Reasonable Adjustments for Disabled Students

Evidence Requirements Policy

Introduction

In accordance with our duties under the Equality Act, we provide reasonable adjustments that meet the needs of disabled students; remove or minimise disadvantages otherwise resulting from the disability; and encourage students to participate in University life and succeed in their studies.

This policy sets out our commitment to implementing reasonable adjustments and explains the evidence we require to establish and provide these.

Policy statement

Anglia Ruskin University aims to enable you to successfully complete your studies and participate in University life on an equal basis with your peers. The purpose of reasonable adjustments is to remove barriers which you may experience because of your disability, whilst maintaining academic standards.

Reasonable adjustments will be put in place where:

- Existing provision, criterion and practices put you at a substantial disadvantage compared with your non-disabled counterparts
- A physical feature of our buildings or premises put you at a substantial disadvantage
- Where you would be at a substantial disadvantage unless an auxiliary aid is provided

If you believe that your performance may be affected or you may face disadvantage at our University as a result of your disability you are encouraged to discuss this with the Study Support Service who are responsible for arranging adjustments.

Eligibility for reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are made for students who are considered disabled within the terms of the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as...

“Someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

This may include mobility difficulties, mental health conditions, sensory impairments, long-term medical conditions or specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. A condition is considered to be long-term where it has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months.
Evidence

In order to correctly assess your needs and to put in place appropriate adjustments, our University requires appropriate supporting evidence of the impact of your disability.

We will make reasonable adjustments based on identified need rather than personal preference. The evidence will be used to establish whether your condition is considered to be a disability within the definition of the Equality Act, what the likely impact of the disability is on your university study and what kinds of adjustments are required to reduce disadvantages you may otherwise face.

Acceptable standards of evidence for medical conditions including mental health conditions

Your evidence must be written by a qualified medical professional such as your General Practitioner (GP), consultant, Psychiatrist or Specialist Nurse.

Your evidence must be no more than 6 months old. Older information will be accepted if supported by a new letter from a qualified medical professional that confirms that your old report is still valid and identifies any changes that we should take into account.

Your evidence must be clearly written in English and on headed paper (or authenticated), signed and dated by the practitioner.

Your evidence must include:

a) A diagnosis (where possible) and when this was made
b) Details of your condition and the symptoms you experience
c) A description of the main difficulties you experience as a result of your condition (including side effects of the medication) and how these impact on your ability to carry out day to day activities.

If you do not already have appropriate evidence you are advised to obtain a Confirmation of Medical Condition/Disability form available from the Study Support Service.

Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorders (ADD/ADHD), Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)

You need to supply a letter or diagnostic report completed by a medical professional, e.g. doctor, consultant, clinical psychologist. This should confirm the nature and implications of your condition, e.g. its effects on day to day activities, studies and social interactions.

Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)

An assessment of a SpLD such as dyslexia or dyspraxia must have been carried out by a psychologist or suitably qualified member of a professional body with a current practising certificate.

Any report must contain a clear diagnosis, substantiated by the assessment test results which have been carried out after the age of 16.

Where your diagnosis was made prior to age 16, your previous evidence will be discussed by a panel of advisers to determine whether or not your evidence is robust enough for reasonable adjustments, including individual exam arrangements, or whether you require a top-up assessment. You will need an up-to-date assessment if you wish to apply for Disabled Students Allowances (DSA).
International/EU students and Specific Learning Difficulties

It is recognised that students from overseas may not be able to provide evidence of a SpLD in the format described above. The Study Support Service will therefore consider each psychological diagnosis on its merit and advise you further. Our University reserves the right to request that you provide an original translation of your evidence in English.

Recommendations for reasonable adjustments

Our University will be guided by the recommendations of your psychologist or DSA needs assessor to make adjustments such as exam concessions where these recommendations are supported by evidence and test scores and where they are considered to be reasonable. If we are unable to make specific adjustments we will explain our reasons for this and advise you of our complaints procedure.

DSA needs assessment reports

Where you provide a Needs Assessment Report related to DSA as evidence, this must clearly state that the Needs Assessor has seen medical evidence which complies with our University’s policy and the report must relate to your current course or a similar discipline. We may request to see your original medical evidence before agreeing examination concessions.

Costs incurred in obtaining evidence

Any cost you incur obtaining the necessary evidence cannot be met by our University. However, you may be eligible to receive assistance with such costs. View our policy for Contributing to the Cost of Dyslexia Assessment for Students.

Temporary illness or injury

Students who suffer temporary illness or injury will not be entitled to ‘reasonable adjustments’, however it may be possible to put a specific temporary arrangement in place. Students should contact the Faculty Student Advice Service for guidance about mitigation or extensions for events that have been unanticipated and beyond your control.

Confidentiality

Any evidence you provide in relation to your disability will be treated as confidential and will not be shared without your permission. If you are concerned about the sensitive nature of your evidence you are advised to discuss your concerns with the Study Support Service.

Further information and advice on acceptable evidence

The Study Support Service is pleased to offer advice about the acceptability of evidence and can advise on the process for obtaining new evidence including new dyslexia assessments.

Our University reserves the right to refuse to consider evidence that does not fulfil the required criteria and to update or amend this policy at any time and without prior notice.
A suitably qualified professional is defined as:

A specialist teacher who must hold a current practising certificate in assessing specific learning difficulties issued by their relevant professional association, for example, PATOSS (the Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties), Dyslexia Action or the British Dyslexia Association.

A Psychologist who must be registered with the Health Professions Council.

Acceptable assessment tools to be used by the assessor

The list of suitable tests for the assessment of specific learning difficulties (SpLD) in Higher Education is part of a National Assessment Framework. The purpose of a definitive list is to promote quality and consistency in assessment and was developed by STEC - SpLD Test Evaluation Committee.

TOMAL 2 [Test of Memory and Learning, 2nd edition]
All 5 subtests of the Attention/Concentration Index [ACI] should ideally be administered.

Wechsler Abbreviated Scale of Intelligence® - Second Edition (WASI®-II)
The WASI II is acceptable for DSA assessments in all areas the WASI I was listed. The WASI II is an updated version of the assessment battery. The WASI I is still acceptable as long as the forms are available.

Woodcock-Reading Mastery Tests: 3rd Edition (WRMT-III). Pearson. 5 - 75+ years

To be of an acceptable standard the assessment report must meet the following:

- Confidentiality maintained
- Appropriate recording of standard scores, percentiles and confidence intervals
- Diagnosis / conclusion supported by evidence and appropriate recommendations, clearly linked to assessment findings
- Demonstrates understanding of the nature of SpLD - especially role of cognitive processing
- Links between ability and attainment made appropriately
- Correct interpretation of scores in relation to average
- Useful analysis of skills and strategies
- Appropriate range of age appropriate tests chosen conducted within standardisation guidelines
- Clear, jargon free writing - especially in summary and conclusion.
- Appropriate presentation and format including accuracy of spelling, grammar etc.
- Includes relevant details to explain report features (test editions, explanation of scores etc.)
- Pre-testing requirements and conditions for assessment have been considered
- There are clear arrangements for feedback

1 Information on what constitutes a suitably qualified professional and the required standards for tests and reports.

4 The Exams Panel will consider your diagnosis, processing speed, reading ability (speed and accuracy), writing speed, mathematics and handwriting and compare these with your general ability.