

DEGREE STUDIES AT WEST SUFFOLK COLLEGE

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS FOR STUDENTS POLICY

Purpose This Code of Practice provides a framework for the implementation of reasonable adjustments to support disabled students. The Degree Studies at West Suffolk College aims to ensure that all students achieve their full academic potential and that no student is disadvantaged because of a disability in their admission to, and participation in, the learning environment of Degree Studies and in demonstrating that they have achieved the learning outcomes of their programme of study

Scope This policy applies to applicants to and students on all courses offered by Degree Studies at West Suffolk College for whom the standard learning, teaching and assessment arrangements for learning materials, the delivery of, and response to, the assessment may adversely affect their ability to demonstrate their true performance level. This Policy adheres to the Equality Act 2010 and the expectation set out in the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B4 'Enabling student development and achievement'.

Principles:

1. To create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive, with all students being treated fairly, with courtesy and respect.
2. To enable students to be partners in their learning and teaching and educational experience, whilst providing the best opportunity for all students to achieve in their academic and professional development.

Definition

3. The Equality Act 2010 confirms that a person has a disability if:
 - a. they have a physical or mental impairment, and;
 - b. the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
4. According to the Act, the effect of an impairment is a long-term effect if:
 - a. it has lasted at least 12 months;
 - b. the period for which it lasts is likely to be at least 12 months; or
 - c. it is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.
5. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College has a duty to anticipate reasonable adjustments in the design of its programmes and their assessment, and in the development and provision of other facilities and services that support students and their learning.
6. A reasonable adjustment is a reasonable variation or alteration made to Institutional processes so that a disabled student can access without disadvantage the HE opportunities of the Institution without compromising the expected academic standards. Such reasonable adjustments could apply to:
 - a. the process of admission to the Institution;
 - b. the delivery of teaching, consistent with the learning outcomes of a programme or module;
 - c. the examination and assessment process.
7. Reasonable adjustments are made on the basis of identifiable evidence verified by appropriate staff. Reasonable adjustments a student may have had prior to their starting a

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programme of study at Degree Studies at West Suffolk College will not necessarily be adopted by the Institution.

Responsibilities

8. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College accepts overall responsibility for implementation of this policy; however individual students and members of staff are required to abide by its principles and to assist in compliance.

9. Course Leaders are responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of reasonable adjustments implemented at course level (for example by reviewing the performance of students with a disability in comparison with other groups of students through Course Committees). The Standards and Excellence Committee is responsible for monitoring effectiveness at Institutional level.

10. As far as possible any likely barriers to disabled students should be anticipated and removed. Where that is not possible, reasonable adjustments should be made to overcome those barriers as far as reasonably practicable.

11. The Disability Support Advisor has primary responsibility for working with individual students with disabilities in advising on their support needs and recommending an appropriate course of action. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College Management are responsible for ensuring these are implemented satisfactorily.

12. The Disability Support Advisor should be consulted where the programme of study involves work placements, field work and study or work abroad and will discuss these with the student and the relevant academic team to ensure all reasonable eventualities are anticipated and reasonable adjustments made.

13. Course Leaders are responsible for managing reasonable adjustments for their programme/s of study and will be the contact point for Student Services in this regard. Course Leaders should ensure that contact is made with any student who has declared a disability and/or has a Reasonable Adjustments Agreement (RAA) in place. Where no RAA has been completed, the student should be referred to the Disability Support Advisor and reminded that support is available and that it is the student's responsibility to discuss any appropriate reasonable adjustments that should be considered. Where there may be concerns about any student with a disability, or about the recommended adjustments, the Course Leader should consult the Disability Support Advisor.

14. All staff involved in teaching and assessment, including any such persons not actually employed by the Institution, have responsibility for ensuring that reasonable adjustments, as agreed between the student, the Department and the Disability Support Advisor are implemented as specified. In cases of uncertainty, advice should be sought from the Disability Support Advisor or, in the case of adjustments to assessment only, from the Exams Office.

15. Staff are kept updated on good practice and current legislation through online resources, staff training programmes and briefings.

16. Students are encouraged to disclose their disability at every possible opportunity and not just through the admissions process. Once a student has disclosed a disability to any member of staff, the Institution has a responsibility not to discriminate.

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17. In order for a reasonable adjustment to be put in place, students need to disclose their disability, and comply with the Institution's procedures for determining and implementing their support and adjustments. Reasonable adjustments cannot be delivered unless a disability is disclosed and appropriate consent given for dissemination of necessary information for implementation to a limited number of individuals on a 'need to know' basis. Students should also note that there may be time constraints on when a reasonable adjustment can be applied, for example exam arrangements cannot be implemented less than two weeks before the exam date.

18. Students should notify their HE Support Tutor if there are any problems in receiving support, or if their condition changes so as to give rise to the need for an alteration to their level of support. The HE Support Tutor should ensure that the Disability Support Advisor and the relevant Course Leader are notified of any additional needs. Any changes to a RAA should be made via the Disability Support Advisor.

19. In the case of professional courses, students must also ensure they comply with any disclosure requirements specific to their programme of study in relation to ethical, registration of fitness to practise requirements of the Institution, and the relevant registration authority.

20. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College will seek the written consent of students to share information about their disability and reasonable adjustment arrangements. Students have the right to request that the existence or nature of their disability be treated as confidential.

21. In determining whether it is reasonable to make an adjustment, staff will give regard to the extent that making the adjustment is consistent with a disabled student's request for confidentiality. In some instances, this might mean that reasonable adjustments have to be provided in an alternative way in order to ensure confidentiality. In some cases, a request for confidentiality may mean that a less satisfactory reasonable adjustment is provided or that no reasonable adjustment can be provided.

22. Although every effort to implement reasonable adjustments will be made, students are also required to show reasonable diligence in their conduct and programme of study. Students are encouraged to refer to those points in the Student Charter and the General Regulations which relate to their responsibilities as a student.

Determining Reasonable Adjustments

23. Apart from where it might impact on a student's fitness to practise, decisions on admission to the Institution are made regardless of any disability which a student may have declared prior to admission. Applicants are advised of the Disability Support Advisor and how to contact the Disability Support Advisor to discuss their individual needs, identify support arrangements and draw up a RAA. Should students choose not to disclose in this way, they are invited report their disability via the enrolment process.

24. In the event that a student's needs are significant, appropriate adjustments will be considered and, where reasonable, agreed by the Department, student and the Disability Support Advisor on a case-by-case basis. Additional input may be sought from relevant external services, including Occupational Health.

25. Students can declare a disability at any time whilst they are at Degree Studies at West Suffolk College. All students who consent to their information being shared will be provided with a RAA and students are advised of a likely timescale for support to be organised. Where there are any concerns within the Department regarding the support that is recommended, an early case

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conference with the Disability Support Advisor should be arranged. Similarly, should a student have any concerns about their support at any time during their course, they are advised to speak to their HE Support Tutor in the first instance or the Disability Support Advisor so that a case conference can be convened.

26. If a disability which might require reasonable adjustments emerges or is disclosed after the student has been admitted to the programme of study, then the student is advised to discuss matters with the HE Support Tutor.

27. Information regarding a student's disability is confidential and the Disability Support Advisor, the HE Support Tutor and the Course Leader must respect the dignity and confidentiality of a student disclosing a disability. Apart from cases where failure to do so might put at risk the health and safety of the student or others, or otherwise in accordance with the Data Protection Act (DPA), information will not be disclosed further without the student's written consent. If this consent is given, any further disclosure will need to be on a 'need to know' basis. Should a student disclose to a member of staff, or should a member of staff become aware of a student with a disability, the protocol for disclosure and consent should be followed. If a student declines to make this full disclosure then it should be understood that the help and support offered may be significantly limited.

28. The Course Leader is responsible for implementing the recommendations in a RAA and should discuss and agree with the student the practical implementation of the recommendations, this discussion should be recorded in writing. Should any element of the RAA or its implementation give cause for concern, the Course Leader should consult with the Disability Support Advisor who will review the RAA and implement any necessary changes.

29. The Disability Support Advisor is responsible for disseminating the adjustments recommended in the RAA to all appropriate staff within the College.

30. For students with disabilities adjustments are only made from the point at which a RAA comes into effect. A new RAA must be put in place for any new programme of study undertaken by the student. Reasonable adjustments such as extra time for examinations can only be put in place once students have provided evidence of their disability or Specific Learning Difficulties and an RAA has been drawn up – screening results for dyslexia or other Specific Learning Difficulties do not constitute a diagnosis.

31. It is good practice for the Disability Support Advisor to hold a review with each disabled student, at least annually. In some cases where the student's condition changes or concerns are raised with the HE Support Tutor, it may be appropriate to hold a review with individual students more frequently.

Implementing Reasonable Adjustments

32. Reasonable adjustments should be embedded across course level through inclusive teaching and learning practices:

- the specific design and delivery of teaching and the individual development of student's learning
- tutorial and feedback processes
- provision of advanced material for lectures.
- provision of reading lists well in advance
- allowing personal use of a recording devices in taught sessions
- consideration of deadlines

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33. For all students with a Specific Learning Difficulty, disability, including mental health conditions or other health conditions or multiple disabilities, additional reasonable adjustments may need to be determined on an individual basis by the Disability Support Advisor.

34. Alternative examination and assessment arrangements are put in place only on the recommendation of the Disability Support Advisor. Students should note there may be time constraints in applying reasonable adjustments, for example in the case of exam arrangements.

35. In cases where the College is unable to implement a certain adjustment on the basis that it is not reasonable, it should record the reasoning for this in writing and retain a copy in the student file. A decision not to implement a certain adjustment should be included in the review of support.

Adjustments for Short Term Conditions

36. Although short term conditions are not specifically referred to in the legislation, the College may take a flexible and sympathetic approach to significant and properly verified short term conditions.

37. This Policy defines a 'short term condition' as any condition not covered by the definition of a disability as noted in paragraphs 2 and 3 above.

38. The College may seek the advice of the Disability Support Advisor and the Vice Principal Quality and Student Experience in handling such issues and may, at their discretion, put in place short term adjustments provided that properly verified evidence of the need has been produced.

39. The Extenuating Circumstances Policy could also be used as a way of handling some short-term conditions and should be consulted in addition to this Policy.

40. In the event of a short-term condition or other health concern arising during the examination/assessment period, the College will act on a case by case basis. Medical or other appropriate evidence must always be sought and the Exams Office informed.

Further Information

41. Where it is felt that the disability of the student is such that they are not 'fit to study' and that embarking on, or continuing with, their course is impossible, consulting with the student as necessary in order to make recommendations to the Associate Dean Student Experience to consider the implementation of the Fitness to Study Policy.

42. The College will consider whether it is appropriate to discuss with the student the option of Interruption to Period of Study in accordance with the Extenuating Circumstances Policy.

43. The Degree Studies Office can advise students about extenuating circumstances, interruption to period of study, appeals and complaints processes as appropriate.

44. Should a student be unhappy with the result of a request for reasonable adjustment they may appeal the outcome in accordance with the Student Complaints Procedure.

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