

Assessments and Examinations - students with disabilities or other additional needs (University-delivered provision)

UPR AS12, Appendix II - version 17.0

Policies superseded by this document

This document replaces version 16.0 of UPR AS12, Appendix II, with effect from 1 September 2024.

Summary of significant changes to the previous version

Addition of references to inclusive assessment design throughout.

Glossary

A glossary of approved University terminology can be found in [UPR GV08](#).

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The University has a legal responsibility under the Equality Act 2010 to anticipate the needs of disabled students and to ensure it does not discriminate against disabled students. This includes making reasonable adjustments to ensure that examinations and assessments offer equality of opportunity and are accessible to disabled students. This includes making reasonable adjustments to ensure that examinations and assessments offer equality of opportunity and do not substantially disadvantage disabled students in comparison to students who are not disabled.
- 1.2 The purpose of the regulations and procedures set out in this document is to enable the University to meet its responsibilities to disabled students as well as to those students with other additional needs not covered by the Act. This document should be read in line with UPR TL05 Inclusive Assessment Design.

2 Principles, Policies and general regulations

- 2.1 The University of Hertfordshire is committed to ensuring that all students have equality of opportunity in assessment.
- 2.2 The University will make reasonable adjustments to prevent a disabled person from being placed at a substantial disadvantage for a reason related to their disability and will use its best endeavours to make appropriate provision for students with other additional needs. These adjustments will not be such that they impair either the validity of the assessment or examination or the standards of competence being assessed.
- 2.3 The University will anticipate the requirements of disabled students, ensuring its practice is inclusive of the needs of disabled people and that there is flexibility in its policy and procedures to enable reasonable adjustments to be made for individuals where these could not have been anticipated.
- 2.4 The Study Needs Agreement (SNA) for individual disabled students will be made available so that staff contributing to modules are aware of their needs. All staff have a responsibility to check class lists for SNAs. Where reasonable adjustments have been identified through an SNA, staff must make these. Where staff consider adjustments to be 'unreasonable' they must discuss this with Student Wellbeing so that the SNA can be amended. Failure to make a reasonable adjustment is discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.
- 2.5 Where reasonable adjustments have been made, a Short Course/Module Board of Examiners will not normally consider a student's disability or other additional needs in extenuation of poor performance.
- 2.6 The University will anticipate the needs of students with disabilities; however, the reasonable adjustments which might be made for disabled students or those with additional needs might include, but are not necessarily limited to, additional time for an examination or assessment; standard examination time with additional rest periods; a location, elsewhere in the University, for the sitting of an examination other than the examination room; the completion of work other than in handwriting (including the use of a computer); the provision of the question paper in an alternative format; the employment of an amanuensis (scribe) or reader and/or opportunities for students to complete assignments in alternative forms.

- 2.7 Where reasonable, the University will ask for medical or other appropriate evidence when considering reasonable adjustments for individual students. Any such evidence must be presented in English or be accompanied by a verified translation.

(Note for guidance:

'medical or other appropriate evidence' would include, but is not limited to, medical certificates or letters from doctors or psychiatric practitioners.)

- 2.8 The University will respond to requests for reasonable adjustments at any stage during a student's period of study and will actively promote procedures for agreeing support and adjustments.

3 Identifying and making reasonable adjustments to examination arrangements

- 3.1 Students must contact their Student Wellbeing or their Adviser within Student Wellbeing ('Adviser') at the earliest opportunity and must do so no later than four (4) weeks prior to the period for Semester A and Semester B examinations identified in the University Calendar and three (3) weeks prior to the period so identified for referred/deferred examinations to agree reasonable adjustments beyond those which are already incorporated into the design of the examination. Where it is reasonable and possible to agree adjustments outside of that period the University will do all that is reasonable and where adjustments are not possible will support students to submit exceptional circumstances or signpost to other services.
- 3.2 Where an examination has been scheduled 'out of time' (that is, other than during the times referred to in section 3.1) students must contact their Adviser at the earliest opportunity and must do so no later than four (4) weeks prior to the 'out of time' examination.
- 3.3 Requests from disabled students where their needs are not met in the design of an assessment**

Even where an assessment has been designed in compliance with UPR TL05, a disabled student may feel that their needs are not met by the assessment design. Consequently, they may request for a reasonable adjustment to be made. The Student Wellbeing Adviser will determine the adjustments to be made for disabled students. The Adviser will discuss requests with the student concerned and, by using the Study Needs Agreement, will agree with the student the arrangements which are to be put in place. The agreed Study Needs Agreement operates for the entire period during which the student is enrolled on the programme but, where appropriate, the Adviser may agree to revise the Study Needs Agreement.

- 3.4 Where the Adviser needs to request medical or other appropriate evidence, this will be used for the purpose of agreeing adjustments and will be shared only for reasons which are necessary. Evidence will normally take the form of a doctor's or consultant's note or, for students who disclose a Specific Learning Difficulty, a report following an assessment with an Educational Psychologist or other suitably qualified person with a recognised practicing certificate.
- 3.5 Where a student requests adjustments on grounds of a Specific Learning Difficulty but does not have a suitable assessment report they will be supported, where

appropriate, to obtain an assessment with an Educational Psychologist or specialist teacher through the University's diagnostic assessment service.

3.6 Requests from students who are not disabled

Where the assessments are not accessible, additional requests for special arrangements for reasons other than disability, such as pregnancy, will be made to the appropriate Adviser. Where special arrangements are agreed by the Adviser, the adjustments agreed will apply only to the examination session for which the adjustments were requested. Further, separate, requests must be made in respect of any future examination session.

3.7 Late requests for adjustments

3.7.1 Any requests for adjustments to examination arrangements made after the deadline referred to in section 3.1 must be referred to the Adviser for consideration. It should be noted that it may not be possible to accommodate such requests.

3.7.2 Where a student believes their performance during an examination would be impaired because their request for adjustments could not be met, the student should not submit or sit the relevant assessment. In these circumstances it is the student's personal responsibility to seek validation of Exceptional Circumstances from their Adviser and then to notify the Chair of the Short Course/Module Board of Examiners, in writing, in accordance with the requirements of section C3.8, UPR AS14¹, 'Exceptional Circumstances'.

3.8 Rooms, invigilation and equipment

3.8.1 Where they are the responsibility of the Associate Director (Academic Services), Semester A, Semester B and referred/deferred examinations for students requiring examination adjustments will normally be held in a separate room and will be invigilated by members of the University's Panel of Invigilators.

3.8.2 Student Wellbeing is responsible for booking certain items of equipment needed for examinations requiring one-to-one invigilation.

3.8.3 Students will start the examination at the same time as all other students but will remain in the examination room for the additional period of time which has been permitted.

3.9 Amanuenses, readers and School-based Invigilators

3.9.1 The Adviser is responsible for obtaining the services of amanuenses, readers or School-based Invigilators and, in doing so, will comply with University regulations. Guidance and information on procedures is available from the Associate Director.

3.9.2 An amanuensis, reader or School-based Invigilator should have no professional or personal relationship with the student. If such a person cannot be found, an independent (additional) Invigilator must also be appointed to oversee the examination.

¹ UPR AS14 'Structure and Assessment Regulations – Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes'

- 3.9.3 When the use of an amanuensis, reader or School-based Invigilator is agreed, both the student and the person taking on the role must be given a copy of any relevant guidelines. These may be obtained from the Associate Director and must be read in conjunction with these regulations.
- 3.9.4 Other than in the circumstances where an independent (additional) Invigilator will have been appointed (see section 3.9.2), the amanuensis, reader or School-based Invigilator is responsible for invigilating the examination and will do so strictly in accordance with University regulations.
- 3.9.5 Amanuenses and readers will ensure that their conversation with students during the examination is not inappropriate and must not allow students to consult with them in any way about their answers nor advise the student in any way.

3.10 Marking

There will be no additional allowance for disability in the marking of examination scripts and Short Course/Module Boards of Examiners will assess the performance of all students on an equal basis.

3.11 Requests for the review of assessment decisions – undergraduate and taught postgraduate students (Appeals Procedure)

Where a student submits a request for a formal review of a decision of a Board of Examiners under the provisions of section 5.6, Appendix I, UPR AS12² ('Formal procedure for the review of a decision by a Board of Examiners'), the University will make reasonable adjustments for disabled students. Disabled students should seek advice from Student Wellbeing.

4 Administration of assessment/examination arrangements for students with disabilities or other additional needs

4.1 Deans of School:

will ensure that, within their respective Schools, students with disabilities or other additional needs have access to the Adviser where the examination is held on University premises.

4.2 Advisers within Student Wellbeing:

are responsible for:

- i agreeing with disabled students the reasonable adjustments which are to be made available to them;
- ii in the case of Semester A and Semester B examinations referred to in the University Calendar, notifying the Associate Director not less than three (3)

² Appendix I, UPR AS12 'Assessments and Examinations - Regulations for Students (Including Requests for the Review of Assessment Decisions (Appeals Procedure)) (University-Delivered Provision)'

- weeks prior to the first examination in the series of the special arrangements agreed for disabled students in their respective Schools;
- iii in the case of 'out of time' examinations (see section 3.2), notifying the Associate Director not less than three (3) weeks prior to the examination of the special arrangements agreed for disabled students in their Schools;
 - iv for referred/deferred examinations, notifying the Associate Director not less than one (1) weeks prior to the first examination in the series of the special arrangements agreed for disabled students in their respective Schools;
 - v determining any non-disability related additional needs of students;
 - vi ensuring that the additional facilities and/or other special arrangements which have been agreed, but which are not arranged by the Associate Director, are provided/made and that the student is informed;
 - vii ensuring that information about agreed adjustments for disabled students is available to staff who need to know in order to carry out assessments and/or examinations outside of the examination periods specified in the University Calendar.

4.3 Costs

Costs that arise from complying with any duty to make reasonable adjustments must not be passed on to the student for whom the adjustment is being made. Any additional costs that have already been incurred either by the student or by a centre other than the student's School should be met from the budget of the student's School or other appropriate funding sources, for example, a student's Disabled Students' Allowance.

4.4 Special arrangements involving external agencies

Where the approved special arrangements involve obtaining the services of outside agencies, it is the Adviser's responsibility to give as much notice as reasonably possible to enable the Associate Director to comply with any lead times imposed by suppliers or external organisations.

5 Time constrained in-course/module assessments

- 5.1 Additional reasonable adjustments will be agreed for disabled students by their Advisers and written into their Study Needs Agreements. Schools will be informed of these adjustments via the automated system.
- 5.2 Where required, Student Wellbeing will support Schools in making adjustments, for example, by identifying specialist support. However, the School remains responsible for making the adjustments, including the provision of resources, identifying rooms and allocating staff to manage and invigilate assessments.
- 5.3 It is the student's responsibility to contact the Adviser to arrange to have a Study Needs Agreement drawn up. This can happen at any time during the academic year. If a student's Study Needs Agreement is completed less than two (2) weeks prior to an in-course assessment, it may not be deemed reasonable for the School to make the required adjustments.

Sharon Harrison-Barker
Secretary and Registrar
Signed: **1 August 2024**

Alternative format

If you need this document in an alternative format, please email us at governanceservices@herts.ac.uk or telephone us on +44 (0)1707 28 6006.