

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT (SPECIAL CONSIDERATION) POLICY

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What are reasonable adjustments?

In order to comply with disability legislation, institutions are expected to make 'reasonable adjustment'. Reasonable adjustment is about avoiding the creation of unnecessary barriers for disabled people. If a disabled person is at a 'substantial disadvantage', responsible bodies are required to take reasonable steps to prevent that disadvantage. This might include:

- the provision of material in other formats
- the delivery of courses in alternative ways
- the provision of interpreters or other support workers
- changes to course requirements or work placements
- changes to policies and practices
- changes to the physical features of the building

Example: A partially deaf student who lip-reads is attending course. One of his tutors continues to teach whilst simultaneously writing on the whiteboard. The student requests that the tutor stops speaking when he is turning his back away from the student to write on the whiteboard so that he can lip read what he is

saying. There is a likelihood that the student will be at a substantial disadvantage if this adjustment is not made as reasonable adjustments are not being made.

What is reasonable?

When deciding whether an adjustment is reasonable your aim should be, as far as is reasonably possible, to remove/reduce any disadvantage which may be faced by a student. Consider the following:

- how effective the change will be in avoiding the disadvantage the student is likely to experience otherwise
- its practicality
- the cost
- the Centre's resources and size
- the availability of financial support

Reasonable steps depend on the circumstances of the case and making adjustments for disabled people is not merely about making something bland simple or less interesting, it is about allowing a disabled person access to the same level of resources and materials and if necessary using alternative ways of providing these.

Curriculum Design, Teaching and Assessment

When designing the curriculum, assessment and teaching materials, the needs of disabled people should be taken into consideration. It is important to look at the potential barriers in the curriculum which may unnecessarily exclude disabled learners. This means looking at the programme outcomes, the module specifications and learning outcomes and deciding whether all learners can achieve these. During this process it may be useful to consider the following questions:

- Are there any alternative ways in which a learner can demonstrate their knowledge and skills?
- Can an alternative assessment be given?

The learning experience should be made flexible to accommodate all learners including those with special educational needs and disabilities. Learners may:

- Have varied listening and learning skills
- Need a more flexible environment
- Need different time scales to absorb different learning

- Require different teaching approaches depending on the subject matter to be taught

With this in mind, practitioners should:

- Develop an environment conducive to learning which will meet the needs of all learners including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- Provide options for assessments and where necessary, offer alternative assessment(s) which meet(s) the learning outcomes and the individual needs of students with specialist educational needs and disabilities.
- Vary delivery methods to enable equal opportunity for all
- Change their delivery style to accommodate the needs of all learners
- Provide learners with any subject specific glossaries or refer them to appropriate published guides/dictionaries/glossaries
- Discuss with the learner how you can work effectively as a team
- Consider using Information Learning Technology with assistive technologies to enable learning (such as interactive whiteboards, audio commentary during classes, placing learning materials online)

Preparing yourself

When teaching disabled learners consider the following:

- Do I have the information I need about the learner's needs to support them fully? (This can be obtained from the Student Support Unit)
- Do I know about the Centre policy of supporting disabled learners?
- Do I need further staff development to feel confident enough to support disabled students in their learning? (Contact your Course Leader to highlight staff development needs).

The End