



## POLICY ON REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS FOR STUDENTS

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University values the diversity of its student population and its Research-inspired Education Strategy aims to create a welcoming, inclusive and enriching learning environment where all students can develop a sense of belonging and achieve success.
- 1.2 Under the Equality Act (2010), universities are required to make reasonable adjustments in *anticipation of, and in response to*, the needs of disabled students to ensure that a disabled student is not treated less favourably than other students for reasons relating to their disability. This applies to all services and facilities universities provide including all aspects of learning and teaching. If necessary, the Act allows disabled students to be treated more favourably than other students.
- 1.3 The term 'disabled' throughout this policy is as defined under the Equality Act (2010) in that you are disabled if you have a *'physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term negative effect on [your] ability to do normal daily activities'*.
- 1.4 The term 'reasonable adjustment' throughout this policy describes provision deemed reasonable under the Equality Act (2010) to meet the needs of disabled students.

### 2. Purpose and Scope

- 2.1 This policy sets out how the University meets its responsibilities to students under the Equality Act (2010), specifically the approach to supporting disabled students through the provision of reasonable adjustments.
- 2.2 This policy applies to all disabled students at the University who have, or may acquire, a condition covered by the Act during their studies. Although the procedures that underpin it may vary where students are studying with a partner institution, including those based overseas.
- 2.3 This policy does not apply to students who have short term conditions such as broken limbs or coughs and colds. Students should use the Mitigating Circumstances process if they cannot meet their assessment deadlines and contact relevant Student Support Services if they need support. See: [Mitigating circumstances | Policies | University of Leicester](#)
- 2.4 The University will apply the policy where it has a responsibility to comply with the Equality Act (2010), but may apply its principles in other exceptional cases where a full consideration of a disabled student's situation by the AccessAbility Centre, in conjunction with their School,

concludes that implementing adjustments would support a student to undertake and complete their studies.

### **3. The University's Approach**

3.1 The University is committed to providing an inclusive and equitable learning experience to enable all students, ensuring they access the same opportunities and achieve success in their studies.

3.2 This commitment includes digital accessibility to ensure all students can use online content. The University statement on digital accessibility is published at [Accessibility statement | Policies | University of Leicester](#)

3.3 The University publishes guidance on creating accessible learning materials at [Digital accessibility \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

3.4 The University aims to develop inclusive curricula and anticipate the requirements of disabled students, identifying anticipatory reasonable adjustments to meet their needs through a range of activities. Examples include:

- Raising awareness of the support and provision offered to disabled students through Student Support Services and its legal obligations under the Equality Act (2010);
- Providing a supportive environment and multiple opportunities to encourage applicants and students to disclose their disability to the University;
- Promoting Universal Design for Learning through the establishment of inclusive learning, teaching and assessment on all programmes and providing support in the learning environment;
- Ensuring the design and delivery of programmes and modules are as inclusive as possible and that this is tested through approval and review processes;
- Providing appropriate training to staff;
- Mandatory monitoring and review of the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments for individual students.

3.5 Further advice and guidance on inclusive learning, teaching and assessment is published on the [Education Hub](#)

3.6 Although the University aims to identify the most common barriers experienced by disabled students and, wherever possible, to identify appropriate anticipatory adjustments to overcome these barriers, this may not be possible in all cases, so where needed, individual reasonable adjustments will be agreed and implemented.

3.7 The University can make reasonable adjustments (individual and anticipatory) to academic provision or practices but not to competence standards. Competency standards are academic,

medical or other standards required for a particular programme of study. These must relate directly to its learning outcomes.

- 3.8 The Equality and Human Rights Commission's Technical Guidance on Further and Higher Education (2012) 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.
- 3.9 There is no requirement to amend the academic standards of a programme for a disabled student, but it may be necessary to change the method of assessment and the examination venue where in person exams must be attended to meet the requirements of professional and vocational bodies. This includes assessment methods for a competency standard. The key questions for deciding if part of an assessment is a competence standard are:
- a) What skill, competence, level of knowledge or ability is being measured?
  - b) What standards are being applied to decide whether a student has met the required level of that competence or ability?
  - c) What parts of the assessment are the method by which the student's ability to meet the standards at (b) is tested?
- 3.10 The AAC can also offer advice and guidance to colleagues on reasonable adjustments which may be needed where disabled students are involved in activities or university processes outside teaching and learning settings.

#### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

4.1 As the University's disability support service, the AccessAbility Centre (AAC) within Student Support Services provides support for applicants and students throughout the student lifecycle. However, all staff should be aware of their responsibility under the Equality Act (2010) to support disabled students and make reasonable adjustments as required.

4.2 The AAC undertakes a range of duties that include:

- undertaking pre-entry work with prospective students;
- providing individualised student-centred disability support and advising on reasonable adjustments;
- liaising with academic Schools including via the network of AccessAbility Tutors Personal Tutors and Mitigating Circumstances Experts;
- advising and training staff;
- liaising with external agencies;
- recruiting disability support workers to support e.g. note taking, specialist mentoring;
- organising screening and assessment, e.g. for dyslexia;
- advising on alternative assessment arrangements and provision of Assessed Work Cover Sheets (AWCS);
- ensuring University compliance with the Equality Act (2010);
- identifying DSA funded students and ensuring compliance with DSA requirement;

- advising on the Flexible Study Policy and other related policies.

4.3 Heads of School are responsible for appointing an AccessAbility Tutor for their School and for ensuring that staff are aware of relevant student policies and implement requirements on reasonable adjustments.

4.4 Academic Schools are encouraged to consider what constitutes a 'reasonable' adjustment within their environment. These considerations should be shared with the AccessAbility Centre.

4.5 AccessAbility Tutors in each academic School are the first point of contact for students and staff who wish to discuss reasonable adjustments. They can also provide advice to students on specific queries about their programme of study and signpost students to support from the AAC and other relevant services.

4.6 All staff are responsible for ensuring that they implement reasonable adjustments in accordance with guidance from the AAC.

4.7 The Examinations Office in collaboration with the AAC is responsible for making Alternative Examinations Arrangements for disabled students for on-campus examinations and in other examinations centres, if required.

4.8 The Student Wellbeing and Inclusivity Sub-Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy. The policy will be reviewed annually and the Committee will receive progress reports on the implementation of the policy.

## **5. Disclosing a Disability and Information Sharing**

5.1 Applicants are encouraged to disclose any disability, specific learning difficulty, long-term physical or mental health condition as early as possible including at the point of application via their UCAS or application form, on the online form on our website.

5.2 Students may disclose information on registration or at any point during their studies through their School or the AccessAbility Centre, on the online form on our website. Information on disclosing a disability is published at:

[Disclosing your disability | AccessAbility Centre | University of Leicester](#)

5.3 All information provided by applicants and students will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and General Data Protection Regulation (2018).

5.4 There are provisions within data protection law which allow for personal and sensitive information to be lawfully shared where it is necessary to meet other legal obligations. This includes relevant disability or health information if sharing is required to meet our obligations under the Equality Act to support students with reasonable adjustments.

5.5 It is important to only share personal and sensitive information with those who need to know, and only to share information required to put the necessary support in place. This is to avoid excessive sharing of this information.

5.6 If a student requests that you do not share their diagnosis or reasonable adjustments needs it is important to explain the university's legal obligations under the Equality Act and direct the student to our Student Privacy Notice [needs link] for more information.

5.7 Students should be aware that Reasonable Adjustments can be arranged from the point at which information about their disability is shared with the University. It is not possible to reconsider marks or other awards which have been completed before the student shared information about their disability.

## **6. Identifying and Implementing Reasonable Adjustments**

6.1 Although the University has processes in place to encourage the development of inclusive programmes with anticipatory adjustments in place, there will be instances where these are not sufficient to meet the needs of individual students and reasonable adjustments will be required.

6.2 The AAC will work with students, their relevant academic School and other university departments to develop a support plan which details the nature and implementation of reasonable adjustments.

6.3 The University considers reasonable adjustments on a case-by-case basis taking into account:

- a. whether a student is disadvantaged by existing modes of teaching and assessment;
- b. how effective proposed adjustments will be in overcoming that disadvantage,
- c. whether the proposed adjustments are practical;
- d. whether there are any justifiable pedagogic reasons why the adjustments are not reasonable; and
- e. whether there are any alternative adjustments which would have the same effect as the request adjustment.

6.4 The AAC, in partnership with academic schools, will consider whether the proposed adjustments are reasonable in terms of practicality for students and staff, although it may not be possible to agree students' preferred adjustments in all cases.

6.5 Schools may make locally agreed reasonable adjustments in response to a student's disability and inform AAC about these adjustments so that they can be added to a students' documented support plan. These locally agreed reasonable adjustments may include:

- Alternative assessment formats
- Alternative methods of engagement
- Consideration if a student needs to stand or move around the classroom
- Allowances if a student needs to leave the room
- Ensuring the learning environment is conducive to a students' needs (i.e.) lighting, low noise levels)

- Ensuring clear and unrushed communication
- Allowing student time to process information
- Alternatives to reading aloud, answering questions out loud, etc

6.6 Support Plans are focussed on supporting the students' needs and will be reviewed as often as required by the AAC with the student and relevant staff to ensure they remain fit for purpose, and make any necessary amendments.

6.7 The University will consider reasonable adjustments for assessment where these do not compromise competency standards. The AAC will support academic schools to ensure that students are able to meet the ILOs for the module.

6.8 The AAC and academic school may implement the Flexible Study Policy on a full-time programme where circumstances have an impact on a student's ability to continue their studies on a full-time programme but where there is evidence to suggest that they would be able to engage effectively with a reduced study load for a defined period.

6.9 Examples of reasonable adjustments in learning and teaching might include:

- providing alternative formats for teaching and learning materials;
- providing additional 1:1 support;
- providing assistance in the form of a British Sign Language interpreter or lip speaker, reader or note-taker;
- allowing a student to study remotely where this is possible for their programme of study;
- agreeing an alternative pattern of registration e.g. through the Flexible Study Policy on a full-time programme to reduce student workload.

6.10 Examples of reasonable adjustments in assessment might include:

- allowing additional time to complete an assessment;
- an alternative method of assessment that tests the achievement of ILOs for a module or programme, but through different means to the standard assessment for a module e.g., a written assessment in place of a presentation, allowing a presentation to be recorded, an oral assessment in place of a written assessment etc.;
- providing Assessed Work Cover Sheets as appropriate for particular students including those with dyslexia, disabilities such as mental health conditions, AD(H)D and autism;
- providing examination papers in alternative formats;
- providing assistive technology such as a computer with screen reading software or other IT solutions for in-person examinations; alternative arrangements for in-person exams, for example using different venues, allowing breaks and additional time and other reasonable adjustments as required

6.11 In cases where there is a variance of opinion on how best to meet the needs of an individual student, the University will take a compassionate approach in the best interests of the student in question, and the final decision will be the Academic Registrar or nominee.

6.12 The AAC will also provide advice and guidance on a case by a case basis to colleagues working with disabled students in situations which may well fall outside teaching, learning and assessment such as Conduct.

## 7 Related Policies

The University has a range of policies designed to support all students, some of which may have particular relevance to disabled students including:

- Support to Study Policy, supports students and staff in managing complex needs in relation to students' ability to engage with their studies;
- Flexible Study Policy on a full-time programme, applies to students with a disability, long-term condition or exceptional circumstances that impact their ability to continue their studies on a full-time programme;
- Senate Regulation 8.47 and 8.48, articulates policy on Alternative Examination Arrangements;
- Mitigating Circumstances Policy;
- Senate Regulation 7, articulates the University's principles and procedures for assessment;
- Senate Regulations 5 and 6 outline assessment requirements for undergraduate and PGT students respectively;
- Fitness to Practice Regulations for programmes in Medicine, School of Healthcare and School of Education.
- Policy on Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity, Shared Parental Leave and Adoption
- Accommodation Policy
- Disability Policy

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