

# Supporting students to access individual reasonable adjustments: an overview for staff

## Introduction

### 1. What are reasonable adjustments?

The Equality Act 2010 imposes a duty upon higher education institutions to make reasonable adjustments to support students with disabilities in Higher Education.

A reasonable adjustment is any action which is taken arising out of the legal obligation to overcome disadvantage experienced by a person as a result of having a disability. 'Disability' includes long term health conditions, mental health conditions and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. In relation to students, a reasonable adjustment may be defined as an accommodation or alteration to existing admission arrangements, academic programmes, learning and teaching, student services, examination arrangements and rules relating to qualifications where these contain inherent barriers for students with disabilities. The implementation of a reasonable adjustment aims to allow students to access higher education without disadvantage within a framework of academic standards. The Equality Act does not require adjustments to be made to genuine competence standards; it does require that adjustments are made to how an individual demonstrates that they have met the required standard, in some circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

### 2. Examples of reasonable adjustments

Examples of reasonable adjustments for students with evidence of a disability or Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) include, but are by no means limited to:

**Physical adjustments:** for example, putting in a ramp for a wheelchair user, using contrasting coloured flooring to help people with visual impairments to see changes in floor level, or allocating parking spaces for use by disabled staff or students.

**Special study arrangements:** for example modifying course materials and curriculum resources to ensure they are fully accessible, or allowing a disabled student to suspend their studies for a period of time.

**Additional examination recommendations:** for example providing examination scripts on coloured paper, using a different method of assessment for a disabled person or allowing a disabled person extra time to complete their exam.

### 3. Anticipatory reasonable adjustments

The University also has an anticipatory duty to act in advance and make adjustments so as to remove any disadvantage that might reasonably be foreseen as likely to affect students or service users with disabilities. For example, the extra large screens in the Assistive Technology Suite are provided as it can be reasonably anticipated that each year a number of students with visual impairments will benefit from these.

### 4. Who is responsible for putting in place reasonable adjustments?

In short everyone – it is a collaborative approach. Recommendations for reasonable adjustments are made by Enabling Services and are communicated to staff on a need to know basis, including to Personal Academic Tutors, Module Coordinators, Health and Safety officers and Accommodation teams. This process is facilitated by Enabling Services; however, it is everyone's responsibility to implement these adjustments and to make anticipatory reasonable adjustments through delivering their teaching inclusively and accessibly. Enabling Services is supporting the work of the Centre for Higher Education Practice (CHEP) to develop resources to support academic staff, including guidance to ensure online delivery is accessible and inclusive.

### 5. Process for reasonable adjustments

The process for implementing individual reasonable adjustments is set out overleaf.

<sup>1</sup> P. 25 Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a route to Excellence January 2017

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## 1. Student Support Appointment booked with Enabling Services:

- All students who disclose a disability are encouraged to make an appointment with Enabling Services to explore reasonable adjustments and support available. Students must provide evidence of their disability.
- All students who receive an offer from the University are emailed to make them aware of our services and given a further opportunity to disclose.
- Some students choose to take part in the Enabling Services Transition programme so that their support is in place from the moment they enrol at the University. The Transition programme is offered throughout August and September.
- For some students, where their individual needs are significant, there is the opportunity to have a pre-transition appointment so that we can put a range of physical and supportive measures in place
- The document 'Student Support Appointment information sheet' is provided to help students prepare for their appointment.
- Postgraduate students moving to a postgraduate programme are encouraged to book a Student Support Appointment to review their reasonable adjustments for their postgraduate course.

**Important note:** if during the appointment a student is identified as having significant mobility issues or requiring significant levels of emergency medical support, the Faculty will be notified at the earliest possible opportunity afterwards.



## 2. Enabling Services documents individual reasonable adjustments:

Following the appointment with the student, Enabling Services will recommend reasonable adjustments which are set out in a Student Support Recommendations (SSR) document and is likely to include:

- Individual reasonable adjustments for day to day living and learning: e.g. adaptations in halls accommodation, timetabling arrangements;
- Actions in the event of an emergency, including need for a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) or specific actions for a medical emergency. Where this is the case, the SSR document (PDF) will contain 'H & S' in the title to indicate that there may be Health and Safety requirements for the Faculty to consider (this may not always be a PEEP). Example: Bloggs, Joe (87612457) H&S SSR (Tip: you can search 'H&S' in the shared folder on the J:drive);
- Additional Exam Recommendations (AERs).



## 3. Enabling Services notifies key stakeholders and students of Student Support Recommendation:

Reasonable Adjustments for a Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD)	Reasonable adjustments for all other disabilities
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Additional Exam Recommendations uploaded to Banner (Enabling Services)</li> <li>2. Email sent to student confirming Additional Exam Recommendations, individual adjustments and support available;</li> <li>3. Key stakeholders including the Faculty office are copied in and are asked to share on a need to know basis. A list of contacts is saved for reference in each shared folder. Please email <a href="mailto:esadmin@soton.ac.uk">esadmin@soton.ac.uk</a> with updates.</li> </ol> <p>General guidance on how to support students with an SpLD can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Additional Exam Recommendations uploaded to Banner by Enabling Services</li> <li>2. Student Support Recommendation (SSR) document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• saved to designated student record on ServiceNow for Enabling Services saved into <a href="#">shared Faculty folders on the J:drive</a>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Faculty and other stakeholders notified of SSR by email from Enabling Services with a request to share on a need to know basis. A list of contacts is saved for reference in each shared folder. Please email <a href="mailto:esadmin@soton.ac.uk">esadmin@soton.ac.uk</a> with updates.</li> <li>4. Student emailed SSR</li> </ol> <p>General guidance on how to support students can be found <a href="#">here</a>.</p>



## 4. Faculty offices share SSRs with colleagues on a need to know basis:

- **SSRs with 'H&S' in the title:** to be managed as a priority by the Faculty so that PEEPs and any other emergency arrangements are implemented. Please refer to the [PEEP flow chart](#) and [PEEP form](#) provided by [Health and Safety](#)
- **Information sharing:** we ask that reasonable adjustments are shared with stakeholders as per the recommendations in the covering email; kindly avoid putting the onus on the student to disclose to each and every Module Lead, Lecturer and Technician as this can lead to increased anxiety and stigmatisation. Worried about GDPR? The University's [privacy notice](#) covers the sharing of sensitive personal data to enable reasonable adjustments to be implemented, with the Equality Act 2010 as the legal basis.
- Note that for interim **Additional Exam Recommendations**, a review date will be added to Banner where agreed.