

Policy on Making Reasonable Adjustments in Respect of Examinations

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Aberystwyth University strives to ensure that the University is accessible to as many students as possible. This is done by proactively seeking to identify and address potential barriers; by providing appropriate support for students; and by ensuring all academic and service departments take proper account of the needs of disabled students, those with specific learning differences and those with long term health issues.
- 1.2. Among the obligations imposed on the University by Equality Legislation is a requirement to make *reasonable* adjustments, this includes making reasonable adjustments to assessment methods. Whilst 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.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. This policy has been formulated to:
 - 2.1.1. Confirm the University's response to providing reasonable adjustments for examinations for disabled students, those with specific learning differences and those with long term health issues;
 - 2.1.2. Ensure parity of treatment and consistency of arrangements across all student groups and degree schemes;
 - 2.1.3. Take account of resource implications and issues of practicality in making reasonable adjustments for examinations;
 - 2.1.4. Ensure due consideration is given to the University's duties as prescribed by law, the requirements of professional bodies and also to academic rigour;
 - 2.1.5. Enable disabled students, and those with specific learning differences or long term health issues to participate on an equal basis with their non-disabled peers to meet the course learning outcomes.

3. Scope

- 3.1. This policy applies to all degree courses, including undergraduate and postgraduate courses and distance learning. It is not the intention of this policy to alter the purpose of the examination, merely to alter its form. Neither is the intention to confer any academic advantage on any individual.

- 3.2. Where adjustments are put in place, thus ensuring all students are assessed on an equal basis with their peers, there will normally be no requirement to take further account of the student's needs when marking papers.
- 3.3. Although this policy focuses on making reasonable adjustments for examinations, reasonable adjustments for other forms of assessment may also need to be considered (i.e. presentations, practical assessments).
- 3.4. This policy ensures that the University meets the General Equality Duty for making reasonable adjustments for disabled students. Sector good practice recognises that reasonable adjustments may also be made, with appropriate evidence, for students with other protected characteristics i.e. maternity, pregnancy and religious observances.

4. Timeframes

- 4.1. It is the responsibility of the individual student to evidence his or her requirements and bring these to the attention of the University at the earliest possible opportunity: prior to joining the University, at initial registration, or subsequently as needs or changes arise, preferably no less than five term-time weeks prior to the examination.
- 4.2. The University guarantees to make reasonable adjustments to examinations where students make their needs known to the University and provide all the necessary documentation within the timeframe above. Adjustments must be both reasonable in accordance with the demands of equality legislation and practical to implement within the time available.
- 4.3. Where requests are received later than five termtime weeks before the student's examination the University will endeavour to make adjustments subject to the nature of the request and the practical considerations of implementation.
- 4.4. It will not normally be possible for the University to implement requests received fewer than five working days before the examination.
- 4.5. Where it is not practical to make adjustments within the time available, or where requests are received later than five working days before the examination, it will not normally be possible to implement adjustments and it may be necessary for the student to undertake the examination without any adjustment. In such circumstances the student may submit a Special Circumstances Form to the Faculty Registrar and it will be for the Examination Board to consider allowing the student to

take the examination as a first attempt at a later date or to give other consideration to the student's future progress.

5. Approval and Confirmation of Requests

- 5.1. All requests for exam adjustments must be submitted via the Accessibility Advisers in Student Services. The Accessibility Advisers will liaise with academic departments and the Faculty Registry team to confirm the adjustments to be implemented. Once confirmed arrangements will be entered onto AStRA.
- 5.2. Only those adjustments confirmed on AStRA may be implemented.

6. Continuation of Arrangements

- 6.1. Students need only apply once for reasonable adjustments. Once approved, the same reasonable adjustments will continue for the duration of their course, unless their support needs change, it was a temporary adjustment only or as a result of Academic/Registry changes to assessment procedures. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the University of any change in requirements. However, Accessibility Services will coordinate a student-led annual review of each student's exam adjustments (for disabled students and those with specific learning differences or longstanding health issues) to confirm whether or not any amendments to the arrangements are necessary.

7. Evidence

- 7.1. To be eligible for individual examination arrangements, it is preferable for students to provide evidence of a disability, specific learning difference or long standing /substantial health issue. All evidence must be provided in either English or Welsh. The University retains the right to reject evidence it considers to be unacceptable/incomplete and may require the student/evidence to be referred to the Student Wellbeing or Accessibility & Inclusion Services for further consideration.
- 7.2. The following evidence is deemed acceptable:
- 7.3. *For students with specific learning differences*
 - 7.3.1. Educational Psychologist's report or equivalent.
or
 - 7.3.2. A current Needs Assessment Report from an accredited Access Centre

- 7.3.3. Recent evidence (within 24 months) from the student's school/college exams office confirming exam arrangements (i.e. a completed JCQ Form 8) may also be considered for the continuation of exam support.

7.4. For students with longstanding health issues or disability

- 7.4.1. A letter from a GP or medical practitioner confirming the nature of the health issue/disability and outlining the potential impact on the student's ability to undertake the usual form of assessment;

or
- 7.4.2. A current Needs Assessment Report from an accredited Access Centre confirming the likely impact on the student's ability to undertake the usual form of assessment.

8. When written evidence is not available

- 8.1. Individual Examination Arrangements are best managed when Accessibility Advisers have access to detailed recommendations from a medical practitioner or a Needs Assessment Report. This is to ensure academic standards are safeguarded and that no advantage is conferred on any individual. It must be noted that obtaining the necessary medical or other evidence may take some time and so the University will consider other forms of evidence relating to the student's disability or health condition, including Constructive Knowledge.
- 8.2. Where evidence is forthcoming but is not complete or cannot be submitted by the specified deadline every attempt will be made to make appropriate arrangements for reasonable adjustments. However, where evidence is delayed or the request for adjustments is received/confirmed after the stipulated deadline the University cannot guarantee to implement arrangements and it may be necessary for the student to undertake the examination without any adjustment. In such circumstances the student may later submit a Special Circumstances Form to the Faculty Registry or Academic Department explaining the impact of his/her impairment or learning difference on his/her attainment.

9. Examples of adjustments which could be provided

- 9.1. Subject to individual need, provision of documentary evidence and mindful of learning outcomes, one or more of the following may be appropriate adjustments for examinations:
 - 9.1.1. Provision of an alternative form of assessment (e.g. viva/extended essay)
 - 9.1.2. Provision of additional time
 - 9.1.3. Use of designated rooms or workstations

- 9.1.4. Use of assistive technologies (including P.C. but not including internet access)
- 9.1.5. Use of a standard toolbar spell checker
- 9.1.6. Provision of an amanuensis or reader
- 9.1.7. Supplementary papers (e.g. A4 page of written notes)
- 9.1.8. Rest breaks
- 9.1.9. Use of coloured overlays
- 9.1.10. Papers in alternative formats (e.g. Braille)

This list is not exhaustive as arrangements are intended to be responsive to individual needs. Furthermore, some students may require a combination of arrangements.

10. Appeal Mechanism

- 10.1. Where a dispute arises regarding the nature of the individual arrangements provided the matter will be subject to the approval of the relevant Pro Vice Chancellor whose decision shall be final.

11. Review of Arrangements

- 11.1. The Assistant Registrar (Examinations) shall convene a panel to review overall arrangements, no less than once each year and shall report to the Student Experience Committee.
- 11.2. The panel shall consist of the Assistant Registrar (Examinations); (Chair) the Head of Accessibility & Inclusion, Student Services (or nominee); representatives from either the Accessibility Service and/or Wellbeing Service; and a representative from the Students' Union.

12 Roles and Responsibilities

- 12.1 **Student:** It is the responsibility of the individual student to bring his or her requirements to the attention of the University at the earliest possible opportunity: prior to joining the University, at initial registration, or subsequently as needs or changes arise. Students are required to provide appropriate evidence of need.
- 12.2 **Accessibility and Inclusion, Student Services:** The Accessibility and Inclusion team shall be responsible, following disclosure of need, for making students aware of the adjustments that may be available and for co-ordinating appropriate evidence. They shall also be responsible for ensuring information on AStRA about the adjustments required is based on up to date and correct information provided by the student. The Accessibility Service shall liaise with -Faculty Registry and the academic

departments in arranging invigilators, readers, amanuensis and other 1:1 support for individual examination requirements.

12.3 **Academic Departments/Faculty Registry:** Academic departments/Faculty Registry shall be responsible for confirming the arrangements identified on AStRA to students and for notifying Accessibility and Inclusion of any changes. They are also responsible for arranging rooms and requesting trained Individual Exam Requirement (IER) staff for students in their department who need individual examination arrangements Requests from departments for IER staff must be made as early as possible to ensure adequate staffing resources are available.

12.4 **Assistant Registrar (Examinations):** The Assistant Registrar (Examinations) will be responsible overall for overseeing individual arrangements, having previously liaised with Accessibility and Inclusion Service, academic departments and/or other relevant service areas. The Assistant Registrar (Examinations) shall also be responsible for briefing/training invigilators, technicians or support staff, with due regard to confidentiality and on a need-to-know basis and for ensuring invigilators, readers and other staff understand their duties and the requirements on them in those roles.

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