered disabled from the day they are diagnosed with HIV infection, cancer or multiple sclerosis).
5. There is no need for a person to establish a medically diagnosed cause for their impairment. The University should consider the impact of a disability rather than the cause.
6. Reasonable adjustments aim to ensure that disabled students can reach their full potential and that they are not disadvantaged in comparison with non-disabled students. The University's duty is anticipatory, meaning that the University is required to consider and take action to remove barriers that impact disabled students generally, as well as putting individual reasonable adjustments in place where needed.
7. The duty applies to:
  - Provisions, criteria or practices (for example, policies, processes, and methods of teaching and assessment)
  - Physical features (for example, access to buildings, design of teaching and learning environments)

- Providing auxiliary aids or services (for example, equipment, technology or support from a person).
8. Factors considered when determining if an adjustment is reasonable are outlined in Annex A.

### **Inclusive environment**

9. The university seeks to create an inclusive learning environment for all of our students, with teaching, learning and assessment designed in ways that embed inclusivity from the start. This approach aims to ensure that alternative methods of assessment, alternative formats and other inclusive arrangements are planned from the start. This approach should reduce the need for individual reasonable adjustments.
10. The University's [assessment and feedback strategy](#) sets out the framework around this in taught programmes. Schools have responsibility for implementing the inclusive approach set out in the strategy. Further information for staff can be found on the [Guide to Inclusive teaching, learning and assessment: how to design for all](#).
11. Although the University aims to make teaching, learning and assessment inclusive by design, in some cases reasonable adjustments may be needed to ensure that disabled students are not disadvantaged.

### **Disclosing a disability**

12. The University has mechanisms in place by which students are able to disclose a disability at any time throughout their programme of study.
13. Students may [disclose a disability](#) in a number of different ways. This could include:
- Telling Disability Services directly, either as an applicant or as a current student.
  - Telling a member of staff elsewhere in the university (for example, the student's Personal Tutor or lecturer).
  - Sharing information through other academic and non-academic processes (for example, by disclosing needs related to student accommodation or as part of an application for extenuating circumstances).
14. Information about disclosure of a disability may be shared between teams within the university to enable reasonable adjustments to be put in place, in accordance with the [Education and Student Success confidentiality statement](#).
15. Where students are struggling or failing to engage, support processes include consideration of whether a student may have a disability or need reasonable adjustments to be made (for example, under the [Support to Study Policy and Procedure](#)).

16. The University has a duty to put reasonable adjustments in place no matter how a disability is disclosed. Where possible, students should be referred to Disability Services to ensure that the University can make a full assessment of their needs and ensure that appropriate adjustments are recommended. However, the University's duty to make reasonable adjustments applies in any case when there is knowledge of a student's disability and is not dependent on a full assessment by Disability Services taking place. Staff should seek advice from Disability Services.

### **Implementing reasonable adjustments**

17. Where a student engages with Disability Services, a study support plan will be produced to assist staff in determining what adjustments should be considered. The study support plan is devised in consultation with the student. Where the support required is complex, new or unusual, the student's Faculty and/or School will also be consulted. The study support plan will state what support the student requires, including adjustments to assessment where appropriate.
18. Where alternative exam arrangements are required, students should wherever possible request this before the stipulated deadline to give sufficient time for the adjustments to be put in place. Requests for adjustments to exams made after the deadline cannot be guaranteed and will depend on what is reasonable and practicable to arrange within the time available.
19. Reasonable adjustments may vary depending upon the form of teaching, learning or assessment. These are determined on an individual basis but typical adjustments may include:

#### *Teaching and learning*

- Provision of materials no later than 48 hours prior to the teaching session.
- Provision of lecture recordings via Re/Play (where available).
- Permission to use a recording device (in accordance with the [University's Policy for Live Streaming and Recording Educational Activities](#)).
- Leave board notes up after the lecture ends (so it can be captured)
- Provision of materials in alternative formats.
- Prioritised reading lists.
- Awareness of occasional absence due to medical appointments or unpredictable relapses/flare ups (upload any hand-outs, information, activities or tasks to Blackboard so that, where possible, the student can continue to work from home)
- Changes to field trips and work placements (where possible and appropriate).
- Provision of accessible or low distraction study spaces.
- Support with book retrieval from libraries.

## *Assessment*

- Up to 25% extra working time (where time is not a competence standard).
- Up to 15 mins per hour stop the clock rest breaks (non-working time).
- Use of a computer (with spell-check enabled).
- Use of coloured overlays (or to wear glasses with coloured/tinted lenses)
- Use of earplugs or ear defenders (not headphones)
- Provision of exam materials in alternative formats.
- Not in the main exam hall (maximum 50 students), small group venue (maximum 20 students) or small group low-distraction venue (maximum 10 students)
- Adjustments to the conditions in a venue.
- Adjustments to the format of presentations.
- Alternative methods of assessment.
- Support for PGR Vivas (oral exams)\*.

## *Aids and services*

- Support workers such as study assistants, readers, scribes and sign language interpreters.
- Changes to buildings and teaching venues.
- Hearing loops (audio induction loops).
- Use of assistive technology.

\* Further information on reasonable adjustments for PGR students is provided in the [Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes](#).

## **Competence standards**

20. Under the Equality Act, the University does not have to make reasonable adjustments in relation to competence standards. A competence standard is a particular level of competence or ability that a student must demonstrate to be accepted on to, progress within and successfully complete a course or programme of study. However, adjustments will be made wherever possible to how the attainment of a competence standard is assessed. A specific method of assessment will rarely, if ever, amount to a competence standard in itself.

## **Reviewing reasonable adjustments**

21. If a disabled student is not satisfied that adjustments recommended are sufficient to address their specific disadvantage or if their circumstances have changed, they should [contact Disability Services](#) or their [School Disability Coordinator](#) to request a further review.

22. Disability Services will contact students four weeks after publication of a study support plan. This aims to:

- Ensure that reasonable adjustments have been implemented in practice.

- Enable the student to highlight any further adjustments which might be needed to address disadvantage.

### **Exceptional circumstances**

23. Students may report any adverse effects of their disability on their study or assessment where any adjustments in the study support plan are either not yet in place or are not sufficient, or for any other reason, using the University's [exceptional circumstances process](#).

### **Responsibilities**

24. The University Board of Trustees is legally responsible for ensuring that the University properly discharges its duties under the Equality Act. As such, all University staff are expected to operate within the parameters of this policy and any associated guidance.

## **Annex A: factors to be considered when putting in place reasonable adjustments**

In determining what is reasonable in each individual case, the University may consider factors including but not limited to:

- the impact of the disability on the individual
- the effectiveness of the particular steps taken in removing or overcoming the relevant disadvantage (i.e. does it work?)
- the practicality of the changes (i.e. is it possible?)
- the type of teaching or learning being provided, and nature of intended assessment.
- the financial and other costs of making the adjustment
- the availability of grants, loans and other assistance to disabled students
- the extent to which aids and services otherwise provided to disabled students
- the University's resources and the availability of financial or other assistance
- health and safety requirements (the Act does not override health and safety requirements)
- the relevant interests of other people, including other students.