

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 learning differences and those with health issues.
- 1.2. The University recognises the benefits of an inclusive curriculum and has included as one of its Equality Objectives, linked to the University's strategic plan, its desire to achieve this.
- 1.3. 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, specific learning differences and those with long term health issues/impairments;
 - 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.

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.

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 term time 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 seven 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 seven 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 later submit a Special Circumstances Form to the Examination Board 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 adjustments must be submitted via the Accessibility Advisers in Student Support and Careers Services. The Accessibility Advisers will liaise with academic departments and the Superintendent of Examinations 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 arrangements will continue to be made automatically for the duration of their course, unless their support needs change. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the University of any change in requirements. However, Accessibility Services will undertake a review of each student's requirements in July each year (for students with specific learning differences, longstanding health or disability issues) to confirm whether or not any amendments to the arrangements are necessary.

7. Evidence

7.1. To be eligible for individual examination arrangements students must be able to demonstrate evidence of a long standing or substantial health issue or disability. 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 Service or Accessibility Service for further consideration.

7.2. The following evidence is deemed acceptable:

7.3. *For students with specific learning difficulties*

7.3.1. Educational Psychologist's report or equivalent undertaken when the student was at least 16 years old/or dated within the previous two years.

7.3.2. or

7.3.3. A current Needs Assessment from an accredited Access Centre

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;

7.4.2. or

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

8. When Evidence is not available

- 8.1. Individual Examination Arrangements will only be made subject to the provision of appropriate evidence. 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.
- 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 Examination Board explaining the impact of his/her impairment or learning difference on his/her attainment.

9. Adjustments which can be provided

- 9.1. Subject to individual need, provision of documentary evidence and mindful of learning outcomes, 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. Practice in working with a reader or amanuensis
 - 9.1.8. Supplementary papers
 - 9.1.9. Rest breaks
 - 9.1.10. Use of coloured overlays
 - 9.1.11. Papers in alternative formats (e.g. Braille)
 - 9.1.12. Timetabling of examinations in the morning/afternoon only
- 9.2. 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 Superintendent of Examinations shall convene a panel to review overall arrangements, no less than once each year and shall report to the Academic Board.
- 11.2. The panel shall consist of The Superintendent of Examinations; (Chair) the Head of Student Support and Careers Services or nominee; and representatives from either the Accessibility Service and/or Wellbeing Service; and a representative from the Students' Union.

Furthermore the Academic Board shall receive a report on these arrangements at least annually.

12 Roles and Responsibilities

- 12.1 The responsibility of the 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. Students shall also be responsible for confirming to academic departments whether the reasonable adjustments identified on AStRA are required.
- 12.2 The responsibility of the Accessibility Service: The Accessibility Service shall be responsible for making students aware of the adjustments that may be available and for co-ordinating appropriate evidence. Accessibility Services 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 also be responsible for providing invigilators, readers, amanuensis and other 1:1 support for individual examination requirements where requested to do so by academic departments.
- 12.3 Academic Departments: Academic departments shall be responsible for confirming the arrangements identified on AStRA to students and for notifying Accessibility Services of any changes. Academic Departments are also responsible for arranging rooms and support staff for students in their department who need individual examination arrangements or for notifying the Accessibility Service where the Accessibility Service is required to provide this for the department.

12.4 The responsibility of the Superintendent of Examinations: The Superintendent of Examinations will be responsible overall for overseeing individual arrangements, having previously liaised with the Accessibility Service, academic departments and/or other relevant service areas. The Superintendent of 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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