

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT AND FAIR ACCESS TO ASSESSMENT POLICY

POLICY DETAILS	
Policy Category	Academic
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Approving Authority	Academic Board
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Author	Quality Manager
Owner (if different from above)	Principal
Version Changes	1. Regulatory references checked and updated. 2. Updated related policy titles to current canonical names. 3. added anticipatory duty and inclusive assessment design. 4. Added early disclosure, evidence and proportionality provisions. 5. Added temporary and emergency adjustments and timescales for requests and decisions. 6. Added communication, implementation and review of agreed adjustments. 7. Added awarding organisation approval and competence standard limits. 8. Added refusal with written reasons and the route to challenge a decision. 9. Added a monitoring, evaluation and review section. 10. Appendix 1 form named consistently throughout; the support team named as in the rest of the policy. 11. Special category data and record retention noted at 6.7 and 6.14. 12. Duplicated clauses removed 13. Appendix 1 rebuilt as a completable form with entry fields, tick lists, a needs box and an office use section. 14. Clause 5.3 clarified: the student is notified of the decision, not only of an approval. 15. Clause 5.1 bullet: extenuating circumstances removed from the review route; 5.2 aligned with 8.1 and 11.1. 16. Redundant text removed at 5.4, 6.1, 6.12 and the unused Awarding Organisation Guidance definition.
Related Policies / Procedures	Extenuating Circumstances Policy Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy Admissions Policy Assessment Policy Academic Appeals Policy Student Complaints Policy
Effective Date	September 2026

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set out the College's approach to ensuring fair access to assessment for all students, including those with disabilities and difficulties. It establishes the procedures for requesting, approving, and implementing reasonable adjustments in line with the Equality Act 2010, the OfS conditions of registration for quality and standards and awarding body requirements. The policy ensures that assessment arrangements provide equal opportunities for students to demonstrate their achievement of learning outcomes without compromising the integrity, validity, or reliability of assessment decisions.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled on accredited qualifications delivered by the College and to all staff involved in planning, delivering, assessing or verifying those qualifications. It is based on the principles of equality, diversity, clarity, consistency and openness. The policy covers the process for requesting, approving and implementing reasonable adjustments for assessments, including adjustments made on the basis of disability or other grounds allowed under awarding body regulations. It applies to all modes of assessment, including written, practical and oral assessments and to all assessment locations used by the College and ensures that assessment processes are fair and non-discriminatory.

3. Definitions

- **Reasonable Adjustment:** Action to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places a student at a substantial disadvantage in assessment.
- **Extenuating Circumstances:** Temporary illness, injury or other event outside a student's control that significantly affects their ability to take an assessment.
- **Access Arrangement:** Agreed change to an assessment that allows a student with specific needs to access it without altering its demands.
- **Disability:** A physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- **Anticipatory Duty:** the duty under the Equality Act 2010 to consider and remove barriers for disabled students in advance of an individual request.
- **Competence Standard:** An academic or other standard applied to determine whether a person has a particular level of competence or ability, which the College is not required to alter.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Key Responsibilities
Principal	Approves reasonable adjustments in collaboration with the Programme Leaders, Quality Manager and/or Lead Internal Verifier.
Programme Leader	Ensures agreed adjustments are implemented; applies equality and diversity principles in assessment design; maintains necessary records such as the College's central Reasonable Adjustments Register.
Students	Provide valid, sufficient, current and authentic evidence; follow relevant procedures for requesting adjustments or reporting concerns.
Quality Manager	Identifies themes for inclusive practice and quality improvement; oversees the annual review of this policy.
Student Welfare and Support Team	First point of contact for students; advises on making a request and on the evidence needed; supports students through the process.

5. Underlying Principles

- 5.1 To comply with the law and the OfS conditions of registration for quality and standards the College will:
 - Request details of individual student's requirements for reasonable adjustments prior to registration.
 - Provide procedures for the application of extenuating circumstances for assessment activities
 - Provide a review process for students whose request for reasonable adjustments is declined. Reviews are considered under section 14.
- 5.2 Requests for Reasonable Adjustments should normally be made by students prior to registration, or as soon as the need arises.
- 5.3 The College will notify the student of its decision within 5 working days of receipt of the request.
- 5.4 Any access arrangements for specific assessments should normally be agreed before an assessment. Such arrangements will allow students with specific needs to access the assessment without changing the demands of the assessment.
- 5.5 Where a student has additional needs, allowable support strategies for assessments will be put in place in accordance with guidance from the relevant awarding organisation.
- 5.6 Learning outcomes, performance criteria and other significant elements of learning and assessment should be made clear to students at the start of each unit and when assignments are set.
- 5.7 Students will be offered appropriate assessment opportunities during the programme with feedback provided on the quality of the work.
- 5.8 Students and staff should be made aware of the existence of this policy and have open access to it.
- 5.9 The College will promote this policy by:
 - Publishing it on the College website
 - Including it in student and staff induction materials.
 - Referencing it in student handbooks and programme handbooks.
 - Covering it during staff training related to assessment

6. Procedures

- 6.1 Where the difficulty is minor, the College will assist and support the student by offering support with study and assessment skills.
- 6.2 Reasonable Adjustments may be granted in certain circumstances, according to awarding organisation policies, regulations and requirements. Students must submit requests using the Fair Access and Reasonable Adjustments Form in Appendix 1, accompanied by supporting evidence such as a medical report or letter from a qualified healthcare professional, a letter from a religious representative (where applicable), or other relevant documentation that supports the request.
- 6.3 Students who are temporarily experiencing an illness, injury, or other event outside of their control at the time of the assessment which significantly affects their ability to take that assessment, and/or demonstrate what they can do in that assessment, must follow the Extenuating Circumstances process.
- 6.4 Reasonable Adjustments must not give students an unfair advantage over other students or affect the reliability and validity of the assessment outcomes. The work produced by the student must be assessed in the same way as the work of other students.
- 6.5 Reasonable Adjustments should not compromise the integrity or credibility of the qualification and must be clearly tracked for audit, with supporting documentation where appropriate.

- 6.6 Adjustment to assessment should only be considered where the difficulty experienced places the student at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with other students.
- 6.7 The College will ensure that any details that students share will be kept confidential. However, anonymised data may be used to monitor the College's equal opportunities and open access policy. Information about a student's health or disability is special category data and is handled in accordance with the College's data protection obligations.
- 6.8 Any special needs or special assessment requirements discussed will be recorded on the appropriate documentation and only necessary information will be shared with the Assessor, Internal Verifier and External Examiner.
- 6.9 Reasonable Adjustments are recommended and approved by the Principal in collaboration with the Programme Leader, Quality Manager and/or the Lead Internal Verifier.
- 6.10 Where reasonable adjustments are required by a student the Programme Leader will ensure that the adjustments are in place. Students who believe that their request has not been reasonably implemented should raise their concerns with the Quality Manager.
- 6.11 The College will offer adjustments that are 'reasonable' in terms of giving access. What is reasonable may depend on the individual circumstances, the impact of the disability on the individual, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment.
- 6.12 Students are always expected to submit valid, sufficient, current and authentic evidence, whether Reasonable Adjustments have been made or not.
- 6.13 All approved reasonable adjustments must be recorded in the College's central Reasonable Adjustments Register. The register will be reviewed quarterly by the Programme Leaders to ensure implementation, monitor trends and identify areas for improvement. Records are retained in line with the College's Records Retention and Disposal Policy.
- 6.14 Long-standing reasonable adjustments that remain in place for more than one academic year must be re-evaluated annually to confirm that they are still appropriate, effective and aligned with the student's current needs and awarding body requirements.

7. Anticipatory Duty and Inclusive Assessment Design

- 7.1 The duty to make reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 is anticipatory. The College plans for the access needs of disabled students in advance of an individual request.
- 7.2 Where an arrangement can be offered to a whole cohort without altering the demands of the assessment, the College offers it to the cohort rather than asking students to apply individually.

8. Disclosure and Early Discussion of Support Needs

- 8.1 Students are encouraged to tell the College about a disability, long-term condition or specific learning difficulty at application, enrolment or induction, so that support can be planned before assessment begins. A later disclosure is still considered.
- 8.2 Disclosing a disability does not affect an application, an assessment decision or a student's academic outcome. Work produced with an adjustment in place is marked in the same way as any other student's.
- 8.3 Reasonable adjustments are also made to the request process itself, for example help with the form, a request made verbally and recorded by staff, or an extended deadline for providing evidence.
- 8.4 The form in Appendix 1 is available in alternative formats.

9. Evidence to Support a Request

- 9.1 A request is normally supported by evidence from an appropriate professional describing how the condition affects the student's access to assessment rather than the diagnosis alone. Evidence may include:
 - a letter or report from a medical practitioner or other qualified healthcare professional;
 - a diagnostic assessment report from an educational psychologist or specialist assessor;

- 9.2 Evidence requirements are proportionate to the adjustment requested. Where an adjustment is straightforward and carries no risk to the integrity of the assessment, the College may agree it on the student's own account.
- 9.3 A student is not asked to obtain repeated evidence of a permanent or long-term condition, or evidence that would be disproportionately difficult or costly to provide. Evidence already held by the College is used wherever possible.

10. Temporary and Emergency Adjustments

- 10.1 A student affected by a short-term injury, illness or condition may request a temporary adjustment, agreed in the same way as any other adjustment but for a stated period with an end date.
- 10.2 An adjustment changes how a student is assessed so that they can take the assessment. Extenuating circumstances apply where a student was prevented from taking an assessment, or was significantly affected during it, and are dealt with under paragraph 6.3. A student may need both.
- 10.3 Where a need arises too close to an assessment for the normal process to be completed in time, the Programme Leader may agree an emergency adjustment, provided the awarding organisation permits it and it does not alter the demands of the assessment. An emergency adjustment is recorded in the Reasonable Adjustments Register and confirmed to the student in writing within five working days.

11. Timescales for Requests and Decisions

- 11.1 Where a request relates to a specific assessment it should normally be made at least 15 working days before that assessment or its deadline. A later request is still considered, but the adjustment may not be in place in time.
- 11.2 The College acknowledges a request within three working days and notifies the student of the decision in writing within five working days, as required by paragraph 5.3.
- 11.3 Where an awarding organisation or partner university sets its own deadline for applying for an adjustment or access arrangement, that deadline applies, and the College will publish it to students on the programmes affected.

12. Communication and Implementation of Adjustments

- 12.1 A student whose request is approved receives written confirmation setting out the adjustment, the assessments and period it applies to, when it will be reviewed, and who to contact if it is not put in place.
- 12.2 The Programme Leader tells the staff concerned what the adjustment is and what they must do, before the assessment takes place. The diagnosis or medical detail is not shared unless the student agrees or the student's safety requires it. Where a student asks the College not to share information, the College will explain which adjustments cannot then be put in place.

13. Awarding Organisation Approval and Competence Standards

- 13.1 Some adjustments need the approval of the awarding organisation or partner university. Where approval is needed the College applies on the student's behalf and tells the student the outcome.
- 13.2 The Equality Act 2010 does not require the College to alter a competence standard. Where a learning outcome or a professional, regulatory or placement requirement is a genuine competence standard, an adjustment that would remove or lower it cannot be agreed, and the College will say which standard is affected and consider how the student might demonstrate it by another means.

14. Refusal of a Request and Right to Review

- 14.1 Where a request is refused, in whole or in part, the College tells the student in writing, with the reasons, any alternative adjustment offered, and how to ask for a review.

- 14.2 A student who wishes to challenge a decision may ask for a review, in writing to the Quality Manager, within five working days of being notified. Because adjustments are approved by the Principal under paragraph 6.9, the review is considered by the Chair of the Academic Board. The outcome and the reasons for it are confirmed to the student in writing within 10 working days of the request.
- 14.3 Where a student remains dissatisfied, they may raise the matter under the Student Complaints Policy if the concern is about how the request was handled, or under the Academic Appeals Policy if it affected an assessment outcome.
- 14.4 A student is not disadvantaged for requesting an adjustment, for asking for a decision to be reviewed, or for raising a concern about how a request was handled.

15. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

- 15.1 The Quality Manager monitors this policy using the Reasonable Adjustments Register, recording requests received, adjustments agreed and refused with reasons, and whether the timescales in section 11 were met.
- 15.2 An anonymised report on that data, together with any themes and barriers to access identified, will be presented to the Senior Leadership Team at least annually.

Appendix 1 – Fair Access and Reasonable Adjustments Form

Use this form to ask for an adjustment to your assessment arrangements.
Read the Reasonable Adjustment and Fair Access to Assessment Policy before you apply. The Student Welfare and Support Team can help you complete it.
Submit the form at least 15 working days before the assessment it relates to, with your evidence attached.

1. Student details

Name	
Student ID number	
Programme and level	
Email address	
Phone number	

2. Assessment details

Unit	Assessment title	Deadline or date

3. Grounds for the request

Tick	On what basis are you applying?
☐	Disability, as defined by the Equality Act 2010
☐	Long-term condition or specific learning difficulty
☐	Religious grounds
☐	Other (give details in section 5)

4. Evidence attached

I have attached the following document(s) to support my application: (tick all that apply)

Tick	Document attached
☐	Report, statement or letter from a qualified healthcare professional
☐	Diagnostic assessment report from an educational psychologist or specialist assessor
☐	Letter from a religious representative

Tick	Document attached
☐	Evidence already held by the College (please say what and when)
☐	Other (list below)

5. The adjustment you are asking for

6. Declaration

I have read the Reasonable Adjustment and Fair Access to Assessment Policy.

I confirm that the information in this application is accurate.

I agree for the College to use the information I have provided in my application in accordance with the policy and for the purposes of making an adjustment to my assessment(s). The information will otherwise be kept confidential.

Applicant signature	Date

7. For office use only

Approval outcome	☐ Approved ☐ Not approved
Adjustment agreed and period it applies to	
Entered into Reasonable Adjustments Register	☐ Yes ☐ No
Date of next review	
Approving staff member	
Date	