

# Disability Policy

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## 1. Introduction

Assessment is a basic ingredient of what we do at ACLT. This guidance ties in with ACLT's Assessment Strategy.

The implications of the Equality Act 2010 ("the Act") are that we should:

- ☑ anticipate the requirements of disabled students;
- ☑ ensure that our assessment procedures neither disadvantage, nor advantage, them; and
- ☑ not compromise academic standards.

Students with disabilities include those with dyslexia (the most common disability), physical or mobility impairments, visual impairments, medical conditions and mental health difficulties. The Act applies to all students, whatever their mode of study.

## 2. Assessments

The assessment methods for each module must be designed to provide adequate opportunities for all students to demonstrate achievement of the intended learning outcomes. Having a variety of assessment methods is good practice and is particularly helpful for students with special needs.

For most students there will be no problem in the assessments that have been designed. There will, however, be some circumstances in which adjustments will have to be made. To allow for this, flexibility has been built in to module descriptors and other places by the use of the word normally when referring to assessment, e.g. "this will normally be assessed by".

If we are clear about what is being assessed it should be easier for us to make modifications without compromising standards.

## 3. Identifying the students and their needs

When a student with a disability is identified, it is the tutor's responsibility to ensure that teaching, learning and assessment on the module is appropriate to the student's needs.

Module Tutors will be supported in this by the Head of Education. It should be emphasised that major adjustments to teaching, learning and assessment will be relatively rare.

We are required to ensure that students are aware that we have a policy of providing alternative assessments for disabled students, and of providing modifications to examination procedures.

We should also make clear how students should make requests for such modifications, bearing in mind that not all students with disabilities make themselves known to ACLT at the start of the year, which can cause problems for staff as well as the student.

Course and Unit handbooks should include a statement reminding students that it is their responsibility to disclose any disability that may affect their learning to either the module tutor or Education Manager.

A suggestion might be: "if you have any special needs please take the opportunity to discuss these with your module tutor or Head of Education, who is ..."

Additional support is often available, and obviously this is much easier to arrange if we know of your needs early in the academic year."

## **4. Special Provisions for Alternative Assessment**

It has to be emphasised that not all students with disabilities need special provisions and those with similar disabilities do not necessarily need the same provision.

There will, on relatively few occasions, be special circumstances where tutors and the Programme Manager will need to discuss with the individual student how reasonable adjustments can be made. Where alternative assessments are required, they should be agreed with the Assessment Board. Examples are: group work for Asperger's syndrome students.

Where it is necessary to provide an alternative assessment for a disabled student, the aim should be to

- Minimise the impact of the disability on the student's performance.
- Accommodate the student's means of communication, learning style and physical abilities.

We are not required to compromise on academic standards: the QAA guidelines specifically refer to the need to protect the rigour and comparability of the assessment. The guidelines also require us to ensure that alternatives are applied consistently across ACLT. It is suggested that the Education Manager is the person who will be able to best advise on this.

## **5. Special provision for examinations**

ACLT is geared up to make special provision centrally for sheltered conditions, additional time, scribes, readers etc.

## 6. Marking

In general it is desirable to make adjustments to the assessment rather than to the marking of an individual's work. Nonetheless, in some circumstances, the module tutor and Education Manager may decide that differential marking is the appropriate solution for a particular student, in which case it should be agreed by the Assessment Board.

QAA guidelines specifically refer to the need to protect the rigour and comparability of the assessment.

ACLT should aim for a consistent approach to the marking of work produced by dyslexic students. As a first step, the Education Manager needs to ensure consistence.

ACLT's guidelines on the anonymous marking of examinations recommends that a student with an impairment, and for whom a recommendation has been made for marking without penalty may have his/her work marked separately. In such cases the work must be second-marked to guarantee equity.