

# **POLICY and PROCEDURES on INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT, REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS and ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR STUDENTS with IMPAIRMENTS or DISABILITIES**

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## **1 Purpose**

1.1 This policy sets out the University’s commitments to promoting inclusive assessment, including making provision for reasonable adjustments and alternative assessment arrangements for students with impairments or disabilities. This includes students with specific learning disabilities, long term medical conditions and those with additional special educational needs.

## **2 Overview**

2.1 Through its mission and values the University of Worcester has a strong commitment to social and educational inclusion. The University Learning and Teaching Strategy and the University Assessment Policy define inclusion as central tenets of professional practice, reflecting not only institutional responsibilities enshrined in the Equality Act 2010, but also the values of the UK Professional Standards Framework.

2.2 These commitments mean ensuring that students with disabilities and non-disabled students are offered learning opportunities that are equally accessible to them, by means of inclusive design wherever possible and reasonable individual adjustments wherever necessary. This applies equally to assessment.

2.3 This Policy sets out the principles for inclusive assessment, reasonable adjustments and alternative arrangements and the associated procedures for requesting such adjustments or arrangements, and their approval. Approval involves the Disability and Dyslexia Service and course/module leaders.

### **3 Scope**

3.1 This policy applies to all staff of the University, and particularly to staff who teach and/or provide learning support for students; it is a professional and legal responsibility for staff to ensure practice is inclusive, in line with this policy.

3.2 The policy has been drawn up with reference to good practice available within the sector, including that available from the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#) and [AdvanceHE](#).

3.3 The policy and procedures are of particular relevance to students with disabilities, special educational needs or long term medical conditions.

## **Policy**

### **4 Key Principles**

4.1 In keeping with legislation and associated guidance with regards to assessment, higher education providers are required to take reasonable steps to:

- mitigate against substantial disadvantage where a provision, criterion or practice may create barriers for the involvement and educational attainment of disabled people
- consider adjustments to assessments or the provision of alternative arrangements for assessments, being mindful of the specific learning requirements of students with disabilities.

4.2 All students of the University can expect a learning and assessment experience that is consistent with the Equality Act 2010 and underpinned by the values and practices of inclusion.

4.3 It is the University's responsibility to give students opportunities, at various stages of their course, to disclose disability, dyslexia or a long term medical condition and to ensure appropriate confidentiality.

4.4 It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the University is aware of his/her disability and to apply for any variation in assessment conditions within deadlines established for this purpose. Any request must be supported by acceptable medical or other evidence of disability or long term medical condition. [Note: Some courses such as Teaching and Nursing require disclosure as a part of the Occupational Health clearance.]

4.5 All information is confidential and is only shared with student consent, to those directly involved in making reasonable adjustments on behalf of the student.

4.6 The University will endeavour to ensure that access and reasonable adjustments are applied consistently across the institution.

## **5 Inclusive Practice by Design**

5.1 Inclusive practice involves:

- providing accessible learning and assessment for all students
- providing for flexibility and choice in learning, teaching and assessment
- ensuring the relevance of curriculum assessment items for all students
- ensuring teaching staff have the requisite professional competencies for teaching and assessing all students
- making reasonable adjustments where appropriate and/or considering applications for alternative assessment arrangements.

5.2 Inclusive teaching and assessment is best facilitated by anticipating and planning for the learning requirements of all students. This involves anticipating and considering, in a generalised way, the requirements of students with learning and/or physical disabilities.

5.3 Key aspects of inclusion for learning, teaching and assessment, should inform all phases of programme design, development, approval, evaluation and review on an ongoing basis.

## **6 Reasonable Adjustments**

6.1 The University recognises that the adoption of inclusive teaching, learning and assessment methods does not negate the need for students to meet competency standards. A competency standard is defined in the Equality Act 2010 as 'an academic, medical, or other standard applied by, or on behalf of, an education provider for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability'.

6.2 In keeping with the Equalities Act 2010 the University does not seek to modify competence requirements or learning outcomes which meet the definition of a competence standard. A genuine competence standard applies equally to all students and may not be modified. However, depending on the need of an individual student, the means by which that student is enabled to demonstrate the standard can be adjusted/adapted. This might involve, for example: adapting materials used in an assessment to aid accessibility; providing assistance during assessment; re-organising the assessment physical environment and facilitating the use of assistive technology and a computer.

6.3 Where it is necessary to make adjustments to assessments in order to meet individual student learning needs, such adjustments should be reasonable and take account of the principles of equity and parity of assessment practices. In considering all requests for specific adjustments, the University will make individual reasonable adjustments based on the student's particular requirements. The University will need to consider the extent to which the adjustment requested is due to the impacts of the student's disability.

6.4 There is no current legal definition of what a reasonable adjustment might entail. However, the Equality Challenge Unit (now AdvanceHE) has published [guidance on making reasonable adjustments](#) and this should be considered when making decisions about adjustments in assessment. Decisions should be further informed by considering:

- whether the student is disadvantaged by the current modes of teaching or assessment
- how effective proposed adjustments will be in overcoming any disadvantage
- whether an adjustment request is related to a disability or is just an expression of preference
- whether proposed adjustments are reasonable in terms of -
  - the practicality of the changes for staff and students
  - the potential impacts on other students
  - the potential wider benefits to other students.

6.5 It is not possible to identify all possible reasonable adjustments that may be required. The most common reasonable adjustments made for assessment include:

- extra time
- rest breaks
- use of software
- use of specialist equipment eg chair
- use of PC
- separate room/small group environment
- supported by a Support Worker – scribe, reader, prompter
- alternative formats – different options including enlarged print, colour of materials, electronic formats
- timing of exams – mornings only, one exam a day etc.

## **7 Alternative Assessment Arrangements**

7.1 In exceptional circumstances, where existing assessment options, even with reasonable adjustments, continue to present barriers, the need to provide for alternative assessment arrangements should be considered.

7.2 As with reasonable adjustments, alternative assessment arrangements must be reasonable and take account of the principles of equity and parity of assessment practice.

7.3 Alternative arrangements, for example a written rather than an oral presentation or vice versa, or a poster or video as an alternative to a written report, should be requested by the student and discussed initially with a Disability Adviser before further discussion and approval by the module and/or course leader.

7.4 Students who disclose specific learning difficulties (eg dyslexia, or a disability impacting on spelling, syntax, or structural organisation of written work, such as for pre-linguistically deaf students) have the facility to bring the nature of their disability to the attention of the staff who mark their work. This is in order to accommodate the student's functional difference when providing feedback on the work; it does not

affect academic standards applied in the grading of work or assessment of the achievement of learning outcomes.

## **Procedures**

### **8 Requesting and Approving Alternative Arrangements**

8.1 Students requesting alternative assessment arrangements should first discuss their needs with a Disability Adviser in the Disability and Dyslexia Service.

8.2 Documentary evidence (medical or specialist) will normally be expected to support the request. This evidence should normally be no more than two years old at the time of the student making an initial application for alternative assessment arrangements. Disability Advisers can advise on the need for evidence, and what is acceptable.

8.3 Students must normally apply for alternative assessment arrangements at least four weeks before the date of the assessment. Late applications will not normally be considered unless directly related to the individual's impairment, although due consideration will be given to individual circumstances.

8.4 The Disability Adviser will complete Form DDS1 and retain a copy of the documentary evidence to accompany the form, which will be held on the student's file. Copies of completed Form DDS1 will be forwarded to the student, and details will be posted on the SOLE-based class lists which can be accessed by course and module leaders and the Examinations Officer.

8.5 Students should discuss their alternative assessment needs with their course and/or module leader(s), who may consult with the Disability and Dyslexia Service. Requests for alternative assessment arrangements will normally be agreed between the student, the Disability Adviser and the course or module leader.

8.6 Placements may require different adjustments to those made for academic study. Students should initially talk to the person responsible for arranging the placement about their needs, making reference to their University entitlements. A Disability Adviser may be able to offer additional advice should this be required.

8.7 In the event that appropriate reasonable adjustments or alternative arrangements cannot be agreed between the student, Disability Advisor and the module or course leader, the matter will be referred to the Head of Department, Head of the Disability and Dyslexia Service and the College Director LTQE who will reach a decision having taken appropriate advice as necessary.

### **9 Examination and Test Arrangements**

9.1 Students should present a copy of the completed Form DDS1 to module leaders in respect of class tests – this must be done in good time, and in any case normally at least four weeks before the date of the class test.

9.2 Where an allocation of extra time for University examinations is agreed, this will normally be 15 minutes per hour (or 25%) unless a different amount is deemed necessary on the basis of independent evidence in individual circumstances. Where

extra time is agreed for students this should also be allocated for class tests as well as more formal examinations.

9.3 In cases where an adjustment for University organised examinations is required, such as the use of a computer or use of an amanuensis, the necessary arrangements will be made by the Examinations Officer for the student to sit their examination(s) in a separate room from the main body of students.

9.4 In other cases, eg class tests, the student's School will make the necessary arrangements, taking advice from the Examinations Officer and the Disability and Dyslexia Service as appropriate, on the organisation of the venue, invigilation and other practical arrangements for the student. A student's support worker may not act as an invigilator for a student with whom they have a professional support role. However, support workers may be used as invigilators for those students with whom they have no relationship.

9.5 It will be the responsibility of the invigilator(s) to ensure that examinations and tests involving students with disabilities are conducted in accordance with agreed alternative arrangements, including the allocation of extra time, and that as far as possible in other respects, the usual rules for the conduct of examinations are observed.

## **10 Alerting Markers to Disability Related Difficulties**

10.1 Students who have difficulties presenting information in written format as a result of their disability can use the University's **Disability declaration coversheet** to notify markers for any examination or coursework assessment, where this has been formally agreed with the Disability and Dyslexia Service and recorded on the DDS1.

10.2 **Disability declaration coversheets** permit students to retain some degree of anonymity (although this may inevitably be compromised where class sizes are small), but alert the marker to the disability related difficulties in the presentation of written work.

10.3 Disability declaration coversheets can be downloaded from SOLE, and where work is submitted electronically, can be copied and pasted as a coversheet to the assessment, so that a single assessment document is uploaded electronically as required.

10.4 Guidance is provided to staff on good practice in marking the work of pre-linguistically deaf students and those with specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD and semantic pragmatic disorder.

### **Related Policies, Documents or Webpages**

[University Assessment Policy](#)

[Staff guidance for inclusive assessments & making reasonable adjustments](#)

[Inclusion Toolkit](#), including section [Assess Inclusively](#) and related guides.

## Approval/Review Table

<b>Item</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Version Number	3.0
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